

Vol.8 Issue 1

Federation Focus is published three times a year by the Jewish Federation of Central California.
 “All Jews are responsible for one another.” (Talmud:Shavuot 39a)

Have a sweet year!



5778

We have begun our annual allocation process and are gathering all requests. The annual allocation meeting will be held on October 22, at 11 a.m. We will publish a list of all allocations granted in our next publication.

If you have not made your pledge yet it is not too late. You can call the office at 432-2162, send an email at fedfresno@sbcglobal.net, or fill out the back page and mail it in. I will update the pledge list in our next publication and remember your pledges help Jewish families both here in the Central Valley and in Israel.

We also accept advertisements that will be included in both our Focus publication and on our website. The cost is \$100 annually. We hope you will consider placing an ad and we encourage all of our community to support our advertisers.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation of Central California, let me extend warm wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year 5778. I hope you and your families have a joyous holiday and that this will be the beginning of a peaceful year for all of us.



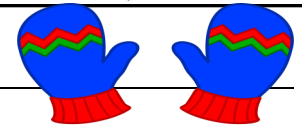
Lehitraot,
Phyllis Farrow

JFCC Executive Director

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Fall—Winter Events Events



For more information on events listed in the calendar, please contact your local Congregation:

Temple Beth Israel (TBI) 559 432-3600
Congregation Beth Jacob (CBJ) 559 222-0064
Chabad of Fresno- 559 432-2770
Congregation B'nai David (CBD) 559 732-3139
Congregation Beit Shalom (CBS) 559 308-1333
Jewish Federation (JFCC) 432-2162

September 2

Learn to Blow Shofar- \$10 Adults/Children free
 Master Teacher Maurice Kamins
 CBS/6:30 p.m.

September 10

TBI Religious School-1st Day
 FYGBI Carwash

September 14

JFCC Board Meeting
 CBJ/7 p.m.

September 16

Rosh Hashanah Program for Children
 Beekeeping, Honey Making & Tasting
 CBS/6:30 p.m.

September 16

Jewish Film Series Presents at TBI
 "The Frisco Kid"
 5:45: Deli Service / 6:30: Srugim / 7:15: Film
 See flyer page 4

September 16

S'Lichot Service
 TBI & CBJ /9 p.m.

*September 20

Erev Rosh Hashanah
 Services at all Congregations

September 21

1st Day Rosh Hashanah 5776
 Services at all Congregations

September 22

2nd Day Rosh Hashanah 5776
 Services at CBJ and Chabad

September 29

Kol Nidre
 Services at all Congregations

September 30

Yom Kippur
 Services at all Congregations

October 1

Sukkot Decorating
 CBJ/11:00 a.m.

October 4

Erev of Sukkot

October 4

Chinese food in the Sukkah
 TBI/5:30 p.m.

October 5

Sukkot
 CBJ/9:30 a.m. Services
 Call CBJ for more information (222-0664)

October 6

Sukkot Thanksgiving Meal w/rituals
 CBS/6:30 p.m.. Adults \$12, Children free

October 7

Jewish Film Series Presents at TBI
 "Denial"
 6:30 p.m.: Srugim / 7:15: Film
 See flyer page 4

October 8

Sukkot Dinner
 CBJ/6:30 p.m. Dairy Pot Luck in the Sukkah

October 8

Port and Chocolate in the Sukkot
 TBI/7p.m.

October 10

Fourth Tuesday
 TBI, Social Hall/11:30 a.m.
 Festive lunch in our beautiful Sukkah- \$5
 RSVP Judy Haber, jahaber@comcast.net or 431-2102

(continued on page 6)

President's Message

by Murray Farber



Back in '94, I was an administrator at a Jesuit university in Connecticut that decided to launch a Judaic Studies minor. It was well designed by a Jewish arts professor with assistance from other faculty and supported by a large donation from a local Jewish entrepreneur. I wondered whether it would be successful since there were only a few Jewish students enrolled.

But the courses proved popular and oversubscribed, partly because of the lead professor who was recruited from another university. I met a number of the undergraduates among the overwhelming Catholic student body and learned why they were in Judaic Studies: "One of my grandparents was Jewish;" "I thought it would help me understand more about the roots of Catholicism;" "The courses sounded as if they would be stimulating." It was fascinating for me to sit in on some classes and observe students' desire to learn more about religion.

I harkened back to those days as I attended a reception at Fresno State University in May for graduates of its Jewish Studies. Guided by Professor Jill Fields, the founding coordinator, there is a growing Jewish Studies program that has been supported for several years by the Jewish Federation of Central California. Students with the surnames Alejo, Davenport, Gorham, Ledesma and Schwarz received the first certificates of completion and a sixth, Russell Douglas, president of the Jewish Studies Association, described his enthusiasm for the classes. He admitted that he originally signed up casually because he needed some courses toward a minor and a faculty member suggested trying Jewish Studies as academically interesting.

Fresno State is taking the program seriously. Michelle DenBeste, the interim dean at the College of Social Sciences, delivered the reception welcome, and during a visit to Temple Beth Israel, President

Joe Castro had expressed hopes for Jewish Studies to prosper and become a minor. Highlighting the graduates' celebration, retired English Professor Lillian Faderman related the story of Ann du Pontavice, the major donor to the Jewish Studies program. Born in France, she came to the U.S. as a teenager during World War II and returned home afterward to become a physician. In 1986, she came to Fresno as a consultant on AIDs at St. Agnes Hospital and served the Fresno Health Department.

Through her friendship with Dr. Faderman, she became interested in Judaism, converted, joined Temple Beth Israel and particularly enjoyed visiting Israel. Introduced to Jill Fields, she benefitted Jewish Studies through her estate. Ironically, as a child in 1936, her mother remarried to a marquis whose family were Nazi sympathizers and she was horrified after the war to learn for the first time about concentration camps.

Currently the faculty represents a variety of disciplines. Here are a few: Vince Bondi, Department of Philosophy, teaches Judaism; Stacy Farenthold, Department of History, Modern Middle East; Bradley Hart, Mass Communication and Journalism, Anti-Semitism from Medieval to Modern World. Among the faculty members particularly known to Fresno's congregations are Toni Wein who teaches Jewish American Writers; Terry Winant, Philosophy and Diaspora; Jack Zeldes in the Department of Linguistics, Hebrew.

Dr. Fields gladly notes the continuing expansion of Jewish Studies with a minor and three new classes starting in spring 2018: Jewish Civilization, Jewish-American Popular Culture, and Writing and the Jewish Experience.

This past spring lectures by visiting professors supplemented classwork with programs devoted to Jewish American women artists, North African Jews and Jewish renewal in Poland. One student became an intern in the office of the Jewish Federation and told me that her class on the Holocaust had more than 40 students but the department has since capped it at 35.



Deli Service : 5:45 PM

"Srugim" : 6:30 PM

Main Feature: 7:15 PM



fresnojewishfilm.org

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Season Tickets: \$50

Deli Service Available on 4 Dates*

Single Deli Meal: \$12-\$15

Deli Meal Season Ticket: \$50

September 16 | The Frisco Kid | *Deli Service

October 7 | Denial

November 11 | Fanny's Journey | *Deli Service

December 2 | Bride Flight

January 20 | Closed Season | *Deli Service

February 17 | Aida's Secrets

March 17 | Rabin-In His Own Words

April 14 | Live and Become | *Deli Service

Fresno Jewish Film Series is grateful to Susan House for sponsoring "Srugim" this season

After 500 Years, A New Home

Thousands of Jews were banished from Sicily in 1492, but recently the local archbishop has granted the use of an oratory -- a small Catholic chapel - in the ancient Jewish quarter to Palermo's growing Jewish community. The oratory was known as Santa Maria del Sabato, or Holy Mary of Saturday. Some scholars think the name is related to the memory of the celebration of Shabbat.

Twenty five years ago some local enthusiasts, including Catholics, founded the Sicilian Institute for Jewish Studies. Scholars found that Jews were in Sicily at least since the first century A.D., at one point there being 51 communities on the island, the largest being in Palermo. A mikvah has been found below the courtyard of Palazzo Marchesi which in the 16th century housed the offices of the Inquisition.

Until now there haven't been enough Jews to form a minyan, but that is expected to change. The spiritual leader is an emissary from a Jerusalem organization that assists those searching for their Jewish heritage. The city is paying for the restoration costs of the dilapidated oratory.



Jewish Family Services continues to be busy providing help and support to members of our community.

Coming up this Fall, we are planning several new programs designed for a variety of interests for all our members.

We will continue our famous and popular Friday challah deliveries each week, as a thank you to members who are chosen for their help or support or just because they are valuable members of our Federation.

We are looking forward to beginning a new program, "Tools for Living," a series of speakers, panels, and activities. The first is a senior fitness program, held twice a week at Temple Beth Israel, led by a professional in-

structor. Some of the speakers and panels will cover Depression, Teen Suicide, Bereavement and Parenting.

We are continually looking for ways to better serve our community. If you know how we might be helpful, please give the Federation Office a call or send us an email. Just a reminder, Jewish Family Services is here to help. If you need transportation, shopping, or just a friendly visit, please call.

The Jewish Family Services Committee

Carol Reba-Chairperson
Rabbi Paul Gordon
Phyllis Farrow-Federation Director
Linda Nahin-Community Coordinator
Leslie Briney, Rita Karsh,
Elizabeth Kassel, Jenny Mann,
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Calendar

(continued from page 2)

October 11-12

Hoshana Rabba / Shimini Atzeret
CBJ/9:30 a.m. Service

October 12

Family Simchat Torah
CBJ/8 p. m.

October 13

Simchat Torah
CBJ/9:30 a.m.

October 22

JFCC Allocations
CBJ/11AM

November 5

Hanukah Bazaar
TBI/10 a. m.

November 11

Jewish Film Series Presents at TBI
"Fanny's Journey"
5:45 p.m.: Deli Service /6:30: Srugim / 7:15: Film
See flyer page 4

November 16

JFCC Board Meeting
CBJ/7 p.m.

November 23

Thanksgiving

November 28

Fourth Tuesday
TBD
TBI, Social Hall

December 2

Jewish Film Series Presents at TBI
"Bride Fight" / 6:30 p.m.: Srugim /7:15: Film

December 12

Hanukah

December 12

Fourth Tuesday / TBI/11:30 a.m.
Annual Hanukah Latke Party
Candle-lighting, a delicious lunch, and latkes unlimited
RSVP Judy Haber, jahaber@comcast.net or 431-2102

December 15

Hanukah Pot Luck Family Service
TBI /6 p.m.

December 17

CBJ/5 p.m.
Hanukah Party

If you have any events that are open to the entire Jewish community you would like posted here and on our email calendar please contact Phyllis Farrow at 559 432-2162 or fedfresno@sbcglobal.net.

Chassidus Thoughts



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The power of speech is often underrated. The source of a single sound begins in a very high spiritual place encased in your will. It seems strange, because you would think that your emotions would be the source of your desire to communicate with others.

Chassidus teaches that your soul was breathed into your body by Hashem. When we are attuned to Hashem's transcendence, our relationship is not subject to the natural decay of time. As such every mitzvah we perform carries with it the wonder and fascination of the 'first time' being anywhere. This physical world originates in the letter 'Hei' of Hashem's name, and the world to come from the 'Yud'.

Unfortunately, this system can break down! Anyone who has been to the dentist knows the great difficulty in speaking and pronouncing their words after a numbing shot. Moreover, when a front tooth is broken, the patient complains that he blows air through his teeth and now can't pronounce words such as 'funny'. With your tooth repaired, your speech returns and you can now pronounce biting letters such as 'the'. When you accidentally burn your lips with hot coffee, you find that you can't say 'please' or if you bite your tongue you lose pronunciation of simple words such as 'help'. Finally, if you develop a sore throat, you lose your ability to use forceful breath sounds, and vocalize guttural words.

Oh yes, don't forget a Jew was given a powerful speech weapon called humor to destroy those who attack God's chosen people. As such, when we speak, we have to be very careful to create only simcha and joy in this world and avoid speaking badly about anyone. Not so easy! So train yourself to think before speaking and let's build a vibrant Jewish community in our valley!

-David ben Hirsch HaCohen



LETTER FROM ISRAEL by Vic Rosenthal

Comments?

K2vco.vic@gmail.com

As I write this it seems that things are more “interesting” (not in a good sense) in America than here in Israel, where we seem to be going through a relatively quiet period as far as terrorism and politics are concerned.

A lot of people are beginning to think that the days of Benjamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister are numbered. There are several police investigations, which I believe do not point to serious corruption, and he could be indicted. Even then, he would not have to resign unless his own party loses confidence in him. Barring this or some other crisis, the next election is scheduled for 2019.

Netanyahu has been PM for only a little longer than Obama was US President, but Israelis think he has been in power forever and are tired of his personality. His leadership has been cautious and competent; but those on the Right think he has been too ready to surrender his principles – such as his decision to remove the metal detectors from the Temple Mount – while the Left, naturally, thinks that it is obscene that they are not the ones running things.

The real question is: who could replace him? Polls show that the opposition parties have no better chances than in the last election (which is good, since they are mostly incompetent), and Netan-

yahu has crushed anyone in his own party that might have challenged him.

Personally, there is no one I would rather see as PM than Ayelet Shaked, who is no. 2 in the Bayit Hayehudi party. But she is



Number 2 – and even if she were Number 1 – she is more popular than the head of her party, Naftali Bennett – that party has no chance to be the leading vote getter.

Shaked, who currently serves as Minister of Justice in Netanyahu’s cabinet, is not quite as charismatic a speaker as Netanyahu or some others, but she is honest, very smart – she has a degree in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science – and, possibly because as a woman she had to work much harder than the men, knows how to do her homework and master difficult issues.

Israel has already had a female PM (Golda Meir, of

course) and has numerous women in the Knesset, so that isn’t a major obstacle. But she would have to jump to the Likud in order to have a chance, and there would be strong opposition there from politicians with established bases. So today it looks like her chances are small.

Rarely does an Israeli government survive the full four years. Netanyahu himself could dissolve the government to try to improve his position (as happened in 2015), he could resign, or a motion of no confidence could pass in the Knesset. I shudder to contemplate the horrors of an election campaign, followed by the even more horrible period after the election during which the ruling coalition is formed; but anything can happen and it can be sooner rather than later.



Golda Meir

TRANSITIONS

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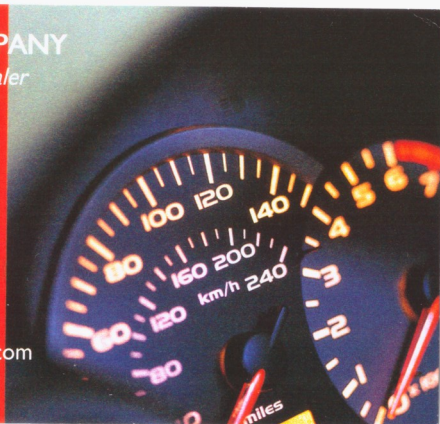
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L'Shana Tova--It's that time again. Looking inward, making a cheshbon ha'nefesh. Time for the mikvah.

A summer of fun was had by Beit Shalomites by welcoming Shabbat and making Havdalah ... candle-lighting and blessings were followed by swimming, noshing, and schmoozing!

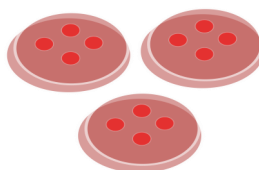
Social Action Project Update: The California Holocaust Education & Resource Center will be traveling to the Tulare campus of College of the Sequoias with resource & enrichment materials on September 12.

In January we are presenting the play JANKA at the Cafe 210 in Visalia at 7 p.m. This is the exceptional story of the playwright's mother - a Jewish woman who survived the Nazis by hiding in plain sight in Germany during WWII. Written by Oscar Space with his wife, actress Janice Noga, in a moving one- woman play. Advance tickets: 559-308-1333.

The drive to collect 6 million buttons in order to build a Holocaust Memorial in Visalia is advancing at a renewed pace thanks to Facebook and the internet. Total collected, counted, and boxed: 2.5 million.

Please check out our Facebook page!

G'mar Chatimah



Cynthia Fischer, Director

California Holocaust Education & Resource Center (501c3)

CBD is getting ready for the High Holy Days now that summer is winding down. Here's hoping for cooler weather in September.

Sunday School will be starting this month with several new teachers and a new director of Education. We will be having several Bat/Bar Mitzvahs in the fall.

Our Student Rabbi, Meir Bergeron, will be returning for another year. His monthly Lunch-n-Learn programs have been very interesting and thought provoking.

Our annual fundraiser, Saucy September, will be held September 16 at 6 p.m. We have partnered for the last two years with Food Link as September is Food Hunger Month. Seven local restaurants will submit their pasta sauces for tasting and judging. Guests will enjoy a delicious pasta dinner and desserts and be able to purchase tickets for fabulous raffle prizes and bid on numerous silent auction items.



CBD welcomes all new or returning members or anyone in the community that may be interested in Judaism and attending services.

- Marcia Brooks Smith

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Who's the Oldest?

Two synagogues are battling for the title of oldest in the nation as well as possession of valuable artifacts.

Shearith Israel in Manhattan was founded in 1654, but is not in its original building. Touro Synagogue in Newport, R.I. was built in 1763 and is the oldest synagogue building.

The Touro congregation, Jeshuat Israel, fled Newport because of persecution during the American Revolution, many people joining the Manhattan synagogue. Shearith Israel maintained the empty Touro synagogue and cemetery through the 19th century. Then enough Jews moved to Newport to re-open the building, which was leased to them by Shearith Israel for \$1 per year.

In 2011 Jeshuat Israel decided to sell some valuable artifacts to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston for more than \$7 million. But Shearith Israel tried to stop the sale, saying they were the rightful owner, and then was sued by Jeshuat Israel.

A judge had ruled that the Jeshuat Israel congregation that worshiped in the Touro Synagogue for more than 130 years still had control over the building and its objects. But later an appeals court enforced some 20th century contracts in which Jeshuat Israel acknowledged that it leased the Newport building for \$1 per year. Now Jesuat Israel is considering an appeal of the decision which had favored Shearith Israel.



Touro Synagogue

"WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN ARE ENDOWED WITH THE LANGUAGES OF DEVELOPMENT THROUGH WHICH THEY CAN EXPRESS THEIR IDEAS. OUR APPROACH IS TEACHING HOW TO USE THESE LANGUAGES (E.G., PAINTING, SCULPTING, DRAMA) IN EVERYDAY LIFE. THE PROGRAM IS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, AND COMMUNITY THROUGH EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY IN A SUPPORTIVE AND ENRICHING ENVIRONMENT BASED ON THE INTERESTS OF THE CHILDREN THROUGH A SELF-GUIDED CURRICULUM. WE NURTURE THE 100 LANGUAGES OF A CHILD BY ENRICHING EVERYDAY LIFE LEARNING THROUGH EXPLORING OUR WORLD

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Our Mission

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Central California is to build and strengthen the Jewish community locally, overseas and in Israel, by

- ◆ *Raising funds and allocating them to identified Jewish community needs and priorities at home and abroad*
- ◆ *Providing education and cultural programs to promote community awareness of the Federation and its mission*
- ◆ *Listening to a broad spectrum of opinions from throughout the community to assure all Jewish voices are heard*
- ◆ *Evaluating efforts to ensure that Federation human and fiscal resources are used most effectively.*

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Federation Offers Youth Scholarships

The Jewish Federation of Central California provides subsidies for Jewish youth to travel to and attend recognized Jewish camps and other programs in U.S. And Israel. Applications or requests must be received 30 days prior to need. For information call the Federation at **432-2162**.

Jewish Federations of North America protects and enhances the well-being of Jews and Jewish communities in North America, Israel and around the world. We strive to realize our core values of *chesed* (caring and compassion), *Torah* (Jewish Learning), *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) and *tzedakah* (social justice). As the focus of the federations, JFNA acts upon these values through philanthropy, strategic initiatives, and collective leadership—in partnership with local communities, national and international agencies.

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December 15, 2017

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