Jewish Community Center of Paramus
Congregation Beth Tikvah
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A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Arthur Weiner

Friday November 20, 2026 ~ Parshat: Vayetzei

Dear JCCP/CBT family,

Remembering Al Nahum:
A Century of Life. A Legacy of Service

This week, I want to share something more personal than my usual Shabbat message. Earlier this week, we said farewell to Albert "Al" Nahum, one of the JCCP/CBT's last founding members, whose life encompassed more than a century, decades of military service, and 70 years of devotion to and leadership in our synagogue and the greater community. I had the privilege of offering the concluding eulogy at his funeral. This Shabbat, I am sharing those remarks because his story belongs to our entire community. I want you to know that story, and to reflect on a simple truth: the responsibilities he accepted now rest with us.

You have heard this morning about the many ways Al loved his family and enriched their lives. I want to remember another part of his story: the seventy years he gave to this congregation, and his decades of service to this country and to his fellow veterans. Al was not only a member but a leader in this congregation for seventy years. He and the late Gloria were among the founders—the families who joined the original twelve charter families in building this synagogue, then loved it, staffed it, volunteered for it, and supported it for the rest of their lives.

Al was deeply involved in the religious life of the congregation. He attended minyan and was a regular at Shabbat and High Holiday services. For years, he coordinated *seudah shlishit*, the third Shabbat meal, on Saturday afternoons. It was there that he and I regularly engaged in passionate discussions, and sometimes arguments, about

important issues in Jewish and contemporary life. Al had opinions, and he certainly wasn't reluctant to share them!

He served on the Board of Trustees and the Executive Board. He taught a current events class for years on Monday afternoon's. He accepted visible leadership roles and also did the work behind the scenes that every congregation needs, but that doesn't always receive recognition. I learned that long before I arrived, Al led a dedicated group of volunteers on what may have been the synagogue's least popular committee: the bingo committee. For years, their efforts raised considerable sums to sustain this congregation.

How involved, how dedicated, was Al Nahum? Let me tell you a story.

When I was relatively new here, Al came to a board meeting to express his displeasure with a decision the board had made. He was no longer on the board, but that certainly did not diminish his interest in its decisions. The issue seemed significant at the time, although, for the life of me, I cannot remember what it was.

I wasn't sure how I felt about it, so I asked one of the longtime members, who strongly supported the board's decision. He explained his position, then looked over at Al and said, "That man has earned the right to complain." And everyone agreed.

What stayed with me was not the disagreement, but the respect. Even those who thought Al was wrong knew how much of himself he had given to this congregation. Al and Gloria helped build relationships, establish traditions, and create the community we have inherited. I cannot imagine our congregation today without their commitment.

I am also honored to recognize Al's patriotic service to the nations in a military career that extended over four decades. He entered military service toward the end of World War II and continued serving in the United States Army Reserve until 1986, attaining the rank of Major.

His commitment to his fellow veterans continued for the rest of his life. As longtime commander of Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America Post 669, and through his service at the county and state levels, Al worked to honor Jewish military service and care for those who had served.

He was also a leader and past chair of the Paramus Veterans Council, where he helped connect veterans with benefits and services for which they were eligible. For many years, he coordinated the borough's annual Veterans Day commemoration. In

recognition of his service, he was named Grand Marshal of the 2025 Paramus Fourth of July Parade. That was a fitting honor for a man whose love of country found expression in a lifetime of service.

Seventy years in a synagogue is an extraordinary span of time. What we honor today is what Al did with those years. He came to pray. He volunteered. He raised money. He spoke his mind. And when his fellow veterans needed help, he worked to see that they received it.

Rabbi Tarfon teaches in Pirkei Avot: “It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it.”

The work of building a congregation, caring for our fellow veterans, and serving our country is never finished. There is always more to do. Al accepted his share of that responsibility, and for decade after decade, he did the work.

Today, we remember with gratitude how much of what we cherish rests on the efforts of people like Al and Gloria. They have entrusted us with something precious. Now it is our responsibility to care for it and carry it forward.

To his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren: alongside your own memories of Al, may you find comfort in knowing how deeply he mattered here. We are grateful for the life he shared with us, and we will miss him. May his memory be a blessing.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Arthur D. Weiner