



Congregation Beth Israel
חבורת בית ישראל

CBI NEWSletter

Jan/Feb 2015 - Tevet / Shvat 5775

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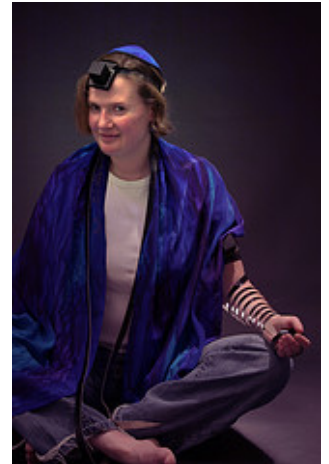
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From the Rabbi

Holy friends,

Though winter has settled in for the duration, the days are growing incrementally longer. (Just look at the list of halakhic candle-lighting and havdalah times in this newsletter; you can see sunset falling a bit later each day!)



If you look into the night sky over the course of January, you'll see the moon waning to nothing and then reappearing. *Rosh Chodesh Shvat*, the new moon of the winter month of Shvat, begins on the evening of Tuesday Jan. 21.

At the full moon of Shvat we'll celebrate Tu BiShvat. The holiday's name simply means "15th of Shvat." In Hebrew, letters double as numbers, and the Hebrew number 15 (טו) spells the syllable *Tu*. (The number is spelled here as 9+6; the other way to spell it, 10+5, also spells a name of God, *Yah*, which is why it's become customary to use the other spelling of the number; otherwise we're writing God's name all over the place.)

Originally, Tu BiShvat was a kind of accounting holiday. Think of it as an ancient Tax Day for fruit farmers. At the full moon of Shvat,

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all of their fruit trees legally became a year older, and the harvest of a fruit tree of a certain age was eligible to be included in the tithe which farmers owed to the Temple.

Tradition teaches that Tu BiShvat is when the sap begins flowing to feed trees for the growing season to come.

Several hundred years ago, Tu BiShvat was reinterpreted as a mystical holiday during which spiritual sustenance flows from the roots of the Cosmic Tree (which is God) into the branches of creation. The kabbalists of Tzfat developed the custom of the Tu BiShvat seder, and the tradition of eating fifteen different tree fruits and nuts to represent an internal spiritual journey through the worlds of action and physicality, emotion, thought, and spirit.

In more recent decades, Tu BiShvat has become understood as a holiday of Jewish environmentalism. Our tradition is rife with teachings which remind us that the world belongs to God and is in our keeping...and it is our job to tend and care for this fragile world with all of its ecosystems so that our children and children's children can flourish on this earth.

According to an ancient Biblical calendar, the year 5775 is a *shmita* year -- a sabbatical year during which, Torah teaches, the land is to be left fallow so that the earth itself can experience a Sabbath. How might the fact of the *shmita* year impact how we experience Tu BiShvat? How might it impact how we choose to walk on the earth and how we access earth's resources? I look forward to meaningful conversations about these questions at our Tu BiShvat seder this year... and perhaps also at our local sugar shacks as we move into sugaring season and go out to savor one of the seasonal tastes of the sap rising in the trees all around us.

Happy winter! Blessings to all,
Rabbi Rachel

Service times

Periodic Friday nights (check our website)

Every Saturday
9:30 a.m. Shabbat Service
11ish a.m. **Kiddush/Torah Study**

Meditation minyan
Friday mornings, **9a.m.** No experience with meditation is required; all are welcome!

Jan/Feb Shabbat candle and Havdalah times



If you want to light Shabbat candles and make havdalah at the halakhically-accepted times, here they are:

Jan 1 4:12p lighting; Jan 3 5:21p Havdalah
Jan 9 4:19p lighting; Jan 10 5:28p Havdalah
Jan 16 4:27p lighting; Jan 17 5:36p Havdalah
Jan 23 4:45p lighting; Jan 24 5:45p Havdalah
Jan 30 4:45p lighting; Jan 31 5:54p Havdalah

Feb 6 4:54 lighting; Feb 7 6:03 Havdalah
Feb 13 5:03 lighting; Feb 14 6:13 Havdalah
Feb 20 5:12 lighting; Feb 21 6:22 Havdalah
Feb 27 5:21 lighting; Feb 28 6:30 Havdalah

If it is your practice to light candles at a different hour of the day (perhaps not quite so early as halakha indicates during the winter, and not quite so late as halakha indicates during the summer), that's also a legitimate Reform Jewish choice. What's most important is that you're finding a way to incorporate Shabbat into your life.

Chanukah Bazaar and Fundraiser

by Liz Miller

A big THANK YOU to **Jennifer Burt**, who organized a Chanukah Bazaar at CBI which was held on Monday, December 8. Jen worked with Concepts of Art in Lenox to have a variety of merchandise available for sale and created a wonderful multi-table display in the social hall for people to peruse. Concepts of Art agreed to donate 18% of all sales back to the synagogue and with \$650 in goods sold, CBI made about \$115.

In addition, inspired by Ed Oshinsky's plea at the Annual Meeting, Jen worked with Reb Rachel, Jane Shiyah, and David Arfa to involve the Hebrew school children in fundraising for Take and Eat. Children created cards and art to be sold alongside the items from Concepts of Art.

There were Chanukah cards, bracelets, and photographs, among other items. A sign instructed customers that the items were "pay what you want" and that all proceeds would be donated to Take and Eat. Jen also encouraged all those who purchased items from Concepts of Art to include a donation to Take and Eat. Together, **they raised \$151 for Take and Eat**. What a wonderful accomplishment!

Thanks to all who made items to sell, to those who donated, and to those who bought items, as well as Reb Rachel, Jane, and David for encouraging participation, and especially Jen for her energy and organization.

Want to Edit This Newsletter?

We're seeking a volunteer to edit this newsletter! The CBI Newsletter comes out every two months. The editor's job is to compile submissions (and also to solicit them when required), to collect them into a readable and pleasant format, and to get a pdf of the newsletter to the office and the rabbi so that it can be uploaded to the From the Rabbi blog, emailed to our membership, and sent via postal mail to those who have requested paper newsletters. You can use whatever word processing program is comfortable for you.

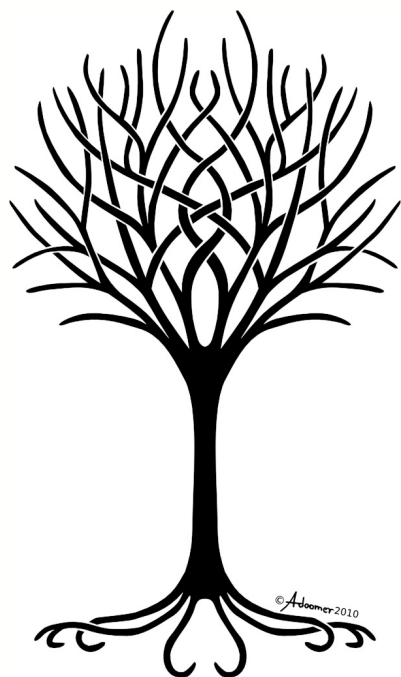
If you are interested in taking this on, please let the rabbi know at rabbibarenblat@gmail.com. Thanks!

Chanukah Party Fun



Deep thanks to all who helped to make our Chanukah party so wonderful! Most especially to **Jen Burt** for decorations and for finding the Wholesale Klezmer Band, and to **Helene and Stu Armet** and **Jane Shiyah** for latke-frying. Here's to friends, feasting, dancing, and light in the darkness!

Tu BiShvat Save the Date: February 7 Seder



Join us for a Tu BiShvat seder (featuring a variety of fruits and nuts, mystical teachings about God and trees, and opportunities to learn about the environmental implications of this being a Sabbatical year for the earth) on **Saturday, February 7**. At 9:30am Rabbi Rachel will lead a Shabbat morning service with some special Tu BiShvat melodies and teachings; at 11am we'll have a **Tu BiShvat Seder** with **vegetarian/dairy potluck** lunch. Please RSVP to the office (office@cbi-web.org or 663-5830) to let us know that you're coming so we know how many fruits and nuts to buy!

Senior Lunch Returns!

"Ruthie's lunch bunch" will meet on Tuesday, January 6 at 12 noon at CBI. If you are eligible for a senior citizen discount you are welcome to join us! Please RSVP to the office ASAP.

ALEPH Ordination Program Courses Open to All

Beginning in 2015, the ALEPH Ordination Program is opening to the general public some of their full-semester foundational courses! While enrolled students have priority seating, no special permission is needed to enroll, and these are terrific adult enrichment courses even for those who are not interested in eventually studying toward ordination. If you have questions, please call the ALEPH office at (215) 247-9700 x21.

Introduction to Jewish Renewal and Reb Zalman's Thought

Instructor: Rabbi Leana Moritt

Meeting Time: Tuesday 8 to 10 pm (eastern)

This 13-week class is scheduled to start on Feb 17, 2015

Fee: \$669.50

Crucial to a full understanding of Jewish Renewal is knowledge of the history and development of the movement, its structures, its leaders and their thought. This includes the principles and development of Paradigm Shift, Integral Halachah, and Davvenology.

Students will be introduced to the rabbis and teachers who embraced Reb Zalman's thought and invitation to renew Judaism with their own unique gifts. As the final assignment for this course, each student will be given a sound file of Reb Zalman teaching to hear, evaluate, and catalog. This course fulfills a requirement for ALEPH Lay Leadership Certificate Program and is essential for those connecting with Jewish Renewal for the first time.

To register: <https://payments.aleph.org/civicrm/event/info?id=28&reset=1>

A Walk Through the Siddur: An Introduction to the Liturgy

Instructor: Rabbi T'mimah Ickovits

Meeting Time: Wednesday 8 to 10 pm
(eastern)

This 13-week course is scheduled to start on
Feb 18, 2015

Fee: \$669.50

From the morning Shema to the evening Shema, prayer provides structure for the Jewish day. The Siddur, the Jewish prayer book, is an inspired compendium of spiritual poetry that takes us on our journey through the three daily opportunities for formal prayer: Shacharit, Minchah, and Ma'ariv – the morning, afternoon, and evening prayers, for weekdays, Shabbat and holy days. In this course, we will take a guided journey through the Siddur—its forms, structures, language and mythic metaphors—to discover how the spiritual journey of Jewish prayer is designed. Our journey embraces the Hebrew of the Siddur, and opens up that language to you. This course fulfills a requirement for ALEPH Lay Leadership Certificate Program.

To register: <https://payments.aleph.org/civicrm/event/info?id=29&reset=1>

President's Column

by Pattie Lipman

This is adapted from the remarks which Pattie offered at our Annual Meeting recently.

Welcome to our Annual Meeting. Thank you for venturing out. I hope you enjoyed the Pizza and desert, a new tradition. The CBI leadership will give you an overview of the past year. It is a short meeting, so if we don't answer your questions sufficiently, let's plan to follow up later.

My sweet, impossible task is to shine a light on every congregant who has participated in and given of themselves to life at Congregation Beth Israel this past year. Here is part of my list (and I know you have a list of your own):

First, let me thank Bill Levy, who is stepping down from the co-Presidency. We are fortunate that he will remain on the Board and continue to bring the same grace, wisdom and commitment he has brought to being President. And, thank you so much, Barbara Kaplan, for your three year tenure on the Board. We will miss you!

So, here goes, and - you know who you are: "Todah Rabah" (Thank you very much!) to you who have come to pray, teach, help teach, eat, nosh, cook, learn, become B'nei Mitzvah, party, wash the tablecloths and the dishes and Hoover the rugs, help your neighbor find the right page in the siddur, give a ride.

Thank you for arranging and coming to Game Night, in February no less; thank you for participating in the Seder, the New and Prospective member brunch, our festive special events, and for raising up and enjoying the Sukkah...and taking it down.

Thank you for running to stop the clanging front door from closing during the high holidays and thank you for fixing the clanging door, and for putting up shades in the classroom; thank you for reviewing the new Machzor for the High Holidays and thank you for the new Machzor.

Thank you for visiting our sick and frail, preparing a meal, challenging each other with divergent views, saying a kind word. Thank you for forgiving, for laughing at my jokes, giving a hug; serving on the Board, working on a committee; preparing the dead for burial, making arrangements for burial and the cemetery, attending a funeral, planting, pruning and bringing fresh flowers to the shul,

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hosting services on Shabbat and the High Holidays, baking cookies and Challah, being parking attendants, making a minyan, coming up for an aliyah, chanting Torah, holding the Torah for Hagbah, bringing your children to services, arranging for violin music before the Yom Kippur service, screening and deciding on which movies to show for the Summer Film Series, schlepping lox and bagels, delivering meals to the home bound, mixing meatloaf, reaching into your pockets for tzedakah and donations, having patience with each other, taking care of and enjoying each other within this beautiful building that you worked so hard to create ten plus years ago. Thank you for sharing joys and sorrows, for making community.

Thank you CBI for all you have done and... for what you will do.

Ride Share

Are you are in need of a ride to and from CBI to attend services or events?

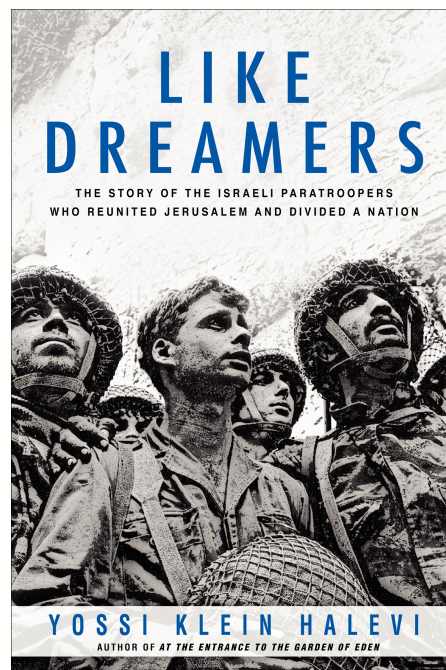
Are you in need of a ride for local errands or appointments?

The CBI community can try to help. Please let Jack know what your needs are.

If you are able and willing to share rides or give rides, please send your information on your availability to Jack (office@cbi-web.org)

CBI Book Group: Upcoming

The CBI Book Group will be discussing some terrific titles in months to come, including:



Like Dreamers, fiction by Yossi Klein Halevi, Monday, January 12 at 7pm;

Super Sad True Love Story, fiction by Gary Shtengart, February date TBA;

Second Person Singular, nonfiction by Sayed Kashua, March date TBA;

Badenheim 1939, fiction by Aharon Appelfeld, April date TBA;

Judaism and Justice: the Jewish Passion to Repair the World, nonfiction by Rabbi Sidney Schwartz, May date TBA;

Brothers Ashkenazi, fiction by Israel Joseph Singer, June date TBA;

The Crisis of Zionism, nonfiction by Peter Beinart, July date TBA;

The War on Women in Israel: The Story of Religious Radicalism, nonfiction by Elana Maryles Sztokman, August date TBA.

All are welcome. For more information, email Chaim Bronstein at chaim@bcn.net.

CBI Book Group: Recent Memories

The CBI book group met on Monday evening Dec.8th to discuss Nathan Englander's *What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank*.

In attendance were our group leader Chaim Brownstein, Barbara Kaplan, Barbara Bashevkin, Bill Levy, Charlene Pepperman, Alice Cande and our new member, Hilda Radin, Len Radin's mother.

The book is a collection of short stories whose title is a reference to Raymond Carver's book *What We Talk About When We talk about Love*.

There was general consensus that we all enjoyed the short story format and in particular the title story where the two couples play the "Anne Frank game" wondering who would hide them in the event of another Holocaust.

Our next book is *Dreamers* by Yossi Klein Halevi .We will meet on Monday January 12th at 7p.m. All are welcome.

We meet on Monday nights at 7p.m but the length of time between books varies from approximately a month to six weeks.

Diversity & Unity: Notes from a Community Hebrew School

I'm considering the relationship of diversity and unity these days at Hebrew School. One part that I love about CBI is our diversity. Being Jewish does not mean just one thing for all of us. Undoubtedly, our community, just like the wider Jewish community is diverse, made up of Jews who call themselves Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, traditional, Neo-Hasidic Renewal, Buddhist, Wiccan, Shamanistic, and

several Jew-nitarians to boot. This is the wider Jewish world that our Hebrew School students are entering.

A world where "Not being Jewish enough" (Oy!) is replaced with the deeply American values of respect for differences. How does it shape the ways in which we share our pride and joy in being Jewish? How do we allow space for our children to find their path in Jewish life?

The more I learn, the more I realize that indeed, Jewish life has always been very diverse. Being Jewish in the insulated world of 1700 Poland, was very different than being Jewish in the post-renaissance world of 1700 Italy. Here, the Rabbi's are known to have taught dance and poetry and bare-breasted women even appeared in Judaic art. Or how about 1200 Spain, where the Zohar was written- Judaism's main mystical text, an imaginative commentary on the Torah that shares deep secrets of the human experience coded inside lush imagery. Daniel Matt, the pre-eminent scholar and current translator of the Zohar's thousands of pages, describes the Zohar as "a proto-novel of sacred fantasy with the Shechina, the Goddess as the main character. Wow!

How about 1100 Kaifeng China, the Jews built a synagogue and described Halacha as "the Dao". 800 Baghdad? The Jews were welcomed teachers in the new Islamic community, and a common name for Gd in the Jewish community was Allah. You get the idea? This just scratches the surface.

Two wonderful books of history that share this new understanding of our diverse history are *The Cultures of the Jews*, edited by David Biale, and *Judaism in Practice from 600-1800*. A great Hebrew school story is from the second book; an Egyptian woman from the mid-1300's writes a letter for help to the head of her community, Maimonides' son, because her husband is spending too much time at the Sufi Monastery.

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She's worried that her husband's devotional practices at the monastery, WHILE WORTHY, is taking him away from the synagogue. He should be praying 3x's every day! And, she worried that if they move to the monastery community, her son's attendance at the Hebrew day school will become impossible!

I would like to open for us all this question of our community's diversity. What parts of the great landscape that is "Jewish Identity" and "Spiritual Life" do you love best? How is it the same as your parents? How is it different? Where do you find your 'Jewish nourishment'? Can you think of one additional way to communicate this directly with those you love? School families, please watch for a new survey asking some of these kinds of questions.

At school, over the past few months we have provided our kids with joyous Chanukah parties, visits to the nursing home, Gd's facebook page (ask your older child!), appreciations with snack and blessings, Hebrew practice, Torah stories, songs and more. Our goal is to provide solid landmarks within a very big landscape.

To consciously guide our children, so as they grow, they can see that Judaism offers many ways to support and deepen their spiritual, religious and communal lives. All the time knowing that in our diversity we can come together in unity.

Maggid David

Please share any reflections and questions here at david@maggiddavid.net

Upcoming Occasions

We wish happy birthdays and anniversaries to our members who have simchas during the coming months.

January Birthdays

Chaya Radin
Michelle Radin
Roberta Sullivan

Ethan Zuckerman
Ruth Ginsburg
Jennifer Burt
Anna Kronick
Molly Howard
Richard Taskin
Faia Sarah Kronick
Alice Cande
Amy Filson
Jesse Cohen
Steven Miller
Peter Murphy
Matt Levy

February Birthdays

Howard Wineberg
Rabbi Pamela Wax
Emily Levy
Patricia Reichler
Gabriel Gerry
Lyra Marshall
Ellen Deibert
Eugene Wein
David Thier
Scott Burt
Allen Kushnet
Katie Lynn Sann
Judith Weber
Dustin Wees
Karol White
Jonah Kelly-Whitney
Jesse Thompson
Heather Levy
David LaChance
Rose Rudin
Warner Smith
Lillian S. Glickman
Cheryl Sacks

January/February Anniversaries

Marc & Vivienne Jaffe
Robert & Jane Miller

Deep thanks to donors

*We offer gratitude to members and friends
for their fiscal support of CBI.*

Generations Campaign

Marc & Lauren Gotlieb

In honor of the wedding of Chris Kelly & Maude Rich

Jan Caryl Kaufman

Rabbi Pamela Wax & Chaim Bronstein

In Memory of Sylvia Ginsburg

Ellen Bernstein

Dr. Mitchell Burgin

Lillian S. Glickman

Susan Gold

Myrna Katz

Howard & Nancy Kaufman

Dr. Ronald & Elaine Mensh

Ellen Schiff

Barbara Silberman

Warner & Amely Smith

Michael & Sally Ginsburg

Rabbi Pamela Wax & Chaim Bronstein

Florence Wineberg

Howard & Deborah Wineberg

In Memory of Susan Taskin

Edith and Richard Taskin

Mitchell Burgin

Lillian S. Glickman

Beatrice Trachtenberg

Rabbi Pamela Wax & Chaim Bronstein

Donation to CBI Take & Eat Program

Lisa & Orion Howard

Pattie Lipman

Len & Darlene Radin

Florence Wineberg

Pattie Lipman, *in memory of her father, Al Lipman.*

General Donations

Pattie Lipman and John Huffaker

In honor of Cole Filson's bar mitzvah

Alan Bashevkin & Nancy Pearlman

In memory of Edith Bashevkin

Pattie Lipman and John Huffaker

In honor of the birth of Ezra Marshall

Richard & Anna Jo Dubow

In memory of Beatrice Renfield

Jordan Golding & Sandra Hirsh Golding

In memory of Samuel Hirsh

Sylvia Lenhoff

In memory of Hyman Grossman

Frances Licht

In memory of Ann & Irving Wolkin

Jonah Marshall & Erin Casey

To Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Ellen Schiff

In memory of Morton Schiff

Susan Taskin

In memory of Elizabeth Carr

Paula and Philip Pomerantz

In honor of David & Maribeth

Thanks, Jewish Federation!

Congregation Beth Israel gratefully acknowledges the receipt of \$7661 from the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires in support of our students' Jewish education. Each student in the CBI religious school received a tuition subsidy of \$333 for the school year. This funding, raised during the Federation's 2014 annual campaign, is a vital part of our school budget and we highly encourage every member of CBI to contribute to the Federation's Annual Campaign.

Simchas

In the November 4 election, four of the five candidates for election to the school board of Mt. Greylock Regional High School were members of CBI. We congratulate them on their public spiritedness: **Rich Cohen** of Lanesboro and, from Williamstown, **Carrie Greene**, current chair of the school district board, **Steve Miller** and **Wendy Penner**.

Rose Ellis will soon be retiring as superintendent of the Williamstown Elementary School and the Mt. Greylock Regional School District. Mazal tov to Rose in her retirement!

Mazel tov to Chris Kelly-Whitney (now known as **Chris Kelly**) and **Maude Rich** on their marriage on December 14th. After an almost three year engagement and eight years together, the couple decided to quit agonizing over the wedding planning and "just do it." The lovely, short-and-sweet, ceremony was officiated by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat. A joyous celebration, held at CBI, was attended by many wonderful friends from CBI, Knesset Israel, Pine Cobble School, family members and friends from near and far. We wish them and their four children much happiness as they embark on this next step of their lifelong journey together.

Seeking Shamashim

The Shamashim are the people who facilitate the Saturday morning services, set out kiddush and bring some snacks for after services. The group is named after the *shamash*, the "helper candle" which lights the candles on a Chanukah menorah.

We are in need of additional Shamashim to help with our Shabbat services each Saturday morning and on periodic Friday nights. The Shamashim have been faithfully hosting our services for years but we need to expand that group by a few. It takes a Saturday morning, from about 9 to noon, once or twice in a 4 month time period.

Hosting services is an honor. It is also a joy, a way to meet members and welcome potential members and visitors. Bringing your children or spouse is welcome, and they can help or just relax and enjoy the service and the beautiful light streaming through the sanctuary windows. That's up to you.

Helping at services is a way to teach children about serving the community and performing a mitzvah.

We provide challah and juice; you are welcome to bring light snacks for the kiddush afterwards, though if that would be fiscally onerous for you, let us know and we can work something out.

If it is something you would like to try, Pattie can match you with one of our hosts for your first hosting experience. If you have questions, ask away!

All are welcome!

Donations Welcome

Donations to CBI are always welcome, and may be directed to:

Cemetery Fund
Education Fund
Building Fund
Senior Lunch Fund
Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
Take & Eat
Program/Event Fund
Gemilut Chasadim (Acts of Lovingkindness)

Reprinted from the Berkshire Eagle:

The Saint and the Jewish Lieutenant

By Kevin O'Hara

Published in the Eagle: 11/11/2014



PITTSFIELD >> When my dear friend, Marc Jaffe, was being treated for complications of

lymphoma at BMC in 2006, I spent many nights by his bedside after visiting hours. Despite his dire prognosis -- a few caretakers believed he wouldn't last another week -- he shared episodes of his long and storied life, from his editorial days at Bantam Books to his enduring romance with his lovely wife, Vivienne.

One night, Marc abruptly emptied out a backpack of memories from his three-year stint as a Marine lieutenant in World War II, a topic he'd never brought up before. A graduate of Harvard '42, he joined the Marine Corps as an officer candidate. After boot camp and further training at Quantico and Camp Lejeune, he received orders for the Pacific Theater.

Before shipping out, however, he went home on furlough to Philadelphia where he met a young Catholic woman. They hit it off famously, and on their last night together she tied a St. Christopher medal attached to a brown shoelace around his neck, saying, "Wear this at all times, and you'll come home safe." Marc jokingly asked her if it would work on a Jewish fellow like himself, and she assured him it would.

FIERCE FIGHT

In December, 1943, Marc boarded the Orizaba in San Diego and ultimately joined the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, as the forward observer in the 81-mm mortar platoon. In early 1944, his battalion prepared for a major operation to capture the island of Peleliu, presumably as a stepping stone to retake the Philippines.

Though this small island was protected by 11,000 well-fortified troops, command guaranteed the officers that the ground assault would last 72 hours. The ensuing 73-day clash would become one of the fiercest battles in Marine history.

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Marc landed in the first wave on Peleliu on Sept. 15, 1944, finding the beach torn up "like a newly-spaded garden." Japanese machine gun fire rattled in long bursts from coral bluffs, and artillery shells rained from above. Marc's radioman, Charlie Long, lost a kneecap, and one sergeant, Bob Miller — "the best Marine in the platoon — took shrapnel in his arm. Marc turned to see two stalled amphibians bobbing in the waves. One caught fire, and with it, Pappy Giannetti.

Marc reached weakly for water on his night stand. "Pappy had made me a ring out of an Australian florin, after I'd given him a pint of rum." His ongoing narrative was so telling I could feel the vibrating rush of shells and concussion of heavy artillery. I even sensed the pain of his annoying split lip, and the island's blistering 110-degree heat.

He explained how he felt like a giant marionette, "hopping from foxhole to shell hole as if handled madly from above." He spoke of wounded men, "who limped by like mechanical toys, their mainsprings nearly sprung." He described Japanese tanks as "brown clanking monsters festooned with colorful streamers," and brave black Seabees who brought troops needed supplies, "never knowing they had joined the Navy to become pack mules." Nearly half the platoon Marc landed with never cleared the beachhead.

Protecting the island and its prized airstrip was Bloody Nose Ridge, a honeycombed battlement of 500 linked caves where the enemy was entrenched, situated on steep hills. "No, not a ridge," Marc remembered, "but a ragged medieval fortress with tiny window portals high up in its walls." Marc winced at the memory. "A fortress that became a grater; our men scraping against it and falling, broken and raw."

He spoke reverently of fellow officers who fell during the campaign; John Decker, son of a Texas county judge, with a honey-sweet whisped drawl. Jim "Chicken" O'Donnell, tall and

lanky, the most likeable officer in the battalion. Gordon Maples, a Tennessee mountaineer, who hunted in his native forest all his life, only to be killed on a hellish outcrop of coral and vine. "Monk" Myer, a cop from Edgewater, New Jersey, who died on the operating room table after having a leg amputated, crying, 'How can I be a cop with only one leg?' And "Molly" Mercer, killed the last day after walking into a burst of Nambu fire.

All told, the Marines suffered 6,500 casualties, and the Army's 81st Infantry another 3,300. Ironically, Allied forces never used the island's air field after taking it.

MEDAL DID THE JOB

On Dec. 6, 1945, Marc returned to San Diego, his war over. Before disembarking, he took off his St. Christopher medal for the first time and draped it over his bunk to shave. Sadly, he was already on the mainland before he realized he'd left it behind.

Marc propped himself up in bed. "But that medal did its job, didn't it? Pity I never saw that dashing girl again to thank her, but somehow I think she knew."

Now perhaps it was Marc's grit and determination, or the bedside vigils kept by his loving wife, or the excellent care of Dr. Harvey Zimble. Or just maybe the new St. Christopher medal I gave him, attached to a brown shoelace. But as sure as Lt. Jaffe was awarded the Bronze Star for later action in Okinawa, he marched out of BMC in shipshape condition.

Today at 11, if you happen to be in Williamstown, go to the Legion Post 152 observance of the ending of World War I at Field Park. There you'll find Marc Jaffe, saluting the flag proudly with fellow legionnaires — a hale and hearty marine of 93.

Kevin O'Hara, a Vietnam veteran, is a regular contributor to The Eagle.

Ethiopian Jewry

For the last 30 years, the Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews (IAEJ) has been providing assistance for more than 140,000 Ethiopian Jews in Israel and Ethiopia with education, housing, job training, advocacy, and community empowerment. Your generous tax-deductible contribution will make a difference. For information, to make a contribution, or to join the mailing list, contact the IAEJ at Friends of Ethiopian Jews, PO Box 960059, Boston MA 02196.

Next Newsletter...

If you have items to submit for the March/April newsletter, please submit them **via e-mail** to rabbibarenblat@gmail.com by **February 15, 2014**.

Thanks!

Find CBI Online At:

- www.facebook.com/CBINorthAdams
- www.cbiweb.org
- congregationbethisrael.wordpress.com



We wish everyone

in the CBI community

a joyous 2015!

Congregation Beth Israel
53 Lois Street
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(meditation minyan 8:15am)
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