

The Retreat Always was an Advance Forward

by Rabbi David J. Cooper



I find myself thinking about the many Kehilla annual retreats we have had these last 33 years. It's on my mind as I will be attending the retreat for the first time in my new emeritus status at

the upcoming annual on July 14-16.

I remember the sensation I had on the Saturday morning of the very first retreat as I walked through the camp. I remember how it was there that I felt for the first time that Kehilla really was a community. We were removed from the city streets; we were out in nature; we were watching children and teens running about happy in each other's presence. The grown-ups were drinking coffee and commiserating over their lack of sleep, and what was so delicious to me was seeing people discovering each other's stories -- who they were, what they did, what they loved.

Before that, we who were organizing this shul, shared a vision that was inspired by Rabbi Burt to have something called a "community synagogue." But it wasn't till that bleary-eyed moment that I experienced this group of people as an actual living community.

And that feeling persists within me today, and especially so at each and every retreat (and I haven't missed one yet).

It's one thing to see each other at religious events, at the school, at adult classes or at a meeting here and there. But it is very different to spend a day together most of which is designed to yes, simply be within each other's company, to hang out and do fun stuff together. And so, we make new friends out of folks who were just acquaintances. And new members get to feel themselves part of this warm and creative community. And the feeling is enhanced a bit if you can actually camp there overnight -- but you'll still get the same feeling whether you camp or not.

Magic happens and also the unexpected. Last year it was all the teens and tweens who kept us

entertained with their memorized command of the entire libretto from Hamilton. 26 years ago, I watched my five year-old daughter teach her one year-old brother to walk at the retreat. And I know that several committed relationships began at a Kehilla retreat.

I love the Saturday morning service too. We turn a grove of trees into a space to sing, dance and worship together which always reminds me that in the biblical stories of Abraham, he lived and also worshipped in a grove called Mamre. We create a shul in nature and fill the trees with our singing and drumming. I especially like the Mi Chamocha dance where we are not confined by any walls as we gambol in the field. I've seen some people chant from the Torah for the first time under those trees. This year, one of our b'not mitzvah from last year will take a return visit to the same parasha from which she chanted at her service. That's never happened before.

But there is so much more. We used to have "workshops," but now we have properly renamed them "play shops." And there is no requirement to do any of this, you can sit in the shade and schmooze or snooze.

The loosely named "Talent Show" is good for both laughs and inspiration. Who would have known the intricate things that our cantor can do with her toes as we cheer for "Shulafeet"? Or gotten to see children who exhibit skills most of us were unaware that they possessed.

I just love the retreat. I camp whenever I can. I spend time with people and I spend time alone. I sing, I dance, I schmooze, I meditate, and I just plain exist in a really lovely community where all I really have to do is be me. This is what Shabbat is really all about.

If you've been at a retreat before, you know what I'm talking about. If you haven't been to one before, this what you've been missing. Don't miss it.

Kehilla Staff Transition



Dear Beloved Kehilla Friends,

I am writing to you with news of a bittersweet change for me. I want to let you know that I will soon be moving out of the Bay Area. I have been having some

health challenges and am fortunate to have the opportunity to spend some time in Hawaii where I can breathe very fresh air.

The hardest part of leaving is knowing that I will miss all the wonderful people I have met while living and teaching here. The opportunity to serve the Kehilla Community as teacher, Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program Director and Spiritual Leader has deeply enriched my life in so many realms. Growing up, I was fortunate to have received a rich Jewish home life, however, I never felt at home in Jewish institutions until I found Kehilla. I am forever grateful for the experiences I've had here and am comforted by the fact that I will carry Kehilla with me wherever I go.

As Kehilla goes through leadership transitions, the wonders of technology will allow me continue as Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program Director with reduced hours. I will be in close contact with Rabbi Dev and our Youth Programs Coordinator Natalie Boskin. I

will also be available to all of you through phone, email and Skype/Facetime.

As many of know you, I teach yoga-based movement with an alignment and wellness-based focused and I will be continuing to develop this work. Along with teacher group and private classes, I post short videos and occasionally blog. To find out more, I invite you to sign up for my email list at www.raziyoga.com. You can also follow me on Facebook at RaziYoga or reach me directly at sandra@kehillasynagogue.org.

Before I leave, there will be a few opportunities to visit and chat; On Sunday, July 9, 5:30-7:00pm I will be teaching my last public yoga class at Oakland Yoga Studio, 4 Yosemite Ave. All are welcome. July 15 come meet me at the fabulous Kehilla Retreat where I'll be participating in the Shabbat morning service leadership and soaking up the sun for the rest of the day. Sunday, July 16 1-4pm come enjoy the outdoors with me at Lake Merritt on the grassy area near the intersection of Bellevue Ave and Staten Ave.

Thank you so much for making Kehilla such a wonderful place to learn and grow.

Sandra Razieli

Kehilla is hiring!

Kehilla is currently searching for 2 new staff members:

- 1. A part-time Operations Manager (80-90%)**
- 2. A part-time Bookkeeping Assistant – AP & AR**

Please see both job descriptions (on the Kehilla website) and forward along to people in your network. Email employment@kehillasynagogue.org with questions and/or resume and cover letter.

The Kehilla Annual Retreat! Shabbat in the Meadow

Friday, July 14 – Sunday, July 16

Come for Saturday or stay for the weekend!

In Bort Meadow, Anthony Chabot Regional Park



Join us as we celebrate Shabbat and renew our spirits in the beauty of nature! At Bort Meadow, Chabot Regional Park in Oakland. Great food, great conversations, great “play-shops” (no workshops on Shabbat!) and the inimitable Kehilla’s Got Talent Show!

New members: this is a great way to take that next step into the heart of our community.

Campers: don’t miss out on the campers’ *esprit de corps*, and breakfast provided. New to camping? Help awaits you.

School Families: the School will be organizing ways for our kids and their families to be especially wanted (and needed) – a very amazing skit for the talent(?) show; perfect games and activities for active youngins seeking a huge meadow in which to be far away and yet not out of sight; s’mores; campfire; all with friends from Kehilla School.

Finding it difficult to attend due to the uneven terrain? The Spiritual Life Practices Committee is hoping to create a sub-committee to address this challenge. Please contact SLPC@kehillasynagogue.org to join the subcommittee and/or to let us know of the particular issues you face that are obstacles to your attending.

The Retreat Committee wants you! There are many ways to pitch in as a member of this long-lived and fun-loving committee. Contact RetreatCommittee@kehillasynagogue.com.

Arrive on Friday, July 14th at 5:00pm

SCHEDULE FOR SAT. JULY 15th

- 10:15am – 12:30pm: Shabbat Service in the Redwoods. Children’s activities begin.
- 12:30pm – 1:30pm: Lunch
- 1:45pm – 4:30pm: Activities: Play-shops and Learn-shops (no “Work”shops on Shabbat!); Children’s Activities
- 5:30pm – 6:45pm: Dinner & S’mores
- 6:45pm – Dusk: The Amazing, Amusing Kehilla Talent Show concluding with Havdalah
- Dusk (8:45ish) Campfire and Camp Songs

Retreat ends Sunday, July 16th at 11am

RETREAT PRICES

Full Saturday program for Adults: Kehilla Members – \$40 each; General Public – \$55

Full Saturday day program for Children: Kehilla Members – \$15 each; General Public – \$30

Camping Friday night and Saturday breakfast– \$7 per person.

Camping Saturday night and Sunday breakfast–\$7 per person.

Link for playshops are online now.

Go to Kehilla website to get registered NOW!

July Bar/Bat Mitzvah's

Dear Kehilla community,

You are invited to join us at the following shabbat morning services as these amazing 7th graders become Bar/Bat mitzvah. Some of us may feel a little hesitant about coming to a shabbat service when a young person we do not know personally is becoming Bar/Bat mitzvah, but please be assured that having Kehilla community members present brings immense joy and liveliness to the service, which is greatly appreciated by the family and their young person. Furthermore, from the pride that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah families show while joining in the Kehilla community aliya to the Torah, to the joyful way that the students dance with that day's celebrant after s/he has finished reading from the Torah, to the beautiful words that are shared when representatives of the chavurah present a gift to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the power of these services reaches all who attend.

Please note that these services begin at 10am and please attend these (and all) services fragrance-free.

Aaron Butler becomes Bar mitzvah on July 8

Maera Klein becomes Bat mitzvah on July 10 (Monday morning, service at 9am)

Ben Melnick becomes Bar mitzvah on July 22

Lena Schoeniger becomes Bat mitzvah on July 29



Pop Up Shabbat



Food trucks and Shabbat fun in the Temescal

At "Bites Off Broadway" outside the Studio One Art Center, 365 45th Street, Oakland

Friday evenings: July 21, and August 11

6:30pm: Shabbat blessings (Food trucks open at 5:30)

Join Rabbi Dev, Kehilla School's new Director, Rabbi Gray Myrseth and friends to enjoy the Temescal's delicious and festive Friday night food truck event. We'll come together for Shabbat blessings, challah and grape juice at 6:30. You can get food from the food trucks (they open at 5:30), or bring a picnic with you.

Look for our table near the back of the lawn, closer to the art center than the street. Come meet our neighbors, make new friends, and jump into the street party with our Jew flag proudly flying.



Wisdom of the Ba'al Shem Tov

by Rabbi Burt Jacobson

NOTE: This is the first of a series of articles that articulate the wisdom of the Ba'al Shem Tov. The pieces come from my new book, *There is Only One Love: The Ba'al Shem Tov in the Modern World.*

A Teacher of Love

The tales about the Ba'al Shem show him to have been a man who was intoxicated with God. He emphasized the notion of the divine as a constant living presence, the vivifying power of goodness and love that pervades the world. He spoke about God's love suffusing the universe and everything in it, and most especially the souls of human beings. Because of this he taught that it is both the duty and the privilege of Jews to become channels of divine love, spreading it to all those whom they encounter. He revealed the joy of our profound unity, the subtle interrelatedness of all beings, every manifestation of the unfolding universe. This was not an abstract concept to the Besht. He lived it out in his daily life.

A father once came to the Besht and told him that his son had broken away from Jewish tradition. "What should I do, Rebbe?" the man inquired.

"Do you love your son?" asked the Besht.

"Yes, I do," replied the man.

"Then love him more," said the Besht.

The Ba'al Shem Tov once told his disciple, the Rav of Kolomaye, "I love the Jew whom you might consider the lowest of the low more than you love your only son."

Rabbi Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezeritch, a principal disciple of the Besht, once asked the holy Ba'al Shem Tov why he called those who followed his teachings *hasidim*—pious and loving men—even those among his disciples who were no longer earnest and zealous. For the term *hasid*, he stressed, should refer only to one who has attained the highest spiritual rung.

The master answered by citing a particular Talmudic teaching from which he learned that the core principle of Hasidism is this:

One must love one's fellow human beings and never harm them, even if this entails harming oneself. Thus, love of the other takes precedence over love of oneself . . . I have chosen to inculcate this virtue above all others into the hearts of my followers. And if you look deeply into their souls, you will detect at least a small part of this virtue in each of them.

The Ba'al Shem came out of a traditional culture in which compassion for others was cherished as a high virtue. But the Besht goes even further: *the other is more important than oneself*. We live in a society that promotes the idea that individual freedom and fulfillment are the highest values, more important than our responsibility for caring for others. Thus, the Besht's notion of self-sacrificing love represents a major challenge to contemporary values. The master's view is found in the thought of the modern Jewish philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas, who taught that every individual has an infinite responsibility for the life of the Other.

To judge by some of the earliest tales told about the Besht, however, his ability to love did not come easily to him. He was orphaned as a young child and he grew up without much adult supervision. Hating school, he would run into the woods to be alone. The earliest collection of stories about him reveals a kind of aversion to being with people and a preference for solitude. Later, when he became a public figure he could be judgmental and angry toward people. At times his self-regard and his grandiosity dominate his behavior.

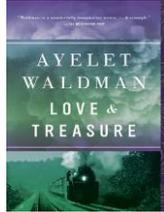
As I read the stories about his life, and his teachings on *teshuvah*, self-transformation, it seems to me that he must have struggled vigorously to transform himself into the saintly leader he eventually became. His efforts have given me hope as I have struggled to refine my own imperfect life.

Book Discussion Group

Monday, July 10 at 7pm

All Kehilla members are welcome to join us for our customary meetings on the second Monday of the month at 7pm. In the Fireside Room.

Love and Treasure by Ayelet Waldman



A story of brilliantly drawn characters, *Love and Treasure* is a sad, funny, richly detailed work that poses hard questions about the value of precious things in a time when life itself has no value, and about the slenderest of chains that can bind us to the griefs and passions of the past.

A spellbinding new novel of contraband masterpieces, tragic love, and the unexpected legacies of forgotten crimes, *Love and Treasure* weaves a tale around the fascinating, true history of the Hungarian Gold Train in the World War II.

Annual Retrospective Art Show Reception

Sunday, July 23, 2017 at 3:30 pm

The Art Committee is pleased to present our annual retrospective exhibit of artists who have been featured in individual shows from September 2015 through December 2016. This year's show will include Em Herzstein's intuitive paintings and pastels inspired by nature, Barbara Petterson's paintings, drawings and prints drawn from places of joy, contemplation and exploration, Allen Price's photographs of old and new imagery arising from a rekindled interest in the medium, Richard Miles' photographic chronicle of new discovery in Botswana, and Sharon Grodin's spontaneous and intriguing collages in cut paper. The show will be an opportunity to see these talented artists' past and more current work on display during July and August in the Fireside Gallery.

Please join us on **Sunday, July 23rd from 3:30-5:30pm** to celebrate the artists, shmooze, and enjoy light refreshments in the Fireside Room.

2017 Art Exhibition - "Collaboration and Connection"

Call for Art Proposals

The Faith Trio, an interfaith alliance of Kehilla along with the Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California and Montclair Presbyterian Church, has sponsored three large interfaith art exhibitions in 2011, 2013 and 2015. Many Kehilla artists have participated in these exhibitions and many more people have enjoyed seeing the exhibitions. We are excited to announce that we have created a website documenting these exhibitions which can be viewed at www.interfaithart.org.

We are now planning our 2017 exhibition on the theme of "Collaboration and Connection" in which we seek artwork created by at least two artists collaboratively, on the theme of interfaith understanding, coexistence, peace and cultural dialogue. We will be sending out a Call for Art Proposals soon. The opening reception will be Sunday, December 3, 2017, 1-4pm at the Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California. For more information please contact Lea Delson at (510) 528-6725 or lea@delsonphoto.com.

Thank You for Your Generosity

Annual Fund

Carol Rothman and Scott Ullman in memory of Carol's mother, Esther Rothman
Janet Holmgren
Lynn Bravewomon
Phil Weintraub
Shoshana Finacom in gratitude for the appreciation of Sharon Grodin, Shulamit Wise-Fairman, Debbe Fier, Julie Nesnansky and Bracha Stone for the love and support and all that each did to help me become Bat Mitzvah.

General Fund

Julie Nesnansky in honor of Shoshana Finacom becoming Bat Mitzvah
Julie Patrusky in memory of Hannah Patrusky, and in honor of Beth Bittle
Kaia Burkett in honor of Shoshana Finacom's Bat Mitzvah
Natalie Roden
The Abrams Family in memory of Lee Abrams

Rabbis' Discretionary Fund

Elena Moser and Janet Linder in honor of our friends Hedy Straus and Laura Boxer
Kristine Peterson

Youth Scholarship Fund

David Leifer
Elaine Brown in honor of Shoshana Finacom's Bat Mitzvah
Elissa Gershon and Michael Butler in honor of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah class of 2017
Jennifer Wachter
Robert Smith and Lisa Raffel

July 2017

Please remember that all events are fragrance-free.

Sat., July 1, 10:30am. **Shabbat Service with Rabbi David and Julie Nesnansky.** During the service, instead of a full Torah study, we will study the text of the Amida, especially parts we don't usually do out loud in Kehilla. Kiddush will follow the service. Bring veggie finger-food to share.

Sat., July 1. **NO TOT SHABBAT**

Mon., July 3 – Tues., July 4. **Kehilla Administrative Offices Closed for Independence Day**

Wed., July 5, 7:50am. **Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev.** In the Fireside Room (Enter through the Patio entrance on Fairview) Doors open at 7:50 a.m., short teaching at 7:55 a.m., silent sit from 8:00 - 8:30, mourner's kaddish and announcements at 8:30.

Fri., July 7. **NO KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE**

Sat., July 8, 10:00am. **Shabbat Service and Aaron Butler becoming Bar Mitzvah** with Rabbi David, Julie Nesnansky, Natalie Boskin, and Debbie Fier. Join us as we celebrate Shabbat and Aaron's simcha. Kiddush provided by Aaron's parents, Elissa Gershon & Michael Butler.

Sun., July 9, 11am-12pm. **Protest at the Richmond Immigration Detention Center.** Please join us for the "Let Our People Go" program — Let's talk Independence Day and "The Land of the Free" on July 9th, join those resisting the criminalization of immigrants, refugees and people of color and the current regime's anti-Muslim bigotry. Bring signs and noisemakers to let those being "detained"—and forced to work!—know we have not forgotten them. Inspired by the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity's monthly vigils, we want to help amplify their work. Location: Richmond Detention Facility - 5555 Giant Highway. For more information: letourpeoplego@kehillasynagogue.org.

Mon., July 10, 9:00am. **Special Monday Morning Service and Maera Klein becoming Bar Mitzvah** with Rabbi David, Julie Nesnansky, and Elizheva Hurvich. Join us as we celebrate the morning light and Maera's simcha. Kiddush provided by Maera's parents, Abby & Ari Klein.

Mon., July 10, 7pm. **Book Discussion Group.** We will discuss Love and Treasure by Ayelet Waldman. All Kehilla members welcome. Fireside Room. (See p. 6 for details).

Tues., July 11, 7:30pm. **Middle East Peace Committee Meeting.**

Wed., July 12, 7:50am **Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev.** In the Fireside Room (Enter through the Patio entrance on Fairview) Doors open at 7:50 a.m., short teaching at 7:55 a.m., silent sit from 8:00 - 8:30, mourner's kaddish and announcements at 8:30.

Fri., July 14, 2:00pm. **Art Committee Meeting.** Fireside Room.

Fri., July 14 - Sun. July 16. **KEHILLA ANNUAL RETREAT** (See p. 3 for details).

Fri, July 14, **NO Service at Kehilla**, there will be an informal Shabbat Service with Rabbi David at Bort Meadow for those camping overnight. Our next Kabbalat Shabbat is August 4.

Sat, July 15, 10:30am. **Retreat Shabbat Service** (See p. 3 for details).

Wed., July 19, 7:50am. **Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev.** In the Fireside Room (Enter through the Patio entrance on Fairview) Doors open at 7:50 a.m., short teaching at 7:55 a.m., silent sit from 8:00 - 8:30, mourner's kaddish and announcements at 8:30.

Wed. July 19, 6:30pm. **Economic Justice Committee Meeting.** Fireside Room.

Fri., July 21, 6:30pm. **POP-UP Shabbat!** At "Bites Off Broadway" in the Temescal. Join Rabbi Dev and Kehilla School's new Director Rabbi Gray Myrseth for food trucks and Shabbat blessings. Food trucks open at 5:30, or bring a picnic with you. Look for our table near the back of the lawn, closer to the art center than the street. At "Bites Off Broadway" on the lawn & street outside the Studio One Art Center, 365 45th Street, Oakland.

Sat., July 22, 10:00am. **Shabbat Service and Ben Melnick becoming Bar Mitzvah** with Rabbi David, Julie Nesnansky, Natalie Boskin, and Debbie Fier. Join us as we celebrate Shabbat and Ben's simcha. Kiddush provided by Ben's parents, Marc Melnick & Catherine Albiston.

Sun., July 23, 3:30pm. **Annual Retrospective Art Show Reception.** Fireside Room. (See p. 6 for details).

Tues., July 25, 6:45pm. (Dinner at 6:15pm) **Board of Trustees Meeting.** All members are welcome. Fireside Room.

Wed., July 26, 7:50am. **Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev.** In the Fireside Room (Enter through the Patio entrance on Fairview) Doors open at 7:50 a.m., short teaching at 7:55 a.m., silent sit from 8:00 - 8:30, mourner's kaddish and announcements at 8:30.

Fri., July 28, 6:30pm. **Tot Shabbat.** For children up to 5 years old (or older if they enjoy it) and their grown-ups. Led by Jen Miriam Kantor, Alon Altman and Jen's puppet friends. Please bring a vegetarian potluck dish. In the Social Hall.

Sat., July 29, 10:00am. **Shabbat Service and Lena Schoeniger becoming Bat Mitzvah** with Rabbi David, Hazzan Shulamit, Sharon Grodin, and Debbie Fier. Join us as we celebrate Shabbat and Lena's simcha. Kiddush provided by Lena's parents, Grace & Joe Schoeniger.

Mon., July 31, **Erev Tisha B'av.** Stay tuned for community Tisha B'av gatherings.

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