

# Kayruv



# קירוב

**"Judaism for Today In a Warm and Caring Environment"**

**April 2015**

**Nisan/Iyyar 5775**

## FROM THE RABBI



Dear Friends,

As I write this, Passover is about to arrive. There are but a few days, and behold, we will be crossing the waters. We should always see ourselves

as coming out of Egypt, individually and personally. How do we do that? By becoming free, or so it seems one of the answers of the holiday is. At the simplest level, Passover is about freedom from slavery: *Avadim hayinu lepar'oh bemitzrayim*, "we were once slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt". But one needs to ask –

what kind of freedom? What is the essence of freedom? And, maybe more important, freedom from what kind of slavery? What is the essence of slavery?

Freedom, just as happiness and goodness, can have many meanings, as Isaiah Berlin, a philosopher of the (gulp!) 20<sup>th</sup> century has pointed out, in his essay "Two Concepts of Liberty."<sup>1</sup> He focuses his discussion on two of the many possibilities. He calls them negative freedom and positive freedom.

Positive freedom means that there is no control whatsoever over my actions: I am the sole master of my actions. No external cause can affect me, and my decisions are based on my own ideas and purposes. Despite the name, positive freedom is not necessarily good.

Imagine someone who would decide to exercise positive freedom all the time, with no concern for others' well-being. One example could be that such a person would never stop at a red light, given that this would mean that she will be two minutes late – and in the instance of receiving a ticket would fight for her right to cross the red light. Or that he will speak his mind, regardless of other people's feelings; or even curse and belittle them, given that he has the need to express his

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**Kayruv means "Welcoming."**

<sup>1</sup> Can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/two-liberties>

frustrations. We would not think that this person is good, or nice, or right.

Negative freedom means that someone else, or something else has a control over my actions, whether the amount of control is big or small. Despite the name, negative freedom is not necessarily bad.

Imagine someone who would stop at the red light, given any amount of reasons, the greatest of which could be his concern for the other drivers' safety. Or, he is careful with how he says things, so as to get his point across with a minimal amount of hurt caused to the other; or curb his anger at his co-worker's inefficacy given that he holds the dignity of all people to apply in the same measure to the inept co-worker. We would not think that this person is bad, or nasty, or wrong.

Of course these two types of freedom can be at odds with each other, and can complement each other – it depends what you fight for and with whom you fight. And this applies, I think, to both personal and communal spheres. The question that Passover brings about in personal terms, is what, exactly, is the nature of slavery?

"I am my own master" or "I am slave to no one" or "no one has control over me" are favorite phrases of those who defend their right to exercise positive freedom. But we have to ask, may one be a slave to their fears, or passions, or desires, in the name of which one exercises the right to take no consideration of the other? Can a person who is constantly and solely focusing on himself or herself, and on their immediate impulses, be considered a Person, with capital P? Can communal life even exist for such a person, in any form?

Conversely, someone who only and solely thinks about others and what they think, and how what they do will or will not affect the others, is not free to be him or herself. That behavior, which can be a sign of good social graces and social awareness, can transform the individual into a slave to fear of judgment if left unchecked. In communal terms, the impulse to force others to "do the right thing", imagining that they would do it if they were more enlightened, or smart, or honest can lead to great – or terrible things. It is in the name of what is right and good that people have been and can be bullied, oppressed and tortured.

So the question – or questions – stand, to be considered at each moment of our lives: what exactly am I slave to, and what exactly, or how exactly, is the freedom I need.

And if we are able to find the *kav hazahav* – the golden measure, as Maimonides puts it – between the freedom and the slavery of our lives, then maybe, just maybe, we will become People with a capital P, or *menschen*.

Warmly,  
Rabbi Nelly Altenburger

Dear members of B'nai Israel's  
caring community,

Dennis and I want to thank all of you who provided us with meals over the last two months. Your kindness is greatly appreciated. It was such a relief to know that all we had to do was pop a meal in the oven to reheat.

Nada, Dennis, Leah and Fred Adler

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

Despite Rabbi Altenburger's helpful guide to Passover cleaning in last month's Kayruv, I must admit I always have some difficulty getting my act together and end up feeling a bit rushed right before *Pesach*, so I'll keep

this brief. I'm happy to report that work on the basement is making great progress, and we'll soon be looking for some volunteers to help do some painting. If you're interested, please contact Henry Tritter. Keep your calendar open for our annual Touch-A-Truck fundraiser on Sunday, May 17, and please let Isabel Kaplan know if you can help with the planning or advertising or (especially praiseworthy) volunteer that day.

Two weeks later, on Sunday, May 31, we've got something brand new planned in conjunction with the PJ Library: an exciting and energetic concert of funky music with a Jewish twist from Doni Zasloff (aka Mama Doni). It will be a big community-wide event, open to the public and fun for the whole family, so drag everyone you know along! And last, but not least, don't forget to vote in the World Zionist Congress election, and please consider encouraging eligible friends and relatives to do so as well. Head over to [myvoteourisrael.com](http://myvoteourisrael.com) to check out the platform of each slate, register to vote (which requires a \$10 processing fee, \$5 if you're 30 or younger), and cast your vote, and don't delay, do it today—voting is only open until April 30!

Before I head back to my *Pesach* preparations, I'd like to leave you with a fascinating insight I found by accident last Shabbes in Rabbi Altenburger's office. I was encouraging Adina to clean up the mess she'd left on the floor, and absent-mindedly pulled a copy of *Paradigm Shift: From the Jewish Renewal Teachings of Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi* off of the shelf. Reb Zalman zt"l was widely known as an innovative and inspirational rabbi, and I had been meaning to familiarize myself with his teachings for a long time. I sat down on the couch, opened the book, and found myself drawn to an essay mysteriously titled "The Dialogical Mentality".

Having read my share of academic papers over the years in which much of the fun was in trying to figure out what the heck the author was going on about, I was undeterred, and quickly found a comfortable, well-worn story that I thought I knew inside and out: "The Greek goes to Shammai and wants to learn the whole Torah while standing on only one foot. Shammai beats him with a builder's rod. The Greek leaves and goes to Hillel. He responds: 'What you don't want to be done to you don't do to someone else. All the rest is commentary; go and learn to the finish.' And the Greek became a Jew."

According to Reb Zalman, the "dialogical mentality," the mindset of being in true dialog, rather than just disputation with another, goes far beyond allowing for other points of view, it's in deeply understanding that "both these and those are the words of the living God" (Eruvin 13b) "to the point of knowing that if Shammai had not hit the Greek, Hillel's pointed 'don't do something to someone else that you would not have done to you' would not have convinced him on one foot." If it weren't for Shammai's beating, the Greek would not have been able to appreciate Hillel's teaching, and would not have become a Jew! I was so astonished with this appraisal of Shammai's role in the story that I had to stop and read it out loud to Adina (who, as usual, put up with her odd father's strange enthusiasm good naturedly).

Reb Zalman's "dialogical mentality" strikes me (no pun intended) as particularly helpful in doing the Passover work of "cleansing our souls", as Rabbi Altenburger described it in last month's Kayruv. Perhaps it can show us a path to dialog rather than disputation with the difficult, strict and demanding Shammais in our lives.

Together for a searching, connecting and dialogical community,

Kennis Koldewyn

## APRIL EVENTS

### **PASSOVER SCHEDULE 2015**

#### **Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Search for *chametz* at nightfall - 7:53 P.M.

#### **Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Finish eating *chametz* before 10:48 AM  
Sell and burn *chametz* before 11:52 AM  
Candle Lighting and First Seder 7:03 PM

#### **Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>**

*Pesach* services begin at 9:30 A.M.  
Candle lighting and Second Seder begin at 8:04 PM

#### **Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>**

*Pesach* services begin at 9:30 A.M.  
End of the second day – 8:05 P.M.

#### **Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**

Candle Lighting for the seventh day of  
*Pesach* – 7:09 P.M.

#### **Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>**

*Pesach* Services begin at 9:30 A.M.  
Candle Lighting for the eighth day and  
Shabbat – 7:11 P.M.

#### **Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>**

*Pesach* and Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 A.M.  
*Yizkor* at approximately 10:45 A.M.  
*Pesach* ends at 8:12 P.M.  
Eat-all-the-*chametz*-you-can begins at 8:12 P.M.

### **The 30 Second Seder**

An exodus occurred from Egypt many years ago,  
With GOD's own help, a group of slaves attained the  
status quo.

Acquiring their freedom as the tale is told and sung,  
From spousal separation and the killing of their young.

From bondage, servitude and want, from pain and grief  
and tears,  
Acquiring responsibility in coming years,

One type of which, is to recount this tale, as GOD  
commands,  
And show that every person, each of us, is in GOD's  
hands.

The Matzoh is our bread of haste, unleavened bread we  
ate.  
The Bitter Herbs, they represent the slavery we hate.

Salt water represents our tears, Charoset's mortar/stone.  
Creating bricks that shackled us, as slaves, to Pharaoh's  
throne.

The roasted shank bone represents what made death  
pass us by  
When plagues were brought on Egypt causing many there  
to die.

The egg, it represents life's wholeness, wine, to celebrate  
And we recline on pillows and this Seder tale relate.

And why this night is different, well, we welcome strangers  
in.  
We give them shelter, food and drink, remembering we'd  
been

Strangers, once, in Egypt, made to feel apart, enslaved,  
Before GOD came and caused us to be "free at last" and  
saved.

And GOD commanded us, a wild Semitic tribe to be  
A model for mankind to follow through eternity.

To be as GOD envisioned us, both loving to our peers  
And peaceful, just, establishing the Messianic years.

Sarah Namer

## LOOKING AHEAD

### SAVE THE DATES!

**Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> the Annual Touch-A-Truck Fundraiser.** Please let Isabel know that you are available to help.



**Sunday, May 31, at 3:00 P.M.**

**MAMA DONI**, a nationally award-winning Jewish Children's Performer is doing a free concert in Brookfield, to be held at the Hammerhead Martial Arts Studio, 317 Federal Road.

Music, fun, participation!



Mama Doni is the recipient of the 2011, 2013, and 2014 Parents Choice® Award and the "Simcha Award Winner" at The International Jewish Music Festival in Amsterdam, Holland

Cosponsored by CBI and Greater Danbury PJ Library

## DONATIONS NEEDED!



### FOR OUR LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES!

This is CBI's ongoing project to help our local food pantries. Items most in need are dried/canned beans, canned fish, peanut butter, jelly, fruit juice, sugar, flour, personal care items such as soap and shampoo. (The pantries get cereal, canned veggies and rice from area supermarkets.)

CBI is a generous and caring community and as always, we thank you for your donations and support as they are truly appreciated.

Hebrew School teacher wanted for Congregation B'nai Israel in Danbury, CT beginning September 2015. Warm and supportive environment.

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## L'DOR V'DOR: FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

### Shalom Lampell – Part 1

Shalom Lampell's biography is a rich tapestry, a Tolstoyan epic, filled with so much detail that more than one issue of the *Kayruv* will be needed to tell his story. Therefore, I have divided it into two parts: In Part 1, I will describe his youth, concluding with his trip to Palestine in 1944; In Part 2, which will appear in a later issue, I will describe his adventures in Palestine and subsequent journey to the United States, where he eventually made his way to our synagogue.

Listening to Shalom speak of his youth, one can't help but conclude that God took a very special interest in seeing to his good fortune and the good fortune of his family. I know of no better way to understand the miracles that occurred at such crucial times in his story.

It seems that this special relationship with a 'higher power' first manifested itself when Shalom was six years old. At that age, he remembers holding his father's hand while walking an hour and a half to attend a *shul* located in Transylvania, his birthplace, which had become a part of Romania after World War I. Perhaps, his unwavering devotion to B'nai Israel was born on that very day, 78 years ago, the day he recognized his heart-felt connection to *shul*. His love for Judaism blossomed, a love that envelops Shalom today, each time he opens the sanctuary door to pray.

In 1939, as the German army made its way into Romania, Shalom's family moved to Bucharest, the capital, where his aunt lived and the family owned a factory that made expensive women's undergarments. They would be safer there. However, his father didn't make the trip with the rest of the family. He stayed behind in Transylvania, trying to sell his land, knowing it would be confiscated once the German army arrived. That was the

time of the first miracle: Shalom's father boarded the very last train for Bucharest before the German army descended into Transylvania and closed the border. No more trains left for Bucharest; no other Jews were able to follow; the fate of many left behind was sealed.

For Jewish people, Bucharest was an oasis compared to other places in Nazi-occupied Europe. Shalom's family was particularly lucky because it had the resources to buy off Romanian and German officials. When the German army eventually arrived, they remained protected. Throughout the war, his family was able to stay in its own home. The family kept Kosher. The children attended a private Jewish school. No Jews in Bucharest were forced to wear a yellow star. And Shalom continued to attend his beloved *shul*, a much larger synagogue than the one he attended in Transylvania.

Bucharest was also the site of the second and third miracles in Shalom's story. A German bomb fell directly onto their next door neighbor's house. Luckily, it didn't explode; no lives were lost. Once, feeling particularly rebellious, Shalom and his school friends poured sugar into the gas tanks of German motorcycles that were parked outside the army's transportation headquarters, which was located in a nearby park. The boys weren't spotted by the Nazi soldiers. Instead, their prank was seen by some neighbors, who reported them to their parents. "I never had a beating like the one my parents gave me when they found out what I'd done!" Shalom recounted. "It was just dumb luck the Germans didn't discover what we did. If they had, where would I be today?" We shudder to think . . .

The family business continued to thrive, making uniforms for German pilots now. However, by 1944, with the war coming to an end, change was in the air. "Once the Germans left for the west, the Russians would soon follow from the east. Would it be any better with them in charge? We thought not,"

so the family decided to sell the factory and consolidate its resources. Also, at the time, Shalom and his friends had learned about other young people who had made the pilgrimage to Palestine. He and his cousins wanted to follow suit. They joined a second trip, which made the ten-day trek in October, 1944. "Our parents gave us their blessing," Shalom recalled. "There were 120 of us. We were 12, 13 and 14 years old."

What an odyssey it turned out to be! First traveling from Romania through Bulgaria to Istanbul, Turkey where they changed trains and crossed over the border into Syria. The train then went through Lebanon, before reaching its final destination, Atlit, in Palestine, a deserted British army camp.

Not only was the trip to Palestine, itself a kind of miracle, but the children always had plenty to eat, even though they had food for only the first days few days of the journey. They were the grateful recipients of the largesse of farmers who gave them food when the train stopped during the day. Also, convoys of British and French soldiers accompanied them at different times during the journey. The soldiers gave generously of their food as well, so Shalom and his traveling companions never went hungry.

To this very day, Shalom marvels at the planning that went into making the trip possible at such a dangerous time. But he and his friends didn't think much about that! They just wanted to have fun! "What an adventure!" Shalom recounted. "We'd play hide-and-seek on the roofs of the train cars, racing to the front and rear of the train, ducking into the area between the cars, or lowering ourselves into open windows. We only traveled by night," he added. "It was safer that way. But we wanted the train to move faster! It only seemed to creep along, most likely keeping us safe. But what did we know! We were only kids!"

After arriving in Palestine, the young people disembarked at Atlit, where they were divided into smaller groups. Three days later, Shalom's group was sent to an architectural school called Ben Shemen, where I will pick up his story in the next issue of the Kayruv.

Marc Heller

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While I am social and enjoy the media, I know very little of social media as it exists in this transformative era of technological innovation. Thus, I've had a Facebook page for years and have paid little attention to it until..... About a month ago, my daughter Jessica said to me, "Why don't you ever check your Facebook messages?" I must've mumbled that I once had years ago and there was nothing interesting, so why bother. But that evening, I did check the messages and the first one listed was from the granddaughter of the couple my parents rented an apartment from in the two family house in Brooklyn where I had lived during my childhood and young adult years. She said she remembered my family fondly and had looked up to my brother and me as kind of older brothers.

She went on to say plaintively, that she had been searching for me for years and that she, her older sister and their mother were sitting in the sister's kitchen and to, "PLEASE, PLEASE write back ASAP." I'm ashamed to say that the message was sent three years ago.

I did write back immediately, tripping over many apologies, but so very happy to have received that message from Hallie, now 48 and married with children. And then the floodgates opened. Hallie, Barbara and I had an hour long phone conversation the next day, with many tearful moments for her as we reminisced about her grandparents and great aunt in the apartment above us, long gone and her father who had died at a relatively early age. She never knew her grandfather, Harry Stern, a business agent for the grocery workers union, for whom she was named and I told her things about her family that she had never heard before. Soon, she posted old photographs of her brother's Bar Mitzvah on Facebook, showing among other things, my

late father beaming as he made the blessing over the challah. None of the Stern elders knew Hebrew or were religious, so my father was given the honor. I had forgotten how proud he had been to do that.

Barbara responded with a slew of old photos which Jessica posted on Facebook for us, featuring the many Stern family members who had attended my parents' 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 1972, held in her grandparent's more spacious apartment (they and my parents had become close friends). Of course the women had teased and lacquered hair piled up in gravity defying splendor and many of the guys sported facial hair modeled after Mark Spitz (I, on the other hand had long hair and a scruffy goatee and looked suspiciously like a Russian anarchist). These vintage photos and embarrassing hairdos elicited much Facebook comment, not only from Sterns and Levitts, but from many friends on both sides. In the spring, we will see Hallie, et al. on Long Island, where the remaining Stern family lives. I'm sure it will be a very warm, nostalgic and tearful reunion.

For postwar Jews in Brooklyn, our lives were often lived in Jewish neighborhoods (often with Italian neighbors) in apartment buildings or two families where neighbors became like family. We attended public schools where we were hardly minorities (there were four other "Joels" in my fifth grade class). So very different from our own children's lives in Connecticut. It is heartwarming to revisit the Old Neighborhood, courtesy of Facebook.

So was this *bashert*, Yiddish for "meant to be," finally finding this unexpected Facebook message that bridged forty years and untold memories for two families who had grown up together and then apart, or just random happenstance? Here's what Rabbi Benjamin Blech, Professor of Talmud at Yeshiva University has said of such times in his life.

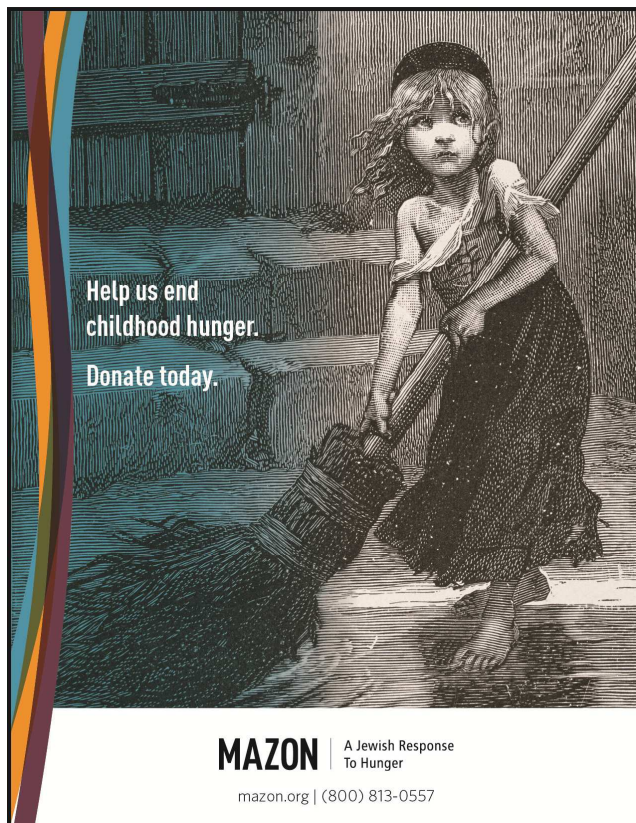
*"The seemingly haphazard, random and arbitrary events that comprise the stories of our lives begin to form a coherent and*



*purposeful narrative when we view them from a divine perspective. With the wisdom of retrospective insight I have countless times learned to acknowledge that coincidence is but God's way of choosing to remain anonymous."*

While God's face remains hidden to us, I'm glad God's Facebook found me that day.

Joel Levitt



## IN THE COMMUNITY

### The Jewish Family Service is Alive and Well

Despite the recent closing of the Jewish Federation of Danbury and Putnam County, the Jewish Family Service (previously sponsored by the Federation) remains active due to a generous grant to the United Jewish Center to fund the services of JFS for several years.

The Jewish Family Service is currently housed in the UJC at 141 Deer Hill Ave., Danbury and staffed by Rosalind Kopfstein, L.C.S.W. , D.S.W.

Ms. Kopfstein is continuing her services of dispensing information and referral by phone and/or short term on site counseling for Jewish residents in the Greater Danbury area. For many years she has provided effective counseling and advocacy services helping numerous residents work toward resolution of challenging issues in their lives.

Programs for clients in need, providing holiday foods for the High Holidays, Passover and Chanukah are also coordinated by Ms. Kopfstein.

The Jewish Family Service can be reached at phone at 203 794-1818 or FAX 203 790-1448. The e-mail address for the service is: [jfsdanbury@gmail.com](mailto:jfsdanbury@gmail.com).

Please refer any members of your congregation or organization who could benefit by this valuable community resource.

Thank you,  
The Board of Jewish Family Service

## SOCIAL WORK POSITION

Wanted: Part-time LCSW – CT with a minimum of 5 years experience; Medicare certified preferred. Generalist practitioner with knowledge of social service systems in CT; understanding of Jewish customs and values. Major responsibilities: manage the information and referral line and clinical counseling. Position in Northern Fairfield County.

Apply to: [rudanka@juno.com](mailto:rudanka@juno.com).

## SCHEDULE OF SHABBAT SERVICES

- ☆ *Shabbat, 15 Nisan, April 4, **Pesach***
- ☆ *Shabbat, 22 Nisan, April 11, **Pesach***
- ☆ *Shabbat, 29 Nisan, April 18, **Shemini**: The dedication of the sanctuary and the death of Aaron's sons. *Haftarah*: I Sam. 20:18-42*
- ☆ *Shabbat, 6 Iyyar, April 25, **Tazria-Metzora**: The laws and boundaries regarding ritual purity of the human body. *Haftarah*: II Kings 7:3-20*
- ☆ *Shabbat, 18 Iyyar, May 2, **Aharey-Kedoshim**: The establishment of the annual atonement ritual for the People of Israel (*Yom Kippur*) and the ethical laws that govern Jewish society in the Holiness Code. *Haftarah*: Amos 9:7-15*

## CANDLE LIGHTING

April 3, 2015: <i>Pesach</i>	7:03 P.M.
April 4, 2015: <i>Pesach</i>	8:04 P.M.
April 9, 2015: <i>Pesach</i>	7:09 P.M.
April 10, 2015: <i>Pesach</i>	7:11 P.M.
April 17, 2015:	7:18 P.M.
April 24, 2015:	7:26 P.M.
May 1, 2015:	7:33 P.M.
May 8, 2015:	7:41 P.M.

## YAHREZITS

- 27 Nisan, April 16, 2015**  
Ida Goldman (Alvin Goldman)
- 28 Nisan, April 17, 2015**  
Robert Goodstein (Rachel Koldewyn)
- 30 Nisan, April 19, 2015**  
Leon Feldman (Bonnie Kasiaz)
- 1 Iyyar, April 20, 2015**  
Herbert Stein (Jeff Shafiroff )
- 3 Iyyar, April 22, 2015**  
Maxine Friedman (Gail Friedman)
- 5 Iyyar, April 24, 2015**  
Ralph B. Osnoss (Kenneth Osnoss)
- 8 Iyyar, April 27, 2015**  
Rose Friedman (Melvin Friedman)
- 11 Iyyar, April 30, 2015**  
Sarah Krantz (Jeff Shafiroff)
- 14 Iyyar, May 3, 2015**  
Milton Small (Pam Lampell)  
Milton Steinberg (F. Richard Steinberg)

## THANKS! THANKS!

### **For the General Fund**

- ☆ Marian and Doug Wise in appreciation of Susan Titter and Pam Lampell
- ☆ Pam and Shalom Lampell in memory of Susan Waltuch, Barbara Poll, Jay Seifert and Bobbie Sommers; in honor of Pearl and Amos Turk and our new *Etz Chaim*
- ☆ Sol Lepson and Natalie Rapoport in memory of Susan Waltuch, Barbara Poll, Jay Seifert and Bobbie Sommers; in honor of Pearl and Amos Turk and our new *Etz Chaim*

### **For the Kay and Harry Robinson Children's Book Fund**

- ☆ Barbara and Joel Levitt in honor of Pearl and Amos Turk for their inspiring lives on the occasion of the dedication of the *Etz Chaim*; in honor of Robbie Turk for the exquisite crafting of our new *Etz Chaim*; good health to Marcia Klebanow, Ruth Holt; in memory of Rabbi Norman Koch, Jay Seifert, Bobbie Sommers, Susan Waltuch, Barbara Poll

### **For Their Generous Kiddush**

- ☆ CBI in honor of Pearl and Amos Turk
- ☆ Dina and Sam Markind in memory of Dina's father Max Kruzansky
- ☆ Marty Waltuch in memory of his wife Susan

## PLEASE SUPPORT OUR FRIENDS IN THE COMMUNITY

These pages contain business cards of members of the Greater Danbury Community who have been instrumental and generous to us in the renovation of our building. We ask you to help show our thanks by supporting them whenever possible for the following services.

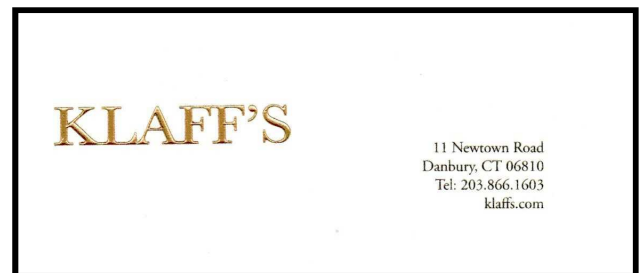
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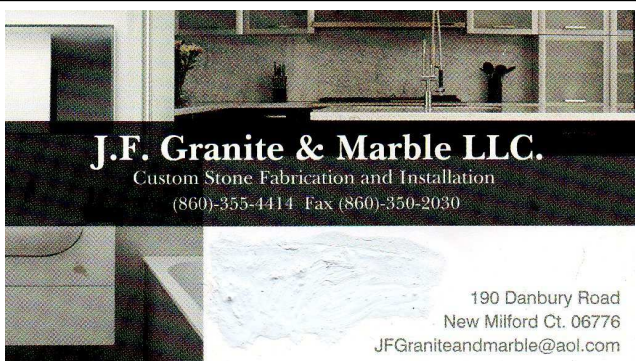
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