



# BETH EL

## The Heights Synagogue

# NEWSLETTER

November 2019  
5780 חשוון / כסלו



RABBI  
MICHAEL UNGAR

Just as we say  
on Passover,  
we ought  
to say on  
Thanksgiving,  
“Let all who are  
hungry come  
and eat”

– all, whether  
Jew or gentile,  
black or white,  
straight or gay,  
Republican or  
Democrat.



## Thankful in This Month, and Thankful for Last

The holidays are now in our rear-view mirrors, and the hard work of being the best we can be is underway in earnest. Hopefully the festivals were an opportunity not only to gather with family and friends, but also to truly reflect on how we can become the best versions of ourselves possible.

The month of Tishrei was especially wonderful for me. In my previous congregations, the High Holy Days were a time of great stress; not only did everything need to be coordinated with the prayer services, but there were programs for children, programs for families, along with all kinds of other initiatives that were starting with the new year. Additionally, with larger congregations my role was much more like a manager than a spiritual leader; services had many moving parts (choir, honors, ushering duties, etc.), and it was difficult for me to find the spiritual fulfillment I sought.

I feel fortunate to have found Beth El – The Heights Synagogue. The efforts that I put in on behalf of the congregation are fulfilling; I love the sense of partnership and cooperation that comes with it.

When it comes to my prayer experience, it has vastly improved. Due to the efforts of many individuals who make sure that services are planned in advance, there is greater potential that I can daven along with everyone. This has made a significant difference in my spiritual experience. I am truly grateful for this.

Speaking of grateful, my thanks go out to all those who labored to make the holidays so wonderful. I want to especially thank the Ritual Committee, chaired by Mia Buchwald Gelles, Marvin Palevksy for everything that he does to make sure the building is set and ready to go (and for the amazing new paint job!), all those who worked hard on the security measures, our co-Presidents for their non-stop efforts, and all those who either davened, read Torah, chanted Haftarah, read an English reading, greeted, or participated in any other way. Thank you for making the holidays so very special this year.

Wishing everyone all the best as we head into Heshvan and the rest of 5780!

Rabbi Michael Ungar

Beth El - The Heights Synagogue builds vibrant Jewish community.  
We welcome all in participatory, traditional, egalitarian worship and learning.

Saturday Morning Services at 9:15 ♦ 3246 Desota Ave., Cleveland Hts., OH 44118 ♦ ☎216-320-9667

## Co-PRESIDENTS



JOEL GENUTH



BUD STERN

### Contact Information

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS?  
COMMENTS? COMPLAINTS?  
Please do not hesitate to contact the Presidents by e-mail [president@bethelheights.org](mailto:president@bethelheights.org) or telephone  
Joel (617) 943-2076  
Bud (216) 991-7383

HELP US  
STAY IN TOUCH!  
Please be sure we have your current contact information. Send changes to [info@bethelheights.org](mailto:info@bethelheights.org) or call  
(216) 320-9667

KEEP UP WITH THE NEWS!  
JOIN THE  
BE-THS LISTS!  
Send an e-mail to Carol Bruml, [benews3246@gmail.com](mailto:benews3246@gmail.com), if you need help with signing up.

# Remembrance Makes People Present

My mother stopped by Beth El –The Heights Synagogue a few weeks ago to wish everyone a happy, healthy new year.

Not literally, of course. She died in 2009. I don't think any of my current BE-THS congregants knew her.

To explain the sense in which she visited, I need to acquaint you with some family lore. My mother's first name was Molly. She did not care for services, synagogues, or organized religion. The outstanding story she told of the religious life of her youth was of her Sunday school class being berated by Abba Hillel Silver during preparations for some sort of public presentation or rite of passage. "You dolts, you dummies!" she would recall the venerable rabbi thundering at the youngsters, and in her telling there was no indication that perhaps he could have been teasing or expressing ironic affection as well as frustration.

My mother's role in the presentation involved a recitation of the Ten Commandments. When she got to the tenth, out from her mouth came, "Thou shalt not commit a-dolt-ery." When my grandparents would recount the story, they would howl with laughter and tell of the supreme struggle they had to keep their composure in the audience. I doubt anybody else in the sanctuary noticed Molly's slip, but thus was born within my family the term "Molly-prop" for the misuse of language in a manner that both confounded yet retained a connection to the meaning of the correct terminology. Throughout her life my mother produced "Molly-props" unconsciously. While a source of frustration to her, she also un-

derstood why others were bemused. The fact that my father found the Molly-props endearing no doubt helped to assuage her frustration. My sister and I found them hysterical.

I don't think I learned of the term "malapropism" until I was in college. Growing up, all I ever knew or needed was "Molly-prop."

My mother visited us on the Shabbat preceding Rosh Hashanah, our day of remembrance, when I was making the announcements. Since becoming co-president, I have taken to doing the announcements extemporaneously. I enjoy challenging myself to remember the important facts, to think on my feet, to wisecrack, and to spar verbally with the other wisecrackers in the congregation. And I'm bolstered by the high probability that someone will correct me when I misremember something, or supplement what I say when I outright forget something. And besides, won't the world continue to spin should an announcement not be made properly in a given week?

Well, with the Days of Awe impending, I got less sure about God letting my world continue to spin if I caused a problem for someone else's holiday preparations. So I thought it wise to give precedence to accuracy and completeness over fun and wit. I dutifully wrote down all the times for all the observances for the week of Rosh Hashanah and remembered to take my notes to services. I reported the times for all Rosh Hashanah services correctly and was giving the times to refrain from eating during the third day of *(continued on p.7)*

# A Rabbinic View of Human Rights in Israel

Rabbi Arik Ascherman will speak on this topic at a Lunch and Learn on November 16 at Beth El –The Heights Synagogue. There are a number of groups in Israel who fight for human rights for all. Among these is Rabbis for Human Rights, which Rabbi Ascherman led for many years, during which he was involved, among other things, in direct action to protect the olive groves of Palestinians from Israeli settlers and to protect the homes of Bedouin citizens in the Negev. More recently, he founded “Torat Tzedek” (Torah of Justice). Believing that every human being is created in God’s Image, Torat Tzedek seeks to defend the human rights of all Israelis and those under Israeli control, advocating for Palestinians, socioeconomic justice for Israelis, African asylum seekers, and Israel’s Bedouin citizens. Rabbi Ascherman is a passionate speaker; he will talk from his years of personal experience fighting for human rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

Arik Ascherman grew up in Erie, PA. He is the brother of the Cleveland photographer Herb Ascherman. After he graduated from Harvard College, Rabbi Ascherman worked for Interns for Peace, a community

work program that sought to bring Israeli Jews and Arabs together in positive interaction. In 1989, he was ordained by the Hebrew Union College –Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). Rabbi Ascherman has served as the director of Hillel at the University of California Davis, as the rabbi of Temple Beth Hillel in Richmond, California, as director of Congregation Mevakshei Derekh in Jerusalem, and as rabbi of Kibbutz Yahel. He and his wife also worked with nascent congregations as the Former Soviet Union was breaking up. Beginning in 1995, Rabbi Ascherman served as co-director of Rabbis for Human Rights, becoming executive director from 1998-2010, and then President and Senior Rabbi. In 2017, Rabbi Ascherman founded Torat Tzedek. In 2009, he was awarded the Keter Shem Tov Prize by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College; in 2014, an Honorary Doctor of Divinity from HUC-JIR; and this year, the Human Rights Prize from the Rabbi David J. Forman Memorial Fund, which honors the founder of Rabbis for Human Rights.

Richard Zigmond

## Learners’ Torah Discussions

Shabbat morning for Learners is back! Rabbis Barry Starr and Michael Ungar will co-facilitate every other week during Torah Service time. We will be *Searching for Meaning in Midrash*, based on the book by Rabbis Michael Katz and Gershon Schwartz. Texts will be provided; Midrash is the interpretation of biblical verses or passages meant to fill in the blanks in stories or legal issues. Hebrew knowledge is not required. Join the fun and discussion as we dig deep into the meaning of Torah.

We meet in the Community Room, after the Torah is taken out and the portion is introduced (about 10:20 am to 10:30 am), and rejoin the service in time for the d’var torah. We plan to meet on November 2, 16, and 30.

Shabbat Morning for Learners - New Format!  
begins November 2

# NEWS FROM BETH EL

# חדשות

## Refuah Sh'lema to:

➤ Harvey Jacobs

רפואה שלימה!

➤ Marsha Katz

## Congratulations to:

➤ Izik Mishan, who has recently become a naturalized citizen of the United States.

מזל טוב!

## Yasher Koah to:

➤ **Leon Gabinet**, who was recently publicly congratulated on Channel 5 News for the fact that he continues to teach federal income tax law at the Case Western Reserve University School of Law, four days a week, at age 92. "I think at 92, I must be the oldest living professor," Leon said, laughing, on the broadcast. So why does he keep coming back? "You have to love what you're doing. I love what I'm doing. I wouldn't do anything else for all the tea in China," Leon said.

י"שר כוח!

<http://tinyurl.com/yxjkhryh>

➤ **Sharona Hoffman**, who recently published an article entitled "Healing the Healers: Legal Remedies for Physician Burnout," in the Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics.

## Welcome, New Members:

- Charlotte Cohen
- David Druce and Karen Shulman
- Cayce Felber and Nathan Kitts
- Betsy Moss
- Devorah Silverman

ברוכים הבאים

## Thanks for Contributions to:

- Bruce and Judie Amsel
- Lisa Lefstein Berusch
- Bill and Carol Bruml, for the new exterior sign. and for plantings around it.
- Frank and Jeanette Buchwald, in memory of Margaret Buchwald z"l.
- David Druce and Karen Shulman
- Robin Dubin and Richard Krueck, towards the cost of pre-Holy Day cleaning.
- Judith Gerblich
- Craig and Janet Hoffman
- Nancy Levin, to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.
- Betsy Moss

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➤ Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin, towards the cost of pre-Holy Day cleaning.

➤ Adam and Samantha Probst

➤ Juliana Sadock Savino, to the Kiddush Fund.

➤ Leonard Tracht

➤ Rabbi Michael and Michele Ungar

➤ Blanche and Jack Valancy, in memory of Lisa Lefstein Berusch's father, Norman Lefstein z"l.

➤ Blanche and Jack Valancy, in memory of Michael Bloomfield's mother, Betty Bloomfield z"l.

➤ Blanche and Jack Valancy, in memory of Marvin Palevsky's brother-in-law, Ernie Bergsman z"l.

➤ Beth and Scott Wachter, in memory of Ira Marks z"l.

➤ Beth and Scott Wachter

➤ Beth and Scott Wachter, for dry ice for the Ice Cream Social.

➤ Marsha Weisberg, in memory of her parents, Sidney and Bertha Weisberg z"l.

➤ Marsha Weisberg, in honor of Marc and Debora Lynn.

➤ Ieda Warshay

➤ Anonymous, towards the cost of pre-Holy Day cleaning.

➤ Anonymous, to the Kiddush Fund.

➤ Anonymous, towards the added cost of security.

➤ Anonymous, towards loan repayments to members.

➤ Anonymous, to the Presidents' Discretionary Fund.

## Thanks for High Holy Day Ticket Contributions to:

➤ Russell Berusch

➤ Lisa Curland

➤ Debora and Marc Lynn

➤ Eric Mazelis

➤ Charlotte Price and Daniel Price

➤ Bonnie and Mark Rosen

➤ Elyse and Isaac Schwartz

➤ Menachem Shoham

➤ Dolly Small

➤ Rachel Tschantz

## Thanks for Kiddush Sponsorships to:

➤ September 21 – Harvey and Karen Kugelman, in honor of Karen's first Torah reading.

תודה!

# CALENDAR, NOVEMBER 2019

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 – We will read *parashat Noach*. Rabbi Ungar will give the d'var.  
ABOUT 10:20 AM – **Learners' Torah Study Group** will convene in the Community Room; they will rejoin the congregation in time for the d'var torah.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 – We will read *parashat Lekh L'kha*. Mia Buchwald Gelles will give the d'var.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10

11:30 AM – **Private guided tour of the Maltz Museum's exhibit, "Leonard Bernstein: The Power of Music."** See page 7 for details.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16 – We will read *parashat Vayera*. Rabbi Ungar will give the d'var.

ABOUT 10:20 AM – **Learners' Torah Study Group** will convene in the Community Room; they will rejoin the congregation in time for the d'var torah.

AFTER SERVICES – **Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Arik Ascherman: "A Rabbinic View of Human Rights in Israel."** See page 3 and attached flyer for details.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17

1:30 – 2:45 PM – **Book discussion with Rabbi Ungar at Mac's Backs** (in the basement): Continued discussion of *Nine Essential Things I've Learned about Life*, by Harold Kushner.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 – We will read *parashat Hayyei Sarah*. Robin Dubin will give the d'var.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30 – We will read *parashat Toldot*. Rabbi Ungar will give the d'var.

ABOUT 10:20 AM – **Learners' Torah Study Group** will convene in the Community Room; they will rejoin the congregation in time for the d'var torah.

AFTER SERVICES – **Monthly Simcha Kiddush**, when we share with our members their celebrations of happy events that have occurred this month.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

AFTER SERVICES – **Lunch and Learn with Michal Marcus, "How Jewish Principles and Interest-Free Lending Are Empowering Northeast Ohioans."** Ms. Marcus is the Executive Director of the Hebrew Free Loan Association of Northeast Ohio.

Thanks for Mailing Help to:

- Robin Dubin
- Richard Krueck
- Honey Massey
- Ron Roth

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- Bud Stern
- Lenny Tracht
- Blanche Valancy
- Scott Wachter

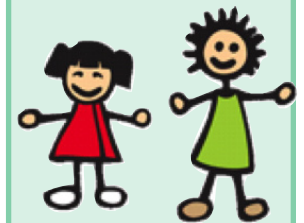
Thanks for Sukkah Frame Construction Help to:

- Bill Bruml
- Marvin Palevsky
- Adam Probst

תודה!



## Shabbat Playdate



Now Weekly!

11:00-11:45 am

in the  
Childcare Room

Jewish-themed  
singing  
and stories  
for children  
7 and younger.



# Fall Clothing Drive

Our annual clothing drive to benefit needy school children in the Cleveland Heights/ University Heights schools will begin on November 1. Warm clothing for the cold weather is greatly needed. Coats, boots, mittens, sweaters, and socks are needed in sizes for kindergarten through fifth grade (large). Wendy Burkey, the Social Worker at Noble and Gearity Schools, says there is a particular need at the moment for boys' sizes 5 and 6, especially pants, and that they always need clothing in boys' sizes 5 though 14; girls' clothing is also welcome. All donated clothing should be new or only very lightly used, please. There is a drop-off box in the main foyer for your donations, which will be collected from November 1 through December 7.



**Brrrrrr...  
It's cold outside!**



**Bring new or gently used children's clothing to the shul Nov. 1 until December 7 for donation to the Noble School clothing pantry for children in our immediate area.**



## Yahrzeits, November 2019

### חשוון

Harry Mayzel	4	Heshvan 5761
Rose Zeisler	4	Heshvan 5723
Louis Brody	5	Heshvan 5713
Dotty Dannhauser	8	Heshvan
Rashe Sobel	8	Heshvan 5716
Joseph Weiss	8	Heshvan 5747
Herbert Goldstone	10	Heshvan 5766
Rose Goldstone	10	Heshvan 5749
Barney Krasny	10	Heshvan 5705
Harry L. Miller	10	Heshvan 5728
Blanche Carr	10	Heshvan
William Schenkelman	10	Heshvan 5724
Rose Rogul Gelles	12	Heshvan
Samuel Protus	12	Heshvan 5757
Sarah Dolin	12	Heshvan
Yoav Borshtein	13	Heshvan 5772
Isadore Gertman	14	Heshvan
Norman Koff	14	Heshvan 5718
Mildred Morton	14	Heshvan 5730
Sadie Bernstein	14	Heshvan
Sam Bernstein	15	Heshvan
William Sonnenstein	16	Heshvan
Yehuda Leib Schultz-Shalit	16	Heshvan 5734
Tobias Seidman	16	Heshvan 5715
Pearl Maeroff	16	Heshvan 5731
Elsie Narmon	16	Heshvan 5729

Herman Collin	18	Heshvan 5723
Louis Freumker	18	Heshvan 5733
Anna Kessler	18	Heshvan
Fay Landau	19	Heshvan
Jack Stern	20	Heshvan 5773
Morton Hoffman	20	Heshvan 5775
David Nadle	20	Heshvan 5755
Doris Glaser	21	Heshvan 5734
Morris Samet	21	Heshvan 5731
Gertrude Sobelman	21	Heshvan 5715
Claire Kammen	22	Heshvan 5736
Hyman Cohen	22	Heshvan 5734
Philip Noll	23	Heshvan 5738
Morris Cohen	24	Heshvan 5684
Philip Reiss	24	Heshvan
Ann Groger	25	Heshvan
Anita Fertman Pereversky	27	Heshvan 5717
Mindy Marfisi	28	Heshvan 5767
Harry Eisman 2	28	Heshvan 5703
Beatrice Goodman	29	Heshvan 5716
Sarah Widzer	29	Heshvan 5731
Lena Berman	30	Heshvan 5708
Deborah Lindenbaum	30	Heshvan 5712

### כסלו

Jennie Gordon	1	Kislev
Patti Cain Freed	2	Kislev 5774

# Tour “Leonard Bernstein: The Power of Music!” at the Maltz

Join us on Sunday, November 10 for a private guided tour of the Maltz Museum’s special exhibit on the life and music of Leonard Bernstein. The tour will begin at 11:00 AM. Those attending will receive a free tote bag. RSVP to Judie Amsel at 440-449-5855 or [jbjbjb38@ameritech.net](mailto:jbjbjb38@ameritech.net) by Wednesday, November 6 (the Maltz needs to predict the number of docents to schedule for the group size). Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors 60+, and \$3 for students K-12; Maltz members do have to pay full price, if they are joining the group tour. Please meet at the museum at 10:45, so Judie can collect your admission fees (in cash, please!); the museum has requested a single payment.

“Leonard Bernstein: The Power of Music” is the first large-scale museum exhibition to illustrate Leonard Bernstein’s life, Jewish identity, and social activism. Audiences may be familiar with many of Bernstein’s works, notably *West Side Story*, but not necessarily with how he responded to the political and social crises of his day. Visitors will find an individual who expressed the restlessness, anxiety, fear, and hope of an American Jew living through World War II and the Holocaust, Vietnam, and turbulent social change—what Bernstein referred to as his “search for a solution to the 20<sup>th</sup>-century crisis of faith.”

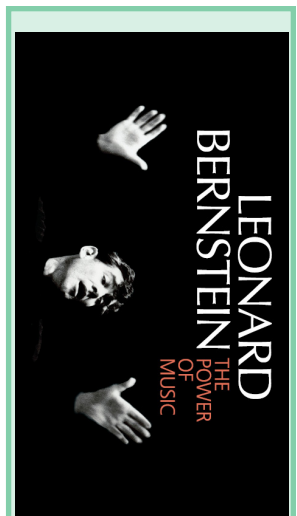
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## Remembrance Makes People Present (continued from page 2)

Tishrei: “The F-E-ast of Gedaliah,” I intoned, “is from 5:57 a.m. until 7:35 p.m.” I think I knew something was amiss immediately; as soon as I heard a few snickers I realized exactly what I had said and enjoyed a good laugh at myself. A couple of hours later it dawned on me that I had made a beaut of a Molly-prop. When I told my dad what had happened, he produced a deeper belly laugh than I had heard from him in some time.

The second blessing of the Amidah cites God’s ability “to give life to the dead.” I gather that it is usually understood to mean that God has the power to resurrect the dead in a future world that the Messiah will usher in. But ever since I started to lose important people in my life to death, and especially since my mother died, I find in that prayer a comforting reminder of how God has given me an ability to give a bit of life to the departed people I have loved. All of us, every day, unconsciously display traits we have internalized from repeated interactions with the important people in our lives, but I get intense joy when I find myself displaying traits of my departed loved ones that I don’t often display. That was my mother making her presence felt when I unconsciously slipped from “fast” to “feast” during those announcements. I’m tickled and thrilled to have her give the congregation a moment of levity during the lead-up to the Days of Awe and a demonstration of how sweet and humorous remembrance can be when the liturgy of *Yizkor* and other parts of the Yom Kippur services stress the sense of loss and tragedy that deaths produce in us.

Joel Genuth, Co-President



**Tour “Leonard Bernstein: The Power of Music”  
at the Maltz Museum with us on November 10**



Rabbi Arik Ascherman is a long time human rights activist in Israel. He led the group Rabbis for Human Rights for many years and led direct actions to protect the olive groves of Palestinians from Israeli settlers and to protect the homes of Bedouin citizens. He now leads "Torat Tzedek" (Torah of Justice), which defends the rights of all Israelis and those under Israeli control. He is a passionate speaker and will talk from his years of personal experience fighting for human rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories.