

שערי שלום ק"ק

## CENTERPOST

South Baldwin Jewish Center—Shaarei Shalom

February  
2025

שבט 5785  
חש"ה

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### TU B'SHVAT


Traditionally, Tu B'Shvat was not a Jewish festival. Rather, it marked an important date for Jewish farmers in ancient times. The Torah states, "When you enter the land [of Israel] and plant any tree for food, you shall regard its fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden for you, not to be eaten" (Leviticus 19:23). Only the fruit of older trees could be eaten. This law raised the question of how farmers were to mark the "birthday" of a tree. The rabbis therefore established the 15th of the month of Shevat as a general "birthday" for all trees, regardless of when they were actually planted.

Fruit trees were awarded special status in the Torah because of their importance in sustaining life and as a symbol of God's divine favor. Even during times of war, God warns the Israelites, "When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees... Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed" (Deuteronomy 20:19-20).

*From "My Jewish Learning" website*


# February 2025 Shevat 5785

Candle lighting times come from the Chabad website and are calculated for Baldwin  
Check with office to confirm mid-week events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 4 Shevat	3 5 Shevat Nat's Group 2 pm Board Meeting	4 6 Shevat Mahjong 6 pm	5 7 Shevat Folk Dancing 10:30 am Canasta 1 pm	6 8 Shevat Rabbi's Class 7:30 pm Library and Zoom	7 9 Shevat Simchat Shabbat Services 8 pm Candle lighting 5:11 pm	1 3 Shevat Services 9:30 am Parshat Bo Shabbat ends 5:55 pm
9 11 Shevat	10 12 Shevat Nat's Group 2 pm	11 13 Shevat Mahjong 6 pm	12 14 Shevat Folk Dancing 10:30 am Canasta 1 pm	13 15 Shevat <b>Tu B'Shevat</b> Rabbi's Class 7:30 pm Library and Zoom 	14 16 Shevat Shabbat Services 8 pm Candle lighting 5:11 pm	15 17 Shevat Services 9:30 am Parshat Yitro Shabbat ends 6:11 pm
16 18 Shevat	17 19 Shevat Nat's Group 2 pm	18 20 Shevat Mahjong 6 pm	19 21 Shevat Folk Dancing 10:30 am Canasta 1 pm	20 22 Shevat Rabbi's Class 7:30 pm Library and Zoom	21 23 Shevat Shabbat Services 8 pm Candle lighting 5:19 pm	22 24 Shevat Services 9:30 am Parshat Mishpatim Birkat Hachodesh Shabbat ends 6:19 pm
23 25 Shevat	24 26 Shevat Nat's Group 2 pm	25 27 Shevat Mahjong 6 pm	26 28 Shevat Folk Dancing 10:30 am Canasta 1 pm	27 29 Shevat Rabbi's Class 7:30 pm Library and Zoom	28 30 Shevat Rosh Chodesh Shabbat Services 8 pm Candle lighting 5:27 pm	

# March 2025 Adar—Nisan 5785

Candle lighting times come from the Chabad website and are calculated for Baldwin  
Check with office to confirm mid-week events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 2 Adar					1 1 Adar Services 9:30 am Parshat Terumah Shabbat Shekalim Shabbat ends 6:27pm
3 3 Adar Nat's Group 2 pm Board Meeting	4 4 Adar Mahjong 6 pm	5 5 Adar Folk Dancing 10:30 am Canasta 1 pm	6 6 Adar Rabbi's Class 7:30 pm Library and Zoom	7 7 Adar Simchat Shabbat Services 8 pm Candle lighting 5:35 pm	8 8 Adar Services 9:30 am Parshat Tetzaveh Shabbat Zachor Shabbat ends 6:34 pm
9 9 Adar Daylight Savings Time begins	10 10 Adar Nat's Group 2 pm	11 11 Adar Mahjong 6 pm	13 13 Adar Ta'anit Ester Erev Purim, Magillah Reading 	14 14 Adar Purim Shabbat Services 8 pm Candle lighting 6:42 pm	15 15 Adar Services 9:30 am Parshat Ki Tissa Shabbat ends 7:42 pm
16 16 Adar	17 17 Adar Nat's Group	18 18 Adar Mahjong 6 pm	20 20 Adar Rabbi's Class 7:30 pm Library and Zoom	21 21 Adar Shabbat Services 8 pm Candle lighting 6:50 pm	22 22 Adar Services 9:30 am Parshat; Vayakhel Shabbat Parah Shabbat ends 7:50 pm
23 23 Adar	24 24 Adar Nat's Group	25 25 Adar Mahjong 6 pm	27 27 Adar Rabbi's Class 7:30 pm Library and Zoom	28 28 Adar Shabbat Services 8 pm Candle lighting 6:57 pm	29 29 Adar Services 9:30 am Parshat Pekudei Shabbat Hachodesh Birkat Hachodesh Shabbat ends 7:57 pm
30 1 Nissan Rosh Chodesh	31 2 Nissan Nat's Group				

## FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Rabbi Jacob Rosner



### Tu B'Shevat

I imagine few, if any of you, have heard of bukseh. It is the Yiddish word for carob. We know it as an inferior substitute for chocolate, but in its original form it comes in a hard pod like substance capable of greatly benefitting dentists who fix broken teeth

Although Tu B'Shevat has its origin in the Mishna, there are no particular rituals associated with the day. It is referred to as "the new year for trees." Originally the day marked a new tax season for fruit. In the yeshivah world we ate buksah from Israel as a way of connecting with the holy land.

The holiday has taken on new meanings primarily to serious non orthodox Jews. Despite coming from the world of the yeshivah, I had never even heard of the kabbalistic Tu B'Shevat seder until I began studying at the Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary. The seder, with its four cups of wine and different types of fruit, has become a way to express our spiritual connection to trees and nature.

Many Jews have also associated this day as a season to express our concern for our environment. The Torah teaches that Adam and Eve were placed in the garden to "work and watch over it." On Tu B'Shevat many modern Jews add prayers that we may bequeath to our next generation clean air and water.

Tu B'Shevat has also become a day for modern Jews to support Israel. Many of you may remember the blue box and JNF. The "new year for trees" has become a season to make donations to plant trees in Israel. It is also a time to celebrate the halutzim who braved the swamps and disease to make the desert bloom

Serious non orthodox Judaism has much to offer. The bat mitzvah, participation of women as rabbis, the embracing of the LGBTQ community, tikkun olam, are among the many areas of change and renewal. Finding new meanings for Tu B'Shevat that connect the festival to modernity is one such innovation.

There is a passage in the Ethics of the Fathers that always disturbed me.

“Rabbi Yaakov said, one who is engaged in the study of torah, and says ‘how beautiful is this tree’ is worthy of the death penalty.” (Typical rabbinic hyperbolic language)

The traditional interpretation is that Rabbi Yaakov is being critical of one who, while engaged in the spiritual world, pauses to admire nature. In so doing he is placing the material world above the spiritual.

I would like to disagree with that interpretation and at the same time defend my namesake.

I would like to suggest that Rabbi Yaakov is not criticizing one who admires nature....in fact his statement has the opposite meaning. If one is studying torah and sees a beautiful tree and goes right back to his study, without pausing long enough to truly take in its beauty, THAT is displeasing to God. If you are davening and see a beautiful sunrise and all you can offer is “that’s nice,” and you immediately go back to burying your face in your prayer book, you are failing to see God in Her many manifestations.

There are so many ways to bring the divine into our lives.....prayer...torah study...acts of charity and compassion are powerful . Tu B'Shevat reminds us that we also find God in the beauty of nature.

The Torah is a tree of life to those who hold onto it and all its paths are peace.





**Co-Presidents**

**Evelyn Estrine  
Jeff Barkan**

## ***Co-Presidents Message***

It is February and we have not had any significant snow storms. That is good in that we have not had to pay for snow removal. It is 45 days until Spring and that could change, but that does not negate the fact that we run a deficit each year. Our funds will run out, when depends on many factors. We ask each and every one of you to stay current with your financial obligations. Please be specific when sending in your checks, as Leslie is not a mind reader when she has to post where the funds are to be applied.

January was a quiet month with the exception of our joint service with Clarity, the church that shares space in our building, holding their services every Sunday. This service, commemorating Martin Luther King Jr. was an uplifting experience, with Rabbi Jacob and Reverend Harden, celebrating in prayer as well as enlightening us with stories and historical facts. We thank Sisterhood for the beautiful table of refreshments that followed. Let us not forget that this past week was Holocaust Remembrance Day. 2025 Marked 80 years since the end of the second world war and the Holocaust. Never Forget and fight to keep this from ever happening again. Remember this started with a surge in Nationalism and a people turning a blind eye to extremism. As Abe Lincoln said "all men are created equal." At SBJC we do our best to not be political, and all we will ask you and your neighbors, is to remember the principals that our nation was founded on.





# Notes From Sisterhood

Betty Arzt, Carol Burkner

What inspires You? During our recent snow event, I was inspired!

My neighbor, someone I barely know, rang my bell. He was asking me if it was okay with me for him to shovel my driveway and clean the snow off my car that had fallen the night before. I expressed my gratitude and appreciation. His wife joined him.

I am so inspired by their genuine act of kindness. We all try to be kind and thoughtful. Where and when are we given these opportunities? Do we recognize these opportunities? Do we notice these small moments?

Sometimes we may feel that we are being intrusive when we reach out. Maybe yes, maybe not so. It's important to note that my neighbor asked if it was okay with me before he shoveled. There was nothing in his manner that suggested that he was being intrusive. He saw a need and wanted to help. I also thought about what a wonderful example he is setting for his children.

I am inspired to search inside myself to find some "hidden strengths or gifts" that could allow me to recognize possibilities. I am grateful for the things that I am able to do for myself and others around me.

Let's continue to be inspired and be an inspiration to others.

## Reflections:

Our sisterhood continues to be a vital arm of our synagogue. Our educational programs are of high quality and are open to all of our congregants. We continue to work diligently to meet the needs of our community. Thank you to Gloria Okin who consistently sends messages to our congregants when they experience sorrowful or joyous occasions. Shabbat meals are provided for the family in the event of the death of a member.

Have you noticed our **Gift Shop** cases in the lobby? You can see that we are ready for Passover. Thank you to Carol Burkner, Susan Lifshitz, and Rachel Rudich for their diligence.

We were pleased to provide the lovely desert when we joined together with members of The Clarity Unleashed Ministries Church to commemorate **MLK Day**. Thank you to Carol, Susan, and Rachel for shopping and for setting up the food. As always, we thank Juan for his cooperation and support.

We are involved members of Women's League for Conservative Judaism. We benefit from their programs and teachings. We invite you to participate in these offerings.

## Looking Ahead:

We have entered the month of Shevat. We're looking forward to celebrating Tu B'Shevat. We know that Adar is coming. Purim will be celebrated in Adar. This year Purim begins on March 23. Yes, we will be preparing **Shalach Manot** bags for the congregation. **We will continue the lovely custom of sending Shalach Manot to family, friends, and neighbors.** A hearty and sincere "thank you" to our congregants for participating in this delightful tradition and allowing us to provide Purim bags for all of the members of our shul. **The invitation to participate is found in this Centerpost.** As always, we appreciate your support of Sisterhood.



The next **Rosh Hodesh Study Group** meeting is scheduled for Sunday morning, February 23, 2025, at 10:30 via Zoom. The link will be sent out just prior to the meeting. We thank Rabbi Jacob for joining us at our last meeting. He certainly adds enrichment to our conversation.

The **Book Club** been in a brief hiatus in our meetings. We're ready to resume these "get togethers." We did not get to review Hadassah by Hadassah Lieberman. As we know, sometimes, "life gets in the way." We welcome your thoughts and input. In person or Zoom? As always, we thank Cindy Gunther for her preparation and for facilitating the meetings.

Join us for **Canasta** on Wednesday afternoons at 1:00 and for **Mah Jongg** on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 in the synagogue.

**Torah Fund Cards** are available for all occasions. Thank you to Rowena Weinstein for her dedication to Torah Fund.

Pirkei Avot teaches: Do not separate yourself from the community.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Gift Shop

Please visit the gift shop for your personal and gift giving needs.

Want to enhance your Pesach or Shabbat? Looking for a special gift? Look at our beautiful challah covers, Seder trays, and more.

Look at our mezuzot and kosher Torah scrolls.

We thank our gift shop managers,  
Carol Burkner, Susan Lifshitz, and Rachel Rudich.



## MEN'S CLUB PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Arnie Gewirtz



On behalf of our SBJC Men's Club and congregants present on Friday evening, January 17, I want to salute Rabbi Jacob on a job well done, conducting a joint interfaith commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The evening's tribute, held together with the members and pastor of Clarity Unleashed Ministries, was truly an invigorating service; real love and diversity filled beautiful voices in English and Hebrew.

Rabbi Jacob's sermon and that of Pastor Harden were uplifting and meaningful. Once again, we thank our SBJC Board for hiring such a brilliant, intellectual Spiritual Leader...our ultimate human gift from Hashem...may he go from strength to strength.

Shabbat evening was topped off by a delicious fruit and cake display organized by our Sisterhood. Thank you.

Let's keep growing.

Arnie Gewirtz, SBJC Men's Club

### **Mondays at Two**

A group of us meets in the SBJC Library on Mondays at 2 o'clock to share thoughts and ideas about contemporary issues. Topics tackled emerge from the interests of the attendees. Discussions are lively and interactive.

Kudos to Nat Greenfeld who initiated the concept of the program. He prepares materials to enhance the talks and facilitates the conversation. We welcome you to join us on Mondays at One.

## Shalom From The Ritual Committee.

To be a Jew means to wake up and to keep your eyes open to the many beautiful, mysterious, and holy things that happen all around us every day. Many of them are like little miracles: when we wake up and see the morning light, when we taste food and grow strong, when we learn from others and grow wise, when we hug the people we love and feel warm, when we help those around us and feel good. All these and more are there for us every day, but we must open our eyes to see them.

*Rabbi Lawrence Kushner*



\*\*\*\*\*

### Celebrate Tu B'Shevat at SBJC

Don't separate yourself from the community

Join us

Friday evening, February 14, 2025

Tu B'Shevat Seder and Shabbat Dinner at 6:30

Reservations are required.

\$25 per person

Shabbat service at 8:00

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Name\_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for\_\_\_\_\_people

## Tu B'Shevat

The name Tu B'Shevat is derived from the Hebrew date of the holiday, which occurs on the fifteenth day of Shevat. "Tu" stands for the Hebrew letters Tet and Vav, which together have the numerical value of 9 and 6, adding up to 15. The date may also be called, *Hamisha Asar B'Shevat*, Fifteenth of Shevat.



Tu B'Shevat has developed into an ecological holiday that reminds Jews of our connection to the earth and to our role as caretakers of the environment. Some modern practices include donating money to plant trees in Israel or planting trees locally.

The 15th of Shevat on the Jewish calendar—celebrated this year on Thursday, February 13 —is the day that marks the beginning of a “new year” for trees. Tu B'Shevat marks the season in which the earliest blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit bearing cycle.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Devarim 20:19: It is forbidden to cut down fruit bearing trees outside a besieged city, nor may a water channel be deflected from them so that they wither, as it is said: “You must not destroy its trees.”*

*Avot de Rabbi Nathan, 31b Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai used to say: If you have a sapling in your hand, and someone should say to you that the Messiah has come, stay and complete the planting, and then go to greet the Messiah.*

*Bereishit (Genesis)2:15: And the Lord G-d took Adam, and put him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to tend (guard, watch) it.*

# Advice from a Tree By Ilan Shamir



Stand tall and proud  
Sink your roots deeply into the earth

Reflect the light of a greater source

Think long term  
Go out on a limb  
Remember your place among all living beings

Embrace with joy the changing seasons

For each yields its own abundance  
The energy and birth of spring  
The growth and contentment of summer  
The wisdom to let go of leaves in the fall

The rest and quiet renewal of winter

Feel the wind and the sun  
And delight in their presence  
Look up at the moon that shines down upon you

And the mystery of the stars at night.  
Seek nourishment from the good things in life

Simple pleasures  
Earth, fresh air, light

Be content with your natural beauty

Drink plenty of water  
Let your limbs sway and dance in the breezes

Be flexible  
Remember your roots. Enjoy the view!

## ***A few reminders...***

**Each Thursday evening, at 7:30**, Rabbi Rosner facilitates a study session. Topics are relevant and discussion is encouraged.

**Every Shabbat morning**, after the kiddish, congregants and the rabbi engage in Torah Study.

Congregants are invited to participate in **Friday evening services on Zoom** if they are unable to attend in the shul.

### **Don't separate yourself from the community.**

2/1/25: Nat Greenfeld will chant the Haftarah

2/8/25: Mike Eisman will chant the Haftarah

2/15/25: Ellen Shriki will chant the Haftarah

2/22/25: Cheryl Cheron will chant the Haftarah

Would you like to sponsor a kiddush or an oneg on Shabbat?

If you would like to acknowledge a special occasion or observe a yahrzeit, you may want to consider sponsoring a kiddush on Saturday afternoon or an oneg on Friday evening.



We invite a few families to join together to help defray the cost.



Sisterhood

# Purim is Coming!

## Mishloach Manot

is the Purim Mitzvah of sending treats to our families, friends, and neighbors. Sisterhood invites you to fulfill this Mitzvah in a wonderful way. We will prepare delightful Purim bags, filled with surprises, for each family in our shul. This is a lovely way to enhance the joy of the holiday!

The cost of sending bags to the congregation and staff members is \$72.00.

If you would like to be included in this Mitzvah, we request that you bring or mail your check for \$72.00, payable to SBJC Sisterhood, to SBJC, Sisterhood, Attention: Shalach Manot, 2959 Grand Avenue, Baldwin, NY 11510. Please submit your payment before February 28, 2025.

Need an additional bag? We are asking for \$18.00 for each additional bag.

Thank you for your support of Sisterhood.

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PLEASE INCLUDE ME/US IN EMBRACING THE MITZVAH OF SENDING SHALACH MANOT BAGS FROM MY FAMILY TO THE CONGREGANTS AND STAFF. I/WE HAVE ENCLOSED A CHECK FOR \$72.00. WE WOULD LIKE ADDITIONAL BAGS; WE HAVE INCLUDED \$18.00 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL BAG.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Your phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Your email address \_\_\_\_\_

*May the joy of Purim linger  
and may there be no Hamans in our lives.*



DONATIONS December, 2024

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Cynthia & Robert Gunther	in memory of	DeDe Stern
Cynthia & Robert Gunther	in memory of	Sheila Goldsmith
June & Harvey Mitnick	in memory of	Jeanette Golub
June & Harvey Mitnick	in memory of	Sheila Goldmith
Eleanor Epstein	Happy Anniversary	Phyllis & Mike Eisman
Mike & Phyllis Eisman	Happy Birthday	Nat Greenfeld
Mike & Phyllis Eisman	Happy Birthday	Gloria Okin
Jeanette Vogel	in memory of	Henry G. Friedman
Toby Maser	in memory of	Sarah Lichtenstein
Toby Maser	in memory of	Benjamin & Sadie Klein
Toby Maser	in memory of	Albert & Frances Saed
Toby Maser	in memory of	Leon Saed
Barbara Sterler	in memory of	Ida Fenerstein
Anne Kaplan	in memory of	Morris Koppelman
Dona Schwab	in memory of	Sheila Goldsmith
Nathan Greenfeld	in memory of	Sam Greenfeld
Nathan Greenfeld	Happy Anniversary	Phyllis & Milke Eisman
Carol Surkis	in memory of	Bernard Kiliminik
Mark Guttman	in memory of	Stanley Guttman
Hy Kapito	in memory of	Anne Kapito
Rowena Weinstein	in memory of	Frieda Weinstein
Rowena Weinstein	Happy Birthday	Nat Greenfeld
Rowena Weinstein	Happy Birthday	Gloria Okin
Margery Bradie	in memory of	Syd Bradie
Margery Bradie	in memory of	Rose Schwartz
Asta Volkmann & Ingrid Pomper	in memory of	Edward Volkmann
Barbara Harris	Get Well	Susan Seiler

DONATIONS JANUARY, 2025

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Rowena Weinstein & Family	in memory of	Elsie Drescher
Marilyn & Marc Cohen	in memory of	Sheila Goldsmith
Marilyn & Marc Cohen	in memory of	Jeanette Golub
Joel Boikess	in memory of	Louis Boikess
Clara Gewirtz	in memory of	Isaac Lisogurski
Clara Gewirtz	in memory of	Sara Lisogurski
Dona Schwab	in memory of	Joseph Bressner
Dona Schwab	in memory of	Nettie Bressner
Marilyn & Marc Cohen	in memory of	Rhonda Zucker
Evelyn Estrine	in memory of	Sylvia Estrine
Barbara Sterler & Family	Bat Mitzvah Mazal Tov	Marilyn & Marc Cohen
Evelyn Estrine	in memory of	Nathan Newman
Susan Reinman	in memory of	Isadore Kaplowitz
Cheryl & Marc Cheron	Bar Mitzvah Mazal Tov	Linda & Ed Frieberg
Doreen Wygoda	in memory of	David Wygoda
Sheila Michael	in memory of	Ben Michael
Phyllis & Mike Eisman	Mazal Tov Great Grandchild	Nat Greenfeld
Phyllis & Mike Eisman	Get Well Soon	Yevette Boikess
Mike & Phyllis Eisman	Happy Birthday	Gloria Okin
Nancy Weston	Happy Birthday	Nat Greenfeld
Noryne Galantai	in memory of	Sabina Galantai
Nancy Weston	in memory of	Ruth Fine
Benita Gindin	in memory of	Pearl Gindin
Deborah Kamins	in memory of	Oscar Kapp
Deborah Kamins	in memory of	Howard Kamins
Cheryl & Marc Cheron	Happy Birthday	Nat Greenfeld
Cheryl & Marc Cheron	Happy Birthday	Gloria Okin
Cheryl & Marc Cheron	Happy Anniversary	Phyllis & Mike Eisman

## FEBRUARY & MARCH BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Rosalyn Chumsky, Birthday, February 3  
Yosef Weiss, Birthday, February 8  
Joel Klausner, Birthday, February 20  
Richard Zuckerman, Birthday, February 23  
Dona Schwab, Birthday, February 27  
Evelyn Estrine, Birthday, February 27



Arnie Gewirtz, Birthday, March 5  
Marilyn Weiss, Birthday, March 8  
Jeff & Sheila Jasper, Anniversary, March 21  
Yevette & Joel Boikess, Anniversary, March 26

# מזל טוב

## Please join us: Simcha Shabbat

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of each month we celebrate  
birthdays, anniversaries and  
joyous occasions



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