

## Executively Speaking: The Effects of Class and Money at Kehilla

By Michael Saxe-Taller, Executive Director



Over the last several months, a group of working class and low-income members of Kehilla have been gathering to discuss how class affects their lives both in and outside of the Kehilla community. From what I have heard from some who have gone, it has been very meaningful for them to connect with each other and have a place to share their common experiences.

I am really excited that these gatherings are happening. I love that at Kehilla, we strive as a community to be fully inclusive and to address challenging issues within our congregation; economic class, money and wealth are exactly these kind of issues. From experience, I know there are many places in the Jewish community where money and class are rarely spoken of. As I wrote in my February 2016 Kol Kehilla article, it is important that we learn to talk about and think clearly about money and wealth and its impact on our community.

Kehilla is continuing to grow, and this upcoming fiscal year we expect our income and expenses to each be over \$1.1 million dollars. We need to bring in a large amount of money for our synagogue to function; we ask our members to pay dues and tuition fees, and to make financial contributions. Our approach to money and class affects our entire community and when our thinking is unclear, it particularly affects those in our community who are, or were raised, working class or low income. Leaders from the Working Class/Low Income Group have discussed some of those effects with me, and I want to talk about two of them:

Contributions and Recognition – In order for Kehilla to meet its expenses, we raise over \$150,000 each year (almost 15% of our budget) from financial

donations, largely from our members. We ask several times each year for members to donate. We appreciate and acknowledge every donation we receive, regardless of its size. We strive to treat everyone - their ideas, their needs, how much access they have to resources and decision-making, how much recognition they receive - equally, regardless of how much money they give. But, we know we function in a broader society, including the broader Jewish community, where people's financial capacity often affects their access to resources and the way they are seen and treated by their community; we are not immune to this problem. We need to be attentive to the ways in which it seeps into our internal Kehilla culture and our community.

The enormous number of volunteer hours put in by hundreds of Kehilla members is as essential towards the functioning of our community as the money that people give. As a staff, we are recommitting ourselves to the recognition, acknowledgement and appreciation of the many ways that our members contribute through their work, time and actions.

Additionally, I want to acknowledge a core Kehilla principal: that we value each and every member of our community regardless of their monetary or volunteer contributions.

Membership Dues – Membership dues are an essential element of our financial stability. Over 50% (\$570,000) of our income will come from dues this next year. Over the years, Kehilla's lay and staff leadership have strived to create dues structures that are both equitable and effective. [continued on page 2]

This has not been easy, and synagogues around the country struggle with this same challenge. About a half dozen years ago, Kehilla moved from a complex income-based system to our current one, which has a set of sliding scales based on the number of income-earners in a household and on the age of the adults. As part of the dues system, we make it possible for those for whom paying the bottom of the scale is still prohibitive to pay what they can afford.

This system has worked in some important ways. We have been able to bring in sufficient income to meet our budgetary needs, and because the amounts have remained relatively consistent, we have been able to plan our budget knowing that we can count on a steady amount of revenue. We have been able to accommodate members paying a wide range in dues amounts that correlate to their financial capacities.

It is also clear that our current system has some problems - most notably that the dues levels in the sliding scales are based on assumptions about the connection between age and income; assumptions that are not fully accurate. Some people work in jobs or professions in which their income doesn't markedly grow over the years; people have lost jobs during difficult financial crises; and we live in a country in which a small series of unfortunate turns can make it challenging to establish financial security. With the growth of the tech industry, we also have many younger people who are making higher salaries, and at the same time because of a number of economic factors, including the outrageous cost of housing, we have other people who, as they get into their 30's, 40's, or older, see no increase in disposable income.

In the long run, we need to alter our dues system to make it more equitable and accurate. We also want to look at broader questions of the role of membership, such as our use of language and how we relate to the many hundreds of folks who don't join as members but have a relationship with Kehilla. To effectively take on these questions, we will need a process - one that demands time and attention to be done right, and it will take some time before that process can begin.

In the meantime, we are trying to make our current system as effective and thoughtful as possible. This year, in our renewal materials, we are adding language suggested by a mixed-class group of congregants that will make it clear that we do not mean to imply that people of certain ages should be at certain levels of income. We will also provide some guidance on how to think about using the sliding scales, particularly for those who will be deciding for the first time what dues amounts to pledge. We have also broadened the span of the sliding scale in recognition of the broad differences in financial resources in our congregation.

I am looking forward to the whole Kehilla community engaging more fully in these questions and issues, and I thank Dvora Gordon, Debbie Fier and the others in the Working Class/Low Income Group for leading the way. Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 7, when they will sponsor a community-wide workshop on class issues facilitated by Penny Rosenwasser and members of the Working Class/Low Income Group.

I will meet you there to delve in!

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**In the Kol Kehilla this month:**

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## Words of Gratitude for the Conclusion of the Kehilla School Year

Our Kehilla School team is still reveling in the sweetness of graduation and somewhat amazed that our school year has come to an end. The summer stretches out before us and we're already looking forward to the learning fall will bring. But these moments of transition can also be challenging, even when they're positive and full of growth. The only thing we know for sure is that next year will be different from the one that has come to an end. How are we to navigate these liminal, uncertain moments?

The Torah has some insight into this question. Last week's portion is Naso, which typically shows up in the yearly reading cycle very near the holiday of Shavuot, which celebrates the revelation of the Torah. Once the smoke and clouds clear, once Moses returns from the heights, these are the words we're left with. Naso is the longest portion in the Torah, dense with disparate elements.

At the heart of this parsha are three short, poetic lines that make up the Priestly Blessing, the oldest piece of the synagogue service still in use today. *Yivarecha Adonai v'yishmerecha*. May the Holy One bless you and protect you. *Ya'er Adonai panav eleycha vichuneka*. May the face of the divine shine on you and be gracious towards you. *Yisa Adonai panav eleycha v'yasem l'cha shalom*. May the Source of Life turn their face to shine on you and grant you peace.

This blessing, which we spoke aloud on May 17th, as our graduating sixth graders gathered under a tallis, shows us a way forward through moments of change.

*May the Holy One bless you and protect you. As a community, we remember that we can show up for each other. That we do our best to keep each other close and safe, able to take risks and stretch.*

*May the face of the divine shine on you and be gracious towards you. We gather to witness the brilliance of all our young people and to help them develop their unique gifts.*

*May the Source of Life turn their face to shine on you and grant you peace. Through ritual, we mark moments of transition, giving each other the strength we need to step forward into whatever comes next. We share our gratitude for everyone who has contributed to making this school year a source of learning and joy for our whole community.*

In particular, we would like to thank:

Everyone who sliced fruit, made popcorn, served pizza, and otherwise contributed to fueling our students so that they could learn and play.

Everyone who made our Purim Carnival a smashing success.

All our wonderful Class Chavurah Leaders, who put time and energy into developing connections within their cohorts beyond our Thursday afternoon meetings.

All our amazing TAs, who nurture and inspire our students.

To everyone else who's behind the scenes work made school run smoothly every week.

And last but certainly not least, our teachers, without whom Kehilla School would not exist.

With gratitude,  
Rabbi Gray and Natalie

### June Book Discussion Group: *Judas* by Amos Oz

Monday, June 11, 7-9pm

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.

## Want to join an affinity group? We would love to have you!

Dear Kehilla community,

We are entering the next phase of the Racial Justice Initiative, now called the “Belonging and Allyship Project: Uncentering Whiteness and Building Racial Justice at Kehilla.” This is a working name, we are still trying to figure out the final form of the name and your suggestions are welcome.

This project began during the 2017 High Holidays with Rabbi Dev’s Kol Nidre sermon - “I Will Sing for People Who Might not Sing for Me” - and the responses that Dev invited. Since then a small group of Kehilla members and clergy have been growing the seeds of this endeavor. This March, we hosted an “Experts’ Circle” that centered the voices of Jews of Color in our community. You can learn more about the history of this process in Rabbi Dev’s article on their blog on our website.

We are excited to launch this next phase of the project-- a collection of affinity groups led by Kehilla Members and open to the wider Kehilla

community. Affinity groups will bring people together to get to know each other and to talk and think about their experiences at Kehilla regarding race and what this project might encompass.

Please fill out the one minute survey through the homepage of our website to let us know which affinity groups you are interested in joining, or call the office for non-electronic information. We imagine the affinity groups will meet several times a year as one phase of a larger long-term project to decenter whiteness and build Kehilla as a welcoming home for Jews of Color.

We invite you to reach out to others and encourage them to join us too.

### Thank you for participating!

From the Coordinating Committee:

Rabbi Dev, Penny Rosenwasser, Matt Leber, Hillary Brooks, Susan Schulman, and SAM Luckey

### B’nei Mitzvah on the Horizon!

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. 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 they have finished chanting from the Torah, 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.

The following shabbat morning services will include the following young people becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

June 2- Gus Goldstone  
June 9- Nathan Pompeani  
June 23- Raffi Cannon  
June 30- Ruby Freedman

## The Mi Shebeirach List

A note from the Chesed Committee

The healing power of our community is available to us in many ways. One of them is during the Torah service. As part of the healing prayer, in the Mi Shebeirach, we mention the names of those who are ill, injured, in distress or recovering. During that prayer, the community prays for physical, psychological and/or spiritual healing, while asking for blessing, compassion, restoration, and strength.

If you would like the community to include you or another Kehilla member in our thoughts and prayers this Shabbat, please fill out the Mi Shebeirach form on the Kehilla website or contact Maya at [maya@kehillasynagogue.org](mailto:maya@kehillasynagogue.org) or (510) 547-2424 ext.106. The names submitted by Friday midday will be read by a community member or by a service leader during the healing prayer at services.

Please help Tayla Husbands-Hankin support our homeless population by donating blankets, tarps, tents, warm jackets, pants and men's socks to be distributed to homeless folks in the area. We have a box located right by the front door (near name badges). It continues to be a pressing need.



## Epiphany on the San Rafael Bridge

by Rabbi Burt Jacobson

For the last few years my wife Diane and I have lived in El Sobrante, California, about eight miles north of Berkeley. I was recently asked to give a presentation about the teachings of the Ba'al Shem Tov at a synagogue in Marin county on a particular Shabbat afternoon. I was excited by the prospect, and a little anxious as well. I spent several hours planning the workshop.

The day was gorgeous. As I was driving over the San Rafael/Richmond Bridge my eyes swept over the grey-green waters of the San Francisco Bay. A sunlit Mt. Tamalpais rose in the distance. I thought of the beauty—not only the beauty of the day, but of all the beauty of the world, and of both my pleasure and privilege, experiencing the gift of this moment. I began to sing a niggun that I planned to teach at the workshop, and the melody lifted my spirits even higher.

But there were also negative voices buzzing in my head. Concerns about how the workshop would go. Wondering if I had enough gas in the car to get me home. And then I remembered yesterday's news about Israeli military brutality toward the

Palestinians along the Israeli-Gaza border—sixty people killed and over two thousand injured. My mood plummeted.

But then I caught myself: “Burt, it's Shabbos and you're driving to a synagogue to teach about the Besht.” I took a breath and reconnected with the Spirit. And just at that moment something immense opened up within me, as if I had suddenly been transported to the top of a mountain or to outer space. It was as if I could see it all—all the faces of being, all the happenings occurring in the universe—the good and the bad, the ugly and the beautiful, the joys and sufferings that make up our universe.

And my awareness opened even more, expanding and embracing everything. I was witnessing the entire panorama without attachment, without judgement, simply appreciating the magnitude of existence and the gift of consciousness. And the grey-green water of the Bay, and Mt. Tamalpais growing ever larger on the horizon. [continued on page 6]

Epiphany on the San Rafael Bridge [continued from page 5]

And compassion arose for both the Palestinians and the Israelis. This past week I had read an article that claimed that Israelis suffer more from ADHD than citizens of any other nation. And what about PTSD? I thought about the way in which memories of the Holocaust and past Israeli-Arab confrontations arouse in Israelis the blunt fear that leads to such brutal lashing out.

One of the Beshtian texts I would be teaching in an hour or so reads,

*The lifegiving soul within a human being is one aspect of the lifegiving soul within all living and created being. And this great soul is itself the blessed Holy One.*

Yes, this consciousness in which I dwell is one with everything! Once again I was in touch with the primal source of spirituality, and my sense of hopefulness was renewed.

#### A Special Thank You

We want to say a special thank you to our outgoing Kehilla board members, Jay Koch and Remedios Martinez-Cantu. Jay has given tirelessly for the last six years as the board treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee, stepping forward whenever something was needed. Remedios brought wisdom, clarity and vision to her time on the Kehilla board.

We also want to say something special about Barbara Petterson, who has been co-chair of the Kehilla board for the past three years. She has brought her unique mix of wisdom and clear thinking and deep compassion and understanding, all of which have had allowed her to impact the congregation in a myriad of ways. She will continue on the Kehilla board as a member.

Thanks to Barbara, Remedios and Jay!!!

## Sharing My Family's Story

by Sam Davis

One of the most moving moments (among many) at the Sanctuary Shabbat service on May 12 was when two people came up to the bimah to tell the stories of how their family members had been saved from the Holocaust by receiving sanctuary in the homes of non-Jews. As Rabbi Dev put it later in the service, "So many of us are here because someone in our family took a train to a boat to another place where somebody helped them."

Rabbi Dev's words struck me because that is exactly the story of how my grandfather escaped the Holocaust and then got my grandmother and my mom visas to come join him in England. This story has been told so many times in my family, and is so fundamental to our Jewishness, that

when I sent my mom a copy of the speech my son gave at his Kehilla graduation last week, one of her first reactions was to ask how he could write about his Jewish identity and not mention that story about her dad.

After the Sanctuary Shabbat, many mentioned how meaningful the family stories had been and suggested that we create a space for us to share those stories with each other. I want to write about how I shared my grandfather's story with people currently facing danger because of their immigration status. But first, my grandfather's story condensed into a paragraph:

[continued on page 7]

On March 15, 1939, as Germany was invading Czechoslovakia -- that very day -- my grandfather drove from Brno, Czechoslovakia, to Svitavy, in the German-occupied Sudetenland region. He was able to cross the border since he had a German visa for business and nobody expected a Jew to be escaping into Germany. He abandoned his car in Svitavy and took a train to Antwerp, Belgium, changing at Aachen. His plan had been to meet family in Dresden, but when he didn't see them on the platform, he just kept going and made a plan as he went. He stayed in Belgium with a business friend for two weeks, arranging his affairs, and then took a boat to England, arriving just before England stopped accepting Czech refugees on April 1. In London, a refugee organization helped him get established, and family friends of his father-in-law (through the international vegetarian movement) filed for work visas for my grandmother under false pretenses, saying they needed domestic help, which they did not. My grandmother and my mom, a toddler at the time, managed to get to England in August, just a couple of weeks before Britain entered the war against Germany. Unfortunately, there was no way for him to rescue his parents or his brother's family. His brother, his brother's wife, and their eight-year-old daughter were all killed by the Nazis in Auschwitz.

Last year, at an immigrant rights workshop that I helped to organize at my son's school in Oakland to help undocumented parents understand their rights in case of ICE raids, I told them that they should not feel bad that they are confronting these dangers. I told them that in my family, we are not remotely embarrassed that my grandfather was a

penniless refugee in England or that he had to use subterfuge in his visa applications to rescue my grandmother and my mom. Of course, in my family we venerate him as a hero for being clever enough and lucky enough to escape and to save those in the family that he could. And I told these parents in the audience that one day their families will recognize them as heroes for being brave enough to cross the border, to seek a new life for their families, and to survive the era of Trump.

I saw in their faces that this recognition of their heroism, at a time when those in power are criminalizing them, even describing them as animals, meant a lot to them. I was asked to repeat this speech at St. Elizabeth's Church on May 1 last year before the immigrant rights march. Recently, a program officer at Catholic Charities of the East Bay told me that this talk struck her, and that she uses the story I told of my grandfather when she talks to groups of immigrants, encouraging them to recognize their own heroism in the little acts and the big acts that they are taking to help their own families survive these difficult times.

I love that my grandfather's story, told many times in my family with many variations on the details, has now spread to people I have never even met. Our family stories have great power, and they are why we, as Jews, are standing up way out of proportion to our numbers to defend, accompany and speak out for refugees in these dark times for our country. Let's keep sharing our stories, because they sustain and motivate us to take a stand for what is right.

### **Q&A on Sanctuary for the Kehilla Community**

Please join us on Saturday, June 16, at 1pm in the Fireside Room.

This will be a wonderful opportunity to meet with Rabbi Dev and members of the Sanctuary Task Force to discuss and learn more about sanctuary at Kehilla.

## Sanctuary: Where We Are Now

On May 12, more than 100 members of our community participated in an all-day Sanctuary Shabbat. The theme of sanctuary was beautifully threaded through the music, prayers, Torah service and talks. Kehilla members, Leah Korican and Ralph Silber, shared deeply moving stories of their families being given sanctuary during WWII, at great risk to those who took them in. These stories connected our efforts to offer physical sanctuary at Kehilla to our collective histories and experiences.

Guest speaker Pastor Jeff Johnson of University Lutheran Chapel, a sanctuary congregation in Berkeley, taught about what he called “holy contagion,” the ripple effect that can happen when even one congregation takes strong leadership. Pastor Jeff spoke about how support for sanctuary spread rapidly after his church offered sanctuary to naval officers who left their posts during the Vietnam War.

In the afternoon we had the honor of hearing from Lourdes Barraza and Fernando Carrillo, whose family continues to be deeply impacted by what they describe as the “nightmare” of Fernando being detained by ICE and threatened with deportation. Though Fernando is now home with his family, the experience was life-changing for both Lourdes and Fernando, who now regularly tell their story and speak out in solidarity with those who are affected by unjust immigration policies.

This talk was followed by an information session on Kehilla’s exploration of sanctuary, hosted by Sanctuary Task Force members, Rabbi Dev Noily, Julie Litwin and Tova Vance, listening circles, in which participants shared their own connections, thoughts and questions about sanctuary, and a Q&A panel, during which Executive Director Michael Saxe-Taller joined the information session leaders. [continued on page 9]

### Summer Torah Chanting Opportunities!

We have many new and seasoned torah chanters at Kehilla and we value your contribution so much! If you're interested in chanting Torah at a shabbat morning service on any of the following dates, please be in touch directly with me and we'll discuss details: [Shulamit@KehillaSynagogue.org](mailto:Shulamit@KehillaSynagogue.org)

July 22, Kehilla Retreat, Lake Temescal  
August 18, Chai Shabbat, Sanctuary  
August 25, Shabbat morning, Fireside Room

### “Memory” – A Photography Exhibit by Alex Madonik

Opening Reception, Sunday, June 10, 2-5pm.

Join us for the opening reception of “Memory,” a photography exhibit by Kehilla member Alex Madonik. Come meet the artist, schmooze, and enjoy refreshments. In the Fireside Room.

Alex writes:

I take photos to help me remember. Every moment, every place, every person is somehow unique and transitory, so we construct memories that we can hold on to. Our minds are full of images and “frames” to put them in, and we are good at constructing memories, most of which are false. We imagine we heard and saw things that we never heard or saw, because we think they are “true.”

We like to say, “the camera doesn’t lie,” and that was at least somewhat true before the age of Photoshop. All I can say is that the images you will see in my Kehilla exhibit are “true” because they correspond to original images or negatives. But, they were selected because they are significant to me. Perhaps their significance will ring true for you, perhaps not. At any rate, you will be able to see the world through my eyes (and mind). I hope to see you June 10<sup>th</sup>!

Overwhelmingly, people who attended the Sanctuary Shabbat expressed feelings of pride in Kehilla's steps towards offering sanctuary and spoke about being moved by the stories shared during the day. A few had anxiety about what kind of external responses we might receive or concerns about ensuring good living conditions for guests. Several people said they were impressed by the thoughtful process and carefully laid groundwork. Many talked about wanting to expand the impact of our work, the strength of our Kehilla community and feeling compelled to contribute to our sanctuary work.

During May, in addition to the Sanctuary Shabbat event, the Sanctuary Task Force held special sessions for Kehilla School parents to discuss questions and concerns about sanctuary, and specifically to address any issues related to Kehilla School.

These actions marked the beginning of engaging our broader Kehilla community on sanctuary. There is much to share about this important issue. To help our members learn more, the Sanctuary Task Force posted [a number of items on our website](#), including statements on sanctuary from Rabbi Dev

and our spiritual leaders, a background article about the process of deepening our sanctuary work over the past several years, and a Q&A. The Q&A addresses many of the questions that have been posed and will be updated as new questions arise.

The Sanctuary Task Force will also host a second Q&A session on sanctuary for the Kehilla community on Saturday, June 16 at 1 pm, and additional opportunities for engaging on this topic will be planned based on feedback and questions from our community.

In the meantime, if you have questions or would like to help with our sanctuary efforts, please contact [ImmigrationCommitteeChairs@kehillasynagogue.org](mailto:ImmigrationCommitteeChairs@kehillasynagogue.org).

*Julie Litwin, Catherine Lyons, Rabbi Dev Noily, Penny Rosenwasser, Richard Speigman, Tova Vance and Michael Saxe-Taller*  
Sanctuary Task Force Members

*Karen Cohn, Barbara Peterson*  
Board of Trustees Co-Chairs

**Community Wide Song of Songs Seder Celebrating Pride and Queer Sacred Sexuality  
Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4-7pm**

Kick off Pride month at a Song of Songs Seder Celebrating Pride and Queer Sacred Sexuality. A participatory ritual filled with song and dance. Past attendees, including non-Jews and straight identified folks said it moved and delighted them. Wheelchair accessible, ASL Interpreted. Fragrance Free.

Based on the Ashkenazi custom of reading Song of Songs on Passover, we gather together in community to rejoice and celebrate queer sacred sexuality for we know that all acts of love and pleasure are our rituals, are holy, and celebrate the Goddess.

Rabbi Akiva – “While all of the sacred writings are holy, the Song of Songs is the holy of holies!” (Mishnah, Yadayim 3:5).

In the Fireside Room and on the Patio at Kehilla.  
Co-sponsored by JeWitch Collective and Aquarian Minyan.  
Contact [events@JeWitchCollective.org](mailto:events@JeWitchCollective.org) with any concerns or questions.

## A New Group at Kehilla – Working Class/Low Income

The Working Class/Low Income Groups was created as a space for those of us raised working class as well as those currently low income because of limited income, age, retirement, disabilities, etc. Kehilla is an amazing progressive community that does tremendous activism in the larger community. We feel that it is now time for us to also focus on issues of class and resource within our Kehilla home.

The group has been a wonderful safe place for many of us to share our stories, feelings and situations as working class/low income folkx in the Jewish community. Given the stereotypes in the wider world that all Jews have money, this issue can be a source of invisibility and can bring up feelings of shame, inadequacy, not belonging and more. We are finding wonderful support and camaraderie in the group, as we listen to and learn

from each other. This group is always open to new members.

We also want to bring awareness and inclusiveness to our larger Kehilla community around dues and fee structures, sweat equity, access to resources and more. Sweat equity is volunteer work being valued and publicly acknowledged in the same way as financial donations are.

We will be offering a Kehilla-wide workshop on Oct. 7. The working title is “No Shame No Blame Celebrating Diversity as we learn about Class Differences and Privilege”, led by Kehilla member, Penny Rosenwasser and members of our group. We’d love if you would save the date of Oct. 7 and keep your eyes and ears open for more info.

### **Next Class Discussion for Working Class/Low Income People in Our Community Saturday, June 9th from 2-4pm at Kehilla in the Back Classroom**

At this meeting, we will continue our discussion on changes we’d like to see at Kehilla, share some personal stories and work on planning the Oct. 7 community-wide workshop.

For any questions or more information contact Debbie Fier: [debbie@debbiefier.com](mailto:debbie@debbiefier.com) or Dvora Gordon: [dvoragee@gmail.com](mailto:dvoragee@gmail.com). In the Back Classroom.

## **An Interview with Barbara Petterson**

Story and Photo by Bill Lazarus

Despite and partly because of her deep roots in Catholicism, when Barbara Petterson first attended a Kehilla service some 30 years ago she felt immediately at home in a community to which she could connect spiritually and intellectually.

For the past three years, Barbara has served as co-chair of Kehilla’s board, first as co-chair with Nancy Feinstein, then chair, then co-chair again with Karen Cohn. This month she is leaving her co-chair position to Karen and another board member. Barbara will stay on the board.

Her relationship to Judaism is interestingly complex. “I practice Judaism, but I don’t consider myself to be Jewish. It’s somewhat of an enigma,” Barbara says, adding that she appreciates that at Kehilla, “We’re willing to sit with questions and there’s no pressure to toe a party line - that you have to believe this or that in order to be here.”

Barbara still thinks as part of herself as Catholic, albeit something of a renegade. She doesn’t appreciate that the church is “so hierarchical and oppressive... In general, the structure of the Catholic Church is you accept [continued on page 11]

what the pope and the priests say... at Kehilla we all get to have our personal relationship with God." She recalls Rabbi David talking at her first service about "wrestling with God" as "part of being a good Jew. That part of it was so wonderful."

Her friend Sandy Bredt brought her to that first service. Her husband David Lee, who is Jewish but was raised in a secular home, initially hesitated to dive in. So, for several years they just attended high holiday services.

Barbara liked that a number of prayers were similar and sometimes close to the same as Catholic liturgy, recalling being moved upon hearing "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" during high holidays.

Still, "when I grew up as a Catholic, a lot of time I felt cut off from my body. One of the things I love about Kehilla is being able to be in the body. To get up and dance."

On social justice issues, Barbara saw a split in the church, along with a level of hypocrisy. In contrast, Kehilla "feels much more unified" in bringing together tikkun olam and tikkun hanefesh," repair of the world and of the spirit.

Nonetheless, Barbara says of the Church, "It's still a part of my history, a part of my identity." She says, "I'd have to do some surgery to take that out of me." Barbara finds she is still moved at times upon walking into a church.

Her daughter Rosa may find the same in renewal shuls. Rosa, 22, graduates from UC Santa Cruz this month. In her first year, she was part of a protest over police violence and fee hikes across the UC system, and was suspended from school for joining in an action in which she and other students

chained themselves to garbage cans and stopped traffic for hours on the main highway into town. Rosa received support from Kehilla - Rabbi David invited her to write a column for Kol Kehilla about her experience, and he and Rabbi Dev wrote letters of support for Rosa's appeal of her suspension.



"To me, that was so emblematic of Kehilla — this embrace and encouragement of political activism and acting on one's values," Barbara says. "I feel that Kehilla walks its talk." She also appreciates that Kehilla "does a profound job" in working with its youth. "I always thought her teachers and spiritual leaders saw Rosa as a person. Now I think Kehilla is really in her bones."

When not dancing at services and wrestling with board issues, Barbara practices as a marriage and family therapist, dealing with a range of issues including depression and anxiety, aging and identity as well as chronic pain. She has master's degrees in counseling and art therapy.

One favorite therapy is physically as well as emotionally grounded. "For people dealing with chronic pain, I bring in all sorts of sculptural material — clay, fabric, rocks, shells, beads, clothespins, and hardware material - screws, locks, all sorts of things. I ask people to make a pain monster." [continued on page 12]

An Interview with Barbara Petterson [continued from page 11]

“It’s quite a powerful thing,” Barbara says. “Putting pain into a form takes it out of us. It provides a bit of distance, an aha moment. We share it in a group and are not so alone.”

These days, given her many involvements at Kehilla, Barbara might find it difficult to be alone. But that’s not so much a problem. “The people are so much of what has kept us a Kehilla. We’ve created a web in our lives with so many relationships — from deep, long friendships to just people we might look across the room and make eye contact with.”

Having added 57 families this year the congregation now stands at some 460 families. With growth has come a sounder financial footing.

Also with the growth, Barbara says, an overarching question is “how do we continue to be what makes Kehilla Kehilla?” She sees the answer as a

continued “strong sense of ownership among the members”.

She says the ownership continues to play out in several initiatives that have arisen in the past two years from members, including giving assistance to immigrant families along with developing plans to offer sanctuary, efforts to protect our democracy, addressing issues of racial justice within Kehilla, tackling housing and class issues, developing a Kehilla space at Mt. View Cemetery, and spurring living room conversations about end-of-life issues.

Barbara is so grateful to have had the opportunity to serve as co-chair of the board, and to have worked so closely with Michael Saxe-Taller, Rabbis Dev, David and Burt, her co-chairs Nancy Feinstein and Karen Cohn, and the rest of the board. Barbara’s vision is that Kehilla will continue to exist while staying rooted to creative change and the activism of its members and rabbis.

## Attention all Kehilla artists!

The Art Gallery Committee invites all Kehilla members to submit two dimensional artwork or framed writing for our Third Annual High Holy Days Art Show. Any piece you create, or have created in the past, that resonates in your heart as a reflection of this year’s theme of “Truth” will be accepted for the exhibit. More details on theme will be provided as they are further developed by the Spiritual Leadership Team. For visual work, feel free to write a short accompanying narrative if you think it will help explain your response to the theme.

This year we will again display artwork in the Fireside Room and in other areas of our synagogue to deepen our connection to this sacred, contemplative time and to each other. Please keep in mind that the Fireside Room is used for worship by Kehilla and other congregations in the community. It is also used for children’s classes and as a space for yoga and meditation. With that in mind, we hope to create a show that will complement these activities and enhance our space with works of artistic quality and thoughtful integrity as we usher in 5772. We look forward to your participation!

### SOME DETAILS

- + Please submit images of your work, identify the medium, and include framed size (width and height) to [rolken@yahoo.com](mailto:rolken@yahoo.com) and [Helayne.waldman@comcast.net](mailto:Helayne.waldman@comcast.net) by July 20, 2018.
- + You may submit more than one image and we will attempt to hang as many as possible. At least one piece per artist will be displayed.
- + All work *must* come ready to hang. Receiving deadline and hanging guidelines to follow.
- + The show will be on display beginning on September 7, and the reception will be held on September 15 from 3-5pm
- + Please contact [rolken@yahoo.com](mailto:rolken@yahoo.com) and [Helayne.waldman@comcast.net](mailto:Helayne.waldman@comcast.net) with any questions, and look for updates in our Kehilla weekly and Kol Kehilla.

## Kehilla's Annual Retreat: Shabbat at Lake Temescal

July 21st, from 10 am - 4:30 pm

Come celebrate Shabbat in a beautiful setting with your community!

We will have sweet times to talk, play, worship, and learn together.

Children's programs and childcare will be available, and playshops offered will include Torah with Rabbi Gray Myrseth and Rabbi David Cooper, Drumming with Debbie Fier, and Sketching from Nature with Leah Korican - among other exciting options!

More information on registration and the day's agenda coming soon - stay tuned!

## Book Talk: *Deathless: The Complete, Uncensored, Heartbreaking, and Amazing Autobiography of Serach bat Asher, the Oldest Woman in the World*

Sunday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 4pm. In the Fireside Room

In celebration of Pride Month, gay author Andrew Ramer will be reading from his new book, the story of a three thousand year old lesbian – *Deathless: The Complete, Uncensored, Heartbreaking, and Amazing Autobiography of Serach bat Asher, the Oldest Woman in the World*.

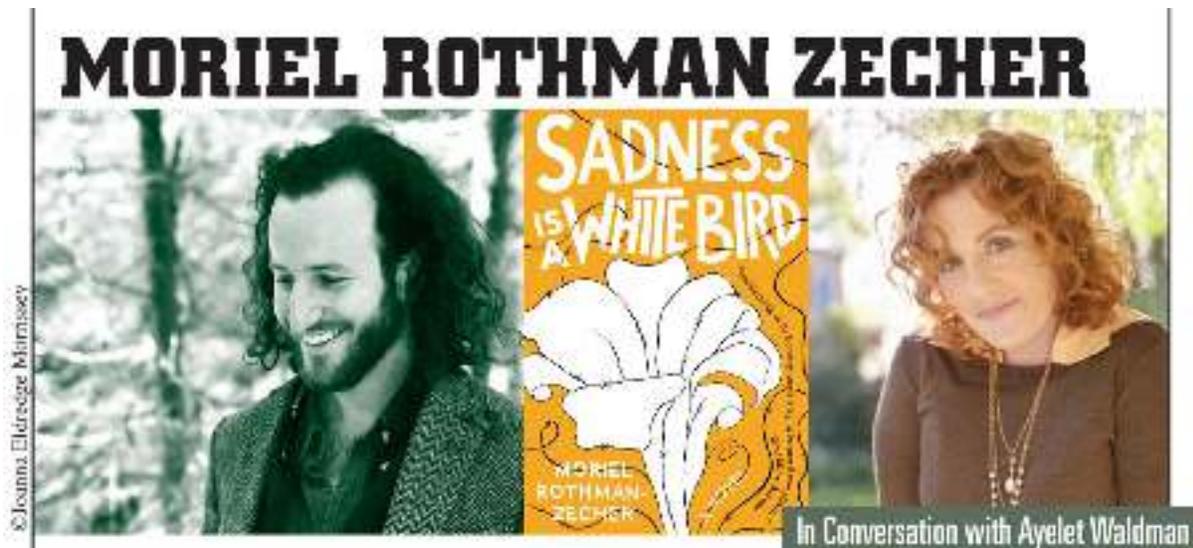
Serach was a granddaughter of Jacob and her name appears twice in the Torah, but we're told absolutely nothing about her. In Jewish folklore she became an immortal figure like Elijah

the Prophet. In this retelling of the life of a woman who knew Moses and David, Spinoza and Einstein, and is now living two blocks from the beach in Los Angeles, Serach shares with us everything she's learned about life, the Torah, and Jewish history.

Andrew Ramer is the author of *Two Flutes Playing: A Spiritual Journeybook for Gay Men*, *Queering the Text: Biblical, Medieval, and Modern Jewish Stories*, and *Torah Told Different: Stories for a Pan/Poly/Post-Denominational World*.

## Novelist Moriel Rothman Zecher in Conversation with: Ayelet Waldman

Wednesday June 20 8-9 pm Moe's Books 2476 Telegraph Ave. Berkeley, CA



*Sadness* follows Jonathan/Yonatan, a border-bouncing young Jew who shares some biographical details with the author: Israeli-American upbringing, facility in Arabic and Palestinian relationships – with a crucial distinction – Yonatan eventually joins the Israel Defense Forces, while Rothman-Zecher was jailed for refusing to enlist. —Evan McMurry, ABC News

## ***Thank You for Your Generosity***

### **Annual Fund**

Aaron Sachowitz (Sachs)  
Samuela Evans  
Janet Holmgren  
Monica Berson and Siraj Omar

### **General Fund**

Miriam, Sally and Ilene Abrams in memory of Harry and Lee Abrams

Miriam Zamora in honor of Jasper Vyda's Bat Mitzvah and Satya Zamudio Bat Mitzvah  
Sandy Bredt in honor of Chinabear Joseph  
Sherry Novick

### **Youth Scholarship Fund**

Ronald & Shoshana Levy in honor of Devon Bowyer's Bar Mitzvah

## ***Thank You for Your Contributions***

***Sharon Grodin***, for being the kind and gentle shepherdess of the conversion process at Kehilla. Five recent conversions were celebrated, and we would like to honor her role as an educator at Kehilla, and a constant pillar of spiritual growth. Thank you!

***Shoshana Finacom, Marcie Rubel and Tova Vance***, for helping plan and facilitate our Annual Community Meeting. Thank you!

***The Sanctuary Taskforce: Julie Litwin, Tova Vance, Catherine Lyons, Penny Rossenwasesr, Richard Speigleman, Julie Arronowitz and Rabbi Dev Noily***, for a beautiful Sanctuary Shabbat event on May 12<sup>th</sup>, and all the work that has gone and is going into Kehilla's deepening commitment to Sanctuary.

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## **June 2018 Event Listing**

**Please remember that all events are fragrance-free**

Fri., June 1, 7:30-9:30pm. **Kabbalat Shabbat with Hazzan Shulamit, Debbie Fier, and Beth Dickinson.** Join us to light Shabbat candles and for a song-filled and soulful evening of both spirited and contemplative prayer. Parents of 2018 High School Grads will receive a special storytelling and blessing in honor of this transition. Kiddush follows the service. Please bring something veggie to share.

Sat., June 2, 10:00am-12:30 pm. **Shabbat Service and Gus Goldstone becoming Bar Mitzvah.** With Rabbi David, Hazzan Shulamit, Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller and Debbie Fier. Join us for a celebratory, musical Shabbat morning exploring Parashat Beha'alotecha. Everyone is welcome! Kiddush provided by Gus' parents, Ruth Goldstone and Jamie Eber.

Sat., June 2, 10:30am. **Tot Shabbat with Jen Miram and Alon Altman, Back Classroom/Main floor.** Join in the musical fun with Jen Miriam, Alon and their puppet friends. Our morning tot shabbat service is geared especially for children up to 3 years old, and siblings and friends are welcome. Kiddush afterwards - bring a vegetarian snack to share if you'd like.

Sat., June 2, 5:30-8:30pm. **Community Wide Song of Songs Seder Celebrating Pride and Queer Sacred Sexuality.** Kick off Pride month at a Song of Songs Seder Celebrating Pride and Queer Sacred Sexuality. A participatory ritual filled with song and dance. Wheelchair accessible, ASL Interpreted. In the Fireside Room and on the Patio at Kehilla (learn more on page 9).

Tues., June 5, 7:30-9pm. **Middle East Peace Committee Meeting.** Fireside Room.

Wed., June 6, 7:50am. **Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev, Fireside Room.** 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. Please enter through the patio off Fairview Avenue.

Fri., June 8, 6:30-8pm. **Friday Night Peace Walk with OCO.** Join Rabbi David in this walk for peace in our own community led by Oakland Community Organizations' Ceasefire campaign. Location: Meet inside First Mt. Sinai Church, 1970 86th Ave.

Fri., June 8, 7-9pm. **NEW-ish!!! Traditional-style Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbinic Intern SAM Luckey, Talya Husbands-Hankin, Kendra Froshman, Chloe Piazza & Eva Pettersson, Fireside Room.** A more traditional davening style of Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma'ariv, the Shabbat evening service, songful and in Hebrew, following the full liturgy. Kiddush and light oneg after the service. Sponsored by Kehilla and Glitter Kehilla.

Sat., June 9, 10:00am-12:30pm. **Shabbat Service and Nathan Pompeani becoming Bar Mitzvah.** With Rabbi David, Beth Dickinson, Rabbi Gray Myrseth, and Debbie Fier. Join us for a celebratory, musical Shabbat morning exploring Parashat Sh'lach L'cha. Everyone is welcome! Kiddush provided by Nathan's parents, Sharon Brown & Robert Pompeani, with his aunt Elaine Brown.

Sat., June 9, 2-4pm. **Working Class/Low Income Group Meeting.** At this meeting, we will continue our discussion on changes we'd like to see at Kehilla, share some personal stories and work on planning the Oct. 7 community-wide workshop. In the Back Classroom (learn more on page 10).

Sun., June 10, 11am-noon. **Protest at the Richmond Immigration Detention Center.** Join Kehilla Immigration Committee and Our Family Coalition, FOR JUST ONE HOUR (11am-Noon). This is a multi-faith, accessible-for-all-ages action to call for an end to the detention/deportation and mass incarceration of our communities and neighbors. Bring signs and noisemakers to let those being interned—and forced to work—know we have not forgotten them. **Location:** the West County Detention, 5555 Giant Hwy, Richmond.

Sun., June 10, 3-5pm. **Opening Reception for "Memory" – A Photography Exhibit by Alex Madonik.** Come meet the artist, shmooze, and enjoy refreshments. In the Fireside Room (learn more on page 8).

Mon., June 11, 7pm. **Book Discussion Group.** All Kehilla members are welcome. This month's book: *Judas* by Amos Oz. In the Fireside Room.

Wed., June 13, 7:50 am. **Morning Meditation Sit, Fireside Room.** 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. Please enter through the patio off Fairview Avenue.

Thurs., June 14, 6:30-9pm. **Economic Justice Committee Meeting.** In the Fireside Room.

*Friday, June 15: NO Kabbalat Shabbat Service.*

Sat., June 16, 10:30 am. **Shabbat Service with Howard Hamburger.** We will focus on davening, singing and sharing an extended Torah study and discussion together. Kiddush following services-- Please bring something veggie to share.

Sat., June 16, 1-2:30pm. **Q&A on Sanctuary for the Kehilla Community.** This will be a wonderful opportunity to meet with Rabbi Dev and members of the Sanctuary Task Force to discuss and learn more about sanctuary at Kehilla. In the Fireside Room.

Sun., June 17<sup>th</sup>, 4-5:30pm. **Andrew Ramer will be reading from his new book,** the story of a three thousand year old lesbian - *Deathless: The Complete, Uncensored, Heartbreaking, and Amazing Autobiography of Serach bat Asher, the Oldest Woman in the World.* In the Fireside room (learn more on page 13).

Tues., June 19, 7-9pm. **Ten Essentials of Judaism.** A deep dive into some of the juiciest parts of Jewish practice and life, with Rabbi Dev. This monthly class is required for Conversion and Adult B'nei Mitzvah Students and is open to all. Please register online.

Wed., June 20, 7:50 am. **Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev, Fireside Room.** 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.  
Please enter through the patio off Fairview Avenue.

Wed., June 20, 8-9pm. **Moriel Rothman-Zecher in Conversation with Ayelet Waldman at Moe's Books** (learn more on page 13).

Thurs., June 21, 6:30pm. **Greening Committee Meeting.** In the Back Classroom.

*Friday June 23: **NO Tot Shabbat:** It resumes on Saturday morning, Aug 4, then Friday night, Aug 24.*

Sat., June 23, 10:00 am-12:30 pm. **Shabbat Service and Raffi Cannon becoming Bar Mitzvah.** With Rabbi Dev, Hazzan Shulamit, and Debbie Fier. Join us for a celebratory, musical Shabbat morning exploring Parashat Chukat. Everyone is welcome! Kiddush provided by Raffi's parents, Ali and Jessica Cannon.

Tues., June 26, 6:15pm. **Board of Trustees Meeting.** Dinners starts at 6:15pm. All members are welcome. In the Back Classroom – Main Floor.

Wed., June 27, 7:50 am. **Morning Meditation Sit with Rabbi Dev, Fireside Room.** 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. Please enter through the patio off Fairview Avenue.

*Fri., June 29: **NO Service***

Sat., June 30, 10:00 am-12:30 pm. **Shabbat Service and Ruby Freedman becoming Bat Mitzvah.** With Rabbi David, Hazzan Shulamit, Rabbi Carol Caine, and Debbie Fier. Join us for a celebratory, musical Shabbat morning exploring Parashat Balak. Everyone is welcome! Kiddush provided by Ruby's parents, Lori Freedman and Ori Tzvieli.

<p style="text-align: center;">Kehilla Community Synagogue 1300 Grand Avenue, Piedmont, CA 94610 Please use the following number for all staff: (510) 547-2424</p>			
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Active Emeritus Rabbi, David J. Cooper Rabbidavid@kehillasynagogue.org	x104	Youth Programs Coordinator, Natalie Boskin Natalie@kehillasynagogue.org	X107
Executive Director, Michael Saxe-Taller Michael@kehillasynagogue.org	x101	Bookkeeper, Molly Melamed Molly@kehillasynagogue.org	x102
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