



CONGREGATION
B'NAI TIKVAH

TIKVAH TALK

Feb-Apr 2021

WALNUT CREEK, CA

REFLECTIONS...

By Rabbi Jennie Chabon



Friends,

If your Facebook feed looks anything like mine, then it was flooded, overwhelmed, by quotes and pictures of Amanda Gorman on January 20th, elevating both her poetry and her presence at a time

when truth and grace have been in short supply in our country. Dressed in sunshine and crowned in red, she stepped up to the microphone, hands dancing, and offered us a cherished gift--honest, searing, hopeful words aimed straight at our hearts, and delivered by a young woman for whom clear, easy speech was hard-won. She stands firmly in line with the generations that came before her, both President Biden himself and Moshe Rabbeinu, Moses our prophet, who each stepped into their power despite--or perhaps because of--their own speech impediments. The path to change, and to healing, is not paved by perfection, but by honesty, integrity, and perseverance:

When day comes we step out of the shade

Aflame and unafraid.

The new dawn blooms as we free it.

For there is light if only we're brave enough to see it,

If only we're brave enough to be it.

What would it mean to be both aflame and unafraid? On fire in our truth, and therefore unafraid? She challenges us to not just see the light but to become alight with it. To BE the light itself. Or to quote other beautiful words from that day, to allow our "whole souls" to be in it, to be wholly dedicated to the work of reuniting our country.

We in the Jewish community know just how powerful words can be. Our tradition is based on words, on text, on the power of the ancient to continue to be alive for us today. The most important day of the Jewish year, Yom Kippur, centers around the ability for speech to

Continued on Page 4

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Judith Barrall, Board President



11 months. That is how long it has been since my neighbor, who has family in China, asked if I could help her find a supplier who had masks. (I work for a medical practice.) The virus was very real, and spreading rapidly, in China at that

time. She could not find masks available anywhere. Of course, I could help. Little did any of us know that in just a short, short time, the virus would put in its foothold here and we would all be scrambling to find an adequate supply of masks.

Such brazen hubris to think that the virus would not reach our shores. Life as we knew it came to an abrupt halt and we all made adjustments.

Some of us are at home with frustrated children and not a moment to breathe; others find themselves with hours and hours to fill. And truly, we are still in the ravages of this pandemic. It will not abruptly "end," though some of us like to hope.

Is there anything that our ancient story can teach us? Last week Rabbi Chabon spoke so beautifully about the Israelites chanting songs of praise in the MIDDLE of the passage out of the Red Sea. Not at the end. But the middle. I believe that this is the first time that I heard that. And the lesson that is so profound is that despite the fear and the unknown, songs of joy and praise were offered. Tambourines were jangled. The sea was encroaching and the Egyptians were in hot pursuit. And yet they took the time to thank and praise G-d. And they did this in the middle of the fear and struggle. They did not know where the journey would take them but they had faith and hope.

And they found song and joy.

Imagine that!

Continued on Page 10

At Congregation B'nai Tikvah, we believe that a kind and vibrant Jewish community deepens and restores our sense of purpose and connection to the world. We are dedicated to learning, music-infused prayer, personal relationships and a commitment to social justice and welcome all who are looking to explore the many innovative paths to meaning that Judaism has to offer.

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CONTACT

The CBT office is open by appointment only.

office@tikvah.org (925) 933-5397

www.tikvah.org

MAZEL TOV

to our B'nai Mitzvah!



Bar Mitzvah of Ryan Slavet
Son of Andrea & Ben Slavet (z"l)
Saturday, February 13



Bar Mitzvah of Ben Lieb
Son of Tracy Silver Lieb & Jeremy Lieb
Saturday, April 3



Bar Mitzvah of Kaleb Isserman
Son of Judith & Chad Isserman
Saturday, April 10



Bat Mitzvah of Sarah Wies
Daughter of Kim & Ed Wies
Saturday, April 24

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Tammy Fisher & Greg Fox

Scott & Jim Helsing-Culver

Amara Altman & Eric Lipsky

Jennifer & Seth Baruch

Stephen Brooks

Kristen & Yuri Burda

SAVE THE DATE

CBT ANNUAL GALA
SATURDAY, MAY 22

 TIKVAH 
TAKEOUT

Wise Sons Pickup at CBT: February 10, March 26

Purim Tal's Dinner: February 25

Mooyah: March 2

Join us for some great food supporting local restaurants and CBT. Questions? Contact Lori Siegel. loriesiegel@aol.com

FROM THE ED'S ZOOM ROOM

By Anne Marx, Executive Director



It is the middle of Tu B'Shvat Day, our New Year of the Trees, and I'm looking out the window at one of the beautiful oak trees which line Congregation B'nai Tikvah. Of course, there are no leaves this time of year, but the underlying skeleton

of branches is beautiful nonetheless. This article and this Tikvah Talk edition are supposed to stretch to the end of April and past our Passover festivities. I can imagine this tree helping to bridge that time as it will be changing in these coming months, getting a new crop of leaves and acquiring a different kind of beauty.

Meanwhile, Passover is another one of our "New Year's," so even these few months hold multiple opportunities to begin. In the middle, we will mark one year since our lives changed with the current pandemic, but one thing has not changed: we continue to gather.

Tonight more than 30 households will join in our community's first Tu b'Shvat Seder in many years. In February we have plans brewing for Purim on the 25th at 6:30 pm. In March we will have a second-night community Seder for Passover on the 28th. Plus, so many Shabbats, Sisterhood, Social Action, and CCJCC activities along the way!

Participating in these events is an important part of your CBT engagement. If you are looking for even deeper engagement, you can still join in our Tuesday night Exploring Judaism series through May. But we could also use your time and talent. If you get more involved, I guarantee your feelings of connectedness will grow.

We have opportunities to help with our spring gala, other fundraising efforts, and renewing our amphitheater (and making it ADA compliant) so we can make better use of it. Perhaps you have kids who've gone off to college or back to in-person learning, leaving you with a little more time. Or maybe the #CoronaLining of no longer having a commute might allow you to take on a CBT project. Please reach out to me at director@tikvah.org if you are interested in getting involved in one of these efforts or taking on a volunteer leadership role. You might find your new beginning and opportunity for beauty.

Wishing you good health, more daylight, and many Happy New Year's!

Anne Marx
Feb-Apr 2021

CONNECTION CORNER

By Keren Smith, Director of Membership & Education



Wrong Number

I have made many mistakes in my life, surely many more than I care to admit. About a month ago I made a mistake that instantly brought happiness to my life. I am not sure who I meant to call, but I mistakenly

dialed Judy Blum's number (don't ask me how). I have never been able to recognize voices, so I didn't realize who I was talking to. I just apologized for calling the wrong number and was about to hang up when the warm voice on the other side said, "Keren, is that you?" It was such a wonderful surprise to have connected with Judy, one of my favorite people on planet earth. I usually feel so rushed in my day to day life that I haven't just picked up the phone to connect with her.

In this unexpected conversation, she shared with me that she knows so little of what is happening in the school and would love to know more. Could it be, I thought, that an institution like Judy Blum, CBT administrator for 19 years, who is so connected to our community, doesn't know what is happening with our school? And so we concluded that I should dedicate this Tikvah Talk to an update about the school.

Last summer, as we were planning for school, and COVID was raging with no end in sight, we were faced with very difficult decisions to make. We were trying to balance safety and health with social-emotional wellbeing, all while listening to the varying and shifting feelings and thoughts from our Religious School parents. We always strive to meet every student and every family where they are and provide solutions that meet the needs of every individual - this was the guiding principle of our approach to reopening the school; ensuring that each family has an option that is right for them.

After many discussions with the teachers, parents, Education Committee, and CBT leadership, we decided to open the school in a hybrid model. This gave parents, teachers, and madrichim the option to choose what felt right for their own families: virtual-only learning or virtual and outdoor in-person learning. We are one of very few Religious Schools in the Bay Area that gave parents an in-person option, although the feedback from par-

Continued on Page 11
page 3

SISTERHOOD NEWS

By Rayna Ravitz, President

I am happy to report that we donated the no-sew blankets to Children's Hospital Oakland. The nurse we gave them to told us that kids and parents are thrilled with them. Sometimes parents spend the night and don't have much with them. If you want to make more blankets, let me know and I will get more material.

Cindy Gershon led us through latke making that was fun to watch and participate in. Thanks to Cindy and Cathie Izen for setting that up.

Cookie Svingos is asking for volunteers for Passover baskets for homebound seniors. Contact Cookie for a list of contents requested. cookieeaz@aol.com

Sisterhood Shabbat will be on March 19. Susan Desmond will coordinate parts for this. Contact Susan if you are interested in participating. susandes22@gmail.com.

Sisterhood is now running the gift shop. I will be looking for volunteers when we can physically shop. In the meantime, click on the shopping cart on tikvah.org (top right). If you see something that you would like to look at in person, let me know and I will meet you at CBT.

We're always interested in new ideas. Let me know what you would like to do.

Sisterhood is supporting the CCJCC Under One Tent programming. There are some wonderful events.

Please note that we have switched Book Sisters to Thursday night to avoid conflict with Rabbi's classes.

UPCOMING SISTERHOOD EVENTS

Thursday, February 18 - Book Sisters 6:45

"The Book of Lost Friends" by Lisa Wingate
Barbara Gutkin will lead the discussion

Thursday, March 18 - Book Sisters 6:45

"A Girl with Seven Names" by Lee Hyeon-seo
This is the story of a North Korean defector.

Friday, March 19 - Sisterhood Shabbat 6:30

Thursday, April 15 - Book Sisters Time TBD

"The Third Daughter" by Talia Carner

This book is fiction based on a true story that happened at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century in eastern Europe. I have asked Talia Carner to come to our meeting and speak about this terrific book. This event is open to all!

Rayna. Raynaravitz@gmail.com

REFLECTIONS...

Continued from Page 1

heal and transform, even as it acknowledges, in the words of Kol Nidrei itself, that we will likely stumble and fall in our attempt to stay true to our highest ideals. And yet that powerful day demands that we put our whole souls into it, our whole selves dedicated to the process of *teshuvah*, of believing that Amanda Gorman's words can be true.

And so, my friends, I urge us this year not to strive to be right, but to understand; not to seek success but solidarity, and for the courage to keep getting up when our words falter and our intention disappoints. We will hold one another accountable. We will shine the light for another when their brightness is diminished. And in so doing, we will begin, stitch by stitch, to sew our fractured world back together.

IT'S A FAMILY ISSUE HEREDITARY CANCER FREE VIRTUAL SPEAKER PANEL

WEDNESDAY | MARCH 10 | 7PM

Learn the latest in genetic testing, cancer prevention, and how inherited genes can impact men and women in your family.



PAMELA MUNSTER, M.D.
Co-Director of the UCSF
Center for BRCA Research



JOSH BARNHART, B.S., M.S.
Genetic Counselor
John Muir Health



RALEIGH ZWERIN
Previvor and
Peer Supporter

Moderated by Aimee Sax, MSW, California Program Coordinator of Sharsheret, The Jewish Breast & Ovarian Cancer Community.
For more information or free support, visit Sharsheret.org.

Admission to this online event is free and open to all.

Register: <https://bit.ly/2JcyBvo>

Questions? Email asax@sharsheret.org

Sponsored by: Anshei Isaiah, Beth Chaim Congregation, B'nai Israel of Rossmore, Chabad of Contra Costa, Congregation Beth Emek, Congregation B'nai Shalom, Congregation B'nai Tikvah, Contra Costa JCC, Contra Costa Jewish Day School, Diablo Valley Hadassah, Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, John Muir Health, NCJW, Sharsheret, Temple Isaiah, UCSF Center for BRCA Research, and Women of Isaiah

1 in 40 Ashkenazi Jews carries a BRCA gene mutation, increasing their risk for breast, ovarian, male breast, prostate, pancreatic, and melanoma cancers. Please join us for a conversation with medical and subject matter experts about the latest updates in genetic testing, cancer prevention, and how it impacts your family. This is a free, live event with the opportunity to ask questions of the panelists.

Register Today: <https://link.sharsheret.org/contracosta>

CONTRA COSTA MIDRASHA

By Devra C. Aarons, CCM Director

Happy Winter! Did you know that Pineapples are a HUGE symbol in our Contra Costa Midrasha world? Pineapples are a symbol of hospitality. CCM aims to make each teen feel not only welcome but radically included. To make this idea a reality, we give out pineapples to our teens. To that end, I invite you to join us for an evening that will surely include LOTS of pineapples - an evening celebrating Contra Costa Midrasha at our virtual “Tropical Journey” on February 20, 2021. Our evening will include ukelele music; speeches from our teens, teachers, and community members; delicious “tropical-themed” food choices (with pineapples); delectable wines; a cocktail mixing lesson from an award-winning mixologist that will come with a “cocktail kit” option; and live and silent auctions to inspire you for journeys in the New Year! Register for your FREE ticket today at ccmidrasha.com/gala.

Our BIG News! CCM has been chosen as one of 13 organizations for the SF Jewish Federation Teen Initiative’s NEW Tzedek Cohort. This cohort also provides funding for CCM to create a new civic engagement program for teens called Project Ezech (citizen in Hebrew). Project Ezech aims to educate and empower our teens to be agents of change through civic engagement and helping to create cultures of diversity and belonging at CCM in particular. Teens participating in Project Ezech will fulfill a journey of growth involving three key strategies - education, advocacy, and service - empowering teens to become change-makers. This will include monthly learning seminars, a sustained and local service project, advocacy work with local and state lawmakers, and a Spring Break impact learning trip focused on an issue of their choosing. Application and information can be found at ccmidrasha.com/ezech. The application deadline is March 12, with the first program happening on April 18.

Our Wednesday nights this Winter and Spring are very full of an amazing array of opportunities for our community’s teens. They include:

- Special opportunities like guest speakers, henna making art courses, Jewish Dungeons and Dragons, and engaging sessions with our passionate educators (on zoom).
- Another round of Celebrity Chef Courses starts in March.
- While it’s not on a Wednesday night, our spring retreat is set to happen April 23-25. All community teens are welcome to participate!



CCM’s Hamsa Fund, our teen philanthropy board, had their retreat in November. During the weekend they learned with an amazing array of philanthropists, educators, artists, and social entrepreneurs. They ended the retreat by writing their new mission for the year: “The mission of the 2020-21 Hamsa Fund is to ensure families a safe and healthy home environment by funding non-profit organizations that provide food assistance, abuse prevention programs, and other resources.” They continue to meet monthly, with their fundraising campaign starting this Winter.

Our **Better Together** program had some amazing highlights this past Fall including an art project where teens made “gratitude garlands” for their elder partners just in time for Thanksgiving. **The project connects teens and elders through intergenerational learning and programming.** Right now we are connecting 12 elders with 18 CCM teens to deepen each other’s understanding of what it means to be alive today. CCM has received funding to both continue and expand this project In the coming months. Find out more at: ccmidrasha.com/byachad. In short, even in these challenging times, we continue the work to engage our teens in Jewish identity, community, culture, Israel, and more! Check out all we have to offer at: ccmidrasha.com.

Family Shabbat

1st Fridays at 6:30 pm on Zoom.

Fun, family-friendly services with interactive stories, prayers and melodies religious school children will recognize and everyone will enjoy.



Fourth Friday Shabbat

4th Fridays at 6:30 pm.

Join Rabbi Chabon accompanied by Lisa Zeiler for Shabbat Services on Zoom.

You do not need to have a Facebook or Zoom account to watch.

Kabbalat Shabbat

2nd & 5th Fridays at 5:00 pm on Zoom.

Join us as we prepare to enter Shabbat together in song and community. We will sing Shabbat melodies, chant the Misheberach for those in need of healing, and recite Kaddish. We will end our time together by lighting candles.

SERVICES AT CBT

For the most up to date details check your weekly email.

2nd Night Community Passover Seder

Join us for a virtual CBT-style second night Community Seder on Sunday, March 28. It promises to be an evening full of music, creativity and spirit(s)!

The Seder will be free to all, with the option of purchasing a specially-curated Pesach meal by the chef who brought us FEAST.

Check your email for more details!



Nishma

Saturdays (2/13, 3/13, 4/10, 5/8) at 10:00 am on Zoom.

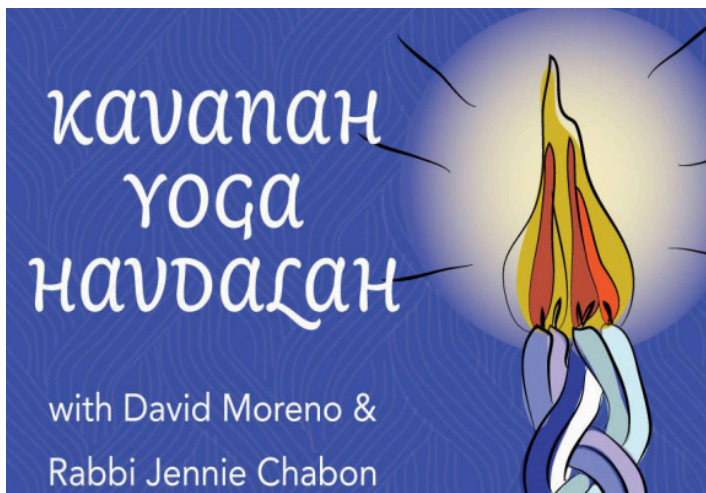
Join us for a Shabbat morning musical worship experience with Rabbi Chabon featuring live music, song, and prayer.

Shir Joy Shabbat

3rd Fridays at 6:30 pm on Facebook.

Join Rabbi Chabon & the Shir Joy Band* for a joyous Shabbat service featuring live music, song & prayer.

*Online streaming Shir Joy will feature Lisa Zeiler on guitar.



Kavanah Yoga Havdalah

First Saturdays, 6:00-7:30 pm on Zoom.

Suggested contribution to David Moreno \$15-\$25 sliding scale.

Join Senior Yoga Instructor David Moreno and Rabbi Jennie Chabon for a one of a kind Havdalah experience as we weave together yoga, song & Torah in a beautiful and meaningful celebration of Havdalah.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

For the most up to date details check your weekly email.

Meditation Workshop

series with Gerri Levitas continues at 1:00 pm on February 19, March 26, April 23. Come to one or all.

CBT member Gerri Levitas is a professional hypnotherapist and is well-versed in guided meditation. Gerri will guide participants in this workshop towards cultivating gratitude in our lives, regardless of our environment or current situation.

Taking a moment for gratitude, as is designed by the Jewish faith, can have positive affects on our well being. Through guided visualization, this workshop will help participants center, ground and access deep wisdom within their own heart. This workshop is FREE for CBT members and open to all ages. Guests are welcome (\$10 suggested donation).



LUNCH & LEARN

Tuesdays at 1:00 pm on Zoom. Join Rabbi Chabon and bring your lunch for what we hope will be one of the best parts of your week.

Zoom & Zen

Thursdays at 10:00 am.

Looking to connect, see some friendly CBT faces and just chat with one another? Join Rabbi Chabon for a spiritual check in as we try to gain a little more balance in today's world.

CONTRIBUTIONS

GENERAL FUND

- In appreciation of CBT
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Arlene Horowitz
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Beverly & Phil Winslow
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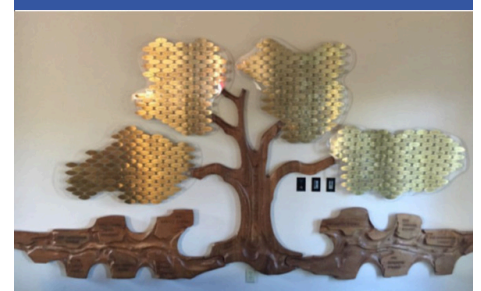
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\$540 for the community

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from Page 1

Offering thanks in the middle of fear and struggle! Not asking for deliverance but offering praise. In these dark days of the ravaging pandemic, amidst our own deep losses and sorrows, I find it comforting to say prayers of praise. I find it comforting because I can get out of my head for a moment, to think of something besides my own challenges and fears. Not to ask for something, but to offer. That simple act can change how I am feeling. How wise were our ancestors to understand that.

CBT is here to help with your Jewish journey, no matter where you are. Please stay tuned for upcoming programs for Purim and Passover.

Additionally, please join us for any of our regular weekly programs. Our Social Action Committee and our Sisterhood have many offerings as well. It is pure joy and delight to see so many of our congregants showing up week after week, on zoom after zoom. It is a testament to the strength of our community.

We are here to hold each other during times of joy and struggle. Complaining and gratitude. Loss and hope. Fear and comfort.

For all of this we continue to praise G-d.

COMMUNITY-WIDE VIRTUAL PURIM PARTY

Costume Contest, Songs, Interactive Game, Professional Storytelling & Megillah Reading

Thursday, February 25th @ 6:30 PM

Great Prizes in Every Category

Preschool
K-4th Grade
5th-12th Grade
Family

Pre Registration Required:
www.ccjcc.org/Purim

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CONGREGATION B'NAI TIKVAH

Mystery Mishloach Manot

Join in on a wonderful mitzvah for Purim by delivering a Purim basket to someone in our community and get one too!

The mitzvah of Mishloach Manot is meant to ensure that everyone has enough food for a Purim celebration and to foster a warm and loving Jewish community. This year, this Mitzvah is going to allow us to share our love for, and care for, our community with another community member.

By signing up to participate you will be assigned a family to deliver a basket to and you will receive one from someone else. When you deliver your basket you can choose to reveal your identity or keep it a secret, it's up to you!

All baskets must be delivered between February 19-26.

Sign up by February 10. You will be assigned a community member to deliver to by February 12. No late submissions.



What is in a Mystery Mishloach Basket?

- Your basket can be any type of bag, container, box, hat, etc. Be creative!
- Your basket should include at least 2 different food items (all kosher).
- Food cannot be homemade (due to COVID).
- Make it personal, add a note, include favorite food items or wine.
- Have fun! Pick a theme! (Examples: A taste of Israel, camping, rainbow)
- Add in some Purim items like hamantaschen, mask, grogger.
- The basket should be \$25-35.



EXPLORING JUDAISM

Winter/Spring Series 2021

Exploring Judaism is a series of monthly classes, held via zoom, that will explore many topics in our rich canon of liturgy and literature. Over the course of 5 months, we will be taught by four different teachers from our local Jewish community. Each session will be three weeks long and you can join for one session or all five sessions! These classes will be open to all in our community—newbies, novices, people born Jewish and those exploring conversion. We hope you will sign up and join us!

Classes meet the first three Tuesday evenings of the month from 7:00-8:30pm.

February 2, 9 & 16: Jewish History through Jewish Literature Part 1
with Rabbi Harry Manhoff

March 2, 9 & 16: Cycles and Symbols of Passover
with rabbinic intern Elizheva Hurvich

April 6, 13 & 20: Jewish History through Jewish Literature Part 2
with Rabbi Harry Manhoff

May 4, 11 & 18: Modern Jewish Literature
with Rabbi Raphael Asher

CBT Members: Free

Guests: \$54 for each session of 3 classes or \$250 to sign up for all sessions.

For more info: tikvah.org/exploring-judaism/

CONNECTION CORNER

ents across this area was consistent. Many parents felt that an in-person option was vital for their child's ability to connect to Judaism and the Jewish community.

After getting each student's choice of method of learning, Orit and I worked tirelessly on creating a schedule. We all met virtually at T'filah together, and each child had an online small group or individual session with our Tutorim (our Hebrew teen tutors) and with their teacher, madrichim, and cohort on Sunday mornings and Tuesday afternoons. We worked alongside the CBT COVID Response Team, which researched all the safety rules and regulations that apply to the school to ensure that our reopen plan was safe and sound.

We got busy building tents for outdoor learning and

distributing supply bags so all kids could have access to supplies and not share anything when in person. Our team of teachers did an amazing job adjusting to their new teaching environments and ensuring that kids were engaged in their learning and in building a community even in this new world.

Although in the last couple of weeks we have all been in virtual learning due to the stay at home orders, the result of the hybrid solution was that more of our families found solutions that met their needs. We are looking forward to returning to our hybrid model now that the stay at home order has been lifted, and hopefully, one day in the not so far future return to our beloved CBT home together in person.

As for my mistake... I wish that all my mistakes had such a happy ending - thank you, Judy, for being wonderful.

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Email office@tikvah.org or call 925-933-5397

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For membership information, please email the Director of Membership and Education,
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A shot in the dark
Or a shot in the light
I don't care which
Just vaccine me right!

I am tired of masks
Want to be done with social distancing
Can't wait to get out of the house
Go to museums, concerts, see what is interesting!

It is so scary
To hear of the daily death toll
I want to travel travel travel
That is my top goal

Another top goal is to visit my family
I haven't seen them in so long
I'll take my chance with this new vaccine
To think otherwise would be so wrong

Get that needle ready
My arm is waiting
One day I will burn all my masks
That I so much have been hating

But they tell me now
That even with this shot
I must still wear a mask
While the virus is still hot

The embracing may have to wait
Until herd immunity
But oh boy then
I will hug with impunity!

So I will take my shot now
And another in a few weeks
Feeling much better
Smiling with both cheeks

My grandchildren will know
That during the pandemic I thrived
And thanks to these vaccine shots
I thankfully have survived!



A Shot In The Dark by Jeffrey S. Weil