

# *B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation*

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CHESHVAN/KISLEV 5784

***B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation is a Brit Olam Congregation in covenant with the world – because we seek the world we want, not the world as it is.***

## **JOIN US FOR PRAYER, MEDITATION, CELEBRATION AND STUDY**

Zoom links for services are sent out weekly.

Please call the office for information about telephone access to prayer services.

Friday, November 3	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>
Saturday, November 4	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, November 10	<b>TOT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>5:30 PM</b>
	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, November 11	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, November 17	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, November 18	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, November 24	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE (ZOOM ONLY)</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, November 25	TORAH STUDY	10:00 AM
Friday, December 1	<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
Saturday, December 2	EXTENDED STUDY	10:00 AM

Visit <https://reformjudaism.org/learning> for each week's parashah.

***B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation, a Reform Jewish synagogue, is a community that fosters individual, family and congregational spirituality by engaging in worship and prayer, promoting learning on all levels, supporting each other's needs, bettering our community and our world, and forging connections with worldwide Jewry.***

***We take pride in being warm, welcoming, informal, progressive, open-minded, diverse, and participatory.***

***We strive to create a vibrant Jewish present, linking our ancient traditions with the promise of the future.***

## ***From Our Rabbi...***

The afternoon of Wednesday, October 11, I made my way from B'nai Sholom over to Ohav Shalom to meet with our Hebrew school students at B'Yachad. It was their first day together for religious school since the October 7 Hamas attack in Israel.

I met first with the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders, then the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, and finally the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes. (Rabbi Ornstein was out of town or he would have joined as well.) Some came in well aware of the Hamas attack days before, others had heard some vague references, and a couple of children were hearing about it for the first time.

The goal, of course, was not to get into the history and politics of the situation, but to allow students to process their feelings, to share empathy for family, friends, and Israelis/fellow members of the Jewish community who are suffering, to pray together for peace, healing, and hope for the future – including the safe return of the hostages. The students expressed a range of feelings, including fear, sadness, confusion, and even pride (that their state/country was standing in solidarity with Israel). And, of course, they had lots of questions as well.

In the weeks since the initial attack, I have spoken to several of you who are carrying many of those same emotions and questions. Stay tuned for opportunities – coming soon – to share them in safe group discussion spaces. And also know that, as always, I am here for anyone who would like to talk individually. There is, unfortunately, still a long road ahead in this war, but we can help each other – and our kin in Israel – carry the daily burden.

עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמֵן

May the One who makes peace on high make peace to us and to all Israel,  
and we say, Amen.

*L'shalom,*

Rabbi Danielle Weisbrot

## **BE ON GUARD AGAINST EMAIL/TEXT SPOOFING SCAMS**

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STAY ALERT! If you see a suspicious email or text message that claims to come from Rabbi Weisbrot or someone else at B'nai Sholom, double-check the address of the sender – it may be a scam. When in doubt, do not click on any links or attachments and do not reply to the message. Send a fresh message to the correct address/number for the supposed sender or call them directly to confirm.

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**The Movies Return**  
**Saturday, December 16 at 7:30 p.m.**  
**'Farewell Mr. Haffman'**

After an almost four-year hiatus, B'nai Sholom is returning to in-person screenings. Our first showing will be "**Farewell Mr. Haffman**" (France 2022) about a Jewish jeweler who, fearing the worst, arranges for his family to flee the city and offers his employee the chance to take over his store until the conflict subsides. His attempts to escape are thwarted, and Haffman is forced to seek his assistant's protection, a risky proposition for both men.

The film masterfully guides the viewer through the world of Vichy, France, where lives are irrevocably shaped by the twin scourges of war and the black market. Rich in moral complexity and empathy, this is grand, big-screen adult entertainment at its finest.

**Synagogue Scholar Book Talk**  
**Friday, Jan. 12, 2024 – Annual book talk by Martha Rozett**  
**'Behind Enemy Lines: The True Story of a French Jewish Spy in Nazi**  
**Germany' by Marthe Cohn**

For 18 years, congregant Martha Rozett has presented a talk each winter at B'nai Sholom on a book of interest to our congregation and the larger Jewish community. At first, the talks were scheduled on Sunday afternoons, but in recent years (except for the 2021 pandemic year) they have taken place during or just after a Friday night service. The title is announced a couple of months in advance so congregants can locate and read the book, and the talks generate lively discussions.

Martha's 19th book talk is scheduled for January 12, 2024. Over the years, friends have suggested titles, and this year Roy Fruiterman introduced her to Marthe Cohn's "**Behind Enemy Lines: The True Story of a French Jewish Spy in Nazi Germany**," published in 2002 and still in print. Cohn, a remarkable, courageous young French woman fluent in both French and German, served as a spy for the French First Army in the final year of World War II. Slipping behind enemy lines disguised as a young German nurse seeking information about a fictional German fiancé, she gathered information from sympathetic or unwitting Germans and then rode her bicycle back across the border to report on troop movements to the French intelligence service.

Today, Cohn is an astounding 103 years old and the subject of a delightful 90-minute 2019 documentary called "Chichinette: The Accidental Spy." "Chichinette" ("little pain in the neck") was the nickname the French Army intelligence service gave to their small, persistent, lively colleague.

You can find the documentary online, and the book is available as an e-book at the Albany Public Library and used and new in paperback. (We will order a copy for the B'nai Sholom library and have asked The Book House to order a couple of copies). The title *Behind Enemy Lines* is a popular one, so be sure to search for the book written by Marthe Cohn with Wendy Holden.

## Uniting Behind UTA

Where can you turn when you are unsure of your rights as a tenant, when you need some funds to assist you in getting out of a cycle of delinquent rent payments and are faced with eviction, when you are thinking of organizing the neighbors in your apartment building to speak to the landlord with a unified voice?

Borne out of their meeting at a 1970 rent strike in Albany, Maria and Roger Markovics started advocating for tenants' rights in a storefront in Albany's South End. Officially incorporated in 1973 as United Tenants of Albany, it recently celebrated its 50th anniversary.

United Tenants of Albany has continued to be the haven for those in need of hotline services, mediation and advocacy, training in tenant/landlord negotiations and coordination of homelessness prevention services.

Marco Flagg, the guest speaker during our Shabbat service on October 13, is a tenant organizing coordinator working for United Tenants of Albany who spoke passionately about the plight of many who live in unsafe housing, may need temporary assistance in paying back rents that, for many reasons, may have come due when the renter "fell on some hard times," and informed us that many elderly who "worked hard all their lives and are living on fixed incomes, are living in unhealthy and unsafe housing." Marco was visibly pained when he shared the difficulty of getting vital repairs made to keep their homes safe to inhabit.

A copy of a survey entitled *Housing-related Health Outcomes at Parkview Apartments* shares the results of a survey that 25 residents completed. They noted mold, pests and lack of hot water, as well as a significant feeling that the landlord did not heed their concerns. Another handout was entitled "Tenant Organizing Toolkit." The framework is designed to educate and assist those who will bring their neighbors together to work proactively using available resources, government agencies and elected officials who can help ameliorate the issues. Templates of letters are available that can be used to address issues that tenants may face.

**Housing for All** meets monthly to focus action on promoting housing rights policies throughout Albany and the Capital Region. Contact John W. O'Grady at [johnhelenok@icloud.com](mailto:johnhelenok@icloud.com) for more information. The public is welcome to attend the meetings.

To make a donation or to become an advocate, there is a wealth of information available at: <https://utalbany.org/> and <https://linktr.ee/utalbany>

## New on Our Web Site – The DONATE Button

Did you know there's a great new way to donate to B'nai Sholom? The DONATE button on the website is now operational. This is a safe alternative to sending checks through the mail, and you can use this button for all your donations, including but not limited to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, Endowment Fund, Social Action Fund and Tributes. We're excited to offer this alternative and hope you explore it and the new website at <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org>.

## **Recommendation from the Library Committee... *Cain v. Abel: A Jewish Courtroom Drama* by [Our Friend and Neighbor] Rabbi Dan Ornstein**

This is a fascinating and wide-ranging midrash on the Cain and Abel story in the form of a trial with Cain as the defendant. But are there others who bear some of the blame? Did Cain grow up in a toxic environment?

All the characters are there in the courtroom as we contemplate what responsibilities we have for one another. Rabbi Ornstein seeks meaning and wisdom in this classic biblical story.

### **Nominating Committee Formed**

In accordance with B'nai Sholom's by-laws, a Nominating Committee has been established for the purpose of nominating officers and Board members for 2024-2025. The names of the committee members are here reported in the congregational publication and were announced from the pulpit at the following Friday evening worship service. Members of the Nominating Committee are:

From the Board: Julie Friedman, Gail Golderman and Ann Lowenfels

From the Congregation: Barbara Devore, Libby Liebschutz, Ben Marvin and Valerie Tabak

### **Onegs Are Back in Full Swing! Want to Host One?**

Do you have a wedding anniversary, birthday or yahrtzeit to honor? Hosting an Oneg is one way to share your joy or remembrance with your friends in the B'nai Sholom community. Hosting is simple: provide food and beverages that the community can share after Shabbat services while everyone socializes.

If you have an upcoming event to celebrate, or a loved one to honor in a special way, please sign up online to host an Oneg at our SignUpGenius site using the link found in the Weekly E-announcements. You will be able to check the dates for which hosts are needed. If there are open dates, the committee will reach out to congregants to inquire about hosting. If you have questions or need the signup link sent to you, please contact Laura Kaplan at [lckaplan79@gmail.com](mailto:lckaplan79@gmail.com).

### **Where to Find B'nai Sholom Calendar**

Please see <https://www.bnaisholomalbany.org/calendar/> for an up-to-date calendar of events.

## Family Promise–Volunteer Opportunity

Family Promise is a national organization whose mission is to help homeless and low-income families achieve sustainable independence. The Capital Region chapter has organized over 30 places of worship to support this mission. B'nai Sholom is the only participating Jewish congregation.

Four times a year for one week, participating congregations provide overnight hospitality (dinner and a place to sleep) for three to five families (max. of 14 people). B'nai Sholom volunteers support our partner congregation by providing dinners and eating with the families for one or two nights during that week. It is a small “ask” in terms of time, but it makes a big difference in the lives of the families.

To learn more about Family Promise, check out the Capital Region Family Promise website <https://www.familypromisecr.org>, and contact the B'nai Sholom Family Promise coordinator Anita Stein at [anitastein75@gmail.com](mailto:anitastein75@gmail.com) if you are interested in volunteering.

### ***Yep! We Did It Again!***

Jeff and Becca Klamka spent a Sunday in mid-October shopping for fresh produce and dairy products and stocking three Free Food Fridges. Jeff reported that two of the fridges were completely empty. You'd think there was some kind of “Bat-Signal” because while stocking, people arrived to pick up food, always offering a “thank you” or a “bless you.”

Our next shopping trip is in December. If you would like to support the community by providing fresh, healthy food, then please send a contribution to the synagogue marking it for the FFF program.

## Caring Community: Helping To Help Each Other

When a congregant is experiencing a time of stress such as an illness, a death in the family or a new baby, B'nai Sholom's Caring Community offers a helping hand.

***But the Caring Community can't do that without you.***

We need congregants to sign up for the “on call” list to cook, to drive a fellow congregant to a medical appointment or to attend a minyan during shiva. Signing up does not mean you have to do it when it is not convenient. It means we can call and ask.

If you are willing to help in times of need, please contact Nancy Maurer by email: [nancymaurer5@gmail.com](mailto:nancymaurer5@gmail.com) ***Don't delay, reach out today.***

*“On three things does the world stand: On Torah, on worship and on deeds of lovingkindness.” Pirkei Avot 1:2*

## Noah and Second Chances A D'var by Carol Smith

***Editor's Note: This is one in a series of spotlights on outstanding d'verei Torah written and delivered by congregants.***

Recently, congregant Carol Smith delivered a thought-provoking d'var Torah on Noah, the second parashah in the book of Genesis, covering the familiar story of God's choice of the only righteous man on earth to build an ark, rescue animal life and save his family to continue humankind on the planet. After the flood, G-d gives humanity a second chance.

It seems G-d is wiping the slate clean, hoping that humans will make better choices the second time around. "We can change our behaviors and our attitudes; we can learn from past experiences or from others and adjust accordingly, we can evolve and grow in different directions. This has all been granted to Noah and his offspring, and it has been granted to us," Carol said.

How do we take advantage of a second chance? Carol reminds us that the first step is to apologize, owning our mistakes and acknowledging them to the people we have hurt or wronged. The next step is forgiveness. We can ask for forgiveness from those we've wronged. We can also offer forgiveness to those who have committed a transgression that has affected us.

But we need another step: to forgive ourselves. Second chances can be granted from someone else to you, from you to someone else, or from you to you.

Then we must believe that we CAN make a change. We need to resist setting lofty goals, but rather set specific, modest goals, ones that we actually have a chance of attaining. With those goals, sometimes it's helpful to have reminders – maybe a post-it note strategically placed in your residence to remind you of your goal. Or by enlisting the help of a friend to remind you of your goal. Developing a new routine around the goal can help, as well. And, of course, we need to be grateful that we have a reprieve!

Finally, Carol said, "As much as this is a story about Noah and the second chance granted to humanity, this is also a story about G-d and about G-d wanting a second chance. In unleashing the flood, G-d wants to return to an earlier time and try again with the human race. As we continue to strive to better ourselves, I think we can take comfort in that these needs for second chances are universal and they are etched in our history."

## Spotlight On New Members: Sasha and Ry Suraski

**Editor's Note:** *One in a series of articles from the Membership Team to introduce those who have recently joined B'nai Sholom. This month we welcome Sasha and Ry Suraski.*

Sasha and Ry are new to the area, having just moved from the Ridgewood neighborhood of Queens at the beginning of September. Both work remotely and moved because they love the area and wanted to live somewhere with more space, quiet and access to nature. Ry is from Rhode Island but spent a portion of his childhood living in China, and Sasha was born and raised in Brooklyn.

Ry is a special education literacy teacher for students of all ages with learning disabilities. Most of his students are middle-schoolers but have ranged from age 6 to 60. He is taking a few extra undergraduate psychology classes at SUNY to get ready to apply for graduate programs in mental health counseling. Sasha, who majored in film/video and new media studies, is a many-hatted creative and tutor/mentor. He works as a musician and interdisciplinary artist, trains AI, and helps people of all age ranges do what they love creatively.

For hobbies, Ry is a writer working on his first novel, a research-heavy project about math, mysticism, gender and religious history. He also volunteers as a suicide hotline operator in his spare time. Sasha is primarily a musician but is interested in many kinds of art and is working on a new album as well as a TV show. He loves anagrams, puzzles and wordplay. They both love Scrabble and their elderly cat named Twentynine.

What attracted Ry and Sasha to B'nai Sholom was the strong feeling of a warm, supportive community, the laid-back and comfortable atmosphere and the thoughtful effort toward many different forms of inclusivity. They also mentioned they loved Rabbi Weisbrot's embodiment of these values in her services and manner of speaking. Ry and Sasha added that, at first, they just wanted to find somewhere to spend the High Holy Days since they were brand new to the area, but very quickly found they want B'nai Sholom to become a regular part of their lives.

Sasha and Ry hope B'nai Sholom will continue to help them stay in touch with Judaism, learn more about Judaism and Torah, and provide the sense of community they need, as they moved without knowing a single person in Albany! Sasha also hopes to get involved with music at the synagogue. Since they have been here, they explained they have felt incredibly welcomed and supported and are looking forward to making more friends in the congregation.

When asked what other things people may want to know, Ry and Sasha shared they have been married since October 8, 2022, and have no kids (though they love them, and will someday). Sasha and Ry also said they look forward to getting to know everyone and asked for recommendations for food, nature spots or anything else they shouldn't miss as they settle into the area. Lastly Ry and Sasha want to thank congregants for their warm welcome!



## ***Mazal Tov!***

... to Alissa Hatch and Dan Green on their recent marriage, and to Candy Raderman, mother of the bride.

... to Kyle Hatch and Abby Belasen on their recent marriage, and to Candy Raderman, mother of the groom.

... to David Ray and Mimi Bruce on the birth of their granddaughter, Lilia Ray Siliciano, to parents Arielle Ray and Andy Siliciano.

... to Melissa Browne and Mary Warrener on the marriage of their daughter, Rachel, to Jay Cook, and on the birth of their granddaughter, Annabelle Joy Cook, to Rachel and Jay.

## **Recent Kibbutzniks**

Robin Belansky – In memory of her sister, Cookie Neligon

## **The Following Yahrzeits will be Observed in November**

11/3 Herman Schoenbach; Rose Kaufman\*; Norma Haas; Anne Maurer; M. Michel Dobris; Robert L. Mutschler\*; Rachel Levy\*; Vicki Adler; Samuel Abrams\*; Julie Fiks\*; Morris Raderman; Abe Turoff\*; Murray Redler

11/10 Sallie Kaplan; Selma B. Kuperman\*; David Bach\*; Lillian Golderman; Maurice Pass; Ben Waxman; Seymour Schwartzman\*

11/17 Teddy Knee; Elenore Morse; Paulette Tabak; Rose Parets\*; Fred Hauptman; Estelle Nitka; Ruth Bosin; Abraham Cogen

11/24 Irving Oblas\*; Betty Feldman; Samuel K. Jaffe\*; Mildred Aronson\*; Abraham Porter; Nusia Reichbach\*; Elihu Propp\*; Frances Rudinger; Ray Stephany; Simon Semelisky\*; Albert Marcus\*; Sylvia Goldstein Marcus\*

*\*Denotes that a Perpetual Memorial has been established.*

## ***Thank You!***

...to the fantastic Bulletin Brigade who folded and stuffed the October Bulletin.

...to the following congregants who recently hosted an Oneg Shabbat or kiddush lunch: William Vail, Becky Marvin, Ian Schleifer, Melissa Putterman Hoffman.

# The Congregation Notes with Thanks These Contributions:

## General Fund

Ashley Snyder and Samuel Gindoff  
Karen Klevanosky in appreciation of Torah Study  
Ruth Swift  
Phil and Martie Teumim

**RABBI:** Danielle Weisbrot can be reached at [rabbiweisbrot@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us](mailto:rabbiweisbrot@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us)

**RABBI EMERITUS:** Donald P. Cashman

**PRESIDENT:** Ann Lowenfels can be reached at [annlowenfels@gmail.com](mailto:annlowenfels@gmail.com)

**OFFICE MANAGER:** [office@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us](mailto:office@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us) (e-mail will be monitored during office manager transition process)

**OFFICE HOURS:** TUE 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM, THURS/FRI 9:30 AM–4:30 PM (call before coming)

Articles and news received after the deadline are subject to omission. As a rule, the Bulletin deadline is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month. Adherence to the deadline is critical to ensuring that the Bulletin is sent out in a timely manner.

Period Covered

Deadline

December

November 8

January 2024

December 13