



# Hakol

THE VOICE OF THE  
PELHAM JEWISH CENTER

December 2017  
5778 Kislev / Tevet



## Upcoming PJC Activities & Events

### December

- 2** -- Hooked on Havdalah/4:30pm
  - 5** -- Soup Kitchen/ 4:30pm
  - 9**-- Women's Group/ 1pm
  - 14** -- Making Shabbos: Challah/6pm
  - 15** -- Community Shabbat Dinner/ 7:30pm
  - 16** -- Open Book 1/ 10:30am
  - 17** -- Hanukkah Party/ 1pm
  - 19** -- Israel Teen Summer Symposium/ 7pm
  - 25** -- Offices Closed
- ### January
- 1** -- Offices Closed

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## Rabbi's Message

One of the things that I love about walking around Jerusalem - particularly the Old City - is noticing the little boxes to the left of the front door of every Jewish house. It is subtle and unobtrusive, but I see it and feel like I am part of a secret club. They aren't labeled, and they don't announce what they are, but I know that each year, for 8 days, the box is not empty, but instead it shines with light, "proclaiming the miracle" of Chanukkah.

The idea that we need to "proclaim the miracle" comes from the Talmud, which states that we are obligated to place the Chanukiah outside of the house, next to the door. If we don't live on the ground floor, then we are to place the candles in a window, but not above a height of 30 feet,

because people don't generally look up that high.

Chanukah candles are a strange thing. According to the rabbis of the Talmud, they are more important than Kiddush wine, but at the same time, we are not allowed to use them for light. We can't read by them, or use them to see one another across the room \*





read by them, or use them to see one another across the room. It may be the Festival of Lights, but the light is restricted. We are instructed to enjoy the light, but not make use of it.

This seems to conflict with the instruction to place the chanukiah outside, where the people walking down the street can see it. How can we enjoy the light of Chanukkah, if we can't even see it? This is a real problem, and one that I haven't been able to resolve yet. But I am able to learn something important out of this situation: The light of Chanukkah must be shared.

We are not meant to hoard it for ourselves, but rather to share it with the people around us, both family and strangers. In fact, the value of sharing the light is so important, that the Jewish legal codes instruct us to light the candles at exactly the hour that people are walking in the streets, on their way home from the market.

Perhaps my favorite memory of enjoying the shared light of Chanukkah took place in the south of Israel, at Kibbutz Ketura. I spent 4 months living there on a gap year, surrounded by the arid beauty (and heat) of the Arava. On one of the mountains to the north of the kibbutz, there were nine oil drums lined up on the crest. This was the community's chanukiah. They would light fires in the drums each night of Chanukkah, a light that was visible for miles around.

I left the kibbutz before Chanukkah that year, but several friends and I made a point of taking a bus down south during the holiday in order to see these lights looming over us. And it was spectacular; in the darkness the mountain itself disappeared, and we were left with nine burning flames in the sky above us. It was a light that was shared with everyone who could see it, and that was enjoyed by all.

*Rabbi Alex Salzberg*

\* Don't worry, the rabbis came up with a way out of this problem. Along with helping us to light the other candles, the *shamash* is also a candle that we are allowed to "use" for light. So, when you sit next to the Chanukiah to study the Talmud - or read the latest magazine - just think to yourself that you are reading by the light of the *shamash*, the other candles just happen to be there.

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- [6 -- Open Book 2/ 10:30am](#)
- [6 -- Women's Group/ 1pm](#)
- [7 -- Blood Drive/9am- 1:30pm](#)
- [9 -- Soup Kitchen/ 4:30pm](#)
- [15 -- Offices Closed](#)
- [19 -- Community Shabbat Dinner/ 7:30pm](#)
- [21 -- Book Group w/ Author Discussion/ 11:30am](#)
- [21 -- "Joseph & the Technicolor Dreamcoat"/1pm](#)
- [28 -- Making Shabbos: Wine/4pm](#)

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**Quick Links**

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- [Find us on the Web](#)
- [2017-18 Calendar](#)
- [2017-18 Board of Directors](#)

## Education Director's Message



On the night of Tuesday, December 12th, Jews all over the world will be lighting the first candle of Hanukkah. Bringing lights into the darkest time of the year, this holiday has resonated with Jewish communities throughout history, and continues to inspire us as we learn about stories of Jewish survival against all odds.

At the Learning Center, we strive to connect our learners to the diverse dimensions in Jewish History, so we can truly appreciate the privilege of living in a country blessed with freedom of religion and expression for all its citizens. We look for opportunities to share with our students authentic stories of Jewish resistance and resilience so they, too, develop a strong connection to

of Jewish resistance and resilience so they can develop a strong connection to our heritage and pride in our traditions.

For example, our Hebrew High School students recently met with Jordan Salama, a PJC Learning Center alumnus, who shared the true story of his Iraqi and Syrian grandparents. The HHS students watched a movie made by Jordan when he was still a Pelham High School student. In this movie, Jordan interviewed his Iraqi relatives in America, regarding their escape from Iraq during the 60's and 70's. Jordan's mother, Mona Gabbay, our PJC fellow congregant, escaped persecution in Iraq as a child, arriving to the US as a young girl in 1974. Mona Gabbay's family saga is portrayed in Jordan's movie, "[From Exile to Exodus: The Story of the Jews of Iraq](#)". You may click the link to learn first hand how the ancient Iraqi Jewish community, which can trace its roots to the times of our patriarch Abraham, was persecuted and dispossessed of their belongings, not so long ago, until their once rich and influential role in Iraqi society was reduced to none.



Our younger students in the Learning Center will learn from our Alef-Bet teacher, Morah Sonia Levin, about her journey growing up in Communist Russia, and how she only was able to connect to her Jewish roots once she emigrated to Israel in her late teens. Sonia's family couldn't keep their Jewish traditions during the years they lived in Russia, since communism didn't allow for religious practices. As Sonia tells in her personal story, Judaism "skipped" two generations of Russian Jews.



Our LC educational team seeks to focus on an enduring understanding and essential question regarding the learning of each Jewish Holiday. This year, our faculty decided that the enduring understanding for our Hanukkah learning will be: Keeping Judaism Alive. Inspired by Morah Sonia's personal account of being denied the freedom to practice Judaism, we will focus on the essential question: How can we overcome challenges to keep our Judaism alive? Students will participate in a Symposium to compare and contrast Hellenism and Judaism, and debate how they can be like a Maccabee, even in our times. The Story of the Maccabees remains a beacon of light, no matter how many years passed since the historical event. (It has been just a few months since we heard anti-semitic remarks echoing in the streets of an American town...) Remembering the Maccabees and their plight is indeed very actual in our days. It is our duty to the future generations, in our community and in the larger scope of world Judaism, to keep Judaism alive and reflect on how are we like the Maccabees.

May your homes be blessed with the light of Jewish knowledge and your hearts be full of joy. May we be always able to celebrate our Jewish traditions with our families and friends.

Wishing each and every one of you Chag Hanukkah Sameach,

*Ana Turkienicz*

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## A Bit About Board Meetings - Learning Center

Did you know that members of the Pelham Jewish Center are invited to attend the monthly Board meetings? Board meeting dates appear in <https://www.thepjc.org/calendar>.

The Learning Center Board serves as the PTA of the Learning Center and is comprised of nine parents (including a Chairperson): Anne Bresnick, Danielle Gretz, Marjut Herzog, Melissa Kagan, Leah Leonard,

Wendy Rackley, Mimi Steinberg, Liz Tzetzto and Sari Schulman (Chair). Rabbi Salzberg and Ana Turmkienicz sit on the Learning Center Board, as well. Our purpose is to set school policies, advise, and oversee the management and educational components of the school.

We held our first Learning Center Board meeting of the new school year on October 22nd. We are pleased to report that the Learning Center has grown with new students and staff. We welcome Ava Gerber (Nitzanim), Max Gerber (Vav), Noah Silver (Alef-Bet), Noah Sherbansky (Gimmel-Daled), Phoebe Schwarz (Vav), Abe Lebovic (Zayin teacher), Lori Weber (music teacher) and Sandi Daniels (Torah Time leader).

Returning staff members include Jerusha Coltof (Nitzanim and Gan), Sonia Levin (Alef-Bet), Penina Weinberger (Gimmel-Daled), Havi Pessso (Hei) and Rivka Kisling (Vav). Marni Heller and Rabbi Salzberg continue to teach our Hebrew High School students, and we are pleased that Justin Fiszler has returned to lead our Junior Congregation. Once again, we are fortunate that Dan Mailick and Maria Abeshouse volunteer to teach trope to our older students. In addition, Amit Danan, our Shinshinit (Israeli gap-year student) has been working with students on Tuesdays. This is part of a program sponsored by WJC, UJA, and underwritten by the Cohen Family Foundation. The goal of the program is create a meaningful link between our children and Israel.

Upcoming events include a Shabbat Dinner for our Hebrew High School families (December 8), Yom Rishon Mishpachah program (December 10), Hanukkah celebrations (December 12 for most students, December 14 for Nitzanim students), Junior Congregation/Torah Time/Tot Shabbat (December 16) and the PJC Hanukkah Party (December 17). Further details about these exciting events can be found in the Learning Center's weekly announcements or on the PJC website.

In the more distant future, a Shabbaton is scheduled for the first weekend in June! If you are able to help plan the Shabbaton, please contact Rabbi Salzberg or Ana Turkienicz.

*Sari Schulman*  
*Learning Center Board Chairperson*

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## Abbie Leonard's Yom Kippur Avodah Reflections

This past year, I have found myself frequently asking: what can I do to change the world around me? I've been confronted with this question almost everywhere I turn: in class dialogues, in personal reflection, and while reading the shocking headlines in our daily news cycles.

I have grappled with confronting my privilege and advantages while in turn balancing the use of this privilege to benefit those without any. It is a tricky thing, and I am not always taken seriously due to my young age and lack of experience, but I am continuing to try and expand my horizons and learn as much as I can so that I can help those around me. This year, I have had the opportunity to travel to two incredible places: Israel and Cuba. Although at first glance the two nations could not seem more different, after visiting them both I've discovered that they have more in common than one may think.

In Israel, I participated in a sustainability-themed service trip called Roots Israel. What began as an excuse for me to travel this summer ultimately altered the lens with which I view both Israel and the entire world. One of the spots we traveled to was Lotem, an accessible nature center for Israel's disabled citizens. We helped them garden and replant trees for the visitors to enjoy. Never before had I even remotely considered how difficult it would be for people with disabilities to spend time enjoying nature. I had taken my ability to see, walk, and comprehend the world around me for granted when others were completely unable to do so. It seriously made me reexamine how I approached my daily activities and how lucky I was to be able to do them in the first place. Another opportunity I had during the trip was visiting Sderot, the unofficial "Bomb Shelter Capital of the World". For the past 8 years, over 10,000 rockets have been fired from Gaza towards Sderot: a common target for rockets because of where it lies. We were able to visit the Sderot Indoor Recreation Center, a 22,000 square foot underground playground that doubles as a bomb shelter. For most parents, their biggest playground worry is their child breaking an arm on the monkey bars, not whether or not a Palestinian rocket will be launched at their town. My whole life I had taken this for granted- Again.

I first went to Cuba this year during February break, with a group of teens from the PJC chaperoned by the Rabbi, Ana, Jennie and Jeremy Driesen, and Sari Schulman. We had the opportunity to tour Habana, interact with community members, and learn about the Jewish microcommunity in the middle of Cuba. The

second time was in June, thanks to the gratitude of Ana and her inviting me to tag along. Although the first trip was amazing, I definitely had more time to learn about the Cuban experience during the second: living in an apartment rather than a touristy hotel, getting to finally visit the homes and families of my Cuban friends in their own community, and getting to explore on my own using public transportation rather than a tour bus resembling a large, disjointed whale. (You can imagine how fun it was navigating dirt roads that were about 7 feet wide). Ana and I had more time to work with the members of the synagogue and learn about their experiences this time around. The second trip both proved to me the prevalence suffering is on the island, and how despite all of it, the incredible resilience of the Cuban people is rampant. An example: My friend Thalia had been out of toilet paper at her house for two weeks. Two weeks. Her family couldn't afford more since paper products are a commodity in Cuba, where all of it is imported since no paper industry exists. When I first attempted to give her some to take home, she refused. It took 3 tries to get her to take home an essential good because she didn't want me to be without any. In my life I had never met someone so giving and altruistic. After spending time in the apartment Ana and I shared, Thalia was stunned to find a mango in the kitchen. They were too expensive to be found anywhere near her house and were at least a 2 mile walk away. Meanwhile, anywhere in the States I can easily drive over to the nearest supermarket (closer than 2 miles) and purchase almost anything I want. This is yet another thing I have taken for granted for the past 18 years of my life.

These stories are what touch me, energize me, and are what motivate me to take action. These messages are of vital importance for us to be conscious of. Personally, this year I want to keep checking my privilege. It shouldn't require a trip around the world to be conscious of this. In order to change our society, we must first be aware of our position and our advantages in becoming educated. Are we going to sit back and watch the injustice and inequality in the world around us, or are we going to use our tools and resources to do something about it? Today, we figure out where we stand. Today, we reflect on the past year and what we've done during it to help those around us. Today, we plan for the coming year, hoping for and promising ourselves to give more and love more and *do* more. During Ne'i'lah, the closing service of Yom Kippur, we are calling upon God to inscribe us in the book of life before the gates are closed. Think of our lives as one chance to prove to God that we are worthy of being inscribed in the book; who can we help in order to do this? As John F. Kennedy once said, "If not us, who? If not now, when?"

*Abbie Leonard*

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## Making Shabbos - Challah Baking!



Join us for the first session of **Making Shabbos - Challah Baking** on Thursday, December 14th, from 6-7:30 pm. We will be using Rabbi Salzberg's family recipe, which has won the grand prize at the Maryland State Fair three times. While we mix, Julia Meyerson will also teach us about the significance of challah, the halakhot that govern it, and how yeast works.

[RSVPs](#) are appreciated so we know how much to purchase of the ingredients. Cost: \$5 Non-members

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## Community Shabbat Dinner



The PJC is hosting another Community Shabbat Dinner after the resounding success of the last one! Join us on Friday, December 15th, following Kabbalat Shabbat services (at approximately 7:30 pm).

A wonderful time was had by all at the first PJC community Shabbat



dinner of the year -- 75 people gathered together to welcome Shabbat, and then ate a delicious meal cooked right in the PJC kitchen. Join together again for dinner cooked by members of the PJC community.

Cost \$18/per adult; \$6 children 6-12: 5 & under, free: Maximum cost per family; \$50. Please [RSVP](#).

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## Open Book Program

### The Pelham Jewish Center

# OPEN BOOK

#### Torah Service

12/16

1/6

2/3

#### The Amidah

3/10

3/24

4/14

**Have you ever felt lost during Shabbat morning services?**

**Do you wish that you understood them better?**

**Come learn the intention of the prayers,  
the meaning of the words, and the choreography of the service.**

**Saturday mornings at 10:30 in the Library**

**(During Junior Congregation)**

**451 Esplanade**

**[www.thepjc.org](http://www.thepjc.org)**

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## Hanukkah Celebration

**Celebrate Hanukkah  
at the Pelham Jewish Center!**

**Sunday, December 17, from 1-3 pm**

**Dreamcoat Experience**  
Hanukkah-themed performance for children 3-7



Adults & children ages 7 and up  
create Hanukkah-themed mosaic tiles

**FREE for PJC members**

Suggested donation: \$10 for non-members

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# FIND YOUR SUMMER

TUESDAY, 12/19

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

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## New Member Spotlight ... Meet the Owen-Michaane Family

Dr. Michael & Maurice Owen-Michaane have been living in Pelham since March 2016 with their family. They have 3 children: Caleb Joseph, age 5, currently in Kindergarten at Pelham schools; Abigail Dorothy, age 2, in preschool; and newborn baby Jacob Isaac.

Maurice is a Real Estate Broker, with his own firm, Capital Realty NY, LLC, serving the New York City & Westchester markets in residential & commercial real estate. Prior to that, Maurice worked in the Finance Industry. Maurice is a life long NY'er, born in Brooklyn, and attended Hamilton College for his BA, and Baruch College Zicklin School of Business for his MBA.

Dr. Michael Owen-Michaane is a native of Elizabeth, Kentucky. He attended the University of Kentucky, on a full scholarship, for undergraduate and medical school. He completed his residency at NYU Medical, and is currently an Attending Physician and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Columbia University Medical Center.

Caleb and Abigail love attending PJC events, and Caleb loves Hebrew School Tuesdays!



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## Library News



We have exciting new books at the PJC Library! Drop by sometime soon and take a look ...

**Adults**

*A Broken Hallelujah* - Liel Leibovitz

*The Weight of Ink* - Rachel Kadish

*Pumpkin Flowers* - Matti Friedman

*Stolen Beauty* - Laurie Lico Albanese

**Youth**

*By Light of Hidden Candles* - Daniella Levy

*The Knish War on Rivington Street* - Joanne Oppenheim

*Bjorn's Gigt* - Sandy Brehl

*Barbara Saunders-Adams*  
*Librarian*

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**Share a Simcha!**

*simcha!*

"Share a Simcha" allows congregants to share their news with our PJC community. Please submit news about family members -- engagements, births, job updates, kid achievements, community acknowledgements and any other

milestones to [Lisa Yelsey](#). This will continue to be a regular *Hakol* feature, so keep your news and updates coming!

- *Mazel Tov* to Eugene Lief & Maria Kogan in honor of their daughter Rachel's *Bat Mitzvah* on November 4th.
- *Mazel Tov* to Patrick Hopper & Jacqueline Nenner on the occasion of their son Kolby's *Bar Mitzvah* on November 11th.
- Wishing much *Mazel* to Jacqui Stein on the wedding of her daughter Dana Wellesley-Stein to Bradley Levine on November 12th at the Glen Island Harbour Club with Rabbi Salzberg officiating!

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**Tributes & Donations**



**Tributes to the PJC in Honor of...**

- All of the Hooked on Havdalah event planners, by Jennie Driesen

**Tributes to the PJC in Memory of...**

- Jack Abeshouse, by Dorothy M. Schack
- Julius & Bronia Fink, founding members of the Pelham Jewish Center, by their sons -- Max and Sidney

#### **Donations to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund from ...**

- Cheryl Agris, in memory of her father, George
- Stephen Handelman & Susan Simpson, in honor of Joshua's Bar Mitzvah
  
- Barbara Saunders-Adams, in memory of her father, Charles
- Bradley Levine & Dana Wellesley-Stein, in honor of Rabbi Salzberg
- Jacqueline Stein, in honor of Rabbi Salzberg

#### **Make Tributes & Donations [ONLINE!](#)**

At any time, if you wish to pay by check, please make it payable to **"The Pelham Jewish Center"** and mail it to our bookkeeping firm at: The Pelham Jewish Center, P.O. Box 418, Montvale, NJ 07645.

All donations to the **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**, at any time throughout the year, should be made payable to **"The Pelham Jewish Center -- Rabbi's Discretionary Fund"** and mailed directly **to Julia Coss at the PJC office.**

Thank you!

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