

Committee Reports for Annual Meeting (10-Jun-2024)

Lifelong Learning Annual Report

June 10, 2024

Co-Chairs: Debra Nevas, Wendy Kaplowitz

There were many opportunities for learning this year at CBI. Lifelong Learning offered an array of options in a variety of ways in which congregants could avail themselves.

Monday morning classes were offered with a variety of instructors including Cantor Wallach, Len Hausman, Sara Sherman and Wendy Kaplowitz. Courses included What is Jewish Music? Women in the Book of Genesis; Passover Experiences in the Ashkenazic and Sephardic Traditions (with special foods to taste); The Origins of Passover; Death in Jewish Tradition; and Music of Israel. Rabbi Lubow continued his Talmud class on Monday nights and Rabbi Isenberg taught Pirkei Avot on Thursday mornings.

For the second year in a row, Susan Gordon and Karen Tucker taught a Hebrew Crash Course, sponsored by NJOP, the National Jewish Outreach Program. The crash course provides an opportunity to brush up on Hebrew reading skills, or learn how to read and write Hebrew for those who have never learned. Returning students were able to take the Advanced Level class as well.

In May, Lifelong Learning co-sponsored with the 100th Anniversary committee, Ben Ryberg from The Lawfare Project. Ben presented on what The Lawfare Project is, who they represent and how lawsuits or the possibility of them, can protect the civil rights of Jewish students on college campuses. Ben also spent time answering questions from the audience.

In February, CBI sponsored Repro Shabbat, initiated by NCJW, to spark learning and conversation about Judaism's approach to reproductive health rights. This was the second year that the synagogue sponsored Repro Shabbat and this year we had the honor of hearing from congregant Elynne Margulis Zucker, an ob-gyn who specializes in IVF and women's reproductive health. Elynne provided a fascinating talk on the state of women's healthcare in a post-Roe world. For the fourth year in a row, we will be celebrating Pride Shabbat in June and Lifelong Learning is assisting the Diversity and Inclusion committee in bringing in to speak to congregants Rakhel Silverman-Gitin, an advocate for trans rights.

Lifelong Learning is also working closely with the 100th Anniversary Committee to create an exhibit of "100 years at CBI." Scheduled for September 8th, this will be a multi-media exhibit of the history of CBI, including its origins, artwork, people and objects.

Blanche Bayar Religious School (BBRS) Board

Jody Reich, Chair

The purpose of the BBRS Board is to promote and facilitate the goals of CBI's religious school, grades Gan through Vav (K-7), and to lend support for continuing education via Tichon, as needed. Positions are filled by volunteer parents and other members of the CBI community. Meetings are held monthly and last 60-90 minutes.

Current Board members include:

- Jennifer Abramson, Parent Liaison
- Milena Gashkevich
- Lisa Glassman
- Jessica Marinoff
- Jody Reich, Chair
- Mark Richman, Treasurer
- Melissa Wernick, Secretary

Also in attendance at Board meetings throughout 5784 were:

- Ruth Kirshner, as advisor from the Board of Trustees
- Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald, as Director of BBRS

Among the BBRS Board's key accomplishments for the 5784 academic year are:

- Increased the size of the Board from three to seven members
- Established the first BBRS Board Charter, effective October 16, 2023
- Introduced programming for K-3rd graders at Erev Shabbat Live
- Initiated the first BBRS Shabbat Community Dinner programming
- Strengthened Shabbat Shelanu programming and attendance
- Held community Havdalah at Genius Gems with support from Federation
- Continued one-on-one Hebrew study via Zoom for grades 3-7, optional for younger grades
- Provided gifts for teachers at Chanukah, during Teacher Appreciation week, and at year-end
- Provided input to programming and curriculum throughout the year

In addition to the above accomplishments, the BBRS Board has been collaborating closely with Rabbi Isenberg, Henry Bloom and Ruth Kirshner on how to continue to run BBRS successfully absent a Director. While tactical strategies are being implemented as an interim measure for

5785, the need for a Director of BBRS is clear. It will be difficult to grow the school, let alone sustain it, absent this role.

Most recently, the BBRS Board, in conjunction with Henry Bloom, Ruth Kirshner and Rabbi Isenberg, has been looking into the possibility of combined classes and/or programming with another Conservative synagogue with the primary goal of doubling the number of children taking classes together, and the bonus of any efficiencies that may be gained as a result. Preliminary discussions have been held and the viability and benefit to BBRS and CBI is still being assessed.

LGBTQ+ Subcommittee Report

Brad Schenerman (Chair)

We're happy to report that Pride Shabbos 2023 was a very well attended, robust success. The Clergy supplemented the Shabbos liturgy with poignant and relevant selections. Our speaker, Professor Peter Savastano, <https://www.shu.edu/profiles/petersavastano.html>; gave a master class in the intersection of Judaism and diversity during services and the luncheon Q&A. He wove into his theme the reasons he, as a gay man, converted to Judaism. We wholeheartedly thank Peter and hope he will return.

This year, on June 8th, we welcome Rakhel Silverman-Gitlin to give their D'Var Torah and luncheon Q&A while providing insight into their life experiences and identity as a transgender Jew. <https://www.keshetonline.org/rakhel-silverman/>

We have also collaborated with the Clergy and Religious Affairs committee to institute additional identity offerings for aliyot (Me-Bet) to burnish our reputation as a welcoming, inclusive congregation.

Facilities Committee

Nik Minocha, Chair

The Facilities Committee at CBI performs advisory and implementation functions including:

1. Repairs to building and property
2. Improvements to existing building and property
3. Grant implementations

Our committee members are and have included:

Nik Minocha

Michael Jurist

Andy Cohen

Andrea Levine (Arts and Architecture)

Sharon Draznin (Arts and Architecture)

Alan Zelman

Jamie Beneroff

It has been a busy year and a half for our committee.

Projects have included:

- Wooden Fencing along school playground / neighbor was replaced.
- Wood Fence enclosure outside youth lounge was replaced.
- Repairs to kitchen appliances – dishwashers, refrigerator, and freezer.
- Various roof repairs
- Repairs to the Fire sprinkler system
- Service building and property drainage systems to reduce flooding.
- Added additional Camera monitors (lobby and school entrance) to allow for security guard to better view entrances.
- The main HVAC controller for the entire building was updated to better control room temperature, reduce energy cost, and allow contractors to troubleshoot remotely.
- Ongoing repairs to our HVAC (Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning).

Homeland Security Grant improvements

- A Lockdown System was installed in Main sanctuary, small chapel, Multipurpose room and doors leading to school. The panic buttons are connected to Essex security to local authorities if activated.

- Level 1 Bullet resistant glass on office windows, Main sanctuary doors, Rear sanctuary doors, Sidelights to small chapel, Sidelights to Multi purpose room and Multi purpose room doors to exterior
- Additional cameras and disk storage to allow for longer retention of camera footage
- Playground gate locks have been upgraded to make unwanted intrusion more difficult.

Kitchen Committee

Karen Tucker and Howard Kessler Co-Chairs

The Committee strives to present healthy and inviting kiddishes on a weekly basis. We try to accommodate a variety of dietary concerns promoting a welcoming environment encouraging congregants young and older as well as perspective members the opportunity to chat informally with Clergy as well as each other.

We are pleased to report that the Committee this past year has prepared 38 kiddishes, 7 of which were sponsored, and assisted on 4 kiddishes sponsored by other committees. CBI is unique amongst other Synagogues whose kitchens are closed during Passover. We are proud to report we served 5 full kiddish luncheons to our matzah loving congregants. In addition we were blessed to share in 13 fully catered kiddishes celebrating Congregants life events.

We take this opportunity to thank those serving on the committee as well as those who have volunteered their time to help out.

Much thanks to our dedicated staff for all their help.

There are many opportunities to sponsor or co- sponsor a kiddish. Please reach out to Karen or Howard for details.

Preschool Committee

Amy Radin, Chair

Committee Members: Ruth Kirshner, Laurie Kavowras, Aditi Footer, Jessica Marino, Nealy Troll

The Preschool Committee meets monthly with Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald. Meetings focused on:

- Enrollment results and trends
- Budget
- Parent feedback; Laurie and Aditi reached out regularly for feedback
- Teacher feedback; Nealy reached out regularly to teachers for feedback
- Holiday events, e.g., Purim Carnival, Sukkot celebration, Menorah lighting, etc.
- Director's report on any open issues, support requirements

Preschool enrollment declined substantially from the prior school year. Given the importance of the preschool to CBI's mission of service to the community, the role it plays as a pipeline for new members and as a key contributor to revenue, and the need we identified to focus more significantly on the changing needs of families in our community, the decision was made in late 2023 by the Board of Trustees to eliminate the position of Director of Congregational Learning, and hire a full time director of early childhood education. The goal of this move was:

- Recruit a candidate with deep experience specifically in early childhood education
- Have a full-time Director focused only on the preschool
- Achieve a slight cost savings to the overall CBI budget

The CBIP board members played a significant role in efforts to recruit, interview and onboard the Director of Early Childhood Education, Mindy Klein, including:

- Supporting development of the position description
- Participating as active members of the search committee, led by Ruth Kirshner
- Interviewing Candidates and providing input to the hiring decision

We attracted a number of strong candidates and were pleased to announce the hiring of [Mindy Klein](#) to the new position, Director, Early Childhood Education, with responsibility for all early childhood programs – preschool, Bimbam Shabbat programs, holiday events, etc.

With Mindy joining the staff, members of the Board have lately focused on providing marketing support to build preschool enrollment. We are looking at the 2024-2025 Camp and School years as a time of revitalization of the preschool, with the expectation that we will be back to target enrollment numbers by Fall 2025.

- Marketing efforts are underway including community promotion and online support, and “Meet Mindy” events, the first one of which was held in April; further events are planned. These are generating leads, meetings, and conversions to new students.
- Improvements to the website are positioning the preschool favorably
- A rebranding effort is underway, thanks to the active engagement of James Beneroff, with the goal of launching the new branding by Fall 2024
- Mindy has launched a Toddler & Me program, and has on the drawing board significant expansion in our Enrichment programming, anticipated to be meaningfully additive to revenue

In addition to supporting Mindy, current focus will be on refreshing the preschool board as 2-3 current members will be rotating off. It will be critical to have parent representation on the board, and 1-2 early childhood educators.

Security Committee
Kenny Kavowras (Chair)

Committee Members: Matt Askin, Greg Daniel, Nik Minocha, Helene Moehlman, Ross Silver, David Troll, Jamie Beneroff

FIRST AID STATIONS

- Front Office (including Defibrillator outside front office, Stop the Bleed Kit & Life Vac)
- 1ST Floor Pre-School (including Defibrillator & Life Vac, Stop the Bleed Kit)
- 2ND Floor Pre-School (including Stop the Bleed Kit & Life Vac)
- Kitchen (including Life Vac, Stop the Bleed Kit, Fire Blanket)
- Rabbi Ari's Office (Stop the Bleed Kit)
- Custodial Office (Stop the Bleed Kit)

*****All Stations have a 1st Aid kit**

CBI TRAINING

- Active Threat: Run, Hide, Fight
- Active Shooter
- Stop the Bleed
- CPR/AED (Defibrillator)
- First Aid training
- "Scam" Awareness training – Don't be a victim
- Lockdown training
- Suspicious packages
- Life Vac training

Seven (7) Straight months of scheduled training with a total of 128 in attendance.

GRANTS 2 for 2 in the past 9 months

1st GRANT

- Installing a Public Address System that would be audible in all areas of the facility including speakers in the playground, parking lot and outdoor sitting area.
- Extend Fencing in pre-school playground

- Repair or replace door on Millburn Avenue
- Additional cameras for our video surveillance system so that all remaining exterior areas are captured and recorded.

2nd GRANT

- \$58,500 to assist with the cost of Security Guards.

PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE - Becoming proactive is our #1 accomplishment!

Here are some of the items we have done in the Past 8 months

- Change and implemented new Security Policies
For example, put more responsibilities on the Ushers during the High Holidays and other events to focus on Security. Changed location of the Guards.

Started searching bags and focus on possible suspicious person before entry to facilities.

- Strengthened our outer perimeter with cameras in almost all areas of the building inside and out
- Cameras all over the building, including in the Rabbi's Office, Rebecca's Office, The Pre-School Director's Office and the Custodial staff office.
- As a group, the Security Committee along with the Rabbi, Cantor, Henry made the decision to go "unlisted" on "YouTube" and have not been "swatted" since.
- Changed Policy in the Pre-School regarding entering the school without the Guard present and entering the playground area, as it now requires two teachers. This policy change results in teachers being more alert and involved with security.

All of the equipment, whether it is Security, Training or 1st Aid, has been provided at no cost to CBI.

IN THE MONTHS AHEAD

- We will have a Public Address System audible from all areas of the facilities including speakers in the playground, parking lot and outdoor seating area.
- Extended fencing in the Pre-School playground which will provide the children and teachers more security.
- Repair or replace the Front door on Millburn Avenue. This is a Security issue.
- Additional up to date cameras for clearer video and covering the complete facility exterior.
- More training and policy changes when needed.
- Continue to provide Security at special events.
- Add a "Lolly Pop" program to the Pre-school which will keep children as quiet as possible in the event of an emergency lockdown.

- Dead Bolt Locks on all Bathroom doors, appx 5 ½ feet high to lock yourself inside during lockdown events.

Erev Shabbat Live!

Dinner Committee Report

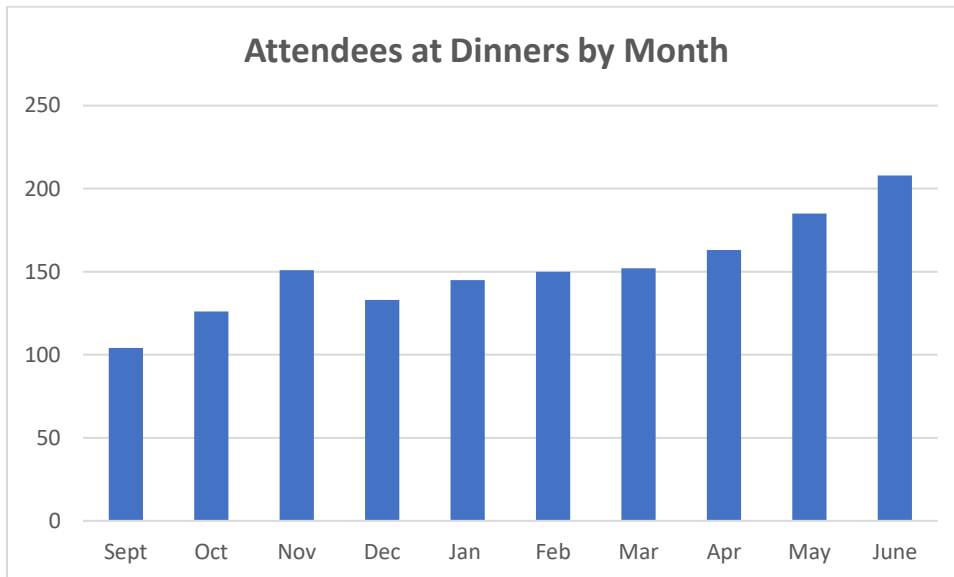
Steven Finkler, Chair

Wendy Kaplowitz, Kitchen Sub-Chair

This year the Erev Shabbat Live Dinner Committee planned and provided 9 Shabbat monthly dinners to CBI congregants and friends. Additionally, CBI Men’s Club prepared and paid for a 10th shabbat dinner.

The themes for our Shabbat dinners were Welcome Back Shabbat Dinner in September, a Sukkot Celebration Shabbat Dinner in October, Shabbat Dinner with Chinese Food in November, Chanukah Celebration Shabbat Dinner in December, Welcome to 2024 Dinner in January, Tu Bishvat Celebration Dinner in February, Shabbat Dinner with Chinese Food in March, Men’s Club Shabbat Dinner in April (March 29), Israel Independence Celebration Shabbat Dinner in May, and a Graduation Celebration Shabbat Dinner in June (May 31).

Attendance at the dinners started at about 100 in September, and rose throughout the year, with over 200 signed up for the June dinner (May 31).



A generous benefactor provided funding to get this dinner program on its feet, with the long term goal of the dinners being fully funded by a variety of sponsors and donations from those attending. The first five of our dinners received financial support from the benefactor. I am pleased to report that the last five of our dinners have been fully paid for by other sponsors and donations.

Our thanks go to ALL of our Sponsors and other Donors who made these dinners possible.

Sponsorships Were Received From:

Major Sponsorship: Anonymous Benefactor
Men's Club: Men's Club Shabbat Dinner.
Diamond Sponsor: Hedda and Ed Maleh in Celebration of their 50th
Wedding Anniversary
Platinum Sponsorship: Susan and Alan Zelman
Platinum Sponsorship: Ettinger-Bloom Family in honor of their winter
birthdays: Yael (Jan 13th), Henry (Feb 11th) and
Lyla (Feb 26th)
Gold Sponsorship: Dovdavany Family in Honor of Raffi's Bar Mitzvah
Gold Sponsorship: Evelyn Baron, Cheryl & Nahum Burstein,
Lilli & Steve Finkler, Mona & Eli Jacobs, Renee &
Arnie Kingsberg, Harriet Klein, Michael & Nancy
Weinstein, Janet & Mike Slifer, and Paula & David
Touger, In Honor of Israel's Independence Day
Bronze Sponsorship: Carolyn and Howard Himmel
Bronze Sponsors: Roberta Rabin and Max Kleinman in Honor of
Six Months Together
Bronze Sponsorship: Meryl Stone and Michael Cohen in Honor of
Matthew's 31st Birthday
Bronze Sponsorship: Flo Ellen and Rischard Maslow (z"l)
Bronze Sponsorship: Nancy and Allan Sloan in Honor of Israel's
Independence Day
Bronze Sponsorship: Flo Ellen Maslow in honor of her February
birthday
Bronze Sponsorship: Allan and Nancy Sloan
Bronze Sponsorship: Jessica Marino and Andrew Goldberg
Bronze Sponsorship: Mona and Eli Jacobs in honor of Rose Jacob's
100th birthday.
Occasion Sponsorship: Amy Dantus in Honor of Her Birthday

Donations were received from:

Almog, O	Brown	Cohen, A
Almog, R	Burk	Cohen, E
Alter	Carniol	Cohen, I
Bloom	Cohen	Cohen, M

Cohen, S	Jacobs	Schultz
Daniel	Klein	Shekman
Darivoff	Klein	Slifer
Dobshinsky	Lubow	Sotnick
Dovdavny	Manne	Srivastava
Dybner	Marinoff	Tenenbaum
Efromowich	McCafferty	Thompson
Ehrlich	Namm	Troll
Engel	Potechin	Weinstein
Feinberg	Rabinski	Weinstein
Finkler	Raday	Weiss
Footer	Reich	Weitz
Freedman	Reichman	Wernick
Friedman	Richman	Wininger
Good	Richter	Yaris, M
Greenwald	Richter-Kobrin	Yaris, N
Gutstein	Rod	Zaccardo
Hausman	Schmerken	Zhu
Himmel	Schneider	

Our Dinners also would not have been possible with the help of the many people involved in all stages from planning and promotion, shopping, meal prep to clean up. We thank the following people:

Barbara and David Gelband
Carolyn and Howard Himmel
Cheryl Burstein
David Good
David Touger
Evelyn Baron
Eliza Baron
Henry Bloom
Howard Kessler
Jamey Potechin
Janet Slifer
Jason Wininger
Laurie Kavowras
Leslie McCafferty
Lilli and Steve Finkler
Maya Bloom
Mona Jacobs
Nancy Weinstein
Paula Touger
Rachel Wininger

Renee Kingsberg
Ruth Kirschner
Steve and Lilli Finkler
Wendy and Hank Kaplowitz

And CBI Staff:

Rabbi Ari Isenberg
Cantor Lorna Wallach
Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald
Clergy Asst. Lurie Silverman
Communications Manager Amanda Abbate
Executive Director Rebecca Gallanter
Maintenance Staff: Marlon, Chris, Ms.
Sandra and Fraser
Marketing Director Anne Zaccardo
Preschool Director Mindy Klein

Sisterhood Report for 2024 Annual Meeting

Susan Stern, President

Sisterhood is a vibrant organization for the women at CBI. Sisterhood membership dues are billed with the annual CBI Statement. CBI Members are given the option to join Sisterhood or opt out. CBI Sisterhood serves multiple functions in the CBI community and offers educational, social and service opportunities at CBI.

Sisterhood hosts two widely attended catered dinners for our members each year, Kickoff (previously known as Paid Up Membership Dinner) in the fall and Installation in the spring where we welcome our new officers and board members and honor our retiring officers and board members.

Among the educational offerings this past year were Rosh Chodesh dinners with speakers such as Rabbi Isenberg, Cantor Wallach and Rabbi Helaine Ettinger. We also hosted a book discussion of Israel by Noah Tishby led by Sisterhood Board Members, Lisa Friedman and Barbara Ismail. Member, Sara Sherman, leads two “Bookends” book club presentations each year. This year most programs were held both at CBI and also simulcast on Zoom who members who preferred to attend from home.

As we move our activities back into the CBI building post-covid, Sisterhood has again begun to host monthly Knit & Knosh (and other crafts) get togethers led by Marion Mohl and Ann Spector. There have also been fun Game and Mah Jongg evenings.

The highlight of the Sisterhood Year is always Sisterhood Shabbat. Services on both Friday night and Saturday morning are led by Sisterhood members. Almost everyone participates in this beloved event from reading Torah and leading prayers to helping in the kitchen for the very special congregational Oneg and Kiddush which are part of the weekend.

Sisterhood takes part in other CBI celebrations such as hosting a Sukkot lunch and participating in the annual Summer Barbeque. Sisterhood donates to CBI fundraising drives and purchasing needs as needed.

Sisterhood provides for flowers to adorn the sanctuary on Shabbats and holidays. We also assist B’nai Mitzvot families in obtaining flowers, kipot and making Oneg and Kiddush arrangements. Funds for Sisterhood are generated by these activities as well as by the annual Rosh Hashana Honey Sale and the Sisterhood Gift Shop.

Sisterhood is there for the Blanche Bayer Religious School when requested. Recently, a prize was given to a graduating Kitah Zayin student.

CBI Sisterhood is a long-standing synagogue institution that was recently honored for eighty years of membership in the Women’s League for Conservative Judaism. We contribute both as a group

and as individual members to Women's League and also Torah Fund which supports the worldwide Conservative/Masorti institutes of higher Jewish learning. Sisterhood is proud to include Ruth Engel and Brittany Stern, daughters of members as cantorial students at The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

The 2023-2024 CBI Sisterhood Board Members and Committee Chairs include: Susan Stern, Lisa Friedman, Susan Zelman, Nancy Sloan, Roberta Rabin, Joan Merdinger, Meryl Hubscher, Sandy Panzer, Ivy Samuels, Marion Mohl, Miriam Linver, Jody Reich, Laurie Kavowras, Lisa Ehrlich, Jennifer Glick, Paula Touger, Lilli Finkler, Karen Kahn and Barbara Ismail.

Music Initiative Task Force
Report to Congregational Meeting
June 10, 2024

We were charged with developing the identity of CBI as “The Music Shul.” Our in-house talent and love of music throughout the congregation leads us to believe that music is so much a part of our DNA that anyone shul shopping in our area who values music in their synagogue experience knows there is only one address for them.

After a lot of brainstorming, we came up with some short-term and long-term goals. We solicited input from committee members regarding how music is already a part of our experience at CBI & what it means to us individually, how we would like to see music added to the CBI culture, and what types of musical events they would like to be involved with. We also recruited music ambassadors (tasks TBD).

Unfortunately, the events of October 7 put everyone into a tailspin and brought everything to a halt, but it did inspire Erev Shirim - an evening of Israeli music, with guitar accompaniment by Len Hausman in solidarity with Israel and support of each other.

A challenge faced by this and many other committees is finding space in the calendar. There is not much room for additional events. So, part of our plan has been to observe the many musical experiences already woven into the services and programs for adults and children of all ages. Rabbi Isenberg and Cantor Wallach often add spontaneous, freilach musical moments into the Shabbat and holiday services. We want to continue to infuse music into everything we do.

Some of what we saw this year:

- Rebranding the monthly community Shabbat evenings as Erev Shabbat Live!
- Cantor Wallach Lorna joined Miriam Linver and Miriam’s sister, Hazzan Elisheva Dienstfrey, for some trio harmonies woven into a Shabbat morning service (with some love theme melodies since we were also celebrating an Auf Ruf).
- Cantor Wallach and Paula Touger sing special duet/harmony for the Auf Ruf of Ari Touger and Joel Feinberg at Saturday morning service.
- Cantor Wallach and Rabbi Isenberg led singing of Chanukah songs at the CBI community candle lighting.
- Cantor Wallach led singing of Israeli songs at Men’s Club Chanukah dinner.
- Cantor Wallach did a Musical Tribute to Debbie Friedman, best known for

composing "Mi Shebeirach", the Prayer for Healing that we usually sing on Shabbat," for Sisterhood, where we learned about this female Jewish composer and the liturgical and Biblical texts she set with singing.

- Sisterhood Shabbat was music, music, music from start to finish. As part of Sisterhood Shabbat, Cantor Wallach led a newly formed Voices of Sisterhood group that led many songs and prayers. Voices of Sisterhood also led services during a subsequent Erev Shabbat Live!

An important long-term goal is to hold an annual Cantors' Concert. It is a wonderful CBI community builder and fund-raiser, and a way to open our doors to the broader community. Plans are already underway for a concert next spring (date TBA), as part of our centennial celebration.

Since we already have a rich musical culture, our goal is to publicize and market it. We would like to create a logo/brand that can highlight the music at CBI. Additionally, a strong social media presence would help re-engage existing members and attract potential new members.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Linver and Susan Zelman, co-chairs
Cantor Lorna Wallach, professional advisor

Please do not distribute or print these reports.