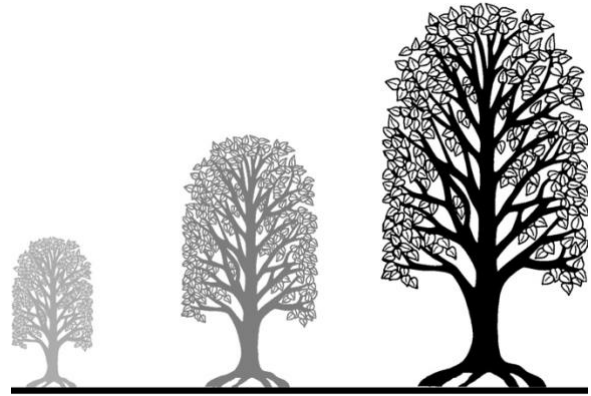


BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION
862 Washington Street
Bath, Maine 04530



January/February 2024

Tevet /Shevat/Adar I 5784

President's Message

by Marilyn Weinberg

On Sunday morning, December 17, we opened our email and found a letter addressed to Beth Israel with a threat that there were bombs in our synagogue. Even with the knowledge that the building was locked and safe from intruders, it was very unsettling. We had read about threats at other Jewish institutions, but somehow thought Maine had been spared. We later learned that in subsequent days this threat had spread throughout out the country.

After a consult with Peggy Brown, I got into action mode. First step was to talk to the Bath police department who were immediately responsive. They agreed to talk to other police departments to see if other places had received a similar threat. I contacted the JCA in Portland as well as the local FBI. A walk through at both of our buildings with Bath police showed that our buildings were safe. With that knowledge we went into communication mode, talking with other members as well as others from the wider Jewish community.

The entire episode became a larger learning experience. The support from many of you as well as other Maine congregations, both Jewish and non-Jewish, was overwhelmingly positive. We got letters of support from the Maine Council of Churches, members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick and the First Parish Church of Brunswick. And I can't say enough about the support from the JCA in Portland. Executive director Molly Curren Rowles communicated with us throughout the day.

The important learning from this experience isn't the message from the hate mongers who originated the hoax, it is the awareness of the wonderful support we have throughout our community. I am very grateful for the care and love I received from members of our Beth Israel community.

I am always strengthened when we are together as a community. Whether we are celebrating a holiday, participating in a community read, or attending services it makes a difference. I hope you will consider coming out, even in the cold of January and February, to participate in a Beth Israel activity. We have a number of lay leaders and visiting rabbis leading services in the next few months. Let's come together to support them and each other as we continue to make our way during these times of uncertainty and challenges.

Upcoming Shabbat Services

by Marilyn Weinberg

Over the next two months we are so fortunate to have some wonderful lay leaders and several visiting rabbis conducting Shabbat services while Rabbi Vinikoor is on her well-deserved Sabbatical. It means a lot to these “volunteers” for you to attend these services. They all have taken time out of their busy schedules to support us in Bath and to just be together in community.

January 12 - 7:00 pm

Shabbat evening services followed by oneg
led by Rabbi Erica Asch from Temple Beth El in Augusta
(Zoom and in-person)

January 13 - 10:00 am

Shabbat morning service led by Rabbi Erica Asch
(Zoom and in-person)

January 26 - 7:00 pm

Shabbat evening services followed by oneg
Led by Joe Blumberg, our Rabbi student intern

January 27 - 10:00 am

Shabbat morning service led by Joe Blumberg

February 9 - 7:00 pm

Shabbat evening services followed by oneg
Led by Robert Gersh

February 10 - 10:00 am

Shabbat morning Refugee Shabbat service
Led by Michelle Lisi-D’Alauro

February 23 - 7:00 pm

Shabbat evening service led by Marilyn Weinberg
(Zoom only)

February 24 - 10:00 am

Shabbat morning service led by Irwin Brodsky

March 8 - 7:00 pm

Shabbat evening services followed by oneg
Led by Rabbi Sruli Dresdner (This will be a musical service)
(Zoom and in-person)

March 9 - 10:00 am

Shabbat morning service led by Irwin Brodsky



Refugee Shabbat

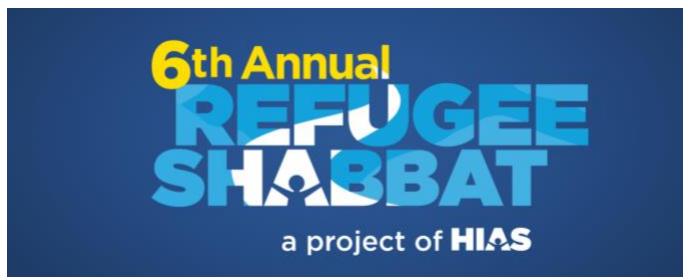
by Michelle Lisi-D'Alauro

February 10, 2024

10:00 am – Shabbat Morning Service

11:30 am – Potluck Lunch

[HIAS' Sixth Annual Refugee Shabbat](#) is an invitation for congregations, organizations, and individuals to express their solidarity with the global Jewish movement for refugee protection. Join us for a morning service and potluck to learn more about refugee communities in Maine. Please reach out to Michelle Lisi if there are New Mainer families that you would like to invite.



Message from Joe Blumberg, Rabbinical Student Intern

To my Beth Israel friends,

One of my favorite aspects of Jewish tradition is that we have so many opportunities in our year to start fresh. There's Rosh Hashanah, of course, when we look back at the passing year and consider how we might like to change our lives going forward. But the Talmud tells us about three other "new years:" Passover, which marks our birth as a Jewish people after we received Torah at Mt. Sinai; Elul, which marks the beginning of the fall holidays; and Tu BiShvat, the new year of the trees and the beginning of spring.

Each of these new years brings the promise of new life, new thought processes, and new possibilities. When you add birthdays and secular New Years, we each have about half a dozen opportunities to begin anew every year! So as 2023 comes to a close and we approach New Years and Tu BiShvat (January 25), may we all grow spiritually and intellectually, explore new challenges, and find ways to return to what we really care about.



It has been such a pleasure getting to know this extraordinary community, and I'm so looking forward to my next visit to Bath at the end of January. We'll celebrate a special Tu BiShvat seder with the Hebrew School (it's one of my newly favorite holidays!), and I'll be leading Shabbat services on Friday evening and Saturday morning. I hope to see many of you throughout the weekend!

Torah Study at the Shul

by Peggy Brown

Been thinking about renewing your connection to Judaism but not sure how? Take a step with lay-led Torah study on Monday afternoons at 1:00 pm at the synagogue. Usually led by Rabbi Vinikoor, Norma and Peggy are stepping up to guide the discussion on Torah portions while the Rabbi is on Sabbatical. No previous knowledge needed but if you do have expertise, come and share it! You'll enjoy the lively conversation in a small group setting.

January 8	Torah Portion Shemot
January 22	Torah Portion Bo
February 5	Torah Portion Yitro
February 19	Torah Portion Terumah
March 4	Torah Portion Vayakhel

Community Read

by Debbie Smyth

Date: January 21, 2024

Time: 2:00–4:00 pm

Location: Synagogue

Book: *The Best Place on Earth: Stories* by Ayelet Tsabari

Please hold the date and join us for a discussion of *The Best Place on Earth*.

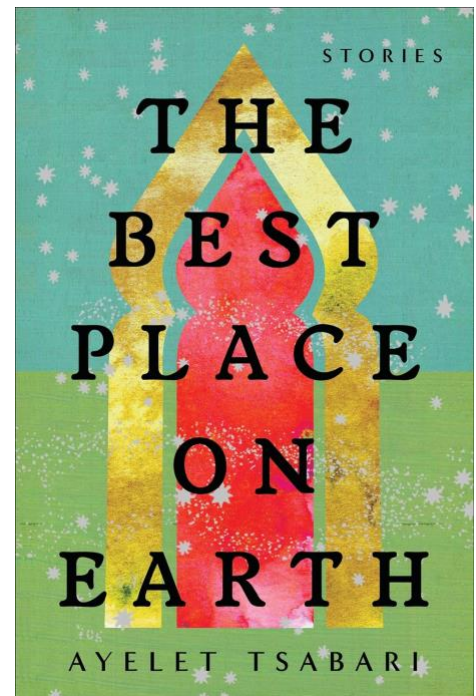
Ayelet Tsabari's award-winning debut collection of stories is global in scope but intimate in feel, beautifully written, and emotionally powerful. From Israel, India, and Canada, eleven spell-binding stories grapple with love, violence, faith, identity, and balancing old traditions with modern times.

The stories often focus on Israel's Mizrahi Jews, mothers and children, soldiers and bohemians, lovers and best friends, all searching for their place in the world.

Tsabari, born in Israel to a large family of Yemeni descent, illuminates the burdens of history, the strength of the heart, and our universal desire to belong.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Debbie Smyth at communityread@bethisraelbath.org

To register and receive information about this event click [HERE](#).



Dine Around

by Elaine Koufman

Lunch seems to be a preference these winter months.
I met the nicest people by joining this group.
Hope you will come. Please join us. Bring a friend.

Thursday January 18 at 12:30 pm

[Broadarrow Tavern at Harrakeeset Inn](#)

Freeport

Tuesday February 20 at 12:30 pm

[Joshua's Tavern](#)

Brunswick

Please RSVP which lunch or both that you will be attending.

dinnerclub@bethisraelbath.org



Yoga for Cultivating Balance Workshop

by Sheila Cohen

Sunday, February 18

2:00–4:00 pm

Zoom only

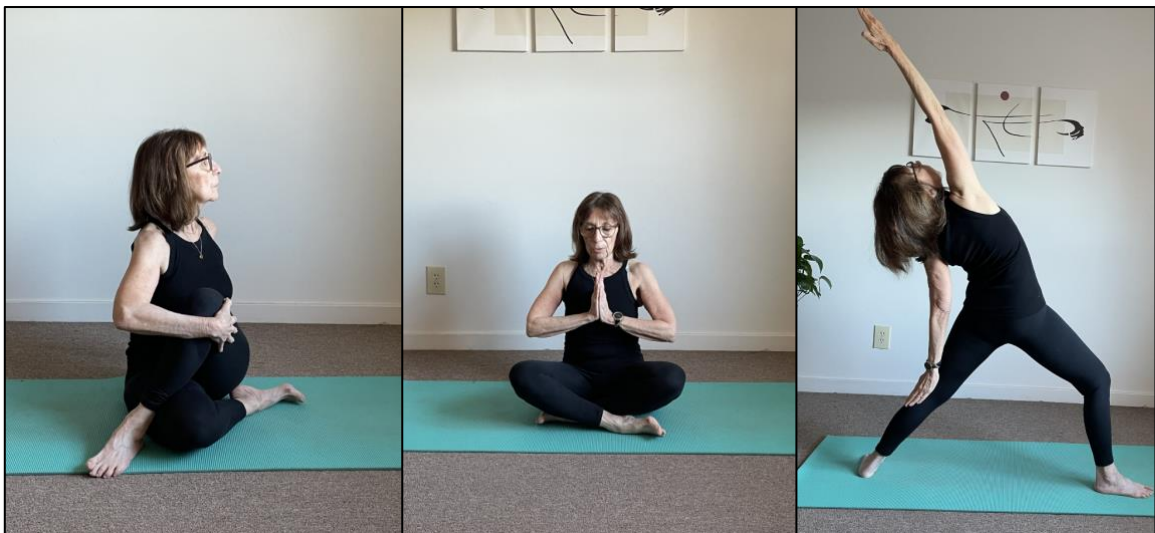
Are you interested in Yogic terms such as “Strengthen your core” or “Center your body”?

Please join Sheila Cohen, yoga teacher and explore your core balance. Practice traditional yoga postures that awaken your mind and body, meditation, and breath techniques to calm the mind. Sequences are tailor made to suit the needs of experienced practitioners on the mat, or newcomers who prefer to sit in a chair.

Please bring a yoga mat and/or a sturdy chair without arms.

Donations to Beth Israel Congregation are welcome.

Please click [HERE](#) to register.



Inscribed: Encounters with the Ten Commandments

by Rabbi Vinikoor

This spring, join Rabbi Vinikoor for a thought-provoking deep dive into the Ten Commandments. The class will center on the book *Inscribed: Encounters with the Ten Commandments*, edited by Rabbi Oren Hayon. Join us for conversation, learning and community.

All classes will be held at the synagogue. We will be purchasing the book in bulk and asking you to pay at the first class for the cost of the book (approximately \$20). Register [HERE](#) by March 1.

Class dates and times:

March 24, 10:00 am–12:00 pm

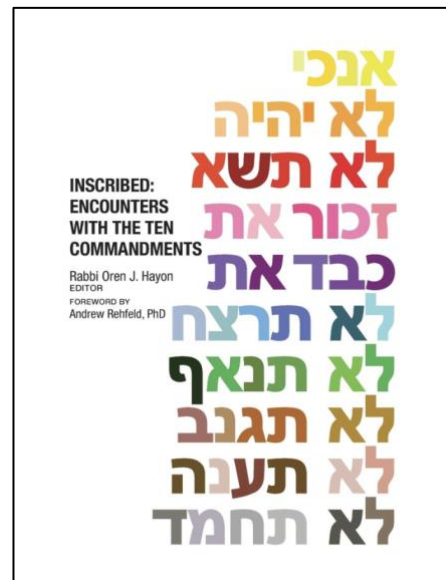
April 14, 3:00–5:00 pm

April 28, 3:00–5:00 pm

May 12, 3:00–5:00 pm

May 26 3:00–5:00 pm

Final class and Shavuot celebration –
either June 11 or 12, 6:00 pm (TBD)



Kulanu

by Joanne Rosenthal

Deciding When and How to Report an Antisemitic, Bias or Discriminatory Incident

It can sometimes be hard to know if remarks directed at Jewish people, or ourselves individually are antisemitic. During war, antisemitic biases are often activated in the guise of “Zionism”, “Globalists” and “Colonizers”. American Jews may be accused of dual loyalties and of committing genocide. Conversations about Israel can sometimes include implicit or explicit antisemitic ideas, (even though criticism of the Israeli government or policies is not inherently antisemitic). Intentionally or unintentionally, antisemitic ideas cause harm and dehumanize Jewish people around the world. If you have experienced or witnessed an incident of antisemitism, extremism, bias, bigotry or hate, please report it using the [ADL's incident form](#). If you are not sure, they will do their best to assess your situation and respond as quickly as possible. Any personal information provided will be kept strictly confidential. If this is an emergency, please dial 911. Incidents reported through this form will be evaluated by ADL, and the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), as required, and followed up when appropriate to provide assistance. The reports will also be evaluated for inclusion in ADL's [Audit of Antisemitic Incidents](#), an annual tally of acts of hatred against Jews in the United States.

To view the dramatic upsurge in antisemitic incidents by state, including in Maine, view the [ADL H.E.A.T. Map](#).



Security Review by Secure Community Network

by Peggy Brown

On December 5th, 2023, a representative from the [Secure Community Network](#) (SCN) came to Bath for a “walk-through” visit at the synagogue. The purpose of the visit was to provide us with feedback on its security “hardening” protocols and recommendations for improvements that will keep our buildings and the people inside them safe. The visit was arranged through the Jewish Community Alliance in Portland. Marilyn and Fred Weinberg and I were present at the walk-through. Because the Minnie Brown building is undergoing renovations at this time, we did not include it in this review.

The first thing to say is that the SCN representative was impressed with the beautiful interior of our sanctuary and said: “I wouldn’t change this space. It’s gorgeous and deserves to be preserved.”

He suggested that we put our primary resources into “stopping entry” of bad actors. He said that with an historic building with limited surrounding space, such as ours, the best actions are to ensure we are careful about who we allow access into the building.

We described our protocols:

- having trained Greeters at all events
- locking the doors and screening latecomers once services begin
- Use of panic buttons and/or cell phones to make contact with police in an emergency
- Hiring off-duty Bath Police Department security details for high profile events

We were given good marks on all these steps and approval for our relationship with the Bath police department.

He noted that the placement of the building - so close to the street with no parking lot or lawn - and no large glass frontage, are both deterrents to anyone planning to crash into the building with a vehicle.

We discussed the upcoming installation of a ballistically rated front doors (in process of working with FEMA/DHS on this project at this writing) and the addition of a protective film on the glass window (prevents shattering) of the side door which was done several years ago. These efforts met with his approval.

In the sanctuary itself, it was noted that the high placement of the windows prevents entry and requires no special treatment.

On the lower-level comments were made about possible areas we could use as “safe spaces”. It was suggested that we install stronger doors in both bathrooms and possibly redesign the kitchen entry.

This review was very helpful to us. It lets us know that the steps we’ve already taken are appropriate and it gives us concrete actions to take moving forward. We are still exploring the possibility of creating a safe passage out of the sanctuary, but the feedback we received gave us another perspective on the issue.

Please let me know if you have questions about this.

B'Mitzvah Class Heads to Boston

by Marilyn Weinberg

On Sunday, November 5, Rabbi Vinikoor and two Bowdoin students, Shoshi Gordon and Emma Mazlish, traveled to Boston with six of our Beth Israel B'Mitzvah class members.

The morning was spent at Temple Israel of Boston connecting with other Jewish teens. They joined the 7th grade class for Torah study taught by one of their amazing rabbis, Dan Slipakoff. They then went to Tefillah with the entire school and had a special lunch with their 7th grade and a few teen helpers, followed by a tour of the synagogue. Later, they headed to up to Coolidge Corner in Brookline to explore the Jewish shops and businesses where they enjoyed browsing and some great ice cream. They ended their day chatting with Jewish social justice organizer Andrew Steinberg from JALSA.

From Willow: It was super fun to travel with all my friends. It was fun to see the difference between our synagogue and the one in Boston and how differently we do things.

From Ren: For me the best part of the trip to Boston was the opportunity to see Judaism through the perspective of a very different synagogue. It opened my eyes to the many ways Judaism can vary from place to place but also the ways it stays the same.

From Ian: I enjoyed the ice cream, looking at Jewish candy and going to the Hebrew school. It was all very fun to hang out with the B'Mitzvah group.

From Noah: I enjoyed visiting the Jewish section of Boston - it was cool to see all the shops that had all the Jewish products. I have never been to any place like that before. I also enjoyed visiting the synagogue. We had a fun lesson, and it was cool to explore and learn about the history of the synagogue. The actual trip to Boston with everyone was fun too!

From Theo: I couldn't believe how big the Hebrew School was and how many students go there. "It was like a regular high school!" It was like the big LA Hebrew school depicted in the new Adam Sandler "Bat Mitzvah" movie.

From Jacob: It was really cool to see a place with so many Jewish people in one area. The synagogue we visited was SO big, I think ten of our Hebrew schools could fit inside! They gave us a great lunch too. The hummus was outstanding!

We want to thank the JCA in Portland for helping to fund this trip.



Community Hanukkah Celebration

by Marilyn Weinberg

A good time was had by all at the Beth Israel Hanukkah Celebration on December 10. We had our own Hanukkah corn hole game decorated by the Kauffungers, fun crafts, and a dreidel spinning competition.

Even though the rain put out the fire pit “lights,” we had so much light inside as we lit our menorah candles and raised our voices chanting the blessings and singing lots of joyful Hanukkah songs. Special thanks to our amazing latke cooks, and all the people who contributed food and drinks to share.

Click [HERE](#) for candle-lighting video by Mark Ireland.



Hanukkah Celebration at the Blaine House

by Marilyn Weinberg

Beth Israel was fortunate to receive an invitation for a few members to attend a Hanukkah celebration at the Blaine house with Governor Janet Mills, sponsored by the Center for Small Town Jewish Life.

There were people from all over the state representing most of the congregations. It was fun to meet new people and connect with others we had not seen in a while. Since there were not many young people in attendance, Ren and Stella were immediately asked to light some of the menorah candles. We were proud to be part of this celebration and had a great time checking out all of the interesting spaces in the Blaine House and enjoying some delicious refreshments, including latkes.



Greeters

by Peggy Brown

Our Greeters provide a vital and important purpose at Beth Israel. They are here to welcome members and guests, make all who enter feel comfortable while keeping an eye on safety and security.

We are always looking for additional Greeters. If you are interested, please get in touch with [Peggy](#).

Minnie Brown Renovation Progress

by Marilyn Weinberg

When you drive by our Minnie Brown Center you might not see much difference. But inside is a very different picture.

All the walls have been removed as well as the stairways and all will be put together so that the building will meet new building codes. And this week they were finally able to pour the foundation for the small addition that will house new bathrooms and a lift.

Thanks to our “design committee” for all the hours they have put in to keep on top of things.



Jewish Community Alliance
of Southern Maine

We gratefully acknowledge that the Beth Israel Congregation Hebrew School is supported financially by the Jewish Community Alliance (JCA) of Southern Maine. For more information visit them at www.mainejewish.org.

New Members

- Max Reinhold and Amy Marchessault and their children Isabella and Isaac
- Carla Dickstein

Donations

Memorial Gifts

- Shelia Cohen in loving memory of her father, Henry Cohen
- Erich and Pauline Haller in loving memory of Chip Krantz
- Margie Greenhut in loving memory of Herman Greenhut
- Lenore and Jay Friedland in loving memory of her parents, Esther and Israel Itzkowitz
- Peggy Brown and John Martell in loving memory of Fred Martin Rosenthal
- Monica and Gordon Blatt in loving memory of her father, Irwin Metviner
- Donna Rubin in loving memory of her parents Morris and Mary Petlock
- Barbara Baseman in loving memory of her husband, Stephen Baseman
- Karen and Matthew Filler in loving memory of her grandmother, Sarah Lang
- Jay and Lenore Friedland in loving memory of his mother, Nettie Friedland
- Merna and Joe Guttentag in loving memory of her mother, Ethel Cohn Schatz
- Robert Gersh and Susan Horowitz in loving memory of his mother, Maxine Gersh
- Stephen Sinclair Jr and Jenna Golub in loving memory of his father, Stephen Sinclair
- Andy and Chris Schoenberg in loving memory of his father, George Schoenberg
- Gary Torow in loving memory of his father, Morris Torow
- Howard Waxman in loving memory of his mother, Goldie Waxman

For the Benefit of the Synagogue

- Alan Mayer and Patricia Brennan
- Aaron Bernhardt for Yom Kippur
- Deirdre and Joseph Steiner for the Security Fund
- Debra and Richard Finn in honor of the Vinikoor-Finn Family
- Margaret McGaughey and z'l George Isaacson
- Benedikt Shohan Family Foundation in loving memory of Ed and Ruth Benedikt
- Nils and Karen Tcheyan
- B'nai B'rith Food Industry Lodge Foundation for the BI Outreach Programs

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

- Joshua Scherz in loving memory of his mother, Florence
- Roberta Lipsman
- Alan Mayer and Patricia Brennan
- Margaret Curley

Centennial Campaign

- Nonni Soifer in loving memory of her parents, Shmuel and Ahuva Soifer
- Harold Alfond Foundation in honor of Barry Mills



Birthdays and Anniversaries

Listing the birthdays and anniversaries of those in our immediate family creates a wonderful opportunity for our community/shul family to have an excuse to celebrate with each other.

January Birthdays

2 Liza Greenwald
6 Jonah Kaplan
7 Shira Dorit Vinikoor Finn
8 Susan Baseman
9 Sylvie Rose Bouttenot
9 Mark Ireland
14 Phyllis Lisi
14 Harry Reissman
15 Isaac Daniel Ensel
17 Stacey Giuliani
17 Ben Crystal
20 Eric Arthur Ensel
20 Corbin Lichtinger
23 Matthew Kanwit
24 Ellen Hagler
24 Elliot Lerner
24 Kristin Propp
25 Robert Gersh
26 Julie Meyer
31 Ralph Jacobs

January Anniversaries

13 Howard Waxman & Lisa Schinhofen
21 Diane Gilman & Arthur Davis
21 Gary Torow & Denise Linet

February Birthdays

2 Carolyn Friedel
3 Willow Halpin
4 William Dunham
8 Joe Guttentag
9 Lisa Schinhofen
12 Rachel Bouttenot
13 Glen Eisman
15 Louis Propp
20 David Kertzer
21 Bud Samiljan
21 Sharon Bouchard
27 Samantha Gersh
28 Christina Schoenberg
28 Richard Jablow
29 Samuel Dunham

February Anniversaries

6 Alina Shumsky & David Chatalbash

Remembrances for January/February 2024

WE REMEMBER	HEBREW DATE	2024 CALENDAR DATE
Abraham E. Greenblatt	22 Tevet	January 3
Fred Lenox	24 Tevet	January 5
Frank Welt	24 Tevet	January 5
Sterling Shapiro	25 Tevet	January 6
Daniel Ensel	25 Tevet	January 6
Howard Kaplan	27 Tevet	January 8
Sheila Vinikoor	27 Tevet	January 8
Janet Lane	29 Tevet	January 10
David Lichter	29 Tevet	January 10
Milton Millstein	1 Shevat	January 11
Alan Meyer	1 Shevat	January 11
Alex Mutterperl	1 Shevat	January 11
Anne Alvare	2 Shevat	January 12
Deborah Cohen	5 Shevat	January 15
Sonia Wernick	6 Shevat	January 16
Paul Marks	7 Shevat	January 17
Freda Selig	10 Shevat	January 20
Susan Spiegelman	11 Shevat	January 21
Robert Weinberg	11 Shevat	January 21
Maureen Oppenheim-Golub	13 Shevat	January 23
Theodore Cohn	14 Shevat	January 24
Max Fox	16 Shevat	January 26
Dean Milkes	16 Shevat	January 26
Ann Isacoff	16 Shevat	January 26
Francis Rosner	17 Shevat	January 27
Ed Benedikt	19 Shevat	January 29
Jerry Spiegelman	21 Shevat	January 31
Shirley Welt	21 Shevat	January 31
Nathaniel Goldberg	22 Shevat	February 1
David Fields	22 Shevat	February 1
Leon Berman	23 Shevat	February 2
Bernice Samiljan	24 Shevat	February 3
Chenka Rosenmann	25 Shevat	February 4
Frances Feldman	29 Shevat	February 8
Marvin Weinberg	29 Shevat	February 8
Milton Florman	30 Shevat	February 9
Michael Hagler	1 Adar I	February 10
Michael Lane	2 Adar I	February 11
Selma E Gilman	5 Adar I	February 14
Rose Hurwitz Silver	5 Adar I	February 14
Ann Torow	8 Adar I	February 17
Frances Weinberg	8 Adar I	February 17
Adele Gurman	10 Adar I	February 19
Albert Weiner	10 Adar I	February 19

Dora Borenstein	15 Adar I	February 24
John Ramsey	15 Adar I	February 24
Howard Kempler	16 Adar I	February 25
Judy Gelles	18 Adar I	February 27
Helen Freedman Cohen	20 Adar I	February 29
Sarah Goldman	20 Adar I	February 29

