



Chadashot Ha'am

A bi-monthly newsletter for Congregation Bet Ha'am

July / August 2021
Av / Elul 5781

Welcome to the Chadashot Ha'am!

RABBI JARED H. SAKS

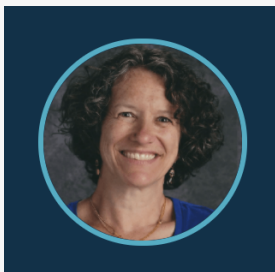
The Rabbi's Column:

Below are Jeremy Moser's remarks from accepting the Jane Snerson Distinguished Service Award at our annual meeting in May. I think it'd be great for this to show up in the next *Chadashot*. His message is compelling about why to be involved and I hope that others benefit from reading it and that we benefit from their reading it!



Thank you,
Rabbi Saks

[Click here to read Jeremy Moser's Acceptance Remarks](#)



SYLVIA MOST, President Board of Trustees

I am grateful to have been elected President of our Congregation at an exciting time. We have each spent the past eighteen months struggling with the large and small impacts of the pandemic that have defined our behavior and our world. Along with the beauty of summer in Maine, I am savoring each hug, each shared smile and each new opportunity to see friends and family. Recently at services I was struck by the joy I feel at seeing friends together again, at hearing singing in our sanctuary and at planning for trips and gatherings this summer. I hope that I will be able to hold on to this sense of gratitude for the simple things.

Among the most exciting news for Congregation Bet Ha'am is the hiring of our Executive Director, Lynn Mansfield. She began to work with us on July 6 - you can read more about her below. We are grateful to Ashley DiPietro for her leadership of the Search Committee and to Martin Lodish, Jeremy Moser, Lynn Urbach and Mark Stone for their many hours of work to define the job description for this expanded role, engage in a nation-wide search and interview candidates. I hope that you will take an opportunity to stop by the Bet Ha'am office to say "hi" to Lynn in the coming months. Lynn's email is lynn@bethaam.org if you would like to introduce yourself by email.

Our Congregation has begun the process of returning to in-person gatherings and to access to our beautiful building. We are following state guidelines for religious gatherings which include wearing masks during services. We ask for mask wearing in the building for the safety of unvaccinated people who may be present. We will also continue to offer services and Torah Study via Zoom. We have volunteers working to ensure that services run smoothly. We are constantly working to improve the experience in the Sanctuary and at home.

This spring the Board conducted financial listening sessions to begin the process of marrying the important roles our Congregation serves for our members with the financial challenges of meeting those needs. We will continue this work in the coming year, as expanded fundraising will continue to be a major goal for our Board of Trustees and new Executive Director. Your financial commitment letter was mailed a few weeks ago - please be as generous as possible to help us cover the projected deficit of \$60,000 in the current year's budget and set us on the path to close this challenging gap.

Finally, we plan to hold an informal "Welcome Back" Party the afternoon of August 29 at Bet Ha'am. Please save the date - we have much to celebrate as we prepare for the High Holidays this fall and more details will be shared in the Weekly Email.

I look forward to seeing you there!

LYNN MANSFIELD, Executive Director

Welcome to Bet Ha'am, Lynn!

Lynn comes to Congregation Bet Ha'am with 25 years' experience as an Executive Director for nonprofit organizations. Whether she's managing the day-to-day operations of the synagogue or serving as a liaison between the congregation and our committees and board leadership, she looks forward to growing our volunteer base and matching members with fulfilling opportunities to suit their interests. "People who give of their time and talents as a volunteer are an invaluable resource. Every aspect of our congregation depends on our vested volunteers, from the sanctuary to our



beautiful gardens. When we work together, we're able to cultivate a stronger community created with the needs of our members in mind."

Lynn and her husband, Cary, are parents to ten children and live in Durham with their teens and long-haired miniature Dachshunds. When asked how managing a large family might contribute to her new role as Executive Director, Lynn said "as a mom to a large family, I've learned to find balance while meeting the needs of ten very different people. Parenting requires daily engagement in civil discourse while modeling ethical living. While sometimes challenging, I'm filled with immense gratitude to be entrusted with the care of such kind people." You can often find her spending time on the Maine coast. Whether meditating on the rocks at Reid State Park or collecting shells at Popham Beach, the ocean is her favorite place to reset.

We welcome you to reach out and introduce yourselves to Lynn. She can be reached in the synagogue at 879-0028, option 4.



What Makes a Bet Ha'am Grad?



Congregation Bet Ha'am Religious School recently graduated a half dozen excellent students (who have also served as teachers.) Congregants who have encountered these young adults know they are high-achieving leaders with full resumes and strong Jewish connections. We know we are sending mensches into the world. But what breadth of knowledge have we achieved at the conclusion of our religious school education?

VALUES:

At an early age, our students learn what it means to be Jewish. They study mitzvot, give tzedakah, and participate in Tikkun Olam programs. They see the impact of social action firsthand when visiting nursing homes and creating their own B'Mitzvah projects. They study the meaning behind Shabbat, parts of the synagogue, and different holidays. They learn about God from an early age and study difficult topics like anti-Semitism in later years. Creating character is a focus every year.

TORAH:

Third and fourth grade Judaica is all about stories from the Tanakh, but this is not the only time students study scripture. Everything we do Jewishly, whether in synagogue or elsewhere, comes back to Torah. I believe in using primary resources, so I try to connect all lessons with Torah in some fashion. When studying Talmud in the older grades or contemporary issues, we return to the text for answers. We emphasize in our B'Mitzvah family program where Jewish law comes from and how it all stems from Torah.

HEBREW:

Teaching foreign language in a weekly program presents daunting challenges. Some students emerge from the program with strong Hebrew skills, capable of reading from a Torah scroll and siddur. Others struggle to read and have forgotten many of the fundamentals by graduation. The determining factor is nearly always an outside party. If a student is given opportunities to practice Hebrew outside school: at home, at camp, in Israel, and at worship, the increased exposure does wonders. Hebrew fluency strengthens students' commitment to attend services and continue practicing Judaism.

IDENTITY:

Our students discover what it means to be a reform Jew in Maine. They discuss intersectionality, the interactions, and clashes of their different identities as Jews, Mainers, students, athletes, and more. They experiment with different aspects of worship and ritual in their B'Mitzvah projects. They bond with their peers on Shabbaton experiences and overnight trips. They study Israeli and develop a connection as American Jews. When one graduates from our program, the Jewish identity has persisted, despite numerous conflicts, and I consider it a great success!



SARAH CROPLEY, Board Member

Sarah Cropley, newly elected to the Board of Trustees

I am a lifelong resident of Maine, currently living in Scarborough. After attending the Maine School of Science and Mathematics, I went to the University of Maine at Farmington and graduated in 2012 with a degree in Elementary Education. Following that, I pursued a master's degree in Library and Information Science at Texas Woman's University while working as a nanny for a wonderful family in Falmouth. I graduated in the summer of 2017 and began working at the Scarborough Public Library in fall of 2017.

This prompted my move to the area, and, a few months later, my first visit to Bet Ha'am. I had always been drawn to Judaism, and I found my experience far outstripped even my wildest expectations. I am proud and delighted to be able to give back to the community that has made me feel so accepted by becoming a board member.

Outside of the synagogue, I continue to work, having accepted a position as the Children's Librarian at Portland Public Library in March of 2020 (yeah, it's been a transition, for sure). In my free time, I love to create art, read, pursue nerdy interests like Dungeons and Dragons, and participate in semi-dangerous individual sports like skateboarding and figure skating. Thank you for electing me to the board!

STEPHEN L. SMITH, Board Member

Stephen L. Smith, newly elected to the Board of Trustees

I was born and raised in Worcester, Massachusetts and my family were members of Temple Emanuel, a large Reform Congregation. I graduated from Brown University in 1964 with a degree in Applied Mathematics and Economics and from



Northeastern University in 1966 with a master's degree in Actuarial Science.

I'm a long-time member of The Society of Actuaries and American Academy of Actuaries. I had a 35-year career in the life and health insurance industry with major responsibilities in finance and product development. I had many executive positions at Union Mutual/Unum where I worked for 25 years before retiring. I became a ski instructor and did some actuarial and financial consulting. I Previously served on the Jewish Federation Allocations Committee, led the United Way Allocations Committee, and was a Board Member of a not-for-profit housing development organization. I am currently President of the Carrabassett Valley Outdoor Association and manage several family financial and technology matters.

I am married to my high school sweetheart, Elaine, and we have two adult sons, five adult grandchildren and one great grandson. We try to spend as much time as we can with our family. We moved to Maine in 1973 and raised our family in Cape Elizabeth. Elaine and I are very active as avid skiers, speed walkers, and exercisers. We love to read, partake of good food and wine and to travel, having visited over 60 countries and 45 states.

We belonged to Temple Beth El prior to a Reform Congregation existing in the Portland area. Our sons had the good fortune to have their Bar Mitzvahs at Beth El under the tutelage of Cantor Messerschmidt. We've been Bet Ha'am members for about 30 years with modest participation in its services and activities. I was on the original Capital Campaign that financed our beautiful sanctuary/social hall. Elaine and I appreciate Bet Ha'am's diverse membership and its commitment to our community. I look forward to helping guide Bet Ha'am into the future.



DREW STEVENS, Board Member

Drew Stevens, newly elected to the Board of Trustees

I was born and raised in Los Angeles, and moved to Maine with my wife, Robin, in 2003. We honeymooned in Bar Harbor and heard about this little city called Portland, ME. We visited Portland in December, and the following April we bought a house and moved across country. We joined Bet Ha'am when our first daughter was born in 2005 and we now have 2 teenage

daughters and live in Cape Elizabeth. As much as I love the quality of life here in Maine, I've found the awareness about Jewish culture is quite lacking, and our family has had wonderful experiences introducing friends to Jewish customs and traditions. Now that we can congregate in person again, I'm looking forward to socializing with our Bet Ha'am community in the coming months.

I did my undergraduate study at San Francisco State University and attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin – Madison where I studied Educational Psychology. I'm a local realtor and I receive tremendous

gratification from helping people navigate a challenging, and often stressful, life transition. I'm the 2021 Cultural Ambassador for Keller Williams Realty Maine, and I sit on the associate leadership council, culture and DEI committees. My wife is a Spanish teacher in Portland Schools, and our two daughters will be attending Cape Elizabeth High School this fall.

At Bet Ha'am, I've been involved with the membership committee and I'm really looking forward to working on the board to see how we can make our congregation even stronger. My intention is to infuse enjoyment and connection into everything I work on so people will want to participate even more. I thank you for the opportunity to serve this community.

ALLAN TOWNSEND, Board Member

Allan Townsend, newly elected to the Board of Trustees

I first moved to Maine in 2002 with my then-girlfriend, now-wife, a native Mainer whom I met in law school. We eventually got married, moved to the Washington, DC area for seven years, and then returned to Maine in 2017. Along the way, we had two wonderful children and currently live in Scarborough.



We joined Bet Ha'am when we moved back to Maine in 2017. We instantly knew this was the right congregation for us. Our daughter started going to the religious school at Bet Ha'am shortly after we moved here, and she had her Bat Mitzvah ceremony at Bet Ha'am in 2020, (the last one held in person at the synagogue before the Covid-19 pandemic turned everyone's lives upside down). Our son attended pre-school at the Jewish Community Alliance in Portland where we also got to know other members of the Bet Ha'am congregation.

I was raised Jewish but grew up in an interfaith household. For most of my childhood, I lived in northeast Ohio but in high school we moved to Texas where I graduated from high school and college.

In my professional life, I am a civil rights lawyer who represents workers. This has been my practice area for almost my entire career both in private practice, here in Maine, and when I worked for the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.

In my spare time, I enjoy running, biking, and being outdoors as much as possible.

Bar Mitzvah

Isaac Perry - July 24, 2021



Isaac is going to be a 9th grader at South Portland High School this fall. He postponed his Bar Mitzvah last summer with the hope that he could celebrate in person with his family and friends this summer. We are so thankful that this will be possible.

Isaac is a very creative soul with a strong drive to succeed. He has been an avid athlete his entire life and will play on the high school baseball and football teams this coming year. He also is a gifted

musician, and plays drums, piano, guitar, mandolin and ukulele. He is looking forward to music actively being a part of the high school curriculum once again, so he can resume playing with the concert and performance bands.

Guided by lessons about tzedakah, a strong core belief of helping others, and distress at witnessing the suffering that was occurring in our community as a result of COVID-19, for Isaac's Mitzvah project, he wanted to help our local residents. Isaac organized all aspects of a combined donation of \$500 worth of coats to the Salvation Army's "Coats for Kids," project, and \$200 for groceries that were donated to the South Portland Food Pantry. He is committed to making this contribution an annual event.

Isaac has had the great fortune to work with many wonderful people at Bet Ha'am throughout his Jewish education and extended two-year Bar Mitzvah preparation. We would like to thank Sam Spinrad, Rabbi Saks, all his teachers, and the Bet Ha'am community. Most importantly, we would like to thank his tutor Rachel Stamieszkin. In 2019 we convinced her to take on Isaac as her last student before her retirement. Little did we know that it would be two years before we would have his ceremony. We are forever grateful to Rachel and everyone who has contributed to helping Isaac to become an "adult" member of the Jewish community.

Bat Mitzvah

**Natalie Morgenbesser - August 28,
2021**

Natalie loves to learn and master new things and then to share with others. She has many hobbies but some of her favorite things to do are baking and cooking

delicious vegan dishes, mastering sourdough bread baking, circus arts such as juggling, unicycle, handstands, acrobatics, aerials, playing musical instruments such as bass guitar and trumpet, drawing and painting, and learning about Torah chanting and Judaism too!

Natalie's Bat Mitzvah project combines her passion for juggling and teaching along with service to those in need. She is teaching kids to juggle - working with kids in families served by the Family Promise program. These families do not have their own housing so every connection and opportunity for building confidence and connection has the potential to be very meaningful and impactful.



Natalie has been a student at Bet Ha'am since Shalom Yeladim and is grateful for all of the friendships with her classmates and also the teachers who she has worked with, most recently her tutor Sam Spinrad. She is excited to celebrate this milestone with her family, friends, and the Bet Ha'am community.

Teaching the History of Antisemitism and the Holocaust

By Catherine Share



Several years ago, Sam Spinrad came to me and asked if I would teach a unit on Antisemitism and the Holocaust to our seventh and eighth graders. This had been taught before at Bet Ha'am but in the last few years it had not. I grew up as a Christian and had no experience of antisemitism and had only learned about the Holocaust as an adult. I didn't recall

studying it in high school. But my ex-partner and I were raising a Jewish child. We had spent a considerable amount of time at the Holocaust Museum on a recent vacation in DC and since then I had studied the Holocaust on my own. It was a big ask but I had no idea how big. To help prepare, I went back to the museum and met with several educators. I also took a two-day workshop at the Holocaust and Human Rights Center at the University of Maine in Augusta. That course (part of Facing History and Ourselves) was aimed at public school teachers but it gave me an idea of what was covered in the schools.

Since then, the course I teach has evolved. I discovered there is an abundant amount of material online. It is more a matter of figuring out what not to use. But what I have learned (I'm not a teacher by training) is that it is not so much the facts about the Holocaust but rather the WHY? This is what students are most interested in. Teaching the history of Antisemitism goes a long way to help explain the "whys" of the Holocaust. There is a video on the National Holocaust Museum website that introduces the history of Antisemitism beginning in the early Middle Ages. It is definitely worth watching and it is one of the first videos the kids watch when they take my class. My job is tying together what they have learned about Biblical times, the diaspora, the history of Jews in America and Israel in the greater context of the most significant event in the history of the world. We examine the difficulties of integrating into European Christian society. We study the origins of the ghettos, the Blood Libels, the Crusades, the pogroms, the Inquisition, and final expulsion from Spain. Finally, we look at all the myths that have been handed down through the ages and how these influenced the development of the Final Solution. We don't shy away from the horror. We name it and we speak the truth.

Finally, teaching a course on Antisemitism has become even more critical. Rabbi David Sandmel recently spoke at Friday night services about the rise of modern-day Antisemitism which has its roots going back to the Middle Ages. It is important that our children be able to recognize it and all its fellow travelers. They need to know that genocide did not disappear after the Holocaust and that it is alive and well, happening in many corners of the world. These abhorrent ideologies will not go away until their origin stories are exposed and debunked for the lies they are. My biggest task as a teacher is to provide our children with the knowledge and tools to combat these evils and to continue to repair the world.

Confessions of a Zoom Worshipper

by Toby Rosenberg

Shazoom: *Noun or Verb, A Shabbat celebrated over Zoom or to celebrate Shabbat over Zoom, as in: We had a lovely Shazoom."* or "We'll Shazoom at sundown."

Zoomishly: *adverb Something done over zoom as in: "We shared our seder zoomishly."*

I have attended Shabbat services both Friday evenings and Saturday mornings for years. Those worship times help me structure my work and social life. They give me an opportunity to connect with my Bet Ha'am family and say prayer words



that I don't usually get to incorporate into my daily life. I'm especially grateful for the opportunity to express my wish for peace through prayer.

When Covid threatened to cancel all of that I was dismayed to say the least. I expected Zoom services to be a poor substitute, but I must confess, I have really come to enjoy worshipping zoomishly and will not so easily give it up.

Here are just a few of the blessings of Shazooming:

1. Rolling out of bed just in time to log in
2. Sipping tea during the service; sometimes sneaking in a whole breakfast eaten with camera off, of course
3. No driving, no rushing to get to synagogue
4. The intimacy and the distance
5. Rebelliously singing a different melody to a prayer who knew but me?
6. Wearing my pajamas or sweats to services
7. Seeing the zoom congregation all face to face rather than backs of heads.
8. Being able to attend services at other synagogues sometimes before or after our services.
9. Greeting people through the chat bar
10. Sending Rabbi a private message, question or praise in the chat bar.
11. Seeing people zooming in from afar
12. Having time to share an enjoyable shabbat dinner before Friday services
13. Enjoying the new B'nei mitzvah practice/tradition where Rabbi invited grandparents to share the thoughts that were only symbolized in Torah passing. We got to learn so much more about our families
14. Opening our microphones to converse before and after services
15. Staying close as a community and welcoming several new members
16. Keeping connections with members who could not join us physically whether for reasons of distance or health
17. Participating in interactive readings where we heard each other's voices and expression in choral speaking if not in harmonized singing

I am sure I will resume worshipping live in the sanctuary and will treasure hearing our voices twine together in real time but don't be surprised if I often join you all zoomishly and continue enjoying those pleasures as well.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to:

- Adam Zimbalist
- Rachelle Bourgault and Maytal
- Paul Doupe

CONDOLENCES

Zecher T'zaddik L'vrachah to:

- Jane Weinstein and Lina Meyer on the loss of Jane's mother, Frances Weinstein
- Susan Paris and Lisa Munderback on the loss of Susan's mother, Fran Paris
- Sharon Ash Tancredi and Eliot Katz on the loss of Sharon's niece, Lisa Silverman
- Rona and Robert Roesenthal and Lauren and Allen Knopp on the loss of their sister and aunt Linda Kopans

THANK YOU!

To Board Members, Kyra Wigoda, Ashley DiPietro, William Welch, and Donna Landau for writing thank you notes.

To Karen Hindall for all that you do to keep things humming in the office. Karen has been the welcoming “tour guide” for anyone who has called, written, or come to the doors of the synagogue. She has been responsible for getting folks together with like interests – young, old, families, singles and for new members – and during this past year and a half, this has been no small feat! She is a treasure to be cherished by everyone in the Bet Ha’am community. We thank you!

DONOR GALLERY

[Donate Online](#)

Annual Fund

- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year’s Jane L Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by William Welch
- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year’s Jane L Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by Michael Levine
- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year’s Jane L Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by Catherine Share
- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year’s Jane L Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by Donna Landau
- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year’s Jane L Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by Laura Kittle
- In memory of Joe Bornstein by Ben and Lauren Bornstein
- In memory of Harry and Esther Mehlsak by Mo Mehlsak and Barbara Riegelhaupt
- Susan Berkman and Maxine Farber

Capital Campaign

- In memory of Gertrude Bernstein by Marcie Lapidó

Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund

- In appreciation of all the educators that contributed as Sabina became Bat Mitzvah by Siane Simon and Noah Petrucci
- To honor the Bet Ha’am staff by Cathy Prichard
- In appreciation by Willie Rose
- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year’s Jane L. Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by Sylvia Most
- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year’s Jane L. Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by Lynn Urbach
- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks as Tori became Bat Mitzvah by Robin and Drew Stevens

Close the Budget Gap Fund

- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year’s Jane L. Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by Andrea Krasker Gavin
- To honor Toby Rosenberg for all her work for the Dramatic Affair Gala by Ki and Bill Leffler
- Rachelle Bourgault and Maytal
- Andrea Schick

Garden Fund

- To support the annual Plant Sale by Izzy Chaleff

- In honor of the Garden Committee for maintaining our beautiful gardens and for another successful Plant Sale by Susan Lieberman

General Fund

- In memory of parents Harry and Elaine Matluck by Janie and Barry Zimmerman
- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year's Jane L. Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by Jane Snerson
- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year's Jane L. Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by Kira Wigoda
- To honor Jeremy Moser as this year's Jane L. Snerson Distinguished Volunteer by Gene Peters
- In appreciation by Izzy Chaleff
- In appreciation of Stone Soup by Cathy Counts
- In appreciation of our worship services by Cal and Denise Fuhrmann
- In honor of Aziza Morrison becoming Bat Mitzvah by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- In memory of Jane Weinstein's mother by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- In memory of Ellie Kohn on her Yartzeit by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- In memory of Sally Kittle on her Yartzeit by Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser
- In memory of William Kopans by Rona and Robert Rosenthal
- To honor the Bet Ha'am staff by Rachel Stamieszkin
- In memory of Susan Paris' mother by Donna Landau
- In memory of Sumner Bernstein on his Yartzeit by Karla Krassner
- In memory of Gerry Robinov on his Yartzeit by his family

Rabbi Goldfinger Fund for Israel Travel

- In memory of Arlene K. Boulette by Tim and Brianna Twofoot Boulette

Religious School Library Fund

- For the religious school children by Izzy Chaleff

[Our Board](#)[DONATE](#)[Our Blog](#)

Congregation Bet Ha'am | 81 Westbrook Street, South Portland, ME 04106

[Unsubscribe_gleckman@mindspring.com](mailto:unsubscribe_gleckman@mindspring.com)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by lynn@bethaam.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!