



Beth Ami

Colorado Congregation for Humanistic Judaism

Volume 7; Issue 12

Beth Ami is a welcoming community where we connect to Jewish past, celebrate Jewish present, and link to Jewish future through a humanistic philosophy.

# December 2016

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## Beth Ami Event Schedule

**Sunday 12/4** – Beth Ami Arts Group goes to see “Hand to God” by Robert Askins (2pm, Curious Theater – 1090 Acoma St., Denver Co 80204 – see play summary below)

**Sunday 12/11** – Community Chanukah celebration (3:15 – 6pm, Boulder JCC, 6007 Oreg Ave., Boulder 80303 – see more below)

**Saturday 12/31** – New Years Party – All are welcome! (8pm – Hirsch Home)

## Other Community Events

**Friday 12/2** – First Conference Call with the Jewish Community Relations Council (10-11am – see more below)

**Wednesday 12/14** – Second Conference Call with the Jewish Community Relations Council (9-10 am – see more below)

## Celebrations

### Anniversaries

- 12/8 – Gordon & Grace Gamm
- 12/27 – Sheila & John Malcolm

### Birthdays

- 12/1 – Ashlynn Anderson
- 12/4 – Michelle Davis
- 12/6 – Evan Wilson
- 12/12 – Herb Josepher
- 12/13 – Michael Hirsch
- 12/20 – Calla Stafford, Laura Moin
- 12/21 – Bill Baum
- 12/25 – Don Griss, Vic Goldberg

## Upcoming Events

### January

**Saturday 1/7** – International Dinner Out (time TBD, Denver)

**Sunday 1/15** – Beth Ami Book Club discusses Pompeii (11am – Brio's Tuscan Grille – for more info and to RSVP, contact [bethamicolorado@gmail.com](mailto:bethamicolorado@gmail.com) – see book summary below)

**Sunday 1/22** – Beth Ami movie night

**Sunday 1/22** – Save the date for Sunday Brunch & Film (Karasik Home in Arvada)

### February

**Saturday 2/4** – Tu B'Shevat celebration (10am)

### March

**Saturday 3/4** – Community Shabbat celebration (10am)

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Submission Deadline  
**11:59pm, Fri 12/23**



## “Hand to God” Summary

In small town Cypress, Texas, sweet but troubled teen Jason is coping with his father’s recent death and is forced to join his mother’s Church-led group. However, things take a turn for the unexpected when

Jason’s foul-mouthed, truth-spewing puppet Tyrone begins to take on a life of his own. Irreverent, and occasionally shocking, “Hand to God” is a raucous comedy that explores faith, grief and humanity.

## Choose Your Own HuJew Adventure: Choose to Change Your World/View Paradise

By Michelle Davis

Choosing. I love this time of year, the changing season, the way our holiday celebration focus on reflecting on the past year and looking forward to the New Year. It encourages us to make choices, to evaluate how our past choices turned out and think of how we can adjust our choices to affect change in our lives in the New Year.

Life is an endless stream of choices. From the moment we come to consciousness in the morning, before we open our eyes and get out of bed, to the last moments of the day as we prepare to sleep and rest for the night, we choose. We choose how to be, how to act, how to respond. We choose with intention and we choose without thought.

There is someone in my life who, for me, really embodies the power of choice. I have known Ron, my father in law, for 17 years. He has always been a chill, zen, spiritual, seeking type of person. He would keep little books of daily meditations and passages in the bathroom, to read and contemplate while in there. About ten years ago, he lost his well-paying, good benefits job. After that, he was unable to get back into a stable, well-paying job. He tried and tried, taking different jobs, working for Home Depot, becoming an Edward Jones financial advisor, doing house projects for people because he is incredibly handy and talented in that area. Today, he drives a school bus. For a lot of people, the experience of going from a full time, salaried worker to being a bus driver, making very little, would be difficult. The change in finances would be frustrating, the change in status from a white collar worker to a bus driver would be demeaning, and the whole experience of the last ten years would be a struggle. But Ron has handled the changes with grace and equanimity. He has become more spiritual and seeking, he meditates and reads about expanding his mind and energy and chakras, he is happy with where he is. His path is one that Ben and I don't fully understand or agree with, but we can see that he is happy and satisfied and that is what is important to us.

I told him this past summer, whenever he comes to visit, he wins the prize for the best visitor. He really does. When he is with you, he is with you. He listens, he pays attention, he engages, he truly connects with you. Time spent with him is deeply satisfying, because he chooses to be present and fully engaged in the moment. He likes to talk with us about how there is only now, the present moment, there is not past or future, only now. How important it is to make eye contact and smile and really connect with people as you walk through life. How we have such power over our experience, how we choose, every moment, how to respond to what life brings us. He has so many wonderful ideas and I get a lot out of my relationship with him.

We have lots of kids music in our life these days. There is one cd that Ben bought for us after hearing an interview on NPR. The artist is Diana Panton, a Canadian singer, and her cd is full of classic songs from movies and tv shows, tunes you know but can't always place right away. The cd is smooth and jazzy, polished and lovely to listen to. You know music is important to me, and especially as a mother, I have used music to keep myself sane and entertain my kids from the moment they were born. On this cd there is a track, Pure Imagination, which is a song that Willy Wonka sings in Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. It runs through my mind a lot these days, one specific lyric. It helps me remember to appreciate the moments I experience, because they go by so fast. And it helps me remember that I have so much power over my experience of those moments. The song goes – "If you want to see paradise, simply look around and view it. Anything you want to, do it. Want to change the world? There's nothing to it."

As you go from this service and go forward into your week, the New Year, everything to come, I hope you remember to look around and recognize the good that surrounds you and to appreciate that you have the power to change your world, all within your own mind.

### Humanistic Judaism On the Web

This information was shared a few months ago on Keshet, one of the e-publications for members from the Society for Humanistic Judaism. There's so much to learn – all free – on these websites!

International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMh90k-m9cg>

Society for Humanistic Judaism:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/societyforhj>  
(Scroll down to the uploads section to view Welcoming videos with Sheila!)

Videos from the Birmingham Temple:  
<http://www.libraryshj.com>

## Beth Ami Chanukah

Chanukah Happiness, Humanistic Jews! Chanukah is a time to bring light into the darkness. Let's use this holiday to rekindle the joy in our hearts, find our passion, and light our fire.

Our Humanistic Chanukah Party will be December 11 at 3:15 to 6:00 at the Boulder JCC. We will be in the room dedicated to Beth Ami (the room directly behind the front desk).

The Beth Ami Chanukah party will be filled with fun, food, and festive projects for people of all ages. This year we are highlighting the Israeli artist Hanoch Piven who creates delightful and thought provoking collage portraits. We'll be setting up a mixed media caricature photo station – what can you create?

I can almost smell the latkes frying in the pan. Come roll beeswax candles for your menorah. How long has it

been since you gave that dreidel a really good spin?

Join us in lighting the menorah and singing a few songs. Eat some latke and apple sauce. Create a craft. Mingle with other Humanistic Jews and bring happiness into your heart.



RSVP via MeetUp or to [BethAmiRSVP@gmail.com](mailto:BethAmiRSVP@gmail.com)

Cost: Beth Ami Congregation members free / adult guests \$10 / kids free!

## Pompeii Summary

All along the Mediterranean coast, the Roman empire's richest citizens are relaxing in their luxurious villas, enjoying the last days of summer. The world's largest navy lies peacefully at anchor in Misenum. The tourists are spending their money in the seaside resorts of Baiae, Herculaneum, and Pompeii.

But the carefree lifestyle and gorgeous weather belie an impending cataclysm and only one man is worried.

The young engineer Marcus Attilius Primus has just taken charge of the Aqua Augusta, the enormous aqueduct that brings fresh water to a quarter of a million people in nine towns around the Bay of Naples. But Pompeii proves to be a corrupt and violent town, and Attilius soon discovers that there are powerful forces at work—both natural and man-made—threatening to destroy him.

## News From National

By Sheila Malcolm

Yes, it is possible to elect smart, energetic, values-oriented leadership! Paul Golin, new Executive Director of the Society for Humanistic Judaism, demonstrated his vision-into-action style at the Board Meeting held over Veteran's Day weekend. The timing allowed for the mingling of three Humanistic Jewish "cousins" to share time together: the SHJ, the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism (IISHJ) and the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO).

Paul has been engaged in a "listening tour" of SHJ affiliates by phone from his home in NYC. He is attending and presenting at conferences nationwide and working with staff at the SHJ to refine financial and marketing practices. His knowledge of Jewish communal life and financial development strategies is impressive.

I had a productive conversation with him about Beth Ami, our unique needs in Colorado, and goals for the

future. We are planning a weekend visit from Paul in 2017 that would include events for Beth Ami as well as the broader Jewish and Humanist communities.

Paul presented his interest in "separation of church and state" as an outreach focus for our Society. The Ethical Values in Action Committee proposed a resolution calling for "the enforcement of secular educational curricula in public, private and parochial schools" so that all students can gain the tools needed to function in our society.

Another resolution strongly condemns attempts to defund Planned Parenthood. These ethical resolutions help to define the humanistic values of SHJ and lend present-day substance to issues facing us all.

Financial Committee reports reflect the national profile of a decline in membership and the need for organizations to creatively fundraise. About \$95 of each Beth Ami membership goes to support the important work of the SHJ as our mother ship.

## JCRC Conference Calls – What Are You Doing?

Here's an opportunity to participate in a series of local conference calls focusing on post-election actions.

First call: Friday, December 2 at 10-11am

Second call: Wednesday, December 14 at 9-10am

See more info about these calls at:

[http://community.jewishfederation.org/site/MessageViewer?em\\_id=2532.0&dly\\_id=6070](http://community.jewishfederation.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=2532.0&dly_id=6070)



## Local Events

The C.U. Boulder Program in Jewish Studies and ACE, the Boulder JCC's Adult Ed Program, are joining forces for a series of academic presentations in the next few months.

Link to more information here:

<http://www.colorado.edu/jewishstudies/upcoming-events#Katz2016>

## Family News and Events

If you or someone you know is experiencing important and life-altering events, please share the news with Beth Ami. In times of need, Beth Ami members can offer support. In times of happiness, we can help celebrate. To share your news, please contact Sheila Malcolm, Madrikha, or Michelle Davis, Madrikha.

Check out this beautiful article about Michelle in advance of a violin concert in her hometown of Plattsburgh, NY. That's Michelle on the cover! <http://en.calameo.com/read/000257732d3f9630c068f?trackersource=library>

## Support Beth Ami With An Honorary Donation

To honor or remember family or friends with a donation to Beth Ami, please email our treasurer at [treasurer@bethami.com](mailto:treasurer@bethami.com). A notice of the contribution will be sent to the honoree or family. Our congregation will express its gratitude in the newsletter for donations received in the previous month.

## Contact Information

### Beth Ami Colorado Congregation for Humanistic Judaism

Phone: 720-466-0101  
Email: [info@bethami.com](mailto:info@bethami.com)  
[www.bethami.com](http://www.bethami.com)

### About the Editor

[rvhirsch@comcast.net](mailto:rvhirsch@comcast.net)

### Programming Committee:

Sheila Malcolm..... [smalcolm280@gmail.com](mailto:smalcolm280@gmail.com)  
Michelle Davis..... [madrikhadavis@gmail.com](mailto:madrikhadavis@gmail.com)  
Lenore Kingston..... [bethamicolorado@gmail.com](mailto:bethamicolorado@gmail.com)  
Marti Hirsch..... [marti.hirsch@mail.com](mailto:marti.hirsch@mail.com)

### Board Members:

Ron Kingston – Treasurer..... [ronkbethami@hotmail.com](mailto:ronkbethami@hotmail.com)

### Members at large:

Terry Fleisher..... [terryfleisher@msn.com](mailto:terryfleisher@msn.com)  
Gerrie Karasik..... [lgkara@aol.com](mailto:lgkara@aol.com)  
Barry Levene..... [blevene@ecentral.com](mailto:blevene@ecentral.com)

### Webmaster:

Christie Gosch..... [christiemgosch@yahoo.com](mailto:christiemgosch@yahoo.com)

Hi, all. I'm Rachel Hirsch. I was a student at the Beth Ami JCS until my Bat Mitzvah in 2008.

I am the editor of the Beth Ami newsletter this year, and plan on continuing for as long as possible (I am currently a Mathematics & Computer Science student at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA).

I welcome any input you have, so feel free to email me any articles or information you want to see in next month's newsletter.

-Rachel