



Upcoming Events

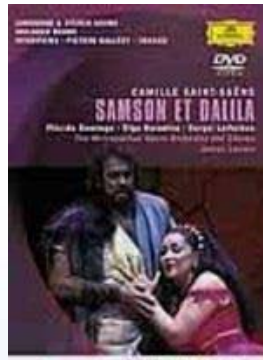
August 8: Erev Tisha b'Av
August 19: Shabbat Under the Stars
August 30: Baking Challah

Cantor Kopmar Introduces the next Opera in Beth Abraham's Opera Series

Cantor Andrea Raizen

Our first Beth Abraham afternoon opera screening of Verdi's *Nabucco* was a great success with 20 people in attendance. Congregant Mike Jaffe introduced the opera and gave some historical background before the stunning Metropolitan Opera performance. Please plan to join us for the second in this series on Sunday, August 21 at 2:00 p.m. when we will screen Camille Saint-Saëns' *Samson and Delilah* with introduction and commentary by our own Cantor Emeritus, Jerome Kopmar.

Samson and Delilah is a grand opera in three acts and four scenes by Camille Saint-Saëns. It was first performed in Weimar, Germany on December 2, 1877.



The opera is based on the Biblical tale of Samson and Delilah found in Chapter 16 of the Book of Judges. It is the only opera by Saint-Saëns that is regularly performed.

In the middle of the 19th

century, a revival of interest in choral music swept France, and Saint-Saëns, an admirer of the oratorios of Handel and Mendelssohn, made plans to compose an oratorio on the subject of Samson and Delilah. Saint-Saëns had approached Ferdinand Lemaire, the husband of one of his wife's cousins, about writing a libretto for the oratorio but Lemaire convinced the composer that the story was better suited to an opera.

The performance we will screen is a 1998 Metropolitan Opera production featuring Placido Domingo and Olga Borodina. The opera runs about two and a half hours, and we will take a brief intermission with refreshments.

In this Issue:

Grounded Love, page 3

Erev Tisha b'Av, page 4

Joseph Klausner, page 5

BA Giving Societies Are Growing!

Susie Katz



When I tell folks that I took three terms as president of a synagogue, I get one of two responses. Either they cock their heads and look at me with puppy eyes in sympathy, or they make very careful steps backward until they feel that they are at a safe distance and then turn on their heels and run away as fast as they can. I don't get it. Being president of Beth Abraham is one of the most wonderful things I have ever done...that is, until I was asked to chair our new Financial Resource Development committee. I am feeling like I'm back in the saddle and my neurotransmitters are again firing at top performance. This is a blast. How would you like to be on the front lines while people you love and respect offer you incredible sums of money to support the institution for which

you have a mutual adoration? It's all good, as my kids would say. So, we began with nine charter members of our Chai Society, and I'm proud to announce that we are now up to eleven and we are anticipating the completion of more memberships in the very near future. This has been a very careful and time consuming process. It is the belief of this committee that folks who are willing to commit to Beth Abraham in this substantial way, deserve to have someone sit in front of them to discuss their generosity and their rationale for the same. And these have been amazing conversations!

Although we are still talking with folks about joining the Chai Society, we are also beginning to open the dialogue regarding Rabbi's Minyan, which is a \$7200 per year commitment for the next two years. For our members who

are already committed to the financial welfare of Beth Abraham, these giving societies, which replace the multitude of "asks" we all get every year with a one-time only option, has been a very welcomed opportunity.

At the same time that we are continuing our outreach efforts, we are also in the planning stages of some exciting social and educational opportunities that will only be offered to our giving society members. Along with our fund raising coordinator, Todd Schear, we are working on the details of events unlike those that have ever been part of our BA calendar. The leadership of our synagogue understands what we are asking of our membership through these giving societies. It is

Continued on page 2

The Cantor's Corner

Cantor Andrea Raizen

Last month I wrote about the need to create community. Shortly thereafter, I met with a group of parents and began this conversation with them. The emphasis here was to explore ways to bring together families with school aged children and also to better integrate this population into the greater synagogue community. This group generated some wonderful ideas and together with projects already set to take place, I believe we are offering "something for everyone." For some of these things to work, I need your help.



This year we bring back our family preschool program, *Yad b'Yad*. This class for preschool aged children and their parents meets once a month on Sunday mornings and focuses on either a holiday or Jewish theme. Using stories, music, art and food, parents and children experience the joys of Judaism as a family. This year's class will be facilitated by congregant, teacher and mom, Donna Weiss. This free class is open to all Jewish families, and synagogue membership is not required. Contact me for specific dates and times.

Children in grades K-7 will begin the Religious School year on Sunday, September 11. Classes meet from 9:00-12:00 with Hebrew instruction, Judaic studies and group prayer and singing. This year we will have a combined Kindergarten/First Grade with Mrs. Rochel Simon, a combined Third/Fourth Grade with Mrs. Sandy Sloane and a Sixth/Seventh Grade with me. Students in grades 3-7 also attend one weekday afternoon for a private Hebrew tutoring session tailored to their individual needs. We will officially honor our youngest Sunday School students with a Consecration ceremony in October and children in grades 3 and up will celebrate an entire Shabbat together in November, sharing Friday night dinner and services, staying the night at the synagogue and concluding Shabbat with *Havdalah*. This program will include our younger youth group, *Kadima* and *Hillel* students.

The parent group suggested that we offer a monthly Shabbat morning service for families to pray and learn together and then to offer a "kid-friendly" lunch

as part of the *Kiddush*. They also requested that we bring back intergenerational, engaging programming as part of our popular Shabbat with a *Beat* Friday night services and dinners. This had been discontinued because of budgetary concerns. However, if individuals would like to sponsor such programs, please contact me.

Our parents also came up with a great idea to bring the generations together. We would like to identify adult members of all ages and backgrounds to come on Sunday mornings to facilitate special sessions with the students. Do you love to read, write or tell stories? Do you have a special skill or craft to share? Perhaps you know some Yiddish songs you could teach. Do you make the best matzah balls or other delicacy that you cook with the children? This could take place in one or multiple sessions, depending on your specialty. Please consider sharing your passion for Judaism with the children.

With the rebirth of USY, we felt it was important to offer an educational component for our High School youth that complemented the mission of USY. On Sunday mornings that do not conflict with USY activities, both local and regional, High School students are invited to spend part of the morning assisting in the Religious School classrooms and then attend a 90-minute class session with the rabbi. This year's class is Jewish Bioethics. We are using curricular material developed in conjunction with the Institute for Informal Jewish Education at Brandeis University. Contact me for more details and schedule of dates.

And speaking of USY, we will kick off our year with a joint event with chapters from Columbus and Cincinnati on Sunday, August 28. We will meet all of them just across the river in Cincinnati at the Newport Levee for a fun-filled day to include the Duck Tour and a scavenger hunt in the local shopping mall. Contact me for details and to RSVP.

I look forward to the new school year and to the possibilities for building bridges throughout our congregational family. I wish you all an enjoyable conclusion to the summer.

BETH ABRAHAM GIVING SOCIETIES

CHAI SOCIETY

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EUGENE & DORIS SCHEAR
LEE & PATTI SCHEAR
MARTIN & SUSAN SCHEAR

Giving Societies (Cont'd)

Continued from page 1

significant. It is critical and it is deeply, deeply appreciated.

As a past president of some substantial duration and as a member of BA for much, much longer – I know beyond the shadow of a doubt who we are. And I am asking that each of you spend time considering how you can best support our synagogue, financially. Is belonging to one of our giving societies a stretch you can consider? Is including Beth Abraham in your estate planning something you've remembered to do? Talk about your neurotransmitters....Go ahead – do something and get the "goods" of giving!

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Rabbi Bernard Barsky

Mid-summer is vacation time, which means travel, beaches, mountains,



forests, cruises, distant places, new experiences. When the sun is warm and the sky clear, no one but Jews would think it was time for

mourning and fasting. But these are three weeks of sorrow, from mid-July to mid-August. On the 17th of Tammuz, which fell this year on July 19, we commemorate the Roman breach of the outer wall of Jerusalem; and on the 9th of Av, or August 8-9, we memorialize the destruction of both the First Temple by the Babylonians and the Second Temple by the Romans.

But to tell the truth, most Jews ignore these weeks of sadness, neglect the fasts, and feel scant emotional tug from the fates of those Temples so remote in place and time. We have enough history to mourn in just the past hundred and fifty years, from the pogroms of Russia and the anti-Semitism of France and Germany, to the concentration and death camps all over Europe. That history still feels close and real, while the Temples seem more like a religious myth that we nod to whenever our tradition tells us to nod.

But that myth contains a spiritual truth which is not part of our recent history in Europe. In recent history we regard ourselves as innocent victims of a long and murderous strain of anti-Jewish hatred in Europe. But in our remembrance of those ancient Temples we cast a judgment of guilt upon ourselves that our own behavior sent us in exile from our homeland and from a certain intimacy with God. If we have to reach back more than two thousand years to retrieve that sense of moral responsibility, then it's worth the brief darkening of a summer mood.

According to the Talmud, *"the first Temple was destroyed because of the sins of idolatry, harlotry, and murder. The second Temple, in spite of Torah studied, commandments and deeds of love executed during its existence, fell because of groundless hatred (hinat sinam), and this teaches us that*

groundless hatred is a sin that weighs as heavily as idolatry, harlotry and murder."

The prophets who denounced idolatry in the First Temple period tell us that it was our faithlessness, our lasciviousness, our avarice which drew us to worship and sacrifice to idols. I think it's more complicated than that. I view the four hundred years from King David to the Babylonian Exile as the time it took Israel to figure out, slowly and painfully, what its monotheism meant, and to recognize how radically different that was from every other religious or cultic experience they had ever known.

Every ancient people had its pantheon of gods, associated with the tribal history, identity and territory. As a caravan traveled from Midian to Moab to Philistia to Phoenicia, the names of the

"The crucial failure in serving God, which outweighs all other good deeds combined, is what the rabbis called "groundless hatred." The lesson is simple: hatred makes it impossible to serve God, and is an offense to God."

gods may have changed, but there was no fundamental competition among them. No one ever claimed before that its highest god was the *only* god. He might be the most powerful, but the spirit world was full of gods and demons, and these you served best by following the ancient local rites. The God of Israel may have been a powerful tribal god, the protector of the Davidic dynasty. But the local Baal or Ishtar had to be acknowledged too, and given their due. Polytheism is inherently tolerant of all gods.

It took our prophets centuries to argue and shape the monotheistic faith of Israel. The fertility rites of ancient Canaan remained tempting, not because the Israelites were especially faithless and lascivious, but because ancient custom held that through those rites the rains fell in their season. The Torah's counter-argument, that Israel's God would provide His faithful people with rain and dew in proper season, sounds dubious to a modern scientific Jew; but to the ancient Israelite it was one of the most powerful arguments to be made. The Lord our God, not Baal, was master of the rain and master of life. The Lord and no other.

Israel had to be separated by exile from the cults of the land for that lesson to finally take root. Scholars today believe that the Torah in the form we

now have it was edited during the seventy years of Babylonian exile after Jerusalem and the first Temple had fallen. The cult of the land was replaced by the cult of the book. And when Israel returned to Jerusalem and Judah, its life was governed by a wide acceptance of Torah and the emerging *halacha*. After the Babylonian exile, God had no more competitors in Israel.

But if idolatry and its immoralities had been rooted out and only one God now reigned in Israel, the question persisted: How to serve this God. According to the Talmud, Torah was studied in earnest, the commandments were followed, and some deeds of lovingkindness were practiced. Yet none of that was enough, not the crucial thing. The crucial failure in serving God, which outweighed all other good deeds combined, was what the rabbis called *hinat sinam*. We usually translate that as

"groundless hatred." A better translation is "free-flowing hatred," or hatred freely given for its own sake. The lesson

is simple: hatred makes it impossible to serve God, and is an offense to God.

After the first exile, caused by idolatry, Israel corrected itself and was restored to its land. But two thousand years after the exile caused by hatred began, our diaspora continues. That hatred must have been pervasively felt in the first century, because so many significant Jewish religious thinkers emphasized by contrast the doctrine of love over all. Hillel the Great, known for his modest and generous disposition, famously asserted that the whole of Torah was contained in the single teaching, "that which is hateful to you, do not do to others." A generation later, Jesus claimed that the two highest commandments of the Torah are "Love the Lord your God," and "Love your neighbor as yourself." And a generation later, after the Temple was destroyed, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai argued that God is better served by deeds of love than Temple rituals.

That lesson still goes forth from Zion. Our open-ended history of exile for the last two thousand years began in a catastrophe caused by hatred freely dispensed, so-called "groundless hatred." The end of exile and the spark of messianic life lie in the opposite of groundless hatred, which is "grounded love". And what is it grounded in? It is grounded in God. The commandment says, "Love your neighbor as yourself, I am the Lord."

Oh, the Places We'll Go

Mary Rita Weissman, Beth Abraham President

As I write this I have had the honor of being president of Beth Abraham for seven weeks. Over the last seven weeks I have



had the opportunity to learn more about what it means to be Jewish, to be a member of Beth Abraham and what it takes to create the wonder of Beth Abraham. Our Shabbat Services, Shabbat under the Stars, Shabbat in the Park, Women of Valor, High Holiday Services,

Scholars in Residence, Film Series, Purim Spiel...I could go on until I use up my allotment of words for this column. All of these wonderful events and celebrations happen because our congregants make them happen. We see and appreciate some of the stars of these events – Rabbi Barsky, Cantor Raizen and all the Torah Readers and Shabbat participants, the Kiddush sponsors and the Kiddush preparers and servers. What has come front and center for me in the last seven weeks is that in addition to the wonderful congregants we

know about, there are ten times those numbers who work behind the scenes to make all of this possible.

I read an article recently, the header of which was “The 2 words that ensure a happy life.” Those two words are Thank You. I can probably say Thank You every remaining day of my life and not exhaust the list of blessings for which I am grateful. So I think I’ll get a few thank yous in right now:

Thank you to the generous donors who make much of what happens at Beth Abraham possible. Thanks to those who give so very much of their financial plenty, which they earned and with which they were blessed. Thanks to those who give out of proportion to that with which they were blessed.

Thank you to the volunteers who make the case to donors that Beth Abraham is a congregation worthy of their support and who make the Ask.

Thank you to Annette Fredenburgh, Dennis Day, Bob Lipps and Claudia Feuer for doing all they do, doing what they’ve been asked, and doing whatever needs to

be done without being asked.

Thank you to the congregants who serve on the Board and its committees.

Thank you to the Board Members who serve as committee chairs, officers and as members of the Executive Committee.

Thanks to members and officers of Sisterhood and Men’s Club.

Thanks to congregants who serve as *mashgiach*.

Thanks to the volunteers who manage and work in our amazing gift shop from which Beth Abraham profits.

Thank you to the minyonaires who give daily their time and commitment to ensure that mourners and those observing Yahrzeits can say Kaddish.

Thank you to the *Gabba'im*.

Thank you to the volunteers who fold the bulletin and get out the mailings and write columns and answer phones and do the thousand other things I’ve yet to observe.

Without all of you, this journey wouldn’t be half as joyful.

Can you see the smile that reflects my happy life?

Sisterhood News...

Helen Abramovitz

The heat aside...Sisterhood continues to provide activities and services year round.

On Monday, August 8 at 1:00 p.m. we will have the monthly Mah Jongg game. All are welcome to come and play. We welcome all levels from beginners to experts.

Tuesday, August 30 from 9:00 a.m. to noon, the Sisterhood will have a Rosh Chodesh Elul Activity. Learn to bake Challah for Rosh Hashanah. We will make raisin and whole wheat challah. Reservations are essential since the kitchen accommodates a limited number of bakers. If needed we will have a later class for the overflow. Please call the synagogue to reserve your space. There will be a minimal charge for supplies.

Look for New Year’s greetings and membership dues in the mail. Also enclosed in the mailing is the opportunity for you to express your interest and offer to help with Sisterhood functions for the year.

Sunday, September 18 at 10:30 a.m. is the opening sisterhood meeting and a taste of our challah with honey. This is a great way to greet the New Year.

The Sisterhood has recently purchased card tables for the Mah Jongg group. In addition Sisterhood has restocked the kitchen and also completed the inventory of dairy dishes.

Dancing With the Jewish Stars January 21, 2012

So your partner won’t dance? You don’t need a partner to join the Beth Abraham Israeli Dance Troupe. Master choreographer Joel Shapiro is looking for willing men and women to perform an Israeli *hora* for our night of dancing. All are welcome. Call Joel at 832-1086 to learn more.



EREV TISHA B'AV Monday, August 8th 8:30 pm

Remember and commemorate the tragedies of Jewish history, from the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in the ancient world until the present day, on our annual day of national mourning. The 25 hour fast day begins with the candle-light reading of *Eicha*, the biblical book of Lamentations, on Monday evening, August 8, at 8:30pm, and concludes on Tuesday evening at 9:30 pm. *Eicha* will be repeated at the Tuesday morning *Shacharit* service. Just as on Yom Kippur, eating, drinking, bathing, anointing, sexual relations and the wearing of leather-soled shoes are prohibited.

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Library News-Off the Shelf

Allan Spetter

Joseph Klausner, an outstanding scholar and an ardent Zionist, may be as responsible as any of the individuals of his generation for reviving Hebrew as a



modern language that could be used for both religious and secular purposes. Klausner seemed to be involved in controversy throughout his life, but even those who opposed his political positions and/or his writings acknowledged his brilliance. The synagogue library book collection contains a brief biography, simply titled *Joseph Klausner* that provides all the details.

Born near Vilna in Lithuania in 1874, Klausner moved with his family to Odessa in 1884. He became immersed in the many cultures and languages of the great Ukrainian port city on the Black Sea. Klausner mastered many languages, and when only 19 years old he began to insist that Hebrew should take its place as a modern language. Klausner spent more time in Lithuania, the center of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment, and he felt that a modernized Hebrew could play a vital role in the Haskalah.

There are indications that Klausner frequently took on too many challenges at the same time and often failed to complete various assignments. He may have been hampered by the problems with his eyes which kept him out of the Russian army. In 1897, however, Klausner followed two paths at the same time, and each would shape the rest of his life. He entered the University of Heidelberg in Germany, where after five years of study in the development of the Mishnah he received a doctorate in 1902.

Also in 1897 Klausner attended the first Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland. As he put it so eloquently, "I sensed that I was privileged to be at a new Sinai." From the beginning Klausner had his own vision of the future of Zionism. He joined what became known as the Democratic Faction led by Chaim Weizmann. They insisted that there must be a cultural dimension to Zionism. Klausner vigorously opposed the proposal to establish a Jewish homeland in Uganda as an alternative to Palestine.

Klausner accepted a teaching position at a unique yeshiva in Odessa.

He taught about the "glories of Western civilization" and a "nationalistic interpretation of Jewish history." He emphasized Hebrew as a "live language" and called for a Hebrew renaissance.

Klausner's "enlightened" views disturbed many in the Jewish community, and he felt forced to leave in 1908. Klausner visited Palestine for the first time in 1912 and after World War I and the Russian Revolution he settled in the Holy Land at the end of 1919.

Klausner participated in the opening of Hebrew University and joined the faculty as Professor of Modern Hebrew Literature. This led to one of his most important scholarly achievements, a six-volume *History of Modern Hebrew Literature*, covering just the century of the Haskalah up to 1880. In his quest to establish Hebrew as a modern language that could bring Jews into the "western world," Klausner insisted that Jews must abandon Yiddish, a stance that again resulted in severe criticism of Klausner.

Those like Klausner who worked to establish Hebrew as a modern language faced serious obstacles. The obstacles can be summarized as follows: "Hebrew lacked many words and expressions for a discussion of contemporary life. The vocabulary for colors and descriptions was very poor. Awkward Biblical phrases were employed for such words as piano, photograph, etc." It proved extremely difficult to conduct a conversation about modern issues.

Klausner insisted that Hebrew had never become a "dead" language. He knew what had to be done. He started by thoroughly examining the Bible for words that might have been forgotten. He would use words from other Semitic languages. He would use some words that are common to many languages. As Klausner explained the need to modernize Hebrew, he said that people cannot ask, "How would Isaiah or Job have expressed this?" Klausner actually created many words to be used in modern spoken and written Hebrew.

The paths Klausner chose, as a scholar and as a Zionist, added to the turmoil in his life. A leading scholar on the period in Jewish history known as the Second Commonwealth, more than 500 years ending with the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70, he produced several significant works, including *Jesus of Nazareth* and *From*

Jesus to Paul. Anyone dealing with those topics risked criticism from both Christians and Jews. He also produced in five volumes *The History of the Second Temple*.

Klausner joined many other Zionists in opposition to Chaim Weizmann's leadership. The opposition believed that Weizmann continued to rely on Great Britain to create a Jewish homeland long after it became apparent that the British had no such intention. Klausner moved closer to the position of the Revisionist Zionists led by the militant Vladimir Jabotinsky. Klausner, however, remained within the World Zionist Organization when Jabotinsky chose to withdraw.

Klausner proved particularly controversial in the last decade of his life. Believing that the Haganah existed only for defense, he chose to support the Irgun, the more militant force created by the Revisionist Zionists. Finally, he agreed to become a candidate for president of Israel, running against Chaim Weizmann. The president has no real power and is elected by the Knesset to bestow an honor on a unique individual. Weizmann received 83 votes, Klausner received 15. Klausner died in 1958 at the age of 84.

Surprise!

Bonnie Deutsch

You have been caught by the Mitzvah Squad doing mitzvot!

You have been a volunteer on numerous synagogue committees and projects. Most recently your smiling face and voice greeted us in the office as you took on administrative tasks while Annette was on vacation. Our kiddush lunches, veteran's programs and "Dancing with the Jewish Stars" program have benefited from your energy and creative talents. We are so grateful for your hard work and especially the warm example of your personality. Thank you for all that you are doing. Mazel Tov to you, this month's mitzvah hero!!!

If anyone knows of others within our Beth Abraham community who quietly and routinely perform mitzvot, please contact our Mitzvah Squad by calling Bonnie Beaman Rice at 409-2880.

Beth Abraham Synagogue
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Times for Shabbat and Yom Tov Candle Lighting & Services

Friday, August 5
Kabbalat Shabbat 5:30 p.m.
Candle Lighting 8:28 p.m.

Saturday, August 6
Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Havdalah 9:30 p.m.

Monday, August 8
Tisha b'Av 8:30 p.m.

Friday, August 12
Shabbat in the Park 6:00 p.m.
Candle Lighting 8:20 p.m.

Saturday, August 13
Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Havdalah 9:22 p.m.

Friday, August 19
Shabbat Under the Stars 7:30 p.m.
Candle Lighting 8:10 p.m.

Saturday, August 20
Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Havdalah 9:12 p.m.

Friday, August 26
Kabbalat Shabbat 5:30 p.m.
Candle Lighting 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 27
Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Havdalah 9:02 p.m.

Friday, September 2
Kabbalat Shabbat 5:30 p.m.
Candle Lighting 7:50 p.m.

Saturday, September 3
Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Havdalah 8:51 p.m.

DAILY MINYAN
Monday – Friday - 6:50 am** & 5:30 pm
Sunday - 8:30 am

**Monday, August 1 –6:40 am & 5:30 pm
(Rosh Chodesh Av)

**Tuesday, August 9 – 6:30 am & 5:30 pm
(Tisha b'Av Shacharit)

** Friday, August 12 – 6:50 am: no evening minyan
(6:00 pm Shabbat in the Park)

** Friday, August 19 – 6:50 am: no evening minyan
(7:30 pm Shabbat Under the Stars)

** Tuesday, August 30 & Wednesday, August 31
6:40 am & 5:30 pm (Rosh Chodesh Elul)

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