Shavuot 2016

Join us to celebrate the Giving of the Torah.

Friday, June 10 — Shabbat Bamidbar
Kabbalat Shabbat + Ma’ariv 6:00 pm

Saturday, June 11 — Shabbat Bamidbar
Shabbat Morning Services + Adult B’nai Mitzvah 9:30 am
Mincha 8:30 pm
Ma’ariv + Havdallah 9:30 pm

AFTERWARD: CHEESECAKE AND A SPECIAL STUDY SESSION WITH DR. BARUCH FELDISTERN

Sunday, June 12 — Shavuot One
Festival Morning Services 9:30 am
Mincha + Ma’ariv 5:30 pm

Monday, June 13 — Shavuot Two + Yizkor
Festival Morning Services 9:30 am
LUNCH AND MINCHA TO FOLLOW
Shavuot Study Session with Dr. Baruch Feldstern
Saturday, June 11, Following Ma'ariv and Havdallah

On Saturday, June 11, following the 9:30 pm Ma’ariv service and Havdallah, Beth El Synagogue will serve up traditional Shavuot cheesecake desserts and a special study session with Dr. Baruch Feldstern. A resident of Jerusalem, Dr. Feldstern was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1972. In 1992 he received his PhD in Midrash, and a year later he began teaching Talmud in the Rothberg School for Overseas Students at the Hebrew University. From 1991-2013 he taught at the Pardes Institute in Jerusalem.

“Spending time in Torah study on the eve of Shavuot began with the mystics of Safed,” explained Beth El’s rabbi, Steven Abraham. “A Tikkun Leil Shavuot can address a variety of topics, including ancient or modern texts, Jewish history or current events. We’re delighted to have Dr. Feldstern share his wisdom with us, and we invite the community to join in the learning.”

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Shanghai is Going Strong
The 2nd Thursday of each month
1:00 pm in Beth El's West Court

Join us at the table on June 9 & July 14

Register online at www.bethel-omaha.org or Contact Phyllis Wasserman at ppw130@cox.net 402.498.2922

Join us at this regular monthly game and be sure to tell your friends... this is open to the entire Jewish community.

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A Whiskey Tasting!
Thursday, June 9, 7:30 pm
Beth El Synagogue

A program of Men's Club for the entire congregation

We’ll be tasting a variety of scotches, led by an expert from Brix.

Cost:
$36/members; $40/non-members (pre-registrations only)
$40/$45 day of event (if space is still available)

Raffle prizes!
One free raffle ticket with each paid registration
(additional tickets $5 each)

Questions? Contact Chairman Ari Kohen at akohen2@unl.edu

Space is limited, register today at www.bethel-omaha.org
The festival of Shavuot is recognized in the Bible as the second of the three pilgrimage festivals. While it is also known as the festival during which the first fruits were brought to the Temple, we are most familiar with Shavuot as the time of the giving of the Torah. It is traditional to stay up all night on the eve of this festival and study, reenacting the excitement and trepidation of our ancestors as they anticipated receiving the Torah.

Preoccupation with the Torah and the majesty of the Holy One, Blessed Be He, is continued into the services of the first day of Shavuot, with the chanting of the epic hymn, Akdamut, which is said just prior to the reading of the first verse of the Torah portion.

Akdamut is a rich and extremely complicated tapestry woven in tooth-breaking Aramaic, an ancient Semitic language, by Rabbi Meir Ben Issac. Rabbi Meir, who lived in France in the 11th century, used lines beginning with each of the letters the Hebrew alphabet twice through. The Rabbi also added the letters of his name, his father’s name, and of a short blessing asking for strength (which he no doubt needed after this huge work). The resulting composition is a 90-verse panegyric proclaiming the majesty and greatness of the Creator, the beauty and wisdom of the Torah, and praise and hope for the Jewish people. Each verse of the opus contains exactly ten syllables and always ends with the syllable, ‘TA’.

Akdamut is usually recited responsively. The melody used for Akdamut is an ancient chant that is characterized by a downwardly cascading motif (very short musical phrase) that occurs at the end of the first of each of the pairs of verses that characterize the hymn. Interestingly, the music for Akdamut is not utilized anywhere else in our liturgy except for a sprinkling throughout the Festival Kiddush.

It may be said that the reasons for emulating the Biblical Israelites’ night-long vigil and for reciting Akdamut with its ancient melody are identical: we are invited to share the excitement of our ancestors at the foot of Mount Sinai together with the passion of Rabbi Meir over God, his Torah and of the life that the Torah conveys. Perhaps, by looking through the eyes and hearing through the ears of our predecessors, we will - in our hearts, minds and bodies - feel, understand and emulate their steadfast commitment to Torah and the meaningful Jewish life it offers to us.

Hag Shavuot Samayach,
Hazzan Michael Krausman
President’s Corner
By Jim Zipursky, President of the Board of Trustees

“Change is inevitable, progress is optional.” - Tony Robbins

As we have the biennial “changing of the guard” in Beth El’s lay leadership, I am very happy to write to you for the first time as your President. I am excited at the opportunity to serve you and to continue to grow and expand upon the outstanding foundation which has been fortified over the last 89 years by our past Presidents (including my beautiful bride, Sally), our Clergy, our Staff, and most important, by YOU, our congregational members.

As we move from 5776 into 5777, we know one thing is certain: change is inevitable. While Beth El Synagogue is steeped in tradition and we always remember our roots and our past, we also know Beth El has embraced change and continues to progress to serve the needs of its congregants. As a child, I remember how excited my parents were when Beth El decided to become an egalitarian congregation. While most of us cannot imagine being at a Beth El where women are not counted toward a minyan, are not allowed to hold the of, that was Beth El 40 years ago. Beth El continues to change and to progress.

In 5776, we say goodbye to our long-time Executive Director, Larry DeBruin. After 25 years of putting his Beth El family ahead of his own, Larry has decided to retire to make the DeBruin family his top priority. It is a bittersweet moment for Beth El: we are excited for Larry and his family but sorry to lose his leadership. However, as we search for a replacement for Larry, we are excited at the possibilities of what a new Executive Director can do for our congregation. Change, again, is inevitable.

In 5777, we will be a constant and consistent theme. Beth El has been my home and my synagogue for almost my entire life. I have seen many changes and know more are in store for the future. I will listen to you—f i rst time as your President. I am excited at the opportunity to serve you and to will move forward at Beth El.

During my term as your President, change will be a constant and consistent theme. Beth El has been my home and my synagogue for almost my entire life. I have seen many changes and know more are in store for the future. I will listen to you regarding your suggestions for change and will heed your advice and wishes. I also pledge to follow this sage advice:

“Change your opinions, keep to your principles; change your leaves, keep intact your roots.” - Victor Hugo

Jim Zipursky

Minyannaires
Thanks to the following members of Beth El who attended at least one daily service between April 10 & May 9:

Rabbi Steven Abraham • Brandy Bailey–King • Wendy Berenson • William Cohen • Larry DeBruin • Jay Durmaskin • Stanley Edelstein • Bobbie Epstein • Gary Epstein • Lisa Epstein • Ronald Epstein • Ronald Feldman • Yonatan Feldstern • Richard Fellman • Glen Fineman • Pam Friedlander • Morris Friedman • Sandy Friedman • Michael Gerson • Irwin Goldenberg Donald Goldstein • Dolores Goodman • Michael Goodman • Jay Gordman • Spencer Gordman • Miriam Gottlieb • Lea Grunkin • M’Lee Hasslinger • David Herzog • Grant Jabenis • Fred Kader • Ilse Kahn • Marcel Kahn • Howard Kaiman Howard Kaplan • Judy Katskee • Milton Katskee • Helen Kay • Leslie Kay • David Kay • Steve King • Harry Klein • Janet Klein David Kotok • Shane Kotok • Laurel Krausman • Hazan Michael Krausman • Zach Krausman • Zev Krausman • Larry Kronick Janie Kulakofsky • Scott Lustgarten • Joan Marcus • Lynda Mirvish • Andy Nathan • Carol Nathan • Patty Nogg • Jeff Passer Sandy Passer • Steve Pitlor • Karen Pollak • Oliver Pollak • Merle Potash • Joel Rich • Steven Riekes • Jason Rife • Caryn Rifkin Gary Rifkin • Nancy Rips • Dottie Rosenblum • Ed Schneider • Phyllis Schwartz • Michelle Shkolnick • Alan Shulewitz • Wayne Siegel • Tootie Simon • Nancy Skid • Fran Snyder • Mort Steinberg • Judy Tully • Stewart Tully • Esther Wax • James Wax Steven Wees • Richard Wiener • Audrey Wiener • Susan Witkowski • Gabby Witkowski
Tichon Transfer: (from left) Chaeli Spivack, Hunter Tam, David Kay, Emily Kirk, Ariel Rife and Melanie Schwarz are rising 8th graders who will enter Hebrew High next fall.

Hebrew High Graduates: (from left) Zach Stein, Brooke Shulewitz, Tomer Palmon and Zev Krausman

Photo by Ophir Palmon

**There will be no Kabbalat Shabbat services at Beth El that evening**

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Beth El Synagogue, Omaha, NE B 4C 02-1034
We Thank Our Yad Squad

The following members read Torah/Haftarah in April:

Shmini
- Michael Gerson
- Steve Riekes
- Yonatan Feldstern
- Sally Zipursky
- Marty Shukert
- Ben Shapiro
- Haftarah - Ray Goldstein

Tazria
- Alan Potash
- Alan Shulewitz
- Amy Nachman
- Roni Reiter-Palmon
- Janie Murow
- Gary Nachman
- Laurel Krausman
- Yonatan Feldstern
- Haftarah - Eadie Tsabari

Metzora
- Glen Fineman
- Ben Shapiro
- Michael Gerson
- Yonatan Feldstern
- Steve Riekes
- Haftarah - Patty Nogg

Best of Luck to the Class of 2016!

Isaac Ferber
Emma Hochfelder
Aliya Jabenis

Mazel Tov to our 2016 Teen Award Winners

Jack Molad Ruach Award - Raelyn Cherry
Raelyn received this honor for her never-ending enthusiasm for everything Beth El: USY, Jr. Congregation, Shabbat activities, Shabbatonim, youth programming and more. She always has a smile and a positive attitude!

Joe Ginsberg Mensch Award - Zach Krausman
Zach has served on the BILU executive board and worked closely with our Kadimaniks. He works with our young students at BESTT and helps with Jr. Congregation. He is always willing to help and is a great example of a Mensch!

Men’s Club Volunteer Award - Tomer Palmon
Tomer has helped out in the school, been an active member of USY and tutored for Jr. Congregation. We have watched him grow into a leader and someone who has added a tremendous amount to our school and youth group.

Sisterhood Volunteer Award - Brooke Shulewitz
Brooke loves children. She works so well with our kids at Kamp KEF and Sunday school, and she volunteers at our Shabbatonim. We are lucky that she will continue working with us next year as she pursues her college degree.

Helen and Joe Fishel Memorial Award - Zach Stein
This new award is given in honor of Helen and Joe Fishel, parents of Eadie Fishel Tsabari. Helen and Joe Fishel were Holocaust survivors and came to Omaha after the war in 1947. They were dedicated parents, hard-working business owners and absolutely loved children and everything Jewish.

Zach has shown that determination and hard work can help you achieve anything you set your mind to. He is tenacious and really has a love for everything Jewish. Both Helen and Joe would be very proud of Zach.

A.B. and Freeda Gendler Award for Devotion to Synagogue and Judaism - Zev Krausman
Zev was recognized with this prestigious honor because of his excellent attendance at BESTT High School and services, his high level of participation in USY, his contribution to BESTT as both a teacher and a teaching assistant, his volunteer service to the synagogue and the wonderful example he has set for our children.

Birthdays With 5-Year Multiples

June
Naama Abraham • Steven Bloch • Braden Brooks • Ryan Cooper • Jodi Epstein
Michal Gaca • Darlene Golbitz • Noah Juster • Isaac Kurtzman • Dmitriy Libov
Oliver Lucoff • Stanley Mitchell • Leonid Raksin • Lloyd Roitstein • Lesli Shrago
Douglas Smith • Ethan Spivack • Susan Witkowski • Louis Wolfson

July
Lillian Cohen • Sophie Epstein • Nita Green
Robyn Jensen • Lauren Kirk • Karen Klingberg • Zach Krausman • Pamela Kutler • Michael Sherman • Gloria Smith
Contributions to Named Endowment & Synagogue Funds

This Kol lists contributions received by May 11, 2016. Donations received after that date will be listed in the August edition.

Contributions to Named Endowment Funds

**Rose Blumkin Endowment Fund**
Yahrzeit of: Jennie Veitzer

**Sam & Ann Epstein Endowment Fund**
In Memory of: Sam Fried, Cal Kirshen

**Willis Epstein Endowment Fund**
Birthday of: Sally Epstein

**Dean Frankel Endowment Fund**
In Appreciation of: John Sodoro, Judi Kahn

**Isaac H. & Ruth S. Friedman Endowment Fund**
Birthday of: Jean Elkon • In Memory of: Nancy Brown

**General Endowment Fund**
Recovery of: Frank Goldberg

**Ann Goldstein Endowment Fund**
Birthday of: Eadie Tsabari, Joanie Jacobson, Laurel Krausman, Ruth Potash • Yahrzeit of: Selma Gershun

**Marcel & Ilse Kahn Endowment Fund**
In Memory of: Thelma Lustgarten

**Milton Marcus Instrumental Music Endowment Fund**
Birthday of: James Wax • In Memory of: Larry Kipperman, Sarah Janette Salkin, Thelma Lustgarten

**Lee Jane Parsow Endowment Fund**
In Memory of: Sam Fried, Jerry Rosinsky

**David & Ida Potash Endowment Fund**
Yahrzeit of: Harry Dolgoff, Sidney Wasserman

**Jerold I. Rosen Endowment Fund**
Birthday of: Joanie Jacobson • Yahrzeit of: Hannah Pradell

**Arnold Stern Endowment Fund**
Yahrzeit of: Bess Stern

**Eli & Sara Zalkin Endowment Fund**
Yahrzeit of: Harold Perelman • In Memory of: Kayce Lynn Goldberg

**Contributions to Named Synagogue Funds**

**Beth El Scholars Fund**
In Memory of: Kevee Kirshenbaum

**Building Fund**
In Memory of: Sam Fried

**General Fund**
Bar Mitzvah of: Hunter Tam • In Memory of: Thelma Lustgarten, Ruth Pollak, Leonard Schneiderman, Sam Fried • Yahrzeit of: Edith Klein Sokol, Rona Smith, Harriet Kutler, Sam Frank, Lester Grumer, Hyman Greenbaum

**Music Fund**
Retirement of: Marty Ricks • Yahrzeit of: Nathan Shukert

**Prayer Book Fund**
In Memory of: Beverly Fellman

**Programming Fund**
Birthday of: Joanie Jacobson, Laurel Krausman

**Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund**
In Memory of: Sam Fried • Yahrzeit of: Richard Murow, Jacob Natkins, Libby Natkins, Charles Guss, Jennie Veitzer, Lena Greenbaum

**Scholarship Fund**
Birthday of: Steve Nogg, Laurel Krausman, Ruth Potash, Joanie Jacobson, Eadie Tsabari • In Appreciation of: Rabbi Steven Abraham, Hazzan Michael Krausman • In Memory of: Sam Fried, Janette Salkin • Recovery of: Harold Zabin • Retirement of: Larry DeBruin • Yahrzeit of: Aaron Snyder

**USY Fund**
Yahrzeit of: Louis Abramson

**Youth Education Fund**
Birthday of: Eadie Tsabari • Recovery of: Debbie Roitstein • Yahrzeit of: J. Lewis Yager, Eugene Giventer

Beth El Synagogue invites you to join us in honoring

**Larry DeBruin**
As he retires as our Executive Director after serving our congregation for 25 years

**FRIDAY, JUNE 17**

6:00 pm, Kabbalat Shabbat services followed by a festive Shabbat dinner

**Early Bird Pricing by Friday, June 10**
$25 adults | $10 children 7-12 | children 6 and under are free

**After June 10**
$35 adults | $18 children 7-12 | children 6 and under are free

*No reservations can be accepted after Wednesday, June 15*

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**Kollectibles**

- Mazel Tov to Bob Belgrade, for being named the Jewish Federation of Omaha’s Humanitarian of the Year.
- Mazel Tov to Janie Murow who was named the Institute for Holocaust Education’s Volunteer of the Year.
- Mazel Tov to Beth Dworkin and Joanie Jacobson who were named the Jewish Federation of Omaha’s Volunteers of the Year.
- Mazel Tov to Rich Juro for being named Volunteer of the Year for the ADL/CRC.
Save the Date for Beth El’s End of Summer Festival
Monday, September 5 (Labor Day), 11 am - 3 pm

Beth El Synagogue is starting an exciting new tradition, hosting an End of Summer Festival on Monday, September 5. This event is designed to appeal to people of all ages and is open to the entire Jewish community. Currently, plans call for a wide range of activities:

Eternal Light Stage – the heart of the festival, with three main bands plus local acts performing throughout the day.

Kid Zone – for kids and kids at heart, the Kid Zone will have face painting, inflatables, a photo booth, animals and more!

Picnic Patch – get some delicious food while enjoying the day’s entertainment.

Community Shuk – A variety of vendors will exhibit their wares, most of which will be available for purchase.

The Marketing Engagement Committee is hard at work planning the details of this event. Logistics Manager Danny Cohn said, “The purpose of the festival is to engage current members of Beth El in a cross-generational program that uses our facilities. Plus, we want to gain attention from the wider Jewish community as the ‘place to be’. It’s going to be huge!”

A number of sponsorship opportunities starting at $180 will be available for individuals and businesses to help sponsor booths, entrance fees and/or the key areas of the festivals. Sponsors will be promoted on signage, in print and online advertising, and naming rights will be available for the Kid Zone, Eternal Light Stage and Community Shuk.

Anyone interested in participating in the festival as a vendor, volunteer or sponsor, should contact Festival Co-Chairs Lisa Marcus at lglieb@yahoo.com or Caryn Scheer at carynscheer@yahoo.com. Be sure to save the date and join us at Beth El for this amazing end-of-summer event!
B’Ruchim HaBa’im – Welcome to Our New Members!

- Ana Cruz-Backman, Judith, Helena and Miles
- Chris & Fran Edwards Family
- Patrick & Lori Elwood
- Jesse Lyda & Beth Katz, and Zev Katz-Lyda
- Adam & Julia Frank
- Gary & Karen Javitch
- Chad & Robyn Menin, Kooper and Charlie
- Danny Cohn & Andrew Miller, and Nora Miller-Cohn
- Donny & Ellie Novak, and Cecilia
- David Pitlor
- Jason, Julie, Ariel & Elana Rife
- Tal & Shir Sandler and Jonathan
- Jeff & Barb Shapiro
- Lev Shekhtman & Elizabeth May
- Michael Small
- Ben & Tina Spatz

Cruz-Backman Family: (from middle left) Judith, Alan & Ana, (front low) Helena & Miles with other family members

Edwards Family: (from back left) O’Bryen, Siobhan, Gaviella, Malcolm, Fran, Lochlan, Chris & Rhys

Sandler Family: (from left) Shir, Jonathan & Tal

Michael Small

Miller-Cohn Family: (from left) Danny Cohn, Andrew Miller & Nora Miller-Cohn

Elizabeth May & Lev Shekhtman
YOUR HOME FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

Barb & Jeff Shapiro with their grandkids
Adam & Julia Frank
Ellie, Cecilia & Donny Novak
Katz-Lyda Family: (from left) Jesse Lyda, Zev Katz-Lyda & Beth Katz
Rife Family: (from left) Jason, Ariel & Julie

Mathew A. Davey, M.D., FAAD
James M. Shehan, M.D., FAAD
Amy K. Price, PA-C
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Beth El Synagogue, Omaha, NE E 4C 02-1034
Greetings! It is so hard to believe that Summer is just around the corner. You would never know this with the rainy weather we have had. The seasons continue to pass by so quickly and time never seems to stand still. We lead such busy lives. My first year as Sisterhood President has flown by. I am happy to have seen so many great things go on at Beth El. There is still more to come.

Thank you to Tippi Deneberg for hosting Rosh Hodesh last month. It was a great experience to learn how to make challah. She showed us some great tips on how to make a delicious challah and make it seem effortless. If you can host a Rosh Hodesh Event please contact me at ljlaz0609@gmail.com or Margie Gutnik at programming@bethel-omaha.org. Sisterhood will reimburse all costs for snacks for your events. If you have any ideas for an event let me know and we will try to make it happen.

Sisterhood was proud to give an award to graduating senior, Brooke Shulewitz. What a well deserved award for a great teen!

Thank you to Darlene Golbitz for managing the Women’s Book Club this year.

Before you know it, the New Year will be here again. How sweet that will be. That means it’s time to write out your list so that you are ready to purchase honey for all of the sweet people in your life. If you ordered honey last year, in June you will receive a copy of last year’s order. Jars will be $11 each, which includes free shipping for orders placed prior to July 27. There are NO EXCEPTIONS, so if you plan to order your honey please do so prior to July 27. There will be delivery by Rosh Hashanah for orders placed thru September 15, but there will be a shipping charge of $4 per jar for orders that are placed after July 28. International shipping rates apply to ALL orders placed regardless of the date of the order. Erev Rosh Hashanah is October 2. Orders will be accepted through the High Holy Days, but there are no guarantees of the delivery date.

Kudos to Eadie Tsabari and her staff for carrying out another successful year of BESTT. Our children are so fortunate to be part of an educational program that is filled with an abundance of engaging activities and learning opportunities that enrich their lives.

Please continue to fill the Blue Buckets in the community court with donations for JFS’s food pantry. See page 13 so that you know what the needs are.

Have fun in the sun this summer.

Many blessings!

Linda J. Fischer

We Share Your Joy

On the Birth of:

- Nadav Gedaliah Feldstern
  Son of Yonatan & Liz Feldstern
# June/July 2016 Calendar

**June**

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<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Kamp Kef</td>
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<td>6:15 pm</td>
<td>Minyan &amp; More Class</td>
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<td>Mincha/Ma’ariv</td>
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<td>Ma’ariv &amp; Havdallah followed by Cheese cake and Study Session with Dr. Baruch Feld stern</td>
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<td>Wed. 22</td>
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<td>Minyan &amp; More Class</td>
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<td>Fri. 24</td>
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<td>NE AIDS Coalition Luncheon</td>
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**July**

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<td>Mon. 4</td>
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<td>Morning Minyan</td>
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<td>Shabbat Picnic at the Lake</td>
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<td>Tue. 19</td>
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<td>Torah Study</td>
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### The Jewish Family Service Food Pantry Needs Our Help

The Jewish Family Service Food Pantry is especially looking for the following item for the community in need:

**Kleenex**

Items should be brought to the collection bins at Beth El Synagogue’s Community Court in June and July.
Anniversaries
With 5-Year Multiples

June
- Gary & Lisa Epstein
- Robert & Barbara Epstein
- Stuart & Barbara Giller
- Marcel & Ilse Kahn
- Harvey & Marilyn Konigsberg
- Ira & Carol Nathan
- Alan & Carol Parsow
- Sidney & Maureen Rosenblatt
- Eitan & Eadie Tsabari
- Benjamin & Anna Wiesman

July
- John Atherton & Marti
- Rosen-Atherton
- Ryan & Lisa Cooper
- Jason & Laurie Epstein
- Bruce & Pamela Friedlander
- Michael & Meta Gerson
- David Herzog & Julianne
- Dunn-Herzog
- Mark & Heather Kelln
- Michael & Marina Sadofsky
- Douglas & Crystal Smith
- Gady & Mindy Tene

Mazel Tov to Beth El’s Annual Award Winners

President’s Award to a Non-Board Member - Donald Goldstein
Donald has been a staunch behind-the-scenes supporter of many of Beth El’s initiatives. He regularly can be seen attending morning minyan and along with Sandy Friedman, initiated a drive a few years ago to encourage others to attend. He has been a Patron member of the synagogue from the program’s inception, and has long supported Scholar-in-Residence opportunities for congregational learning. Most recently, he and his wife Andi hosted a Patron event this fall when Rabbi Bradley Artson was a visiting scholar. Donald’s commitment to and support of Beth El is because he considers the synagogue his home. Let it serve to all of us as an example of involvement and caring.

Earl Siegel Award to a Board Member 2015 - Lloyd Roitstein
Lloyd was traveling last summer and unable to accept his award, which he received for his work with the Life & Legacy campaign. His continued effort to ensure a strong future of our congregation has extended well beyond his term as President of the Board of Trustees. Under Lloyd’s capable management of this project, nearly 90 people have made commitments to help secure the future of Beth El. We can be doubly proud of him because Beth El has secured more commitments than any other participating organization in the Jewish community. We are grateful for Lloyd’s love and devotion to Beth El Synagogue.

Earl Siegel Award to a Board Member 2016 - Barry Zoob
As chair of the Marketing Committee, Barry has been instrumental in leading the charge to brainstorm and implement initiatives designed to position Beth El as a congregation not only for the 21st century but for generations to come. Under his leadership, Beth El has streamlined the appearance of our online publications, created a new logo and tagline, and implemented the very successful ‘Voices of Beth El’ series. His mission is to ensure that Beth El finds new opportunities to engage our membership, tell our own story and have people recognize that this is “the place to be” in the Jewish community. Barry continually pushes his committee to strive for excellence and to achieve outstanding results.

In Memoriam
Beth El extends profound sympathy to the families of:

Pauline Landman
Esther Wax
Stanley J. (Jerry) Wolpa

May their memory always be for a blessing.

Beth El Synagogue sincerely thanks Benjamin and Anna Wiesman for establishing the following named synagogue fund:

1st Benjamin and Anna Wiesman Family Chapel Endowment Fund

We greatly appreciate your generosity!
Emerging Leader Award - Abigail and Adam Kutler
Together, Abby and Adam are a force to be reckoned with. They are regulars at Tot Shabbat; Babies, Bigger Kids and Bagels; Our Shabbat Tables and all family and holiday celebrations at Beth El. As chairs of the Young Adult Committee for the past two years, they have taken on the responsibility of planning and publicity for all the group’s events. Adam participated in Beth El’s first Sulam for Emerging Leaders, serves on the Board of Trustees and the Men’s Club board, and has been an active member of the Marketing committee. Abby enthusiastically welcomes new synagogue members with her unique blend of warmth and friendship, delivering welcome bags and encouraging new members to join her family at various synagogue programs and events. Together with their boys Sam and Henry, Adam and Abby are dedicated to carrying on the long-standing Kutler legacy of active participation and devotion to Beth El - and our synagogue is the richer for it.

Selwyn Roffman Award for Religious Growth - Torah Study Group
You’ll find them in Beth El Synagogue’s library every Sunday morning, engrossed in their pursuit of knowledge and understanding. A truly unique group of men and women bound by a common interest: the cerebral pursuit of Torah. Beth El’s Torah Study Group is considered by many to be Omaha’s longest, continuous and consistent adult education group, meeting regularly since 1999. 17 years later, they show no signs of slowing down, even after having completed Torah’s five books many times over. Although the group is fluid and welcomes newcomers at any time, there are seasoned veterans who have been attending since the beginning. They can, perhaps, be considered the “patriarchs” & “matriarchs”, those whose guidance, determination and consistency have kept the group going all this time. Steve Riekes, a longtime champion of Jewish education, serves as the informal coordinator of the Torah study group and shares facilitating duties with other regulars including Dick Fellman, Marty Shukert and Howard Epstein. Others who are part of the group include Rami Arav, Michelle Byrnes, Leonard Greenspoon, David Herzog, Howard Kaiman, Lynda Mirvish, Gilda Pieck, and Iris Varkony.

Larry DeBruin Award for Service to the Synagogue - Ben Shapiro
Ben has served our congregation as a service leader for High Holy Days, daily minyan and Shabbat services, in addition to being a regular Torah reader and Megillah reader. Ben has been a long-time member of the religious life committee and a member of the Board of Trustees. He has been very involved in Men’s Club, including serving on their board and participating in many of their events and programs such as Jews and Brews, building the sukkah, World Wide Wrap and the Yellow Candle Project. He was also a past recipient of their Man of the Year award. Ben designed the architecture for our computer network and as a volunteer has maintained it for many years, even working with United Synagogue concerning our website. His talents also include his recent participation in the choir for the Cantor’s Concert. Ben truly personifies this new award of service to the synagogue.

TOT SHABBAT
Friday, August 5, JCC Pavilion
5:30 pm, Jewish themed games and activities
6:00 pm, Services
6:30 pm, Picnic Shabbat Dinner
Be part of a different and VERY special Summertime Tot Shabbat celebration at the JCC. Bring a dairy or vegetarian picnic dinner for your family. Beth El will provide dessert and beverages. We’ll enjoy singing, movement and prayer outside at the JCC. Join other families with young children to explore the wonder and value of Jewish community. Designed for children 2nd grade and younger, but all are welcome!

NO CHARGE to attend, but please register online to let us know you are coming.
When reminiscing about their connection to Beth El, many previous Voices participants describe the Synagogue’s influence in shaping their adult views. For Howard Kaslow, that influence manifested itself in the classroom. “I have always felt a strong connection to Judaism and I think my education at Beth El played an important part in that outcome.”

He continued, “I confess to being part of the occasional discipline problems the teachers encountered and I’ve enjoyed reading other Voices of Beth El profiles where congregants confessed to that as well.”

Howard says the Hebrew School environment was much different than today, where the school runs a variety of various enrichment and extra-curricular activities and has older students working as TA’s in the classrooms. “As best I can recall, there were no Tot Shabbats, Shabbatons, and other family activities that today serve to help connect young families with the synagogue and each other.”

Today, the Kaslows enjoy Friday evening services, the Cantor’s Concerts, and other special synagogue events. “I am pleased to see the Synagogue attracting new members, particularly young families. Conservative Judaism seems right for Gloria and me. We appreciate the Conservative movement’s efforts to honor the principles of Conservative Judaism while at the same time welcoming non-traditional members and generally being more inclusive,” Howard said.

“Volunteerism is a very important aspect of Omaha, and in my experience and observation, the community is welcoming to those who want to be involved. The cooperative spirit of the Jewish community and its synagogue congregations, along with the wonderful opportunities that the Jewish community provides for its younger members through scholarships and group trips, are important attributes that one may not always find elsewhere,” Howard said.

In particular, Howard said, Beth El is welcoming of all who want to be a part of synagogue life. “It has very dedicated lay leadership and clergy who are genuinely committed to making Beth El a place where anyone who is seeking a connection to Judaism can find that connection in a way that best fits him or her.”

Emily Kutler

A vivacious and endearing 14 year old, Emily Kutler’s earliest memory at Beth El is standing on chairs reciting the Hebrew alphabet with Eadie Tsabari. “Every Wednesday I complained about going to Hebrew school, but once I went through the doors, there was no place I’d rather be,” Emily said.

Whenever she is at Beth El, she is reminded of how important the Jewish community is to her. “Beth El is honestly my home away from home, well, besides Herzl camp. I appreciate the family I am surrounded by every time I go to synagogue.”

Emily is a Madrichim (assistant teacher) in BESTT and is very active in USY. Emily’s personality shines through every Sunday morning. Margie Gutnik, Beth El Program Director said, “In my eyes, Emily is an awesome kid! She is someone who is full of sunshine. She is always upbeat, always has a smile and is that rare combination of kids... someone who is bright, sweet, adorable, funny, and the kind of kid other kids AND adults want to be around.”

Being a Jewish teen in a town where the Jewish geography is increasingly spread out across the city from north to south and east to west has its challenges in 2016. “There aren’t very many Westside kids that go to Beth El, so most of my Jewish friends at school go to different synagogues.”

“However,” Emily continued, “my Beth El friendships have had an influence on me. They have taught me to be outgoing and that being yourself is more important than being the type of person you want people to think you are. Beth El friendships make me love being Jewish.”

Her favorite memory, she says, was when BILU, (Beth El’s USY region), floated down a river for four hours. “It was the greatest thing because ten Jewish teens were stuck together without a care in the world at the time. It didn’t matter that the river we were floating down was probably one of the grossest things ever; I still had a blast!”

Listen to the Voices of Beth El

Excerpts of the Voices of Beth El series will continue to be published in the Kol. To see the complete articles, visit www.bethel-omaha.org.
Join Us for Adult B’nai Mitzvah Shabbat with Sophie Ambrose and Alice Weiss

Saturday, June 11, 9:30 am

On Saturday, June 11, during Shabbat morning services, Sophie Ambrose and Alice Weiss will become B’nai Mitzvah. They have studied with Hazzan weekly for the past two years to reach this milestone. We asked them to reflect on what their motivation was to begin and see this process through, something that is often a difficult commitment for adults while they are juggling day-to-day work and family responsibilities.

Sophie Ambrose shares her thoughts on becoming a Bat Mitzvah as an adult. “Although my mother was raised in a Jewish household, my sisters and I weren’t raised with a specific religion in the home. Instead, my parents provided us the flexibility and encouragement to find our own path. As a young adult, a world religions class left me intrigued with Judaism’s emphasis on morality, community and education. Eventually, a Birthright Israel trip solidified my connection to the religion and culture, and resulted in me making Judaism a part of my daily life.

In some ways, I think the fact that I “chose” Judaism has made my connection to the religion and culture especially strong, which has made me grateful for my parents having not chosen Judaism for me as a child. However, there have also been moments of feeling as if I missed out on experiences my peers all shared, and one of those was having a Bat Mitzvah. I knew that this was an experience I wanted to have, but it never quite fit into my busy schedule.

However, when I became pregnant, the importance of my completing this tradition felt magnified; I certainly wanted to complete this milestone before my son. Thus, when he was only two months old, I started attending Hazzan’s weekly class. The class has been a very positive experience for me, making me more connected to Beth El, more engaged in services and more confident in my Jewish knowledge. I am very grateful to Hazzan for his patient teaching, Alice for sharing this experience with me, my husband and in-laws for caring for Will while I attended class, and to the congregants and Rabbi for engaging with my high-energy son during services so I could prepare for this milestone.”

Alice Weiss similarly shared her thoughts on this milestone occasion, responding to some questions that Hazzan posed:

**Why did you want to do this? Why now at this point in your life?**

“I first read Torah about 15 years ago and found it a very meaningful experience. I wanted to reconnect with that feeling of being part of the community, both local and worldwide, in sharing this experience with Jews all over the world.”

**What were your expectations of this experience before you began?**

“Since I could read Hebrew I thought I would just need brushing up, but I found it lots more challenging, especially learning the cantillation. Years ago I learned my Torah portion by memorizing the trope from a tape recorder. This time I learned the cantillation first, and it was like learning a foreign language. Although it was easier for me to memorize, I’m so glad I learned the cantillation because it will help me in being able to read Torah in the future.

**Has the journey toward this milestone changed you in any way?**

“I feel more able to not just participate in the service, but also to contribute and give back. That’s important to me.”

**What would you tell someone else to encourage them to become an adult B’nai mitzvah?**

“Take the challenge. It’s a meaningful and worthwhile journey, and besides the Hazzan tells great jokes and will keep you laughing.”

We applaud Sophie and Alice’s dedication and invite you to celebrate with them!
Longtime Executive Director Takes on New Role as Retiree - by Jill Belmont

Larry DeBruin, Beth El’s executive director for the past 24-plus years, has worn multiple hats to keep the synagogue running smoothly and attend to congregants’ needs. Last month he packed those hats away and retired.

There was no such thing as an eight-hour day for DeBruin, who listed his cell number as an emergency contact for Beth El after hours. He fielded middle-of-the-night calls from police and fire personnel, sometimes meeting them at the synagogue to figure out what tripped an alarm. He received calls from hospitals whose patients had asked for the rabbi. He addressed leaky roofs, security, and the computer network. And that was just the tip of the hat rack.

The job of executive director has changed and expanded over the years, DeBruin said, with the addition of fundraising and development responsibilities. The demographics of an aging congregation, plus keeping up with the needs of new, younger Beth El members kept him on his toes. And security concerns, not a factor two decades ago, are now front and center.

One thing that didn’t change was his supportive role in his congregants’ lives, during both joyful and difficult times. “If the phone rang and a congregant needed something -- for instance, if someone lost a loved one and was calling to say, ‘What do I do? What’s my next step?’ I always thought it was important to be there for them, to be truly responsive, responsible and supportive. Whether it was a celebration of brit milah or baby naming, or helping someone after the death of a loved one, it was always about taking care of the people – the relationships and serving the congregation, no question about it,” he said. “We’re a business but a business with a heart, and I was always committed to maintaining that focus.”

Larry DeBruin became Beth El’s executive director in October 1991, shortly after the synagogue moved from its home on 49th and Farnam Street to its current location. From the get-go he took special pride in caring for the new facility.

“It was always my goal to make sure that our building always stayed pristine,” he said. “It shows its age, but overall it’s a facility we can be proud of. It’s warm, it’s welcoming. People come here from all around the country and they’re amazed by what a jewel it is in the Jewish community.”

Moe Feingold, one of the architects who designed Beth El so many years ago, recently sent DeBruin a note, congratulating him on his retirement and thanking him “for taking care of my building.”

Several former and current Beth El clergy and synagogue presidents also expressed their appreciation for DeBruin’s service to the congregation.

“A synagogue is, for many of us, our second home and Larry has been its keeper for 24 years, putting the needs of our congregation above all else,” said Rabbi Steven Abraham. “As a new rabbi, Larry was both a mentor and mensch, helping me find my way while at the same time being understanding of the fact that I was still wet behind the ears. His care and compassion for congregants were as if they were his own family, something that will stick with me for my entire career. Our congregation has been extremely lucky to have had someone as dedicated, compassionate and wise watching over our home.”

Hazzaan Michael Krausman said, “I have had the pleasure of working closely with Larry for the nearly five years that I have been at Beth El. From the moment I arrived I was impressed by his warm, kind and generous personality. Even before we settled in Omaha, Larry and his wonderful wife, Hanna, spent hours helping us find a home. Larry even took time to personally inspect our new house and make sure it was right for us before Laurel and I even saw it!”

“What always impressed me was that Larry has an unending love for Beth El and each member of the Beth El family. I could always count on him to know details about the members of our community, their family history, their level of involvement at Beth El, and anything else that there was to know. This, combined with his intimate knowledge of our building and systems, was just one of the many attributes that made him such an amazing executive director.”

“Although we are grateful that Larry will still be an active member of our community we will miss having his expertise as well as his warmth, openness, caring and deep concern here in the office,” Hazzaan Krausman added. “Together with my wife, Laurel, and our sons Zev and Zach, I wish him the most wonderful retirement and all kinds of success, nachas and happiness in the future.”

“I had been involved with several executive directors in my time but I found that Larry was so much more,” said Cantor Emil Berkovits, Beth El’s cantor from 1981 to 2003. “In the 12 years I worked with Larry, I realized that he was not only an employee of Beth El but also a friend to all, making sure that everyone’s needs were filled. What better employee or friend would anyone need? Lili and I wish him a pleasant retirement, and know he will enjoy the grandchildren together with Hanna. Mazal tov!”

“The position of executive director is likely the most difficult position to define in a synagogue,” said Rabbi
Paul Drazan, who led Beth El's congregation from 1982 to 2002. "Unlike the clergy or education director, the number of tasks and roles open to an executive director can be endless. As I sat with Larry, I offered this guideline, 'Each job at a synagogue has a mitzvah at its core. The mitzvah of the executive director is hakhnasat orkhim – welcoming guests.' The mitzvah covers the gamut from how the phone is answered to how the building looks. It means making the entry into sacred space a welcoming one, no matter the reason for a person entering.

"Larry took that mandate to heart and he fulfilled the mitzvah of hakhnasat orkhim on behalf of Beth El for nearly a quarter century," Rabbi Drazan said. "Whether coming to worship, to celebrate, to take care of business or to mourn, Larry saw to it that the greeting was appropriate, the support generous and meaningful. It's no easy task to manage the various ins-and-outs of synagogue life and to do so with aplomb. Larry has done so. For his 25 years of service to Beth El, longer to the Jewish community, Susie joins me in wishing the DeBruins all the best."

Michael Abramson served on the search committee that interviewed Larry for the executive director position. From his first impression, he knew DeBruin was "a perfect fit." Years later, when he was synagogue president, Abramson recalled that, "We spoke no less than four times a day to go over every aspect of Beth El's operation. Larry organized and planned almost every lifecycle event at the synagogue. People do not know how hard he worked and how much he loved the synagogue and its congregants. This was an extension of his family. It will be hard to replace this love and devotion. I was lucky to have him at my side while I was president. More importantly, we are all lucky to have had him at Beth El. He will be missed."

Bruce Shackman also served on that search committee. After the initial phone interview, he felt confident that Larry was the right choice for the job. Subsequent personal interviews only solidified that belief.

"The test of time has obviously shown that we made the perfect choice 25 years ago," Shackman said. "Larry has truly been one of Beth El's most valuable assets. He worked with three rabbis, four cantors, over a dozen presidents, multiple programming, youth and education directors, and multiple boards, as well as staff people. He knew every nook and cranny of our synagogue and did an excellent job overseeing the maintenance of our facilities. His compassion was evident, and he was of tremendous service to Beth El, both publicly and behind the scenes. We all owe Larry a debt of gratitude for a job so well done."

Saying that "Larry lived up to his title as executive director of Beth El," former president Bruce Friedlander added, "To navigate almost 25 years of lay leadership was a remarkable accomplishment. Larry loves Beth El, and his service to Beth El and our community came from his heart. For that, we all should be grateful."

Another former president, Sally Zipursky, noted that, "It's so hard to come up with the right thoughts about Larry. He has been such a permanent fixture at Beth El for so many years. Anything you needed, you asked Larry. Any family history, you asked Larry. Larry is one of the kindest, most empathetic people I have ever met. He treated every congregant as if they were a member of his family, because Beth El is his family. I'm very excited for Larry to retire and spend more time with his family, but there will be a void every time I come in the building and he isn't there to greet me with a hug and a kiss!"

Immediate Past President Joel Rich applauded DeBruin for his dedicated service, and pointed out his involvement in the recent Beth El Cemetery improvements.

"Larry's assistance with the Cemetery Expansion Program started during the early discussions about our needs and continued through the fundraising, contract and construction," Rich said. "The cemetery was always available when needed, even in the midst of construction. He worked to make the cemetery and Epstein Chapel a warm and welcoming place."

Rich noted that Beth El has established the Larry DeBruin Service to Beth El Synagogue Annual Award. The community will honor DeBruin at a special tribute dinner at Beth El on Friday, June 17, 6 pm. See page 8 for details.

DeBruin said he looks forward to reading for pleasure, traveling with his wife, spending time with his two (and one on the way) grandchildren, attending to a 25-year-old honey-do list, and taking leisurely walks.

The new retiree has tossed aside all the synagogue hats he wore for so long. And for the sake of a good night's sleep, let's hope he also deleted his cell number as the emergency contact on the synagogue's answering system.
Passing the Mantle

Newly installed President Jim Zipursky thanks Joel Rich for his leadership on Beth El’s Board of Trustees.

Candle Lighting & Service Times

Friday Evening Candle Lighting:

**June**
- June 3 .......................8:34 pm
- June 10 .....................8:38 pm
- June 17 ......................8:41 pm
- June 24 ......................8:42 pm

**July**
- July 1 .......................8:42 pm
- July 8 .......................8:40 pm
- July 15 ......................8:36 pm
- July 22 ......................8:31 pm
- July 29 ......................8:24 pm

Mincha/Ma’ariv Service Schedule:

**June**
- June 4 .......................8:30 pm
- June 11 ......................8:30 pm
- June 18 ......................8:30 pm
- June 25 ......................8:45 pm

**July**
- July 2 .......................8:45 pm
- July 9 .......................8:45 pm
- July 16 ......................8:45 pm
- July 23 ......................8:45 pm
- July 30 ......................8:30 pm

Weekday Services at 7:00 am and 5:30 pm

Sunday Services at 9:00 am and 5:30 pm

The last day of BESTT featured a delicious breakfast, an amazing talent show, & good friends. Have a wonderful summer!

Marcus of Omaha Fine Photography