

SPECIAL

# SUMMER Issue

JUNE ▲ JULY

# THE JEWISH NEWS

OF SARASOTA-MANATEE

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**The Jewish Federation OF SARASOTA-MANATEE**

THE LARRY & MARY GREENSPON FAMILY CAMPUS FOR JEWISH LIFE

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## Announcing Federation's new CEO

### Staff Report

**O**n behalf of The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, I am proud to announce that after a comprehensive national search, our Board of Directors has selected Shepard Englander as our new Chief Executive Officer," said Randon Carvel, Federation Board President. "We believe we have found the perfect leader to take the helm of our growing Federation. We couldn't be more thrilled."

Shep's 16 years as CEO of The Jewish Federation of Cincinnati earned him national recognition as a strategic and entrepreneurial leader who transformed Cincinnati's Jewish community by implementing new business models that multiplied revenue. Shep's first project in Cincinnati was spearheading the Federation's capital campaign and construction of its community center campus. This was the first step in Cincinnati's journey to becoming one of America's most collaborative and purposeful Jewish communities.

"Sarasota-Manatee is one of the fastest-growing Jewish communities in

America and the board is looking for new and innovative approaches," Shep explained. "Organizational growth and transformation have been my passion for the last 16 years and I am excited by the challenge of leading a new community transformation. After experiencing the ways in which Cincinnati's community campus invigorated our community, I can't wait to partner with community leadership to build and launch the new campus."

Joel Morganroth, Chair of the CEO Search Committee, said, "Shep has a mixture of everything we were looking for: a professional with a keen business mind, who is known as a collaborator, and who has experience with capital campaigns, entrepreneurial business models and community relationships. Shep will be an asset from day one."

Previously, Shep served as Vice

President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, Associate Director for Government Relations at The Jewish Federations of North America, and practiced law in Washington, D.C. Shep earned a Juris Doctor degree from Northeastern University School of Law and is a graduate of Tufts University.

Shep is familiar with Sarasota because his mother often wintered here. Shep and his wife Hayley are excited to partake in Sarasota's acclaimed cultural offerings.

They love being outdoors and Hayley looks forward to playing tennis year round. Shep and Hayley have three grown children who plan to visit regularly.

Shep will succeed Howard Tevlowitz, who is retiring after 20 years as CEO. Shep will begin his role on September 1, 2021.

For more information, contact Kim Adler, Chief Operating Officer, at [kadler@jfedsrq.org](mailto:kadler@jfedsrq.org) or 941.552.6300.



Shep Englander

## Camp Marci Lynn – only one year away

By Robby Etzkin, Sr. Director, Camp Marci Lynn

**D**rum roll please! We are officially one year from the grand opening of Camp Marci Lynn (CML) – where friendships begin, happiness grows and memories are created to last a lifetime. For those who attended a Jewish summer camp as a child, as I did, the memories are vivid. The traditions, friendships and counselors who were thought of as rock stars, are all part of each summer's exhilarating journey.

In June 2022, a very special inaugural first day of Camp Marci Lynn

will occur right here on our reimagined Larry & Mary Greenspon Family Campus for Jewish Life. The school year will be in the rearview mirror and the summer season that, as a child, seemed as if it never had an end in sight, will finally kick off. Bus rides, sleeping bags and late-night talks are all on the horizon. Lifelong friendships will unknowingly be starting.

For most children, there is no better time of year. When the camp gates finally swing open on the first day of camp to the upbeat music, there will

be smiles, excitement and the smell of sunscreen everywhere. Those campers who walk into CML are the fortunate ones, and parents and grandparents will be too!

The days of parents stressing about filling their child's summer or just the complications of driving all over town for different camps on different weeks are over. The days of grandparents looking for summer activities for visiting grandchildren are over too!

Camp Marci Lynn will be an eight-  
*continued on page 2*

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## Camp Marci Lynn...continued from page 1

week experience, broken down into four, two-week sessions. Each two-week session will have a one-time only, not-to-miss special event, a themed dress-up day and much more exciting programming unique to each session. Examples include carnivals, community service projects and our soon to be famous Color War, where the entire camp is split into teams for a multi-day competition in spirit, sports and sportsmanship – bragging rights included! Other ideas feature Sports Team Day, Israel Day and Red, White and Blue Day. This is the type of camp where campers will be mad at their parents if they even think about scheduling dentist or doctor appointments during the camp day. The FOMO, or fear of missing out, will be real!

Programming throughout the week will include arts and crafts, ceramics, STEM, cinema creation, drama games, theater performance, nature activities, camping skills, Israeli culture and all kinds of sports. We'll have basketball, soccer, flag football, archery, frisbee golf, kickball and a huge variety of tag games. Our counselors will even be creating new games that don't even exist yet, because we will be *the* trend-setting camp of the Florida Suncoast.

Speaking of camp trends, if you haven't heard the word gaga (gah-gah) yet, please accept this warning that your camper will come home talking about it, and might ask, or even demand, you build a gaga court in your backyard! I apologize in advance. Gaga, translated from Hebrew to English, means touch-touch, and it is believed that this enduring camp game was brought from Israel to American

An elective is when a camper can choose between two or three activities. The older the campers are, the more electives they have the opportunity to choose. Our electives will range from drum circles to sleight-of-hand magic, and from cheerleading to junior life-guarding.

One major highlight of CML is going to be the new, sparkling swimming pool, where campers will get to swim twice per day. The mornings will be structured with group swim lessons taught by certified aquatics staff, and the afternoons will be free swim.

While we aren't yet ready to start camp trips to Israel, we will

bring Israel to CML through The Jewish Agency for Israel's summer *shlichim* (ambassadors) program. These young, post-Army Israelis will be trained, full-time camp staff, teaching campers about Israeli food, dancing and games, and creating connections to Israel. They will also be teaching a Hebrew word of the day each morning, running an all-camp special event (Israel Day) and participating in helping lead our weekly full-camp Shabbat program led by our song leaders. I can almost hear "Hinay Ma'Tov" being sung as I type! Music will be a big part of CML and we hope to make some of our camp songs available for download.

With digital so prevalent now, camp registration will be online only. We even have plans for a CML app! Don't worry – we'll be happy to assist along the way.

Helping others and being inclusive will be ongoing camp themes throughout each summer. CML believes all campers can benefit from camp, from each other and even more so from those who are different. CML values inclusion of all campers regardless of ability, background, religion and socio-economic status.

In addition, our camp is proudly committed to providing financial assistance to families who cannot afford camp, and also committed to creating programming and a physical camp that is inclusive of all who enter our camp gates.

Being a Camp Director is both a massive responsibility and an awesome opportunity, and I want to thank the community for welcoming me to Sarasota-Manatee to bring this collective dream to life. Many thanks to the Camp Marci Lynn Committee and co-chairs Tom Bernstein and Jaime Marco, along with the amazing Federation staff. Let the countdown begin!

Have a favorite camp tradition, camp song or camp memory you want to share? Have CML questions? Please contact me at [retzkin@jfedrsq.org](mailto:retzkin@jfedrsq.org) or 941.552.6308.



Robby Etzkin



Gaga games will be a highlight at Camp Marci Lynn

Jewish camps in the 1970s. I remember playing it when I was a camper at JCC camps. I describe it as an exciting form of dodgeball, where you can only hit the ball, typically a red playground ball, with your open hand and cannot pick it up or throw it. It's played in an eight or ten-sided "pen." Our camp will feature two separate gaga courts!

In addition, the timeless camp favorites such as tie-dye, capture the flag and even overnights will be on the camp calendar too. That's right, we're talking about packing sleeping bags, pillows and flashlights. And if your camper is like I was, then maybe even sneaking in a favorite stuffed animal too.

If all of the traditional camp activities aren't exciting enough to start a countdown until 2022, then I also want to share that we will be providing exciting and unique electives too.

# Training Center to bring security education to Sarasota-Manatee

By Marty Katz, Sr. Director of Communications & Marketing

Michael Ritter keeps it very simple when he answers why he and Nancy Wolk decided to make a lead gift to support the reimagined Larry & Mary Greenspon Family Campus for Jewish Life. “To keep our community safe,” he said.

The couple has funded and named the new campus training facility – The Michael Ritter and Nancy Wolk Training Center. Mike, who serves as immediate past-president on the Federation’s Board of Directors, says “Given the ongoing threats to Jews and Jewish organizations in Sarasota-Manatee, we strongly believe that security related training and education programs are critical for our safety.”

Nancy concurs, saying, “Growing up and living many years in the Jewish communities of Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Chicago, we have both witnessed antisemitism and hateful behavior firsthand. Everyone in our community has a responsibility to proactively address this difficult environment, and training is a critical component of this.”

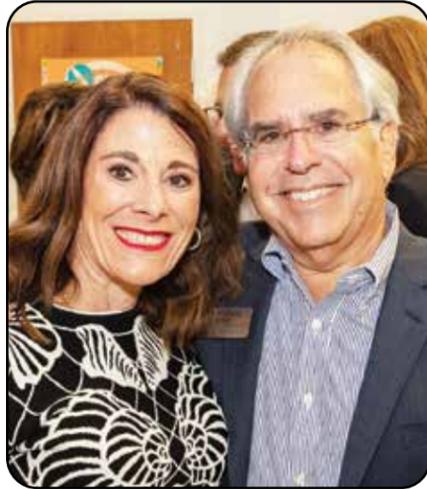
In their past careers, Mike was a senior partner and CPA at global professional services firm Ernst & Young, and Nancy ran global technology at Alcoa, serving as the company’s Chief Information Officer. They both have experienced the growing challenges around personal safety and cybersecurity, and the necessity to protect ourselves and our institutions from these and other threats.

Mike says, “Although the Training Center will be available for all types of education related programs, the cornerstone of the training to be provided will be directly and indirectly related to the Federation campus and community-wide security. The Training Center will also be available to train law enforcement professionals and elected officials relative to the unique threats the Jewish community faces.”

Jewish Community Security Director Jeff Solomon, who will be leading the efforts of the new Training Center, describes plans that call for, among other things, a state-of-the-art multimedia classroom to host weekly, monthly and annual training events. “The goal would be to not only provide our Federation and community partners with local training opportunities, but to be nationally recognized for hosting larger events and conferences

such as safety training on a national scale for all Federations and other Jewish organizations that want to participate,” he says.

Both Mike and Nancy have been impressed with Jeff’s work in the community since his arrival last fall. “In his short time here, Jeff is already making a



Nancy Wolk and Michael Ritter

significant impact in making our community safer,” they say. “He is clearly a national expert in security with many years of relevant law enforcement experience. To deal with this ongoing threat, it was critical that we hire a very talented professional in this area and we are fortunate to have Jeff leading our campus and many community security related initiatives.”

As to why the couple felt inspired to make such a large gift, they pointed to the way they grew up and the responsibility of giving back to one’s community. “We both grew up as Conservative Jews in traditionally Jewish homes and lived our adult lives in communities that benefitted greatly from the generosity and hard work of many people. Over the years, we both had firsthand opportunities to know and work with many of these individuals and we have both been positively influenced by their philanthropy and activities. Our parents and grandparents had strong work ethics and taught us about the importance of education and tzedakah at early ages.”

They are both ardent volunteers, as well as consultants. Over the years, Mike has held numerous leadership roles at both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. Currently, in addition to his Federation related work, he is on the boards of Perlman Music Program/Suncoast and Parkwood LLC, a diversified financial services

company. Throughout Nancy’s career, she has served as a mentor to up-and-coming leaders. She currently serves on the Advisory Council for the Heinz College at Carnegie Mellon University and as a consultant and program director for the Conference Board, a business think-tank and research group organization.

The couple’s value of tzedakah is being carried on in the four adult children they have between them. They say, “Our children are very aware of how important it is to help others less fortunate through active volunteering and philanthropy, and are already engaged in their own meaningful activities in other communities. They also realize that education and involvement are critical components for sustaining the Jewish people, including understanding our traditions, values and customs. This behavior should also influence our grandchildren in a positive way, even beginning at relatively young ages.”

Barbara Mazer, Chief Development Strategist who works closely with

Mike on the Federation’s Development Committee, says “We are so honored to be the recipients of Mike and Nancy’s generosity, and can’t wait for the Training Center to be operational. Think about how many in our community will reap the benefits of learning how to keep themselves and others safe!”

Having been board chair when the Federation’s Community Study was conducted in 2019, Mike knows, perhaps more than most, what a diverse and growing community the new campus will serve. He says, “Nancy and I are both committed to the present and future well-being of our Sarasota-Manatee community. The reimagined campus will be a tremendous asset for meaningful Jewish and non-Jewish involvement for persons of all ages and interests.”

To learn how you can join Mike and Nancy and become involved in the JFED PROUD & STRONG campaign to reimagine The Larry & Mary Greenspon Family Campus for Jewish Life, contact Ilene Fox at ifox@jfedsrq.org or 941.343.2111.

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## Jewish Happenings

Looking for something Jewish-related to experience? See the Jewish Happenings section for more than 60 events in June and July!

## New role for Holocaust educator

By Trudi Krames, Sr. Director of Programming

There has been a significant spike in antisemitism and hate-fueled violence and rhetoric in recent years. Surveys show that Holocaust education has an enormous positive impact on young people's attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and actions. Despite that, Holocaust education is a requirement in only 15 U.S. states. The need for Holocaust education, which plays a

key role in teaching about the importance of human rights and how democracy will guarantee those rights, could not be greater than now.

Enter Bette Zaret, the newest staff member at **The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee**. Bette will now lead our Holocaust education and programming efforts. She most recently served as the Vice Chair of Fed-

eration's Heller Community Relations Committee and Chair of its Holocaust sub-committee, and on the Federation's strategic planning committee. Bette was also responsible for the creation of the Butterflies of Hope and Remembrance project last year, which commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWII and the liberation of the Nazi concentration and death camps.

Bette has a 40+ years of experience in strategic brand marketing, and successfully transformed brands and built sustainable businesses for a number of Fortune 100 companies. She has held executive positions in the U.S., Japan, France and the U.K. for major global companies such as Bristol-Myers Squibb, Disney, Johnson & Johnson, PepsiCo, International Playtex and Transitions Optical. She has a



Bette Zaret was honored with the Zachor (Never Forget) Award at last year's Federation Celebration

Bachelor of Arts degree from Syracuse University and an advanced executive degree from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

For more information about Holocaust educational programming, contact Bette Zaret at [bzaret@jfedrsq.org](mailto:bzaret@jfedrsq.org) or 941.371.4546.

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## Women's Giving Circle awards funds

By Jeremy Lisitza, Director of Innovation and Volunteer Engagement

The Women's Giving Circle (WGC) membership recently met to award \$34,000 to seven outstanding non-profits in Israel. Nadia Ritter, who has been a member since WGC's inception, shares, "I'm so gratified to be a part of the Women's Giving Circle. Even during this past year, with all the financial challenges of Covid-19, this group of very caring women has been able to help worthy and very important Israeli organizations serving at-risk women and children. Their needs have become even more profound due to the pandemic and we hope our group will be able to provide more funding for the coming year."

The following are the organizations and the amount awarded in April 2021:

- ◆ DVI - Dental Volunteers for Israel, Free Dental Care for At-Risk Youth and Abused Women – \$6,000
- ◆ Mavoi Satum, "From Strength to Strength" empowerment program for Jewish women trapped in unwanted marriages – \$6,000
- ◆ Beit Ruth for Young Women and Girls At Risk, Computers for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning – \$5,000
- ◆ ELEM - Youth in Distress, Young Women Activists Group – \$4,000
- ◆ Beit Micha, Parent Assistance Program for Families of Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Infants – \$5,000
- ◆ American Friends of Rabin Medical Center, Rabin Medical Center's Breast Cancer Unit - BRCA Multidisciplinary Breast & Ovarian Cancer Clinic – \$4,000

- ◆ The Dr. Israel Goldstein Youth Village, Residence for Lone Soldiers – \$4,000

WGC Chair Debbie Yonker says, "Seventy-three grant applications were received and whittled down to the top nine choices of the grant reading committee. Seven applications were deemed worthy of an award by the



Zoom participants. Although our grants are small and in the \$4,000-\$6,000 range, each of these organizations is now able to further their missions with our assistance. Please consider joining the WGC and help us make the lives of women and children in Israel better."

Since its start in 2014, WGC has distributed more than \$307,000 in grants to 71 nonprofits in Israel that help women and children of all backgrounds live safer, healthier and more meaningful lives. Membership is \$518 and every member has a voice in which organizations are awarded grants.

If you are interested in becoming a WGC member, please contact me at [jlisitza@jfedrsq.org](mailto:jlisitza@jfedrsq.org) or 941.343.2113.

## Why WE belong

**We love the work our Federation does here in Sarasota, Israel and around the world. Happily, our new campus will be here for our grandchildren and great grandchildren.**

Ed Kalin and his daughter, Leslie Malkin



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# People of the Book author series expands during the summer

## Staff Report

The People of the Book series of virtual author events, sponsored by The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, was to conclude in June with three works with the Holocaust as the theme. However, given the popularity of the series, bonus authors have been lined up to speak in July and August.

The first June event is on Tuesday, June 15 at 7:00 p.m. with Debbie Cenziper and her book, *Citizen 865*. It will be followed on Wednesday, June 16 at 2:00 p.m. with author Michael Dobbs and his book, *The Unwanted*. The month will wrap up on Thursday, June 17 at 7:00 p.m. with Neal Bascomb and his book, *Faster*.

The summer bonus series begins on Wednesday, July 7 at 7:00 p.m. with Howard Blum and his book, *Night of the Assassins*. It will be followed on Wednesday, July 28 at 7:00 p.m. with author Esther Amini and her

Prize and the Robert F. Kennedy award for human rights reporting.

### Why did you decide to write about this one particular aspect of the Holocaust?

For many decades, western investigators had very little information about an SS training camp for mass murder established in the early months of the war in the tiny Polish farming village of Trawniki. So-called "Trawniki men" went on to help the SS murder 1.7 million Jews in fewer than 20 months, the span of two Polish summers. I wanted to explore this little-known piece of Holocaust history and better understand how SS leaders managed to train, arm and empower 5,000 men from across eastern Europe, including Red Army soldiers who had been recruited from POW camps.

More broadly, however, *Citizen 865* is a post-Holocaust story about the pursuit of justice by men and women

museums, including the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., and was able to review previously classified documents about the operation.

What lessons or message do you hope readers will take away from your book that will be pertinent to our world today?

Genocide doesn't begin with one person or one moment in time. It takes an entire organization – thousands of collaborators who either directly participate in mass murder or look the other way. The men of the Trawniki training camp were, in the words of one historian, the "foot soldiers of the Third Reich." Bringing them to justice, according to the prosecutors and historians who worked on the cases, was every bit as important as tracking more well-known Nazi killers.

These prosecutors and historians believed that the passage of time must never excuse mass murder and that the United States must never provide refuge to war criminals.

As a journalist and a human being, I found their work inspiring. I write in the prologue of the book, "*Citizen 865* is a story about darkness but also about light, the pursuit of truth by a team of American Nazi hunters that worked to expose the men behind the most lethal operation of the Holocaust." I believe that readers of this book will come away feeling immensely satisfied and, perhaps, hopeful that our future won't be as grim as our past.

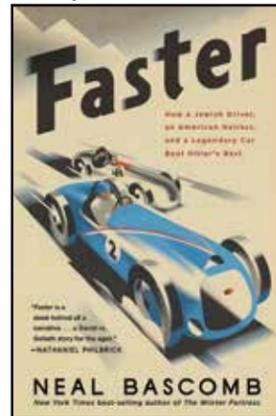
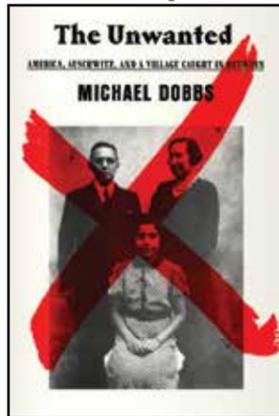
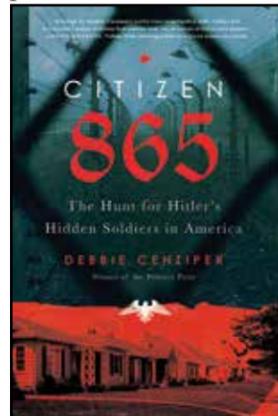
**Michael Dobbs / *The Unwanted***  
Winner of the 2019 Jewish Book Club Award for Holocaust Studies, *The Unwanted* examines U.S. immigration policy under President Franklin D. Roosevelt through the prism of a small Jewish community at the edge of the Black Forest.

Michael Dobbs is an author and former journalist for *The Washington Post*. He has written six books, including *The Unwanted*.

### Why did you decide to write about this one particular aspect of the Holocaust?

I became interested in the fate of German Jewish refugees while work-

*continued on next page*



book, *Concealed, Memoir of a Jewish-Iranian Daughter Caught Between the Chado and America*. The series will wrap up on Wednesday, August 18 at 2:00 p.m. with Ariana Neumann and her book, *When Time Stopped*.

**Debbie Cenziper / *Citizen 865***  
*Citizen 865* is about two American historians who make a startling discovery in a basement archive in Prague



Debbie Cenziper

in 1990: a Nazi roster from 1945 that no Western investigator had ever seen. The long-forgotten document helped unravel the details behind the most lethal killing operation in World War II.

Debbie Cenziper is an investigative journalist and author based in Washington, D.C. A contributing reporter for the investigative team at *The Washington Post*, she has won many major awards in American print journalism including the 2007 Pulitzer

inside an obscure Nazi-hunting unit deep inside the Department of Justice who spent the better part of 30 years hunting for Nazi perpetrators in the United States, including the men of Trawniki.

### What was the biggest challenge in writing this book, and how did you overcome it?

*Citizen 865* is a modern story but it spans more than 70 years. I essentially retraced the steps of Nazi hunters, as well as survivors who fled the men of Trawniki. I traveled to Poland, Austria and the Czech Republic to do on-the-ground reporting.

I also spent hundreds of hours interviewing the historians and prosecutors who worked on the cases. I pulled records and photos from archives and



## Here's "to Life" on the Gulf Coast

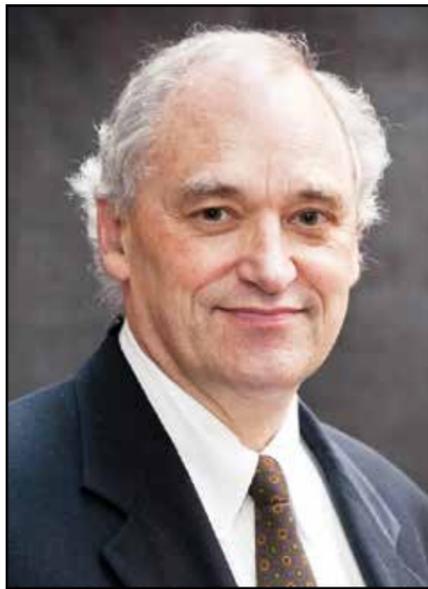
Committed to the Jewish Community for over 20 years, Stacy is passionate about real estate and strives to build ever-lasting relationships based on exceptional service, uncompromising values and a strong work ethic.

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*People of the Book...continued from previous page*

ing on an exhibit for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum on “Americans and the Holocaust.” As part of this exhibit, we looked at America’s response to the Jewish refugee crisis that resulted from Nazi persecution of the Jews under Hitler. I wanted to connect the political debates in the United States to the fates of individual Jewish refugees attempting to flee Nazi Germany. I ended up focusing on the experiences of Jews in



Michael Dobbs

a single village in southwest Germany called Kippenheim. Some of these Jews found refuge in America. Others, tragically, were unable to obtain American visas and ended up in places like Auschwitz. Exploring why some died while others survived is the principal theme of *The Unwanted*.

**What was the biggest challenge in writing this book, and how did you overcome it?**

There have been a lot of books written about U.S. immigration policy under FDR but none that have linked that debate to the stories of individual refugees and actions of U.S. consuls and other officials. In order to tell this story, I had to gather information from a wide range of official and unofficial sources, including State Department files, archives in the U.S., Germany, France and Britain, family correspondence, court cases, visa files, oral histories, relief agency records and so on. It was a challenge akin to assembling a huge jigsaw puzzle where you have to search for the individual pieces in many different places. It took a lot of searching and piecing together for the final picture to emerge.

**What lessons or message do you hope readers will take away from your book that will be pertinent to our world today?**

The immigration debate in the U.S. tends to be rather abstract, with strong passions on either side. My book shows that political and bureaucratic debates here in Washington have real life consequences, and are sometimes a matter of life and death for the people involved.

**Neal Bascomb / *Faster***

As Nazi Germany launched its campaign of racial terror and pushed the world toward war, three misfits banded together to challenge Hitler’s dominance at the apex of motorsport: the Grand Prix. Their quest for redemption culminated in a remarkable race that is still talked about in racing circles to this day. *Faster* chronicles one of the

most inspiring, death-defying upsets of all time and a symbolic blow against the Nazis during history’s darkest hour.

Neal Bascomb is the award-winning and *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Winter Fortress*, *Hunting Eichmann* and *The Perfect Mile*, among others.

**Why did you decide to write about this one particular aspect of the Holocaust?**

It all starts with a story. A friend regaled me about a 1930s French race car built by Delahaye that had been dismantled and hidden away outside of Paris before the Nazis invaded. Such was the renown of the car and the Jewish driver, Rene Dreyfus, who had piloted the Delahaye to victory against the Germans, that Hitler wanted any memory of it erased. This incredible story first sparked my interest, and then I came to understand the history was even richer, with an American heiress and speed-queen named Lucy Schell funding the challenge to beat the Third Reich in the greatest sport in Europe at the time, motor racing.

**What was the biggest challenge in writing this book, and how did you overcome it?**

Tracking down the stories of Rene Dreyfus and Lucy Schell was very difficult. Despite their celebrity at the time (and success against the Nazis that rivaled that of Jesse Owens), they had largely been forgotten, particularly from the history books. Further, there is no central archive of motor sport. Records of the past are largely scattered among individual collectors around



© Meryl Schenker

Neal Bascomb

the world who are often very proprietary about what they have. Thankfully, I was able to convince the Dreyfus family to open up its personal archives to me, everything from photographs, collections of new articles in a dozen languages, letters and even the speeches at Rene’s funeral. This then offered clues on where to unearth details about Lucy’s remarkable life. As with every book, it takes a bit of detective work.

**What lessons or message do you hope readers will take away from your book that will be pertinent to our world today?**

*Faster* is a David vs. Goliath tale, one about a small, unlikely band of strivers who take on the monolithic Third Reich motor champions. Lucy

*continued on next page*

# SUPPORT ISRAELI VICTIMS OF TERROR

Photo: AP Ariel Schalit

Hamas and Islamic Jihad have been incessantly sending rocket fire into Israel and indiscriminately targeting Israeli citizens. We support Israel as it undertakes its critical work to defend the Jewish State.

Your gift will go where families need it most – trauma care, counseling, home repairs and crucial social services.

If you would like to help with emergency aid to the survivors of this tragedy, please donate to the **Victims of Terror Fund**, which will support The Jewish Agency, our partner on the ground in Israel. Thank you for your generosity!

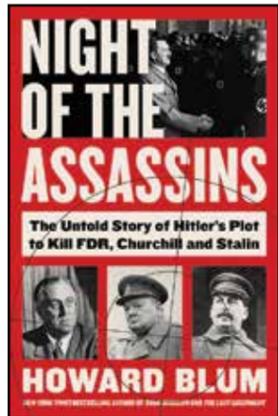
To donate, please visit: [JFEDSRQ.org/TerrorFund](https://JFEDSRQ.org/TerrorFund)



The Jewish Federation  
OF SARASOTA-MANATEE

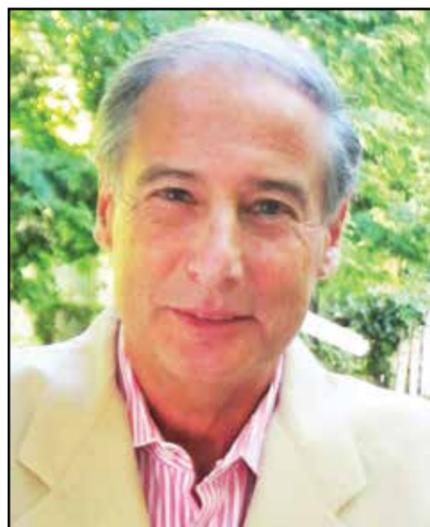
People of the Book...continued from previous page

Schell and Rene Dreyfus did not hold political power; they were not part of any organized resistance. But, in their community – racing – they decided to take a stand, symbolic though it was, against German might. They took the fight to the world in which they lived. Today, we all similarly need to take stands in our own communities against injustice and aggression.



Howard Blum / *Night of the Assassins*

In Howard Blum's *Night of the Assassins* – *The untold story of Hitler's plot to kill FDR, Churchill and Stalin*, three world leaders are meeting for the first time at a top-secret conference in Tehran. But the Nazis have learned about the meeting and Hitler sees it as his last chance to turn the tide of World War II.



Howard Blum

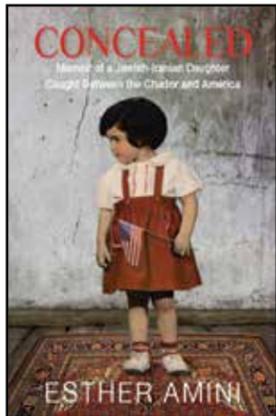
Howard Blum is the author of *The New York Times* bestseller and Edgar Award winner *American Lightning* as well as *Wanted!*, *The Gold of Exodus*, *Gangland*, *The Floor of Heaven* and a 2018 *New York Times* Notable Book, *In the Enemy's House*. While at *The New York Times*, he was twice nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting.

**What was it that first attracted you to the theme or subject of your book?**

I first heard about this story after Russia decided the time had finally come, a full 70 years after the end of WWII, to crank open their vaults and release a trove of previously secret documents that told an extraordinary story – a German commando mission to kill the three Allied leaders during the Tehran Conference in November 1943. Was this true? I wondered. And

why hadn't I heard about it before? Excited and intrigued, I spent the next three years going to archives around the world hunting down the confirming evidence. And what I found was nothing less than a true-life *Day of the Jackal*. I was hooked and decided to tell this story.

**What is the main challenge in writing a historically based book,**



**and how did you overcome those challenges?**

My books tell true stories. I apply the same standards to writing my non-fiction books as I do when I do reporting for *The New York Times*. At the same time, however, I am determined in my books to create a narrative, to have characters that lead the reader through the action. Therefore, before I take on a project, I need to see if there is sufficient source material – memoirs, documents, letters, contemporaneous news reports and interviews – that will allow me to recreate what my characters are thinking and feeling throughout the story. When I found the source material for *Night of the Assassins*, I felt confident I could tell a true story that was also exciting and suspenseful.

**What is it that you hope readers will take away from your book?**

I'd like readers to be caught up in what is a real-life thriller. Yet, at the same time, I'd hope that they'd see how close the plot came to succeeding, how close history moved toward being changed forever during five days in Tehran in 1943.

**Esther Amini / *Concealed***

Esther Amini's memoir, *Concealed, Memoir of a Jewish-Iranian Daughter Caught Between the Chador and America*, is a provocative coming-of-age saga, recounting her youth and early adulthood as a first-generation Iranian-American Jewish woman in the 1950s and '60s. Her personal struggles are intertwined with her history and culture, as she recounts the story of her Jewish ancestors.

Esther Amini is a writer, painter and psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice. Her short stories have appeared in *Elle*, *Lilith*, *Tablet*, *The Jewish Week*, *Barnard Magazine* and *Proximity*. She was named one of Aspen Words' two best-emerging memoirists and awarded its Emerging Writer Fellowship in 2016 based

on her memoir *Concealed*. Her pieces have been performed by Jewish Women's Theatre in Los Angeles and in Manhattan, and she was chosen as its Artist-in-Residence in 2019.

**How is writing a memoir different from other forms of writing or storytelling?**

In order to write my memoir, I had to relive my life, live it a second time. I had to peel back the layers, capture the sights and smells, beginning with early childhood when my Jewish parents had immigrated to New York from the Iranian city of Mashhad. Growing up in the 1950s, I was straddling two conflicting cultures. I felt caught between the Islamic world my father had hauled from Mashhad into our Queens living room and the voice of freewheeling 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S.A. I had to remember every meaningful high and low, as well as numerous sidesplitting comedic moments which threaded their way throughout my life. My parents, who had escaped a torturous land, were also bewildered by America. Recalling the subtle details of my past required re-experiencing them viscerally in order to pen my story authentically. Writing a memoir is very different from other forms of writing since it demands a deeply personal archaeological dig, along with the willingness to expose oneself and become intimately known by total strangers. Writing an open and honest memoir requires not only hard work but the courage to reveal.

**What lessons do you hope people take away from your book?**

I didn't write *Concealed* with the

hope that readers would learn certain lessons. For me that would have felt formulaic. I didn't want my memoir to come across as prescriptive in any way. Since my parents were Crypto-Jews living a life of duality and duplicity in the Iranian city of Mashhad, I felt the



Esther Amini

need to tell their tale and mine – one that has never been told and needed to be. That being said, so many readers from around the world have written, stating they not only identified with me and my dilemmas, but also were left with insights regarding their own cultural conflicts, their own relationships with parents and siblings, their own journeys. The predominant takeaways I often hear from others are of hope, resilience and perseverance. Readers tell me they feel inspired by my ability to hold onto my core, intrigued by my feelings of otherness, and how I found

*continued on next page*

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For a complete schedule of events, admission information, author bios and book synopses, visit [jfedsrq.org/books](http://jfedsrq.org/books).

*People of the Book...continued from previous page*

various ways to channel such feelings.

**What did you learn about yourself by writing this memoir?**

After spending the past five years diligently writing *Concealed*, I was thrilled to discover that my rather strange and unique story is loved by thousands. By sharing the humor and idiosyncrasies of my life, many readers have found parts of themselves in my book. What a revelation! I had no idea this would happen. I've learned I do have a story to tell and that my book has been a source of great joy, laughter and insight for many. That's quite an eye-opener and very rewarding to hear.

On a more personal level, the entire writing process has been astounding. Memories, repressed for decades, buried underground, slowly surfaced. I gradually developed a bird's-eye view of the past and understood my story in brand new, multi-dimensional ways: through the lens of Iran, the fanatical city of Mashhad, the secret lives of my ancestors, my parents as concealed Crypto-Jews, their acclimations and altercations with America, my place in the family, my own concealment, and the mistakes I had to make which in turn forced me to grow. In short, it melded disparate parts, helping to form a cohesive self.

**Ariana Neumann /  
When Time Stopped**

When Ariana Neumann's father Hans dies, he leaves her a box of papers which become her roadmap to the history of her father, to all the family he would never speak of and to the past

he would never let enter his present. Before long, Neumann is forced to become the detective she'd played as a child if she wants to unravel the enigma of her father.

Ariana Neumann grew up in Venezuela. She graduated from Tufts University with a degree in history and



Ariana Neumann

received her master's in Spanish and Latin American Literature from New York University, where she taught for a year before moving to the UK, when she obtained a postgraduate degree from the University of London. She previously worked as a foreign correspondent for Venezuela's *The Daily Journal*, and her writing has also appeared in *The European*. She currently lives in London with her family. *When Time Stopped* is her first book.

**How is writing a memoir different from other forms of writing or storytelling?**

I don't think it's hugely different as

you are still telling a story and weaving it together. I think we always imbue the stories that we write with our own narratives, but sometimes we do this more overtly and consciously than others. The process of writing a memoir is much more personal as you have to become a character in the story. You have to be more open, observant and critical of your own life, and of those around you, so this also means it's a more immersive and therapeutic process.

**What lessons do you hope people take away from your book?**

I hope people better understand the insidious nature of antisemitism and the terrible and gradual process of dehumanization that the Nazis employed so effectively and ruthlessly. I hope they reflect on the immense power of what makes us human, the light, creativity, courage and resilience that somehow manages to triumph over darkness and cruelty. And I hope that

it reminds them of the importance of doing the moral thing, and of family, stories and love.

**What did you learn about yourself by writing this memoir?**

The most important thing that I learned about myself is that I come from a marvelous people who are brilliant, loving and resilient. And practically speaking, I also learned that I am a better writer if I can go for long walks and have an endless supply of tea and chocolate!

Individual tickets for the June series are \$10 per household per event or \$18 for the three events. Individual tickets for the summer bonus July and August events are \$10 per household or \$18 for the three events. Register for events at [jfedrsq.org/books](http://jfedrsq.org/books).

For more information on the People of the Book series of events, contact Jeremy Lisitza at [jlisitza@jfedrsq.org](mailto:jlisitza@jfedrsq.org) or 941.343.2113.



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We offer our very deep appreciation  
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\*As of 10/11/20

# Local Jewish organizations receive Stronger Together grants

By Kim Adler, Chief Operating Officer

Throughout the pandemic, our Jewish Federation has raised funds from generous donors to support the needs of our Jewish community. So many of our Jewish institutions have been impacted due to this crisis – loss of revenue, the challenges of engaging with their members virtually, and struggling to find funds to support the needs of their constituencies. Our Federation was proud to step up and grant funds to alleviate some of these issues. Our fundraising efforts resulted in more than \$360,000, all of which has been used to support our synagogues, JFCS of the Suncoast, Aviva Senior Living and Community Day School.

“As more of us are vaccinated and restrictions are lifted, I have been reflecting on this past year,” said Stacey Gillman, chair of the Stronger Together granting committee. “I am so grateful to the Federation for responding immediately to the crisis with the Stronger Together Fund. Our committee would meet regularly via Zoom to discuss the funding requests and we were all inspired by the thoughtful ways our agencies aided our community. I was awed by the generosity of our donors and our partners during the pandemic.”

Stacey and her committee, which included Eve Biller, Liz Gellis, Gary Kurnov and Nancy Roucher, completed the fourth and final round of grants

from this fund in April. The committee approved nearly \$80,000 in grants for the following organizations: Aviva, Chabad of Bradenton and Lakewood Ranch, Chabad of Sarasota, Chabad of Venice and North Port, Community Day School, Congregation Kol HaNeshama, Jewish Congregation of Venice, Temple Beth Israel, Temple Beth Sholom, Temple Emanu-El and Temple Israel of Highlands County.

These grants will support a number of important projects that will positively impact our institutions and the greater Jewish community. Five of the grants to synagogues address food insecurities, including Shabbat meals to community members in need; three of

the grants will support outdoor programming to combat isolation and allow participants to engage in safe settings; and the final three will assist with virtual programs that engage our entire community.

I am so grateful to those who generously contributed to this effort. It was truly a privilege to work with Stacey and the entire committee, who willingly dedicated their time and passions to this important project.

For more information about the Stronger Together Fund, please contact me at 941.552.6300 or [kadler@jfedrsq.org](mailto:kadler@jfedrsq.org).

# Deepening knowledge through art – The Lois and David Stulberg Education Gallery

By Barbara Mazer, Chief Development Strategist, and Rich Bergman, Major Gifts

Judaic art and artifacts, from the time of antiquity to the modern age, have helped educate our community, commemorate our struggles and elevate the beauty of our centers of Jewish culture. One aspect of the new Larry & Mary Greenspon Family Campus for Jewish Life will be the display of Judaic art and exhibits, which, in a city as artistically rich as Sarasota, seems only appropriate.

The Lois and David Stulberg Education Gallery, to be located in the Cultural Arts and Education Building on our new campus, will feature exhibits covering Jewish history, the Holocaust, Israel and the country’s extensive accomplishments, and other topics of community interest. The Federation

will work with museum partners and Jewish agencies to identify potential exhibits for the Education Gallery, with the goal of educating children and adults about our Jewish people in Sarasota-Manatee, in Israel and around the world.

The Education Gallery is named for Lois and her late husband David, and will reflect their lifelong family values, which include standing strong for Israel, pride in our Jewish history, fighting antisemitism, and promoting knowledge and truth through art and education.

“I wanted to do something special for our new Federation campus that brought to the forefront the causes that were important to me, especially

education. Rich Bergman helped me choose the art and education gallery space for my support, so our community could benefit from the exposure to the many exhibits and lectures it will bring,” said Lois.

Howard Tevlowitz, Federation CEO, upon reflecting on Lois’s gift said, “I was happy that Lois chose to help us create The David and Lois Stulberg Education Gallery. Lois Stul-

berg is a lifetime member of the Federation board and has supported so many of our Federation initiatives over the years. She is a thoughtful, intelligent and caring Federation superstar and a good friend.”

If you would like to learn more about gallery space on our new campus or participate in the visual arts selection group, please contact Barbara Mazer at [bmazer@jfedrsq.org](mailto:bmazer@jfedrsq.org) or 941.706.0035.

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## Where your dollars go

# The Jewish Federation and Operation Lifeshield: Working together to save Israeli lives

By Gayle Guynup

This series highlights mission-based programs and projects that are supported by **The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee**. Funding for these initiatives is derived from the Annual Campaign. The series helps to explain where your generous dollars are spent and features certain initiatives that enrich the lives of Jews living in Sarasota-Manatee, local projects with area partners, and overseas programs that support the social and humanitarian needs of Jews in Israel and around the world.

Your generous support is found in our tenet of *Tikkun Olam* – repairing the world!

**A**t Kfar Maimon, a small Jewish community in southern Israel (about five miles from the Gaza border), a new bomb shelter – jointly underwritten by **The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee** and the Birmingham Jewish Federation – is saving lives every day.

The shelter was provided by Operation Lifeshield, an emergency campaign to save lives in Israel by providing transportable, above-ground, easily accessible, protective bomb shelters to Israeli communities threatened by enemy rocket attacks.

Howard Tevlowitz, CEO of The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, said, “There is nothing more important than saving lives and that’s what this is all about. We are working in a part of Israel where the attacks come out of Gaza, and residents have only mere seconds to respond. This is the heart and core of what we do.”

According to Avigail Tresgallo, public relations specialist for Operation Lifeshield, “Over the past decade, Hamas and other terrorist groups in the Gaza Strip have terrorized civilian areas in Southern Israel with more than 18,000 rocket and mortar attacks.”

“Operation Lifeshield is a humanitarian, nonprofit organization founded by a small group of American and Israeli friends,” explained Tresgallo. “Its shelters are constructed in Israel by leading manufacturers of steel-reinforced, pre-cast concrete products, and deployed quickly. Our shelters meet the strictest requirements of the IDF Home Front Command,” she added.

Kfar Maimon is an agricultural

village established in 1959, which now has a population of 380 people.

“In 2018, explosive and incendiary kites and balloons started being launched from the Gaza Strip into Southern Israel, in addition to the projectiles, repeatedly setting fields and neighborhoods ablaze,” Tresgallo said, with children and adults alike suffering from ongoing traumas.

“Kfar Maimon families only have a 15-second warning to drop what they’re doing, grab their kids and run to the nearest bomb shelter,” she explained. “You can be at school, at work, driving your car, out for a run, buying groceries or at a school soccer game, and suddenly your proximity to a shelter can become the difference between life and death. The children in Kfar Maimon sadly have spent their entire lives living in this crazy situation where they know that terrorist rockets can rain down on them at any time. They are constantly looking for the closest shelter everywhere they go, just to feel safe.”

The shelter that The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee co-sponsored was on Operation Lifeshield’s top-priority list. This particular bus stop in Kfar Maimon is heavily used, serving both as a public bus stop and a school bus stop. Prior to this shelter donation, anyone waiting at the bus stop was vulnerable to rocket attacks.

“Imagine,” Tresgallo said, “the anxiety of waiting 10-15 minutes for your bus, knowing all too well that a rocket could come your way at any time, and you’d have nowhere to run. In the event of rocket sirens prior to this

shelter delivery, adults and children at the bus stop dived into a ditch behind the bus stop or even tried to climb into a large dirty pipe nearby to save their lives,” she said.

“Thanks to your generous donations, the bus stop now has an Operation Lifeshield protective shelter stationed right beside it,” she said. “Needless to say, the Kfar Maimon community is incredibly grateful.” Bob and Esther Heller have generously made a lead gift to the Bob & Esther Heller Israel Center and are the namesakes of the Heller Community Relations Committee. Bob said, “As Jews,



Bomb shelter at bus stop in Kfar Maimon

it is our duty to protect Israel. I am so proud that the Federation does such good work in helping our beloved State of Israel, home to the Jewish people.”

The Gaza Belt region, where Kfar Maimon is situated, has unfortunately become the “punching bag” of multiple terrorist groups in Gaza, which are committed to Israel’s destruction. According to Tresgallo, the rocket attacks are unpredictable. A few months can go by without any rocket attacks, and suddenly hundreds of rockets can be fired at this region within a single day. There’s been an average of about 1,150 rocket attacks per year over the past 10 years. “We want to provide as many of the urgently needed shelters as possible before the next barrage hits. With continuous threats and attacks from Hamas terrorists in the south and Hezbollah terrorists in the north, war is unfortunately always on the horizon in Israel,” she said.

Since its founding in 2006, Operation Lifeshield has placed about 400 protective shelters throughout Israel. To pay for the shelters, Operation Lifeshield reaches out to American Jewish and Christian Zionist communities, and looks for grant opportunities with Federations and organizations. “All of our volunteers and board members (other than our executive director) live in the United States and are constantly raising awareness about Operation Lifeshield at events, club meetings, religious institutions and through fundraising within their communities,” Tresgallo said. As for the future, “We will continue to stand by the people of Israel and provide lifesaving protection as long as the continuous threat of rocket attacks exists. Unfortunately, these attacks and threats have existed since the modern

State of Israel was established, and vulnerable Israeli communities have been continually attacked and traumatized to this day. With terrorist organizations committed to our destruction at both our Northern and Southern fronts, disaster can strike at any moment. We are working hard to ensure that all Israelis in highly targeted areas will be able to reach safety whenever necessary.”

She notes that the most rewarding thing and the most challenging thing about her work with Operation Lifeshield are the same: feeling connected to Israeli communities that are constantly under threat of enemy rocket



The shelter is underwritten by two Federations

attacks and raising awareness of what they are going through.

“As part of our projects, we frequently visit and create connections and friendships with the people in the communities we work with, and see the strength, resilience and beauty of the people and the cities in two of the greenest and (normally) most peaceful regions of Israel: the North and the South.

“Even though I live in Jerusalem, I am glued to my phone and my Red Alert rocket siren apps the entire time these communities are under rocket attack, because it is my job to report updates on social media in real time. There have been times when I’ve reported on rocket attacks that came in nonstop for 48-72 hours. I am fully aware that the fear, frustration and indignation I feel for my fellow Jews during these attacks is barely a fraction of the intense emotions the locals are going through every single time.

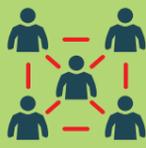
“It’s very frustrating to me that many of the ongoing terrorist attacks on these Israeli communities don’t make it into international news. Because these attacks are so frequent and common, they have lost their shock factor and have therefore lost the attention of most reporters and readers. The world needs to know what is really happening here. And these Israeli families need to know that their cries are being heard.”

Thankfully, The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee heard their cries. As Tresgallo points out, “Thanks to the generosity of your community, the shelter now stands next to the previously unprotected, vulnerable bus stop, bringing safety and peace of mind to Kfar Maimon residents, employees and visitors on a daily basis.”

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# With everyone's help, we can stay safe

By Barbara Mazer, Chief Development Strategist

Safety and security are critical concerns to all faith-based institutions, especially those with spaces where Jews frequently gather. According to the 2020 Homeland Security Threats Report, Jewish organizations are a prime target for white supremacy groups. We must remain diligent in protecting ourselves and our entire Jewish community.

The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, in partnership with the Secure Community Network, is at the center of security-based planning for faith-based institutions in Sarasota-Manatee, with a special emphasis on threats to Jewish organizations. Our re-imagined Larry & Mary Greenspon Family Campus for Jewish Life will not only be a safe place to visit, but will also centralize security planning for the community, offering training and resources, and creating a security shield to protect our community.

As you can imagine, state-of-the-art security comes at a price. In 2020, contributions to the Federation's Keep Us Safe security fund totaled more than \$170,000. That money was used

for on-site security personnel and surveillance technology at local Jewish organizations.

However, our work is not done. With security a vital necessity for this community, we continue to solicit contributions for security-specific needs, including training, equipment, technological tools and security staffing. This need will be ongoing well into the future.

If security is a concern for you, please consider supporting Federation's Keep Us Safe Fund. Contributions of any amount help bolster safety measures at the Federation and the many Jewish organizations it supports. We hope for a future in which security needs are diminished, but until then, we hope you will help "Keep Us Safe."

To give, please visit [jfedsrq.org/keepussafe](http://jfedsrq.org/keepussafe), or contact Ilene Fox at [iflox@jfedsrq.org](mailto:iflox@jfedsrq.org) or 941.343.2111. For more information about Federation's security initiatives, please contact Jewish Community Security Director Jeff Solomon at [jsolomon@jfedsrq.org](mailto:jsolomon@jfedsrq.org) or 866.284.4933 x0. To report a security incident, visit [jfedsrq.org/srqsafe](http://jfedsrq.org/srqsafe).

# Sheldon Gensler, Federation's first President

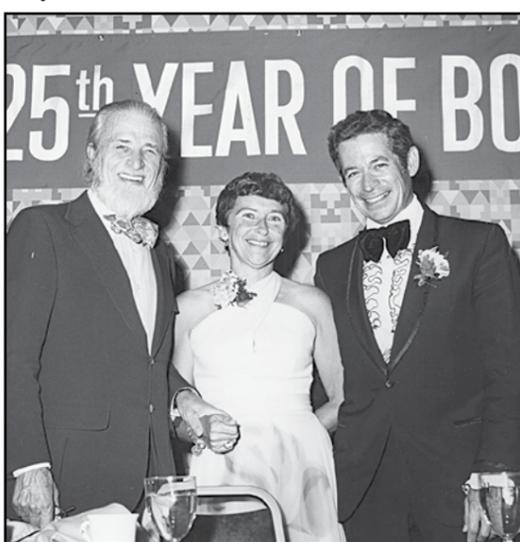
Staff Report

We offer our condolences to the family of Sheldon Gensler, who passed away on April 22, 2021. Sheldon, who was 101 years old, was the first president of The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee in 1971-1973.

Sheldon helped lay the cornerstone for today's Federation. As written by Sandy Chase in a *Jewish News* article in April 2019 about the Federation's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, his milestones included:

- ◆ Raising money for UJA and Israel bonds (he was recognized with the Israel Shalom Award in 1975)
- ◆ Helping cement an effective working relationship with non-Jewish lay and religious leaders
- ◆ Working tirelessly to discontinue discrimination, like penalizing Jewish public-school students for being absent during the Jewish holidays
- ◆ Working with the Sarasota County School Board to adopt a set of teacher guidelines endorsed by Federation's Community Relations Committee

- ◆ Encouraging women to play a significant role, establishing their own fundraising campaign
- ◆ Launching *The Chronicle*, the forerunner of *The Jewish News*
- ◆ Assessing community readiness to build a retirement residence
- ◆ Laying the foundation for social services



Sheldon Gensler (right) with his wife Martha and Robert St. John, noted author and foreign war correspondent, at the 1975 Israel Bonds dinner honoring Gensler

We are forever indebted to Sheldon for his vision and allegiance to the Jewish community and Israel. May his memory be a blessing!

# B'shert – two years later

By Marty Katz, Sr. Director of Communications & Marketing

Exactly two years to the day we left for Israel, the 2019 Inter-faith Community Leader Mission group came together for a reunion. The goal of the mission, sponsored by The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, was to bring together leaders in the nonprofit, business and faith communities to learn about each other and Israel, and become advocates in Sarasota-Manatee.

The May 1 event was generously hosted by Jennifer Vigne, Executive Director, Education Foundation of Sarasota County, and Dan Vigne,

Wealth Strategist, Northern Trust. All who gathered relished being able to be together outdoors. Friendships that started during the mission were picked up right where they were left. Israeli food was a hit of the evening.

Everyone agreed that our trip was a life-changing event. As Jennifer said, "Little did we know then how the world would change and our friendships would blossom."

There were sadly a few trip participants missing. We hope to see you soon!



(Back row:) Dan Vigne, Pastor John Walker, Captain John Walsh, Julia & Pastor Patrick Miller, Lori & Jay Solomon, Brenna Wilhm, Pam Ramhofer, (front row:) Marty Katz, Jennifer Vigne, Jessi Sheslow

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## Finding my place

By Gary Kurnov, 2019 MoMENTum Trip to Israel Participant

The first time I heard about the Momentum father's trip to Israel was through my wife Lauren, who participated in a mother's trip, sponsored by **The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee**. After she returned from the trip, Lauren felt a renewed connection to her Jewish heritage and enhanced commitment to Jewish values and traditions for our family. We began regularly observing Shabbat and having dinner together as a family. It was Lauren's first trip to Israel. She felt inspired, and it had a positive impact on our family.

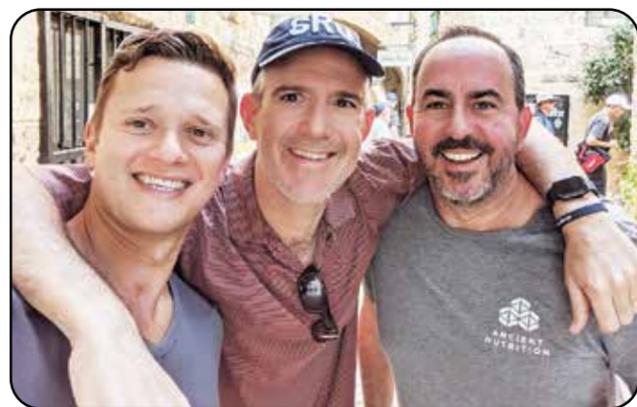
Even still, I didn't feel it was for me. I had already done a similar trip, sponsored by Birthright, in 2000 when

friend of ours was planning to go and needed a roommate. What's the harm in attending an introductory meeting, I figured. So I went. I must admit, that first meeting was a bit intimidating. At the time, I was not well connected within the Sarasota Jewish community and didn't know a lot of Jewish guys in town. The meeting was full of doctors and surgeons. Who were these guys? I don't have a single person with a medical degree in my entire family. Was this for me?

Turns out it was the right decision after all. As we started preparations for the trip, I gradually began to get acquainted with the other men on the trip. They weren't all that different from

me. They were fathers with kids of varying ages, and most had lived in Sarasota for a long time. Many of their wives had participated in the same Israel trip with my wife. We were all there for the same reason. The trip was meant to help us focus on what's truly important as fathers and as Jewish men:

family, identity and purpose. But who says you can't have fun while connecting with your roots? Although the trip was structured around sightseeing and lectures planned by Momentum, there was ample free time to experience Israel as Israelis do. Some of my favorite memories from the trip are hanging out



Gary Kurnov, Michael Gordon and Jeremy Schwimmer enjoying their MoMENTum experience in Tel Aviv

I was a sophomore in college. My recollections of that trip were generally positive, but I do remember being herded around in big groups, having to get on and off buses and being surrounded by a lot of people I didn't know. Why go through it all again? Then Lauren mentioned that a close

## 2021 MoMENTum Trip to Israel October 18-24 Applications Opening Soon!

The MoMENTum Men's Trip is a boot camp for living awesome lives that are guided by Jewish values. Men enjoy empowering classes led by world-class Jewish educators and Israeli thought-leaders; explore spiritual Tzfat and Masada's desert magic; enjoy Shabbat in Jerusalem with local families; and discover how to connect more deeply with themselves, their families and their communities.

This trip is designed for people who are not highly engaged in the

Jewish community or Jewish ritual observance. Participants must have children at home age 18 or younger OR be the parenting partner of a recent Momentum alumna. For 2021 ONLY, the age limit for the youngest child is 21.

Participants must be physically and emotionally healthy.

For more information about the 2021 MoMENTum Men's Trip to Israel, please contact Gisele Pintchuck at 941.706.0029 or [gpintchuck@jfedsrq.org](mailto:gpintchuck@jfedsrq.org).

with the guys in casual situations that were not part of the itinerary.

On the first night in Tel Aviv, after a tasty sushi dinner at Nini Hachi with another guy from the trip, we hopped on two of the ubiquitous electric scooters and zipped down the seaside promenade in the cool night air to the central part of the city. There we met up with another group of guys from Sarasota who were finishing up dinner at Abraxas Bar. The city buzzes with energy and excitement. It is hard to believe the thin strip of land north of Jaffa had been desert a mere 100 years ago, but has somehow emerged as the metropolitan center of Israeli life. Later in the trip, when we arrived in Jerusalem, our entire Sarasota group went out for an evening at "The Shuk," a narrow, bustling food market filled with Israelis from all walks of life. As we relaxed at a bar with our drinks and took in the vibrant scene, I was overwhelmed with the feeling that this was not just a fun night out in a foreign city. This was my place, it was our place, we belong here.

Growing up I had a hard time figuring out where I belonged. I was born in Moscow, Russia, in the early 1980s as the country was slowly emerging from communism. However, being Jewish in Russia meant you were a minority. It was stamped on your passport and the authorities knew who you were. Although Moscow was a cosmopolitan city compared to other parts of Russia, there were limitations on Jews wherever you looked. One prominent example was quotas in top academic departments. There was a limit to how many Jews could matriculate. It was a huge blow to my dad who had ambitions of pursuing a doctorate degree. Worse yet, we couldn't tell anyone we were Jewish for fear of persecution. Privately we were proud of our Jewish heritage, but publicly we had to hide who we were from friends and neighbors.

Ambivalence toward my Jewish

identity persisted even after immigrating to the U.S. in 1990. We lived in a small town in New Jersey where I was typically the only Jewish kid in class. I was also the only Russian kid. Was I Russian or was I Jewish, or both? Five years later we were granted U.S. citizenship. Now I was American, right? You can see how identity can get confusing. Fast forward to the Momentum trip in Israel where we had the opportunity to contemplate our Jewishness in the context of our family, without any family around. It was a rare opportunity to reflect. Through a series of lectures centered around our roles as fathers, husbands and Jewish men, the trip helped us focus above all on being present, for ourselves and for the ones we love.

It should be easy, but living in the moment is becoming increasingly difficult in our distracted, busy lives. We have jobs, families, and kids to schlep to extracurricular activities. But the biggest roadblock to being present is sitting right there, warming our pocket all day, every day: our phone. When our trip leader pointed this out to us, it was a shock. On Shabbat in Jerusalem, we were asked to turn off and put away our phones from sundown on Friday night to sunset the following day. Retiring my phone for 24 hours was excruciating, like parting with a limb, but it was also strangely freeing. When you're not constantly trying to fill the empty space in your life, you start to reflect.

As I approached the most powerful and enduring symbol of our people, The Kotel, I felt a cool draft emanating from its ancient stones, drawing me closer. When I pressed my hand to that solemn stone, tears welled in my eyes and at that moment I knew who I was and why I was here. I am a proud Jewish man, and we were a band of Jewish brothers reconnecting with our roots and bringing Jewish values back to our community.

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JEWISH NEWS  
OF SARASOTA-MANATEE

# A new beginning with Community Havdalah celebrations

By Jessi Sheslow, Teen & Family Programs Manager

Beat the heat in person with the entire Federation community at our two summer Havdalah celebrations! Havdalah can be a magical experience for so many reasons. Bringing Shabbat to a close while welcoming the new week can be the transition we need the most in our modern world. The spiritual “pause” button that Shabbat offers us helps create a more defined intention for the week ahead as we stand together for Havdalah.

This particular summer also serves as another kind of new beginning. Many people in our community are starting to feel comfortable being out and about – especially with the Covid-19 vaccines more widely available. We are excited to come together in person as a community twice over the summer for Havdalah. We will continue to adhere to the recommendations put forth by the CDC for outdoor engagement and encourage you to still wear a mask and

remain socially distant. That said, the mere fact that we are coming together in person will serve as a new beginning after a year of uncertainty.

Our Community Havdalah on Saturday, June 12 will be held at Lido Beach. The Havdalah on Saturday, July 24 will be at Nathan Benderson Park at UTC Mall. Both events will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will consist of a community-wide Havdalah celebration followed by affinity breakout groups for

young families led by me, and for Club Fed active adults led by my colleague, Jeremy Lisitza. The events are BYOB – Bring Your Own Blanket (or whatever else you enjoy having with you for comfort)!

To register for these free Community Havdalah events, visit [jfedsrq.org/events](http://jfedsrq.org/events). For more information, please contact me at [jsheslow@jfedsrq.org](mailto:jsheslow@jfedsrq.org) or 941.343.2109, or Jeremy Lisitza at [jlisitza@jfedsrq.org](mailto:jlisitza@jfedsrq.org) or 941.343.2113.

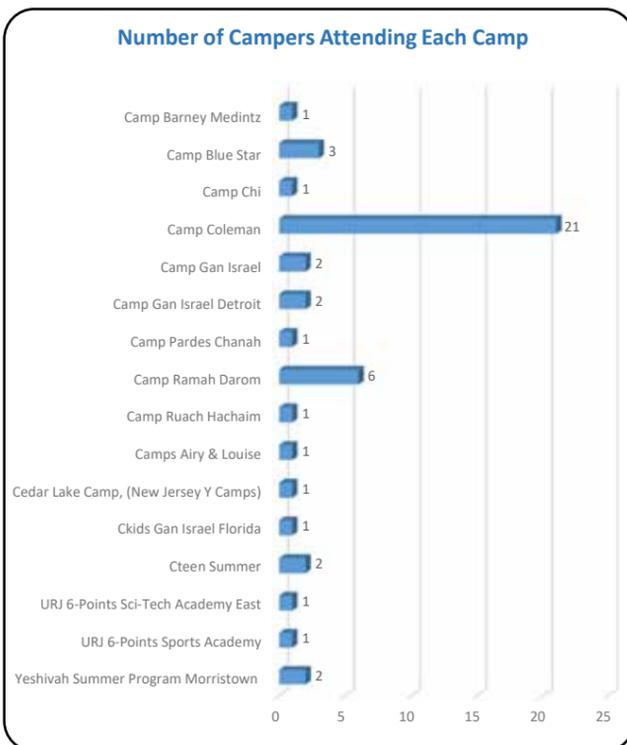
# Overnight Camping Grants

Lisa Feinman, Resource Development Manager

Each spring, The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee assembles a committee of dedicated volunteers to do their favorite thing – give away money. Committee members Lori Greenbaum, Rebecca Schwartz Bergman, Howard Banner and Andrew Rosin are passionate about enabling our community’s youth to enjoy and grow in an immersive Jewish summer experience. This year they have facilitated memorable and formative Jewish overnight camping experiences for 47 campers attending 16 different camps with an average scholarship of \$1,570 per camper, awarding nearly \$74,000 in all.

Conservative and Orthodox camps as close as Parkland, Florida, and as far away as Montreal, Canada. Some are even traveling to Israel and Europe with their fellow campers.

In 2020, Covid-19 forced most camps to close. The committee was very excited to be able to make these awards for the summer of 2021 and celebrate the return of Jewish overnight camping to the national and international experiences available to our children and teens.



While some of our families require large scholarships in order to make attending camp possible, the Federation also offers Incentive Grants of \$500 to campers who may not require financial aid for camp. Of these, we would like to recognize the Collier, Rosenthal, Rosenberg, Rosin and Sakellarios families, who donated a portion of their grants back to the Federation so the funds could be reallocated to families with greater need. Thank you for your generosity.

For more information about Overnight Camping Grants or to get involved, please contact Jessi Sheslow, Teen & Family Programs Manager, at 941.343.2109 or [jsheslow@jfedsrq.org](mailto:jsheslow@jfedsrq.org).

The grant recipients range in age from seven to 18 and attend Reform,

# “How the Jews Won the Wild West”

By Marden Paru, Dean, Sarasota Liberal Yeshiva

Did you know that Jews over time conquered the Wild West? Learn all about these exciting time periods when The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee offers the six-week series, “How the Jews Won the Wild West,” beginning July 12. Classes will meet for six Mondays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Zoom.

Jewish values.

During this period, Jews found themselves in a totally free, capitalistic society. They flourished as merchants at all levels: peddlers, importers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers. There were also Jewish cowboys and cattlemen!

You will learn about the various Jewish settlements in each of the western states. Who were the pioneers and what was their legacy? How did they set up Jewish communities, deal with Shabbat, kashrut, synagogues, clergy and religious education? Were there any Jewish gunslingers or Indian Chiefs? You bet there were!

The bedrock of our modern thriving market system was created by Jewish merchants in cities, towns and villages throughout the West. They came with merchandise, in wagons and ships. They brought anything they thought would sell in this vast new territory, and they had literally nothing with which to start.

When we study the period of the American Wild West from 1849-1909, we might conclude that it was the third Golden Age of the Jewish People. (The first was the Golden Age of King Solomon, 950 BCE, and the second was the Golden Age of Spain, 1200-1300 CE.)

They were mostly immigrants from Europe. New opportunities opened up in the Old West without the presence of pervasive antisemitism. Indeed, America was the *goldene medina* (golden state).

It was a time when Jews adapted to new and strange environments, drawing upon their intelligence, *Yiddishe kop*, creativity, hard work ethic and

The cost for this six-part series is \$18 per person. To register, please visit [jfedsrq.org/events](http://jfedsrq.org/events). For more information, contact Jeremy Lisitza at [jlisitza@jfedsrq.org](mailto:jlisitza@jfedsrq.org) or 941.343.2113.

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## Volunteer Spotlight

# A new chapter for Helene Davis

By Sandy Chase

Helene Davis is writing a new chapter at **The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee**. A staunch volunteer, she is honored to have been chosen as the inaugural chair (2021-22) of Federation's People of the Book author lecture series.

Under Jeremy Lisitza, Director of Innovation and Volunteer Engagement, this program has provided an array of author events for the past two years, helping to foster Federation's mission of enriching Jewish life and identity in our community.

Until now, Federation staff chose Jewish Book Council authors for the program. For the 2021-22 series, Helene will work with the staff on this endeavor.

She says, "Up to a few months ago, I was an avid participant, signing up to hear all the authors in person and on Zoom. I especially like how each month focuses on a particular theme, like memoirs, arts and culture – my career and passion – or history."

In February, when Jeremy asked Helene to introduce the four novelists, she had the most moving experience. "I had the opportunity to speak with the writers – mesmerized by their knowledge, eloquence, confidence and inviting personalities."

Jeremy says, "I admire Helene's enthusiasm, dedication, creativity and commitment to organizations that mat-

ter to her. After working with her and seeing how effectively she communicated with the authors, I knew she was perfect for the position."

Important to Helene is collaborating with Jeremy and the rest of the staff, echoing other volunteers when she says, "Jeremy and the rest of the staff are among the most dedicated, inspiring, thoughtful people I've ever met."



Helene Davis

Helene's connection with Federation began over eight years ago, when she relocated to Sarasota from New Jersey, shortly after having lost her husband Ron, of blessed memory.

After joining Temple Emanu-El and Federation – faithful to her Jewish identity – Helene fulfilled her promise

to volunteer once retired from teaching high-school art for 30 years and raising two children: Marnie, a doctor, and Scott, a lawyer.

Rabbi Brenner Glickman of Temple Emanu-El reaffirms her religious devotion. "Helene's passion for Judaism has come alive in this phase of her life, as she spreads her enthusiasm to everyone she meets at the temple."

Rabbi Michael Shefrin captures

Helene's essence when he speaks of her unique charm and big heart, interacting with people of all ages. Her involvement with the Starfish program, an initiative helping disadvantaged kindergarteners access the joy of books and reading, "brings a special light to young children that shines even more brightly – a light

that also glows at the People of the Book events."

Beholden to Temple Emanu-El, Federation and other organizations for which she volunteers or used to before Covid, Helene emphasizes how fortunate she was to have served on the steering committee for the Federation-sponsored Women's Giving Circle, a philanthropic organization enhancing the lives of Jewish women and children in Israel.

Helene's philanthropy extends to her supporting Temple Emanu-El through LIFE & LEGACY®, saying, "I want my children, grandchildren and their future generations to embrace their religion. Pride in being Jewish cannot be measured. It's part of me."

Inspired by her primary-grade art teacher, Thelma Newman, Helene began writing her future "chapters,"

recalling, "I wanted to be magical like her. Teaching art has been extraordinary, helping to shape my passion for children, art and books."

Volunteering also speaks volumes of Helene's creativity. Promoting the arts is written on every page of Helene's "book."

For Temple Emanu-El's religious school, she co-chairs an ambitious art activity, temporarily on hold because of Covid.

Helene explains, "We're sending ceramic pieces, complete with student messages, to decorate an Israeli kibbutz peace wall. In return, our students will create and decorate their own ceramic pieces to be placed on our school's peace wall."

When not volunteering, Helene lives to create art. "During Covid, I started painting mannequins," she says. One of her painted mannequins was in the Art Center Sarasota juried show. She hopes to contact a few galleries to see whether they will represent her.

Helene is also a voracious reader. Reminiscing, she says, "As a child, I once devoured 50 books while vacationing in the Catskills."

Convinced that both reading and art have helped her thrive during the pandemic, Helene says, "I read a lot of fiction, and I'm excited about giving my all to this amazing People of the Book program. I know that the rewards will outweigh any challenges."

Rabbi Shefrin says proudly, "The world is blessed to have a leader like Helene. Her gusto is contagious."

All who know Helene would agree that her chairing the People of the Book program will be a "page turner."

*If you are interested in volunteering, there are many ways to contribute and be part of the volunteer life at the Federation. For more information, please contact Jeremy Lisitza, Director of Innovation and Volunteer Engagement, at 941.343.2113 or jlisitza@jfedsrq.org.*



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# JNF-USA ignites love in a post-pandemic world

As Israel continues to lead the world in its vaccine rollout, Jewish National Fund-USA (JNF-USA) has wasted no time in setting a date to resume its in-person missions. Only this time, America's singles get first dibs to "swipe right" for Israel.

With much of the dating scene taking place in the virtual world over the past 12 months, participants on the singles trip may find themselves going on a real date while eating dates grown from a tree that JNF-USA brought back to life after 2,000 years.

The trip for singles ages 35-50 will take place July 4-11 and includes eight days and seven nights in high-quality lodging, touring with an English-speaking guide on a Wi-Fi equipped luxury coach, daily buffet breakfasts, most lunches and dinners, entrance

fees to various sites, museums and events, and airport transfers.

"People have been stuck inside and the development of romantic relationships got put on hold, so now JNF-USA is wagering that sparks will fly



for singles across the country over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend," said Toby Halpern, President of the JNF-USA Sarasota

Board of Directors. "Participants are being offered a chance to find true love while receiving a backstage pass to an unforgettable trip to Israel."

The week-long itinerary is packed with activities that will make history come alive for participants as they immerse themselves in all of Israel's magic and wonder. The tour bus will hit most of the country's cultural landmarks and will travel along the scenic coastal routes exposing the hidden gems of the Western Galilee. The group will also engage in Tel Aviv's vibrant nightlife and indulge in Israel's thriving culinary scene. The high-end vacation will include meals at some of Israel's finest dining establishments and four-star sleeping accommodations.

"Whether you've been there zero times or 10 times, if you are single and support Israel, your first international trip post-Covid should be to Israel. Hopefully, you'll meet a special someone while you're on the tour but, at the very least, you'll definitely enjoy a truly memorable experience," said Jeffrey Greenberg, the JNF-USA professional leading the summer singles trip.

Space is limited. Visit [jnf.org/travel](http://jnf.org/travel) for additional details and registration information.

All Jewish National Fund-USA tours will adhere to the health and safety guidelines set by the Government of Israel.

For more information, please contact Joshua Mellits, Director, Western Florida, at 941.462.1330 x865 or [jmellits@jnf.org](mailto:jmellits@jnf.org).

# Yiddish letters come alive through readings and music in *A Bintel Brief*

Experience authentic Yiddish letters come to life through words and music in *A Bintel Brief* (A Bundle of Letters) on Sunday, July 11 at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

The ORT America Florida Region presents the Asolo Repertory Theatre Guild Play Readers, who will bring to life Yiddish letters written by European Jewish immigrants seeking advice in the popular *The Forward* newspaper.

Often separated from family and bewildered by life in a new country, thousands of Jewish immigrants wrote to *The Forward* seeking advice about assimilating to their new lives as American Jews. The paper's founder and editor, Abraham Cahan, would personally respond to each letter with encouragement, wisdom and warmth.

Kvell while you listen to Rosalie Leon, an ORT member, play the guitar and sing your favorite Yiddish melodies. She will be joined by members of the Asolo Play Readers who are also ORT supporters: Dianne Brin, Alice Cotman, Beverly Horwitz and Jonathan Horwitz.

During the pandemic, the Asolo Repertory Theatre Guild Play Readers brought theatre to the community through Zoom. The troupe consists of

volunteers committed to extending the theatre experience beyond the traditional stage.

This performance is a fundraiser. The proceeds will benefit ORT Florida Region's project for Kfar Silver Youth Village, which is a rural boarding school in southern Israel. It educates 700 students, grades 7-12, most of whom are considered at risk, and 218



Beverly Horwitz, Jonathan Horwitz, Alice Cotman and Dianne Brin stand behind Rosalie Leon at a previous performance of *A Bintel Brief*

of whom live in the dorms full-time and consider Kfar Silver their only home. These students come from challenging backgrounds, including mental health issues, extreme poverty, single parent homes and families who are just unable to care for them. Many have failed in the conventional school system, so Kfar Silver is considered their "last stop" for succeeding academically and in life.

The proceeds will also benefit the Asolo Repertory Theatre Guild Play Readers' mission to help local students see live theatre.

The minimum donation to receive the Zoom link and attend is \$18. Additional contributions are appreciated and will support each organization's mission. For more information, contact Kim Sheintal at [klapshein@aol.com](mailto:klapshein@aol.com) or 941.921.1433.

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# The arts at Aviva: Overcoming isolation

By Gayle Guynup | This program is sponsored by The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee

Over the past year, the pandemic has had a debilitating effect on seniors all over the country, especially those in congregant living facilities. At Aviva Senior Living, one side effect of the social isolation required to help curb the pandemic was that all of the stimulating programming that is such an integral part of the Aviva lifestyle was no longer allowed.

Until now.

Thanks to a grant from The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee,

“Our Federation understands the importance of providing opportunities for Aviva residents to attend quality programs in a safe, outdoor and socially distant environment,” said Federation Chief Operating Officer Kim Adler. “We appreciate the creativity and effort that Aviva staff and leadership have taken to keep their residents, some of our most vulnerable constituents, engaged throughout the pandemic. Aviva’s new performing arts series will help to address issues of isolation and loneliness, and will hopefully bring new people to its campus.”

“Aviva once again cherishes the wonderful partnership with The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee,” said Aviva CEO Jay Solomon. “The grant which they so generously provided has enabled our community to provide so many life-enrichment programs. The musical program provides our residents with

the ability to continue to enjoy so many of the marvelous cultural programs that are such an integral part of life in Sarasota.”

According to Maria Leonardo,

Director of Campus Life Enrichment & Volunteers, because of Covid restrictions, it has been very isolating for Aviva residents to be unable to share these cultural experiences. “Even watching programming on our in-house television station, as wonderful as that is, is not the same thing as getting together with people you care about to share these experiences,” she said. “Many of our residents have been longtime arts supporters before moving to Aviva,” she added. “The arts are part of who they are, and it is important that they do not lose that connection.”

“Whether the events are held in our beautiful theater – socially distanced, of course – or outside, where they can enjoy the fresh air and beautiful surroundings in addition to the performances, it is very important for our residents to know that they are not alone.”

Among the scheduled performances are:

## Porte-Cochere Performances

### Kobernick House

These one-hour, outdoor concerts will be held twice a month through August on Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. Performing groups will include different musical genres as well as theater and dance. Performances are open to the community. In case of inclement weather, the Kretzmer Center will be used.



### Anchin/Benderson

These one-hour, outdoor concerts will be held monthly through August on Tuesdays at 2:30 p.m. Performing groups will include different musical genres as well as theater and dance. Outdoor concerts are open to the public. In case of inclement weather, the second-floor dining center will be used.

### Piano Performances

### Kobernick House

These concerts will be held on two Sunday afternoons a month from June through August at 2:00 p.m. in the rotunda.

### Anchin/Benderson

These concerts will be held on two Sunday afternoons a month from June through August at 2:00 p.m. on second or third floor.

### Poolside Pops

### Kobernick House

These casual events will be held bi-monthly through July on Mondays at 3:30 p.m.

### Aviva Classical Music Series

### Kobernick House Porte-Cochere or Kretzmer Center

Four outstanding evening performances will be held once a month through August on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. Seating will be limited to 100 guests due to social-distancing requirements. The community is invited to attend.



Aviva residents enjoyed a performance of *Fiddler on the Roof*

Aviva is reintroducing its arts programs. Specific programs have been created for audiences in Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care and Rehab, in different campus venues.



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Also, our new **Sunday Eblast**, sent at the end of each month, is a sneak preview of **ALL** Federation events in the upcoming month. You can promote your event for only **\$100 per month.**



Interested? Contact Adam Kaplan at [akaplan@jfedsrq.org](mailto:akaplan@jfedsrq.org) or 941.552.6307

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**NOTE:** To be publicly acknowledged in *The Jewish News*, Honor Cards require a minimum \$10 contribution per listing. You can send Honor Cards directly from [jfedsrq.org](http://jfedsrq.org). For more information, call 941.371.4546.

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# Much more than a case manager

By Rabbi Jonathan R. Katz | This position is sponsored by The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee

In 1994, when Jan Alston went to the Sarasota Health Department for a shot, she met a nurse named Helga Melamed. They got to talking and at one point Helga mentioned she'd been "in the camps."

A few weeks later, Jan made it a point to attend a presentation Helga gave at the Jewish Congregation of Venice. Riveted by her personal story, Jan became keenly interested in Jewish persecution during World War II and became friends with Helga. She also got to know Helen Fagin, who has made an immense contribution to Holocaust education including the Dr. Helen N. Fagin Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Collection at New College.

Nine years ago, while working for a local non-profit, Jan called her friend Beverly Mishkin, then Senior Services Clinical Social Worker at JFCS of the Suncoast, to inquire on behalf of a client regarding an open Case Manager position for Jewish Financial Assistance. At one point, Mishkin told Jan she should apply herself because it also included the role of assisting Holocaust survivors. Jan took the advice and got the job.

Due to health and aging concerns and an expansion in benefits provided by the Claims Conference, an organization established in conjunction with the German government after World II to make financial reparations to Jews who'd suffered at the hands of the Nazis, more survivors sought compen-

sation. Jan recalls that one survivor told her, "I didn't want anything to do with Germany. I didn't want blood money. But now I feel I need it."

Registering survivors with the Claims Conference requires extensive documentation. As a result of the time



Helga Melamed and Jan Alston

necessary to complete this process for so many people, together with her growing case management responsibilities, Jan became our community's full-time Holocaust Survivor Case Manager only six months after coming to JFCS. The position, a part of JFCS's Jewish Healing Program, is sponsored by **The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee**.

When Jan started, only four survivors in the North Port area were receiving compensation through the Claims Conference, but this number soon increased to more than a hundred.

Jan began working closely with the

Gulf Coast JFCS Holocaust Assistance Services Division in Clearwater to coordinate a range of cultural, socialization and Jewish holiday programs for area survivors.

"Jan has been invaluable to our program, supporting survivors in Sarasota and Manatee," says Cindy Minetti, Senior Director of Gulf Coast JFCS. "Jan has a special relationship with the survivors, supporting their needs and enjoying many hours of time with each of them."

"I have been extremely gratified by this work," says Jan, who retired in February but now works part-time. "Getting to know these individuals has been a privilege. They endured incredible losses, sometimes including all of their siblings and parents. Yet, even with so much suffering, they've been able to move forward in life with a measure of hope. My heart rises when I see them dancing and singing with friends at events we host. I truly want to log that extra mile for them. They've become family to me."

Alston related that one survivor was determined to come to the United States to marry and have children in order to give them names of relatives who perished in the Shoah.

Jan has served as a guide, confidante and counselor. "They call to ask: 'How do I know the plumber is being honest? Where can I get my tooth treated? How can I get more homecare services? Who can arrange a memorial service?'"

In nine years, things have changed a great deal. "During that time, 60 of the survivors I assisted have passed away and those who remain are getting older," Jan notes. "They now require even more help with homecare, medical and housing needs. The Claims Conference does not cover many things such as dental work and home and car repair that survivors need."

Rabbi Jonathan R. Katz serves as the Community Chaplain and Director of the JFCS Jewish Healing Program. His position is underwritten by The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee.

## Bereavement Support Group begins June 10

This program is sponsored by The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee

Sponsored by JFCS of the Suncoast and The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, a new Bereavement Support Group, either in person or via Zoom, will begin on Thursday, June 10 from 1:30 to 2:45 p.m. and continue for six successive Thursdays.

Facilitated by Community Chaplain Rabbi Jonathan R. Katz, the group provides a valuable opportunity to learn how others are dealing with grief, examine ways loss can impact us, gain coping insights, cultivate resilience and discover renewed hope.

Especially during the social isolation associated with Covid-19, it is important for those who have suffered the loss of a loved one to have an opportunity to share and find support. There is sadness but also moments of gratitude and laughter.

The group is open to all, regardless of background. Pre-registration by Monday, June 7 is required. The cost is \$36.

For more information, please contact Rabbi Katz at [jkatz@jfcs-cares.org](mailto:jkatz@jfcs-cares.org) or 941.366.2224 x166.

# HOMELESS VETERANS STAND DOWN

**June 26, 2021 8am - 12pm**

**Sarasota Fairgrounds - 3000 Ringling Blvd, Sarasota**  
**Registration: 8:00am to 11:30am**

The Homeless Veteran Stand Down is an annual event providing an array of services in one location for the homeless veterans in our community. The Homeless Veteran Stand Down is a time for the community to connect with our homeless veterans and break down the barriers that keep these heroes on the streets.

The "hand up, not a handout" philosophy of the Stand Down requires the work of countless volunteers and service providers. Several community organizations will provide direct services (including medical checkups, benefits reviews, and Amnesty court) to reduce barriers preventing access to permanent housing.

**To Volunteer or for more information visit:**  
[jfcs-cares.org](http://jfcs-cares.org)

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# DID YOU MISS IT?

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Visit [JFEDSRQ.org/ProgramRecordings](http://JFEDSRQ.org/ProgramRecordings) to watch many of the virtual programs the Federation has produced this past year. **New recordings added frequently!**

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The Jewish Federation OF SARASOTA-MANATEE

# Temple Sinai honors members of LIFE & LEGACY® program

By Melanie Epstein

On April 9, Temple Sinai held its annual LIFE & LEGACY® Erev Shabbat service to honor the donors responsible for the program's success. LIFE & LEGACY has been a four-year partnership with The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee and 10 other local Jewish organizations. At Temple Sinai, the initiative works in collaboration with the Rabbi Hunting Endowment Fund to ensure a Jewish home, L'dor V'dor, from generation to generation.

LIFE & LEGACY promotes after-lifetime giving to build financial stability within local Jewish communities and the organizations that serve them. Fostering a philanthropic culture helps to ensure

a bright future for the Jewish people and gives donors the ability to contribute to a cause about which they care so deeply.



Laurie Lachowitz

Temple Sinai member Laurie Lachowitz was honored during Temple Sinai's April 9 service for helping lead Temple Sinai's LIFE & LEGACY program. About her recent honor, Laurie said, "It's been my honor to work with these great people on such an important committee. It's now time for me to move on to something else."

Laurie is entrusting the future of this important committee to Janine Cohen and a co-chair to be named, who have large shoes to fill but are ready to step up and continue the work of safeguarding our Jewish community's future.

Thank you, Laurie, for your commitment to Temple Sinai and LIFE & LEGACY. For more information, please visit [templesinai-sarasota.org/lifeandlegacy](http://templesinai-sarasota.org/lifeandlegacy) or email [lifeandlegacy@templesinai-sarasota.org](mailto:lifeandlegacy@templesinai-sarasota.org).



Temple Sinai's LIFE & LEGACY Erev Shabbat service honored program donors

# Recognition for outstanding volunteers and new trustees at Temple Emanu-El

Temple Emanu-El recognized outstanding volunteers and elected two new trustees at its Annual Meeting on Sunday, April 18.

Ken Marsh, Immediate Past President, Nominating Committee Chair and recent *oleh* to Israel, joined the meeting from Netanya to announce that Joanne Haiby and Dennis Reens had been named to the slate of new Temple Emanu-El trustees. Both were enthusiastically elected.

Outgoing trustee Michael Levitan was recognized for his leadership and dedication as well as his continuing commitment to the Temple community. "I know you'll be actively involved in bringing Temple Emanu-El members together," President Barry Gerber stated.

Honored with custom-made certificates of appreciation were Dr. Janet Hiller and Ellen Zipin, outgoing Adult Education Chairs, for "high-quality en-

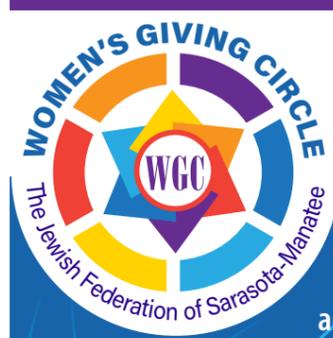
gaging programs for...the Jewish community to enjoy;" former Social Action Committee Chair Barbara Peltz, for her work to "help those in need in our local community and beyond;" outgoing Philanthropy Chair Michael Richker, whom Gerber called "a priceless part of Temple Emanu-El's history (who has) tremendously helped to shape Temple Emanu-El's future;" incoming trustee Dennis Reens for ably leading the Financial Review Committee; and longtime bulletin editor Alan Zuckerman, whom Elliott praised as "so

dedicated and loyal" as he continues his role with co-editor Dr. Eleanor Wachs.

Leaders and volunteers with Temple Emanu-El's Board of Trustees, Brotherhood, Caring Committee, Endowment and LIFE & LEGACY®, Friends of the Religious Action Center, Governance Committee, Israel Committee, Mishpucha Committee, Religious School and Starfish Initiative were also recognized for their essential contributions to Temple Emanu-El and the Jewish community.



The Starfish Initiative – which serves needy kindergarteners at Wilkinson Elementary School with programs including livestreamed storytelling performances – was among the programs recognized by Temple Emanu-El President Barry Gerber at the congregation's Annual Meeting



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In the last seven years, we have distributed more than **\$307,000** in grants to nonprofits in Israel that help women and children of all backgrounds live safer, healthier and more meaningful lives.

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QUESTIONS? Contact Jeremy Lisitza at 941.343.2113 or [jlisitza@jfedrsq.org](mailto:jlisitza@jfedrsq.org)

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The Jewish Federation OF SARASOTA-MANATEE

\*Anti-Defamation League survey of American Jews & perceptions of antisemitism

## Temple Beth El welcomes Deena Kanoff as its Office Administrator and Marketing Coordinator

By Sandy Clark

Temple Beth El Bradenton/Lakewood Ranch is thrilled to announce that Deena Kanoff has joined the staff as the new Office Administrator and Marketing Coordinator. Deena will help the temple stay connected with business development, programming, marketing and office administration, both virtually and socially.

Deena's background in marketing, business development and corporate strategy spans over two decades with a

degree in Business Administration from the University of Southern California.

Deena recently moved here from California with her twin daughters who are both attending the University of South Florida in Sarasota. As a family they enjoy all water sports, surfing and kayaking. They have a dog named Oliver who is the



Deena Kanoff

leader in most playtime activities!

Deena is excited to take on her new role as part-time Administrator. In this newly created position, she will be instrumental in fundraising projects, and planning and participating in Temple Beth El's Jewish cultural programs.

Deena announced, "I'm so excited

to be part of such a great Jewish community. My daughters, who just turned 20, enjoy the beautiful singing and programs by Cantor Bard and Rabbi Sternfield. The experience for us has been that of a warm and inviting family congregation."

For more information about Temple Beth El services, membership and programs, please contact Deena at [dkofficetbe@gmail.com](mailto:dkofficetbe@gmail.com) or call the temple office at 941.755.4900.

## Temple Beth El delivers 10,000 sandwiches to the Salvation Army

By Sandy Clark

Ken Handelman, mitzvah organizer of the peanut butter sandwich project announced that Temple Beth El Bradenton/Lakewood Ranch will have delivered 10,000 sandwiches to the Salvation Army by June.

Temple Beth El Men's Club, working with the Salvation Army, has been engaged in this ongoing Mitzvah Proj-

ect. Members deliver peanut butter sandwiches every other Thursday to the Salvation Army's 14<sup>th</sup> Street location.

Kelly French, the contact at the Salvation Army, explains what they do with the sandwiches. "Each evening, we serve dinner to about 200 individuals in the community, as well as clients who are in our shelter programs. While

we always provide a hot meal, on the nights that we have your sandwiches, we are able to pass those out so people have either a late-night snack or lunch the next day. When there are some left, we've been handing those out to clients before they head out to work in the morning so they have something for lunch."

By taking the sandwiches to the

Salvation Army, the temple is able to get the food to where it is needed.

If you are interested in participating in this program, send a text message to Ken Handelman at 941.840.4132. For more information about Temple Beth El Bradenton/Lakewood Ranch, please call 941.755.4900.

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“Board Games” By Yoni Glatt, [koshercrosswords@gmail.com](mailto:koshercrosswords@gmail.com)

**Across**

1. Game where you might say “L’chaim!”?
5. Many homes at the start of Shabbos as opposed to the finish
9. “ \_\_\_ 18” (Uris novel)
13. Some jackets and collars
15. China preceder
16. Camera aperture
17. Discriminator against the elderly (Var.)
18. Game for Shifrah and Puah?
20. Legendary director Sydney, and others
22. Person from Muscat
23. Queens stadium that was nearly empty last September
24. Loughlin who didn’t have the best 2020
26. Game for Egypt and Syria’s attempts to destroy Israel?
32. They’re run
33. Carpentry tool
34. Where Senators skate?
36. “Titen \_\_\_ l’Yaakov, chesed l’Avraham...”
37. Game for not following Jewish tradition?
39. \_\_\_ lot (like what many do at a Seder)
40. Yearly shot, for many
41. Isn’t so hot...but also might be hot?
42. Copycat’s activity
43. Game for Rosh Hashana?
47. Avigdor Kahalani, e.g. (look him up!)
48. Organ tube
49. Seussian character that was not canceled, with “the”
52. Abased
56. Game for Israeli campaigns?
59. 10, in Hebrew dates
60. Have the aspect of
61. Gentle as \_\_\_
62. “Rosemary’s Baby” author Ira
63. Never \_\_\_ sentence with...
64. Pure 26-Down in liquidy form
65. Game for an Israeli vacationing in Iran?

**Down**

1. Like every fourth year
2. 2/3 of a hit “Frozen” song
3. Aluminum product in the kitchen
4. Makes like Pharaoh to the Israelites after Joseph dies
5. Buffalo coin of the past
6. One of Adam’s grandsons
7. Use this: +
8. Oft-stubbed appendage
9. Sch. in Ohio not Florida
10. “The Joy of Cooking” author Rombauer
11. House hold?
12. Talmudic Rav
14. Condition of equilibrium
19. Like Thor or Loki
21. Hornets, on the scoreboard
24. Celebrity chef Lefebvre
25. Little pasta
26. Impure, in Yiddish
27. City in central Israel
28. Freeze over
29. “Blue Ribbon” beer maker
30. Recon gathering
31. Yonder
35. PepsiCo snack brand
37. Stadium ticket price factor
38. Plus
39. One who gives in easily
41. She might play music for you if asked
42. Petition to a higher court
44. Big \_\_\_ (drug industry)
45. Went on before the main attraction
46. Point
49. Miss a game winning shot, e.g.
50. Kind of sports competition with rackets or clubs?
51. First name of the Fantastic Four
52. Way in or out
53. Yechezkel or Amos, e.g.
54. Apple-thrower of myth
55. Cellarlike
57. Tefilah for dew
58. Mom of Mary’s best friend, on classic TV

See the Crossword Puzzle solution on page 34A

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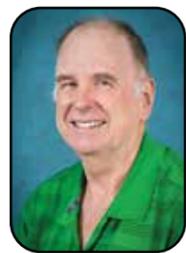
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# War of the Century: Operation Barbarossa

By Paul R. Bartrop, PhD

Eighty years ago this month, on June 22, 1941, the largest military invasion in history took place when Nazi Germany and its allies invaded the Soviet Union. Code-named Operation Barbarossa, the assault took place along a 2,900-kilometre front from the Baltic to the Black Sea. German forces alone numbered 3,200,000 men in 151 divisions, with 3,350 tanks, 7,184 guns and 1,945 aircraft. Accompanying them were 40,000 Italian troops (ultimately to grow to 235,000) together with 18 Finnish, 14 Romanian and two Hungarian divisions. It began, as historian Laurence Rees has termed it, the War of the Century. Others have labeled it the War for the World.



Dr. Paul Bartrop

Immediately before the start of World War II, on August 23, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union had signed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (also called the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact) in Moscow, according to which both dictatorships defined their future spheres of influence in Eastern Europe and pledged to a period of peace between the two countries. In June 1941, however, Hitler dramatically overturned the Pact which he and Stalin had initiated a year and 10 months before.

After several weeks of Operation Barbarossa, most of its major military objectives had been achieved. Where they had not, new campaigns had to be devised, while simultaneously confronting Soviet counteroffensives. The lengthened war between Germany and the Soviet Union would only end with the capitulation and destruction of the city of Berlin in April-May 1945.

Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union was accompanied by a proclamation in which he reinforced his often-stated role as the Savior of Europe against Bolshevism. Earlier, on June 6, 1941, he issued his *Kommissarbefehl* ("Commissar Order"). The order's formal name was Guidelines for the Treatment of Political Commissars.

The *Kommissarbefehl* was a clear manifestation of the deeply ideological nature of how the forthcoming struggle with the Soviet Union was to be fought. Its core demand was that German soldiers shoot any Soviet political commissars taken prisoner in the forthcoming conflict during and after Barbarossa, as they carried "Judeo-Bolshevik" ideas that were antithetical to everything for which Nazism stood. By extension, those targeted included all Jews.

Accordingly, special mobile killing squads, known as *Einsatzgruppen*, were established to accompany the combat troops of the German Army close behind in the weeks following the invasion of June 22, 1941. The Order was signed by General Walter Warlimont and approved by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, Chief of the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, the military

High Command – a clear indication that this was approved at the highest levels. As an order that called for the mass murder of non-combatants by German combat troops, it was clear to the German commanders that the order contravened international law. But having been underwritten by Hitler, whose word in the Nazi state was above written law and overrode existing foreign obligations, the Commissar Order was accepted without question. For Hitler, the war against the Soviet Union was not to be a conventional conflict following the usual customs and laws of warfare. Instead, it was to be a "War of Annihilation," a clash between the German and Slavic races and between Nazi and Communist ideology from which there would be only one victor. The nature of the war in the East was to reflect the Nazi policy of *Lebensraum* ("Living Space"), in which the region would become an area colonized by so-called "superior"

Dear Readers,

After six months of retirement from Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), I am pleased to report that I have been honored by the university by election to the position of Professor Emeritus of History. While I am no longer teaching, this means that I am still involved in the life of the university and maintain my connection with Southwest Florida. I am grateful for all the messages of support I received from readers at the end of last year upon my retirement from FGCU. I have now returned permanently to my native Australia, where borders are closed in both directions owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. As soon as circumstances permit, however, I am looking forward to returning to my adopted home in Southwest Florida for a visit!

– Paul Bartrop

Aryan Germans and where members of the local population were expendable, Jews especially so.

The Commissar Order was one of two Führer commands at this time. The other was entitled "Guidelines for the Behavior of the Troops." This mandated that all legal protections for local civilian populations were to be rescinded, and soldiers were informed that actions which would have been considered crimes in the rest of Europe were to be pursued in the Soviet Union without punishment. Such guidance, issued directly to the troops, both condoned and led to the abuse of civilian populations.

Together, the two orders informed soldiers of the racial component of the war, and that Bolshevism and its "carriers" (that is, Jews) were the "mortal enemy of the German people." The orders authorized reprisal killings of civilians and further encouraged soldiers to treat all civilian populations

*continued on next page*

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The Jewish Federation  
OF SARASOTA-MANATEE

# K'zohar Ha-Ivrit Adam – A human

By Dr. Rachel Zohar Dulin

Father's Day is celebrated in June. According to the biblical story, *Adam*, the first human created by God and named by Him, is the father of all humankind. So, in honor of the day, let us briefly explore the Hebrew word *Adam*.



Dr. Rachel Dulin

*Adam* is mentioned in the Bible 561 times. The word generally refers to human beings, men and women alike. Accordingly, God created them both in His image and blessed them equally, as it is written: "God created *Adam* in His image ... male and female. He created them. (Gen1:27)

Also, we read, "When they were created, He blessed them and called them *Adam*." (Gen 5:2)

From this, we may surmise that in many references, *Adam* in the Bible does not point exclusively to the male gender, rather *Adam* is an all-inclusive name, directed to all human beings, male and female alike. However, there are times in which *Adam* is a gender-centered word, referring specifically to a man. For example, "It is not good for *Adam* to be alone. I will make a fitting helper for him." (Gen. 2:20, et al)

The more common word in the Text addressing a man is the noun *ish*, (plural *a-na-shim*). Depending on context, the word *ish* means not only man, but also husband and hero, and is mentioned 2,179 times in the Text. The feminine form of *ish* is *i-shah*, namely woman (plural *na-shim*), and it appears 782 times in the Text.

Interestingly, in Hebrew, the noun *Adam* has no plural or feminine form. It is derived from the noun *adamah*, meaning earth or ground, out of which, according to the Text, *Adam*

was formed. (Gen.3:19) It is also interesting to note that the noun *adamah* is a feminine noun, which has no masculine form and it is derived from the adjective *adom*, meaning red, which originally pointed to the red arable ground, its redness and beauty. By the way, Hebrew is not the only language which juxtaposes human beings with the Earth. In Latin we find the word *homo*, which means a human being, and *humus*, or ground or the Earth.

The word *Adam* is at the center of many phrases in Hebrew. For example, a person with fine manners is called *ben adam*, literally a son of a human being. On the other hand, *pereh adam*, a wild human, is a way to point to a rude, uncivilized person. The idiom *ha-adam ha-na-khon ba-makom ha-na-khon* means the right person at the right place. And *Leshon b'nay adam*, literally the tongue of human beings, is the proper language to use in communication between *b'nay adam*.

We should also mention that the way to behave is dictated by rules *beyn adam la-cha-ve-ro*, literally between one human being and his fellow human, not to be confused with rules *beyn adam la-ma-kom*, between man and his maker.

We will end our list with the phrase *me-adam ve-ad be-he-mah*, literally from a human being to a beast, which refers to all of God's creation, humans and the beasts of all kinds.

Father's Day, like Mother's Day, are lovely days to remind us that we are *b'nay adam*, and have to behave accordingly, respecting and cherishing the family, as the rules *beyn adam la-cha-ve-ro* were revealed to us. Enjoy the day. 🌟

*Dr. Rachel Zohar Dulin is a professor of biblical literature at Spertus College in Chicago, and a retired adjunct professor of Hebrew and Bible at New College in Sarasota.*

## War of the Century...continued from previous page

with ruthless brutality. Criminality and excess were accepted, indeed, encouraged.

Enforcement of the Commissar Order led immediately to tens of thousands of executions, not only of political commissars, but also of Jews and of huge numbers of Soviet prisoners of war. This would grow to hundreds of thousands over succeeding months. Jews were seen as racial enemies just as much as bearers of Bolshevik ideology. Moreover, every German general involved in Operation Barbarossa throughout the summer and autumn of 1941 enforced the Order.

Accordingly, special mobile killing squads, the *Einsatzgruppen*, were established to accompany the combat troops of the German Army close behind in the weeks following the invasion.

On May 6, 1942, however, less than a year after the start of Operation Barbarossa, the *Kommissarbefehl* was finally overturned after continued appeals to Hitler from German field commanders. This did not stop the killing, of course. The most intensive murder phase of the Holocaust was already underway, now as a designated SS operation. What began with the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, developed an irrepressible momentum that would only see an end with the defeat of Nazi Germany and the liberation of the camps from the Fall of 1944 onwards. 🌟

*Paul R. Bartrop is Professor Emeritus of History and the former Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Research at Florida Gulf Coast University.*

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# “David’s Quilt” – the story of King David in music

By Arlene Stolnitz

I am always amazed and thrilled when I hear of contemporary composers using biblical themes for their work. Such is the story of the Helfman Composers Group, associated with the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. Together, and under the



Arlene Stolnitz

auspices of the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience, they have created an oratorio based on the life of King David, musician, warrior, lover and ruler.

Fifteen Jewish composers with diverse backgrounds have produced 18 pieces of music for orchestra, choir, soloists and dancers. The result is a tapestry much like a beautiful fabric being pieced together. The idea of the tapestry or quilt is “to get you into David’s head; what he was feeling...”

So how did this idea get started? The idea was envisioned about 10 years ago by Cantor Phil Baron of Valley Beth Shalom, a large conservative synagogue in Encino, California. Cantor Baron had been a songwriter for Disney Studios and had also created successful award-winning music series for Jewish children. Eventually, though, his strong Jewish background as a trained cantor pulled him in a different direction.

His idea was to invite a group of gifted and experienced Jewish songwriters who were actively engaged in composing, but not writing Jewish music. He invited a group of composers to attend a two-day retreat with an outstanding faculty at the Brandeis-Bardin Campus of American Jewish University in Simi Valley, California. (I have been there and can vouch for the place as being inspirational.) That was in 2010, and what has followed has been an amazing and creative contribution of music to the liturgy of today’s synagogue music.

The Institute was named the Max Helfman Institute for New Jewish Music for renowned composer and conductor Max Helfman (1901-1963). The institute’s formation was aided by a substantial grant from the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles and the endorsement of the Milken Center.

Helfman thought “the arts are a great way for people to bind their Jewish soul.” He stated, “Some think there is a wall between Jew and Gentile, but the real wall is between the Jew and himself... the young Jew who has turned away from his heritage and in so doing has turned his back on a rich creative past... they will argue with you... but you cannot argue with a song or with a dance.”

Reading the bios of the Helfman Institute Fellows (as they are called) is an experience in itself. Each of the composers, who are classically trained

musicians, have had extensive experience in film and TV, and many are Emmy award-winning composers. Most have had backgrounds in Judaic music. There have been some non-Jewish “visitors.” In particular, there was a Korean Julliard student and there has been a Jewish composer from Mexico. More recently, graduate students from the music school have participated, adding diversity to the group.

The composers were told to write in each of their own styles resulting in a mix that is greatly varied. According to Cantor Baron, who directs the program, the flaws of biblical David’s character make him perfect for this ambitious musical undertaking.

A few titles of the works are “Valley of Shadows” by Cantor Phil Baron, “When I Open My Mouth” by Rebekah Mirsky, “Halleluja” by Dr. David Lefkowitz, and “Beauty and the Dance of Wonder” and “David Dancing the Ark

to Jerusalem” by Dr. Michelle Green Willner.

The program took two years to produce and debuted in a live performance on November 5, 2017, at the Stephen Wise Temple in Los Angeles.

The group has now written over 40 pieces and is currently developing a major new work in partnership with the recently endowed UCLA Mickey Katz Chair in Jewish Music. More information about the group can be found on YouTube under “David’s Quilt.”

*Arlene Stolnitz, founder of the Sarasota Jewish Chorale, is a member of the Jewish Congregation of Venice. A retired educator from Rochester, New York, she has sung in choral groups for over 25 years and also sings in The Venice Chorale. Her interest in the preservation of Jewish music of all kinds has led to this series of articles on Jewish Folk Music in the Diaspora.*

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# Aging Jewishly – What our traditions teach us about growing old

## Clairvoyant? An elderly aunt discloses a dubious gift

By Rabbi Barbara Aiello

She was just a little girl when it happened. It was early morning in her family's tumbledown house in a steel town in western Pennsylvania. The little girl, still tucked in her bed with her two sisters asleep by her side, called to her mother. "Mama, come quick. The washing machine is overflowing."



Rabbi Barbara Aiello

Located in the basement of the house, the washing machine was indeed on the fritz. Warm water and soap bubbles were pouring out

of the washer's bin and slopping all over the floor. Within minutes, the little girl's mother had marshalled all the children and several boarders to come to the rescue and clean up the mess.

When the crisis had passed, the mother of the young girl who first sounded the alarm became alarmed herself. "How did you know what was happening in the basement?" she asked as she grilled her daughter. "Were you in the basement this morning? Did you try to use the washing machine? And when you broke it, you told no one and just went back to bed?"

Clearly the mother was angry and the little girl began to cry. "I never went to the basement," said the little one. "I woke up and in my head I saw the washer overflowing. That's when I called you!"

At this point an older sister appeared on the scene. "She does this all the time," shrieked the sister. "She sees things that nobody else sees." The older sister then brandished a broom and began bashing the little one. "Mama, Mama, our sister is a witch."

Seventy years later, over a cup of coffee in a local diner, my aunt (z"l) recounted the washing machine incident, noting that this was the first time she had ever shared the story with anyone.

Auntie said, "Until that day I believed that everyone could see into the future. I had no idea, until my mother confronted me and my sister beat me,

that I was completely different from others. Over the years I had more and more visions, but it wasn't until I was much older that I acknowledged these as something positive and decided to use them for good."

Auntie went on to explain that she was first compelled to divulge her psychic gift when she read about two bank robbers who had foiled a police roadblock. "The more I read the newspaper account, the more certain I was that I had to contact the authorities. I clearly had a vision of a house with the two thieves inside. The house number was clearly visible. And try as I might I could not get that image out of my head."

As is often the case with those who have psychic tendencies, taking a vision to the police might arouse suspicion and result in the authorities implicating them in the crime. Auntie felt the same way. "I thought about making an anonymous tip but that didn't seem right. So I called the police and told them about the vision. I also gave them my name."

The detective who visited Auntie was naturally skeptical, that is, until he sent a squad car to the house in question and found the homeowner locked in a closet and the two bank robbers drinking beer at the kitchen table. The cops were ecstatic and lauded as heroes. Auntie was grateful, not only for the arrest but for the fact that no one mentioned her psychic intervention.

"But did you ever help solve other crimes?" I asked. Auntie wouldn't say. Instead, she fell back on Jewish traditions saying that she came to believe that her visions were gifts from God and she had the responsibility to use her gifts to help others.

In a 2015 article by Marcus J. Freed, "So You Are Psychic. Now What," the author explains a biblical prohibition that seems to describe my Auntie's position regarding her psychic powers. Freed writes about the "curious Biblical warning" that suggests exercising caution when encountering a psychic.

Freed says that should a person

meet "a high-level psychic who predicts something that comes true, but they tell you to veer from the path of Oneness and Unity, you should ignore them." This admonition is found in the Torah itself where we read, "If there will arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of a dream, and he gives you a sign or a marvel ... and says, 'Let us go after other deities' ... you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer of a dream." (Deut. 13:2-4)

Which begs the question: Do Auntie's psychic powers complement or distort Jewish tradition? Our sages speak of those few men and women who have "ruach hakodesh," a higher level of intuition sometimes described as "divine wisdom." This implies a concomitant level of responsibility. Ancient Jewish sages cautioned against using one's psychic gifts for selfish purposes, profit, party tricks or show.

During our discussion at the diner, Auntie admitted that her track record was such that police investigators often

asked for her psychic input in solving a particularly baffling crime. "I would always help," Auntie said, "but I wanted no notice, no publicity and definitely no pay."

"Did you ever help solve any famous cases?" I asked. I was dying to know some specifics, but Auntie wouldn't budge. Instead, she changed the subject, pointing out that the Hebrew word, "mazal" has a meaning that few understand. "Mazal means constellation, Auntie said. "When we wish someone Mazal Tov, we are really saying that the stars are in a good position, and the stars are lined up in their favor." For those who had the benefit of Auntie's psychic gifts, Mazal Tov indeed.

Rabbi Barbara Aiello served Aviva Senior Living in Sarasota as resident rabbi for 10 years. She now lives and works in Italy where she is rabbi of Italy's first Reconstructionist synagogue. You may reach her at Rabbi@RabbiBarbara.com.

**Rabbi Barbara Aiello's most popular columns are now published in her new book, *Aging Jewishly*, available on Amazon. It makes a great gift!**

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## Stars of David

By Nate Bloom, Contributing Columnist

**Editor's note:** Persons in **BOLD CAPS** are deemed by Nate Bloom to be Jewish for the purpose of the column. Persons identified as Jewish have at least one Jewish parent and were not raised in a faith other than Judaism – and don't identify with a faith other than Judaism as an adult. Converts to Judaism, of course, are also identified as Jewish.

### Thrillers, Comedies, Animated Fun, Plays on Film

We are still in pandemic times and, because of that, premiere dates are often announced quite close to the actual premiere date. That's why many May premieres are being reported in this column. You can easily catch up on streaming services.

*Hacks* is a 10-episode dramedy series that premiered on HBO on May 13 (two episodes on 13<sup>th</sup> followed by two episodes each Thursday for four weeks). Jean Smart (*Designing Women*) plays Deborah Vance, a legendary Las Vegas comedian whose career is tanking. Nobody is hiring her to do stand-up comedy anymore. She's reduced to promotional appearances, like store openings.

Vance hires Ava, a 25-year-old struggling comedy writer to freshen up her act. Vance has an imperious personality and a fierce tongue. So, Ava is in for "quite a ride."

Ava is played by newcomer **HANNAH EINBINDER**, 26. She has quite a backstory: her mother is original *Saturday Night Live* cast member **LARAINNE NEWMAN**, 69. Her father is **CHAD EINBINDER**, 57, a little-known actor. Hannah is a real-life stand-up comedian. In March 2020, she did a set on Stephen Colbert's show just before production was shut

down (view it on YouTube). She has a unique, artsy stand-up style that is funny, if not hilarious. In another YouTube stand-up video, she referred to herself as Jewish in passing.

Newman grew up in a secular Jewish household in Beverly Hills. She told *The Jewish Journal* (2003) that it wasn't until she enrolled her oldest daughter in Temple Isaiah's preschool (Los Angeles) that she joined a temple (Isaiah), learned Hebrew and brought ritual home.

Newman has two daughters. The older one she referred to is **SPIKE NEWMAN**, 30 (born Lena Einbinder). Spike, too, is an actress. Her current gig is her best: she's a regular cast member (named Water's Shadow) in the comedy series *Los Espookys* on HBO. The first season streamed in 2019. It was renewed, but a second season hasn't yet appeared.

*Blackspace* is an eight-episode, made-in-Israel psychological-thriller. It began streaming on Netflix on May 27. It follows the police investigation into a massacre of four students at an Israeli high school carried out by anonymous, unicorn-masked figures. The cast and filmmaker are all Israeli. A second season has already been ordered.

*The Kominsky Method*, a hit Netflix series, streamed its third and final season on May 28. It was long known

## Interested in Your Family's History?

Nate Bloom (see column at left) has become a family history expert in 10 years of doing his celebrity column, and he has expert friends who can help when called on. Most family history experts charge \$1,000 or more to do a full family-tree search. However, Bloom knows that most people want to start with a limited search of one family line.

### So here's the deal:

**Write Bloom at nteibloom@aol.com and enclose a phone number. Nate will then contact you about starting a limited search. If that goes well, additional and more extensive searches are possible. The first search fee is no more than \$100. No upfront cost. Also, several of this newspaper's readers have asked Bloom to locate friends and family members from their past, and that's worked out great for them. So contact him about this as well.**

that co-star **ALAN ARKIN**, 87, didn't want to do a third season. In the advance trailer, it is clear that Arkin's character, Norman, a (Jewish) talent agent, has died and his best friend, (Jewish) acting coach Sandy Kominisky (**MICHAEL DOUGLAS**, 76), has to find a way to function without his "wingman." The trailer also reveals that Kathleen Turner, who plays Sandy's ex-wife, returns to help with their daughter's wedding to a much older man (**PAUL REISER**, 65), and Sandy is offered a life-changing acting part by big-time director **BARRY LEVINSON**, 79 (playing himself).

*Housebroken* is an animated series about a very varied group of neighborhood pets who meet to discuss their problems. **LISA KUDROW**, 57, voices Honey, a star character. Honey is a standard poodle who was forced into a "marriage," by humans, to Chief, a sloppy St. Bernard, voiced by **NAT FAXON**, 45. (His mother is Jewish.) Fun note: There's an animal character named Tchotchke. (Began May 31 on Fox; new episodes on Mondays at 9:00 p.m.)

The original HBO film *Oslo* premiered on May 29. It's based on the play *Oslo*, which won the Tony for best

drama in 2017. It depicts the backstory of the secret negotiations in Norway's capital which led to the Oslo Peace (1993) accords. The play, by J.T. Rogers, was praised by Israelis and Palestinians, alike, for depicting them in realistic terms without taking sides. (Rogers is a self-described "WASP from California.") The film has Israeli actors playing Israelis, and Arab actors playing Arabs. By the way, there actually is some humor in the script.

*Lisey's Story* is an eight-episode Apple TV+ thriller series that is based on a novel by Stephen King. Two years after the death of her husband, Lisey (Julianne Moore) is forced to face memories of her marriage that she had blocked out. The main cast includes **JENNIFER JASON LEIGH**, 59. (Begins Friday, June 4)

On Tuesday, June 15, HBO will begin streaming *Revolution Rent*. It's about the recent production, in Cuba, of the mega-hit musical *Rent*. It has been 25 years since *Rent* premiered on Broadway (April 1996). Writer/composer **JONATHAN LARSON**, age 35, died suddenly on January 25, 1996. He posthumously won just about every theater award, including the Pulitzer Prize. 🌍

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# 73 fun facts about Israel

To celebrate Israel's 73<sup>rd</sup> birthday, ISRAEL21c brought together a list of 73 weird, wacky and remarkable things about this tiny country in the Middle East that you most likely don't know.

By Nicky Blackburn, ISRAEL21c.org, April 8, 2021

1. Israel has the highest number of altruistic kidney donations per capita in the world: 1,005 in the past 11 years and counting.
2. The oldest tree in Israel is a jujube tree in Ein Hatzeva on the road to Eilat, which is thought to be between 1,500 to 2,000 years old.
3. Scientists in Israel managed to grow fresh dates from sixth century seeds found at Masada and Qumran.
4. The Israel postal service has a special Letters to God department, for all the letters arriving in Jerusalem from around the world addressed to God. They are opened and placed into the cracks of the Western Wall.
5. About one million notes are left in the Western Wall every year.
6. Israel is the only country to have revived a dead language and made it the national language.
7. The hottest temperature ever recorded in Israel was 54 degrees Celsius (129.2 Fahrenheit) in 1942 at Kibbutz Tirat Zvi in the northern Jordan Valley. (The highest temperature ever recorded worldwide is 56.7°C in Death Valley in 1913.)
8. While Jerusalem has snowstorms every few years, and even the Negev desert gets occasional snow, Tel Aviv has only had one snowstorm in its history. In 1950, it

9. At the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, an old wooden ladder has been propped up against a window since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. No one can move it because the building is



The immovable ladder at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

10. More than half the landmass of Israel is desert, but it still has an Olympic bobsled and skeleton team.
11. Israel dramatically leads the world in the share of the total population

12. Israel is a global leader in medical clowning, and was the first country in the world to send medical clowns into Covid-19 wards.
13. In 2007, Israeli businesswoman Shari Arison initiated Good Deeds Day to encourage people to help each other. That year, 7,000 people took part in Israel. In 2019,

3.9 million people took part in 108 countries around the world.

14. Israel is bordered by snowy peaks at one end and a desert beach on the other.
15. Israel has 137 beaches – all of them beautiful.
16. Israel is piloting a new locally developed AI system to help lifeguards protect swimmers on the beaches and give real-time data on wind, waves and other possible hazards.

*continued on next page*



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### 73 fun facts about Israel...continued from previous page

17. Israel recycles 90% of the wastewater it creates, making it the leading nation in the world for water recycling. In the United States, only 1% of wastewater is recycled.
18. In July 2012, a group of artists in Netanya created the world's largest mosaic made of socks, using 12,000 in total. (All of them clean, thankfully.)
19. Cows in Israel produce more milk on average than do dairy cows in other countries.
20. An Israeli company has developed a revolutionary spray-on skin made of nanofiber to help heal wounds.
21. Israelis love kids. With an average of three children per woman, Israel has the highest fertility rate among the 37 countries in the OECD, where the average is 1.7.
22. Israel performs more in-vitro fertilization per capita than any other country, and it's free for the first two babies.
23. Babies in Israel are 10 times less likely to be allergic to peanuts than in other countries. Studies suggest it's because they eat Bamba peanut snacks from an early age.
24. According to Hebrew-language Wikipedia, there are seven different ways to eat a Krembo, one of Israel's favorite snacks.
25. Members of a voluntary organization called Trail Angels open their homes to hikers on the 1,025-km (637-mile) Israel Trail, offering free beds, showers and other amenities.
26. Israel is roughly half the size of Lake Michigan.
27. The glue on Israel's postage stamps is kosher.
28. Israel has over 50 alternative meat startups – a disproportionately high number compared to elsewhere around the world – making it a fake meat powerhouse. Perhaps it's no surprise, given that the country has more vegans per capita than any other country.
29. Researchers in Israel have grown mouse embryos in bottles in a revolutionary way to observe the first stages of mammalian embryonic development.
30. In 2020, Israel was the eighth most expensive country in the world to live in. Switzerland came in at number one.
31. Israelis eat some 24 million *sufganiyot* (donuts) during the eight-day holiday of Hanukkah.
32. In 2020, Tel Aviv was named the fifth most expensive city in the world to live in, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit. Zurich, Paris, Hong Kong and Singapore came in before it.
33. An Israeli company has developed a paint that uses sunlight to activate a cooling mechanism on cars, buildings, planes and even clothing, providing air conditioning without electricity. The hotter it is, the more the coating cools.
34. Israel takes in more immigrants than any other country in the world per capita. Since it was founded in 1948, 3.3 million people have immigrated to Israel.
35. In 2020, the most popular baby names in Israel were Mohammad for boys and Miriam for girls.
36. Syrian hamsters were first domesticated as pets by a zoologist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1930.
37. Israel has more museums (230 and counting) per capita than any other country in the world. A new museum dedicated to women is opening soon.
38. Israel has its very own Stonehenge, an ancient stone circle called Galgal Refa'im with massive rock walls that jut eight feet into the sky. The stone structure is around 5,000 years old and is made up of some 42,000 tons of basalt stone. It was only discovered in the 1960s.
39. The Mount of Olives is the oldest continuously used cemetery in the world. It's been in use for over 3,000 years.
40. Israel is home to the largest known dog cemetery of the ancient world. More than 1,300 dog skeletons, most of them puppies, were found at the Ashkelon site.
41. Israeli students won an international award for producing real honey without bees, using a bacterium programmed to "learn" how to make honey.
42. An Israeli company has developed an atmospheric water generator that can create clean drinking water from the air. It has been deployed in disaster situations all over the world.
43. Israel has the largest underground hospital in the world: the 2,000-bed Sammy Ofer Fortified Underground Emergency Hospital at Rambam Health Care Campus in Haifa.
44. In Israel, it is legal to write the Jewish calendar date on all official documents, including checks, instead of (or in addition to) the Gregorian date.
45. A Tel Aviv company has invented a folding car that can retract its wheels for narrow streets and snug



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Prototype of the City Transformer folding electric car (photo courtesy of City Transformer)

spots, but still can reach speeds of 55 miles an hour.

46. The main compounds of the cannabis plant were first isolated, analyzed, synthesized and named in Israel.

47. An Israeli company provides off-grid, solar-powered automatic handwashing stations to developing countries, using water pulled from the atmosphere mixed with a precise dose of soap, to fight the spread of life-threatening infections.

*continued on next page*

## 73 fun facts about Israel...continued from previous page

48. A revolutionary "human on a chip" developed at Hebrew University aims to replace animal testing for new pharmaceuticals.
49. When Israel was founded in 1948, there were only 806,000 residents. The population reached two million in 1958, and is expected to reach 10 million in the next three years.
50. In 2020, 28% of Israel's population was under the age of 14, and only 12% older than 65.
51. In Israel, people regularly stumble on amazing ancient finds while out hiking.



Imri Elya with an ancient tablet and certificate of recognition from the Israel Antiquities Authority (photo courtesy of IAA)

52. Archeologists recently discovered the world's oldest woven basket, in the Judean Desert.
53. The oldest-ever cave tool, dating back 350,000 years, was found in Israel.
54. The field of video therapy was invented at Jerusalem's Ma'aleh School of Television, Film and the Arts.
55. In a tech first, Israeli scientists made a robot hear using a dead locust's ear.
56. In Israel, people are taught from an early age to turn off the tap while they brush their teeth to save precious water.
57. In Israel, a meal without a salad is not a meal. Even breakfast.
58. Tel Aviv has over 4,000 Bauhaus buildings, the largest concentration of Bauhaus buildings of any city in the world.
59. An Israeli company has developed the world's first autonomous beehive. It can house up to 40 bee colonies (around two million bees) and take care of their health and upkeep with a simple app.
60. Israel was the first country to ban underweight models from participating in fashion shows.
61. During Passover in Israel, supermarkets are not allowed to sell chametz (forbidden foods like bread and cakes), and if you bring the products to the checkout, they cannot be scanned. Large sections of the shops are covered in plastic sheets.
62. In Hebrew, Happy Christmas is *Chag Molad Sameach*, which means Happy Festival of the Birth.
63. In Israel, the most common way to mop the floor is by doing what's called a sponja: flooding the floor with copious amounts of water and using a long-handled squeegee to push the dirty water outside or down the nearest drain.
64. Israeli toilets have two handles: a smaller one that releases less water to flush down #1, and a larger one that elicits more water to get rid of #2.
65. Israel's Parliament, the Knesset, has 120 seats because it's modeled after the Second Temple-era Knesset HaGedolah (the Great Assembly), a leadership body of 120 sages, prophets and scribes.
66. In Israel, there's hardly such a thing as a gift registry for weddings and bar mitzvahs. Instead, people come to the parties bearing envelopes full of cash.
67. Matzot Aviv in Bnei Brak baked the world's largest matzah this year: 13.2 pounds (6 kilograms), nearly 20 feet (six meters) long, 3.5 feet (1.06 meters) wide and 0.16 inches (4 millimeters) thick.
68. The Israel Start-Up Nation cycling team's roster for the 2021 season includes 32 riders from Israel and 16 other countries, including four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome from Great Britain.
69. Tel Aviv University recently launched the world's only Center for Combating Pandemics, aiming to create best practices for infection containment, vaccine and treatment development, and social and economic resilience.
70. Israeli companies raised a record-breaking \$10 billion in investments during 2020, despite the uncertainty and instability caused by the worldwide pandemic.
71. 85% of Israeli households get hot water from rooftop solar heaters, compared to less than 1% in the United States.
72. An Israeli scientist's invention to instantly turn dog droppings into odorless, sterile fertilizer powder is starting to revolutionize how animal and human waste is disposed of.
73. Israel has more than 300 wineries, 70 of which harvest at least 50 tons of grapes per year. Approximately 60,000 tons of wine grapes are harvested in Israel annually.

*Special thanks to Abigail Klein Leichman, Naama Barak, Danya Belkin, Tess Levy and Mariano Mann, who all contributed their favorite random facts about Israel to this article.*

*Nicky Blackburn, Editor and Israel Director, has worked extensively as a journalist and editor both in Britain and Israel for a range of national and international publications including The Cambridge Evening News, London News, Travel Weekly, Israel High Tech Investor and The Times of London.*

## BRIEFS

## HOW ISRAEL HELPS DEFEND AMERICAN INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- ◆ Israel plays an indispensable role in helping defend American interests in the Middle East, serving as a stabilizing bulwark in a dangerous region that remains vitally important to the U.S.
- ◆ Israel's determination to prevent a nuclear Iran represents significant leverage for American diplomats in negotiations with Tehran. If wielded skillfully by American negotiators, this leverage can play an essential role in pressuring Iran to dramatically curb its nuclear ambitions.
- ◆ Should talks fail and Iran's march toward the bomb continue, Israel's ability to act decisively is a unique strategic asset – one that the Biden

administration should have every interest in preserving and ensuring is as effective as possible.

- ◆ Israel also has taken the lead against Iran on the ground. In Iran's shadow wars across the region, Israel alone has mastered gray-zone combat, conducting more than 1,000 strikes against Iranian-related targets in Syria, Iraq and the surrounding seas, almost single-handedly crippling Tehran's master plan to turn Syria into an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps fortress and forward operating base.
- ◆ For the U.S., it's hard to put a price on the value of having a local partner with the power and skill to operate so effectively. (Michael Makovsky and John Hannah, *National Interest*)

*continued on page 32A*

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# The remarkable trajectory of Greece-Israel ties

By David Harris, CEO of American Jewish Committee (AJC), April 19, 2021

Recent developments underscore the remarkable trajectory of ties between Greece and Israel.

First, there was the quadrilateral summit in Paphos, also involving Cyprus and United Arab Emirates. Historic would not be an overstatement in describing this gathering, as it reflects the strategic results of last year's Abraham Accords and connects the Eastern Mediterranean with the Arabian Gulf. Moreover, it would not be surprising to see other regional actors seeking to join this group in the future.

Second, the two countries just announced a large defense deal, indeed the biggest ever between Athens and Jerusalem. Needless to say, it didn't come out of nowhere, but rather was the result of ever growing strategic and military cooperation – and the trust it bespeaks.

What may seem obvious today about overlapping interests and values between Greece and Israel was anything but obvious 40 years ago, when I first became interested in the relationship.

At the time, I was shocked to learn that bilateral ties were quite frigid, to the point where Greece and Spain were the only two West European countries that had not established full de jure relations with Israel. And when Spain finally did so in 1986, Greece became the lone holdout.

It made no sense to me. Sure, I heard that Greece was closely tied to the Arab world and feared it would lose

its standing if it also connected with Israel, but the argument didn't hold water. Other West European nations were able to successfully juggle their ties with both sides of the political equation. Meanwhile, of course, Egypt and Israel had signed a peace deal in 1979.

Rather, I was a believer in what Winston Churchill had seen years earlier. The legendary British leader said, "No two cities have counted more with mankind than Athens and Jerusalem. Their messages in religion, philosophy and art have been the main guiding lights of modern faith and culture. Centuries of foreign rule and indescribable, endless oppression leave them still living, active communities and forces in the modern world, quarrelling among themselves with insatiable vivacity. Personally, I have always been on the side of both..."

How could it be that two democratic countries, sharing the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and with so many overlapping features, were estranged from one another, I asked. And I wasn't alone. A number of Hellenic-American leaders, led by the late Andrew Athens, and American Jewish Committee (AJC) representatives, led by the late Maynard Wishner, asked the very same question and, joined by several Members of Congress, resolved to do something about it. But it wouldn't prove to be quick and easy.

In 1986, I was asked to prepare a memo for Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou on a Jewish perspec-

ive of Greek foreign policy. I noted the absence of full diplomatic ties, the close friendship with Syria and the PLO, the weakness in dealing with terrorism, a largely hostile voting record at the UN, and the fact that no Greek foreign minister had ever traveled to Israel since 1948. The overall assessment, in other words, was pretty bleak.

But within five years, things began to change dramatically. A new prime minister, Konstantinos Mitsotakis, and his foreign minister, Antonis Samaras, established full links with Israel and changed the overall tone.

Encouraging as that was, a question lingered: Would the upswing in the relationship survive the inevitable political pendulum swings in Athens?

It wouldn't take long to find out. Andreas Papandreou returned to power in 1993. Given the fall of the Soviet Union, the break-up of Yugoslavia, and an increasingly assertive Turkey, his hard-line views mellowed, as we were to discover in our own meetings with him.

And by now, in 2021, after many twists and turns in Greece's governments, the verdict is in. Leaders of various, and often disparate, parties have come to embrace fully the ties with Israel, recognizing they form a pillar of Greek foreign policy and, at the same time, do not negatively affect links with the Arab world.

Today, it's clear that relations between Athens and Jerusalem are blossoming in every sector. Putting the

pandemic aside, tourism is booming. And visitors say they feel very much at home in each other's country. Political and strategic dialogues are now the norm. High-level summits take place regularly. Cooperation in new technologies and energy are expanding rapidly. The devastating legacy of World War II continues to impact both nations. The Jewish community in Greece and the Greek Jews who resettled in Israel form a bridge across the sea. The list goes on.

Some say this is really all about Turkey. Sure, Turkey looms large in the geopolitical thinking of both countries. But, let's be clear, the main driver is not Turkey. Rather, it is the belated recognition that Greece and Israel have vast potential, as two neighbors and two Western-oriented democracies, to develop their links in just about every sphere. In doing so, they serve the highest interests of both nations.

And, to return to Churchill's theme, I, too, am on the side of both and couldn't be happier with the burgeoning ties. This is indeed another reminder that history is not static. In the span of four decades, this relationship went from detached to full-blown, with, no doubt, more to come.

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# Tisha B'Av – stop carrying hate



## From the Bimah

Rabbi Samantha Kahn  
Temple Sinai

I recently read about a young man, whose bubbe, his grandmother, invited him to come visit her in her new apartment. She called him and gave him the following directions:

“David, come to the front door of the apartment complex. I am in apartment 14T. There is a big panel at the entrance door to the building. With your elbow, push button 14T. I will buzz you in. Walk inside, the elevator is on the right. Get in the elevator, and with your elbow, hit 14. When you get out, make a left. When you get to my door, with your elbow, hit my doorbell.”

“Bubbe, that sounds easy, but why am I hitting all these buttons with my elbow?”

She responded, “What, you’re coming empty-handed?”

I know it’s a silly story, but the truth is, David’s bubbe was right. We are never empty-handed as we enter new moments and new spaces. We are carrying things with us that weigh us down. We are holding on to our anger, our grudges and our missteps. Yet this

month, we are reminded of all the trouble such baggage truly brings.

On Tisha B’Av, Judaism’s day of tragedies, we commemorate our accumulated history of disaster. This includes the destruction of both the first and second Temples in Jerusalem, which are seen as two of the most devastating events in Jewish history. Rabbinic literature and tradition draw a direct line between the anger, the pain and the baggage we carry, and how it leads to *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred, and the destruction of these Temples. (Yoma 9)

We read a story in the Talmud about two men with similar names, Kamsa and Bar Kamsa. A wealthy person in the town was throwing a party and sent his servant to invite his friend Kamsa to the gala. Unfortunately, the servant invited the wrong man, Bar Kamsa, who was the host’s enemy. When the host saw his enemy in attendance, he threw him out. Bar Kamsa pleaded and bargained to try and stay, but the host refused. The rabbis who were in attendance saw this terrible interaction and sat idly by. Bar Kamsa was so hurt he looked for revenge. One thing led to another and the Temple was destroyed.

The anger, the stubbornness and the embarrassment that these men carried with them led to a tragic loss. From this story we are reminded that, sometimes, we need to put down the negative feelings we hold on to and simply move on. Tish B’Av reminds us that we must let go of the anger we carry – even if it feels valid. For the truth is, it doesn’t

actually matter how justified we feel in our hatred. Even if the other person really did do terrible things, it doesn’t justify hatred on our part.

There are no positive examples in the Kamsa/Bar Kamsa story. The host acted terribly, no matter if he was justified or not. And no matter how hurt, ashamed or angry Bar Kamsa was, he intentionally started a war that eventually destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem. Hatred gets us nowhere. It only

destroys what is most sacred to us.

As we commemorate all the pain and loss of our people this Tisha B’Av, let us internalize the message that carrying anger and hatred with us will only lead to destruction. Let us find within ourselves the courage and strength to let go of all that weighs us down, so that we may emerge with open arms, ready to embrace future possibilities. It is this that would truly make God, and all our bubbies, proud. 🌍

# Jewish inside and out



## From the Bimah

Rabbi Zev Steinmetz  
Chabad of West Bradenton

There is a fascinating story recorded in the Torah regarding a rebellious individual named Korach, who rose to challenge Moses’ leadership. Korach, along with 250 of his followers, gathered together to confront Moses in an attempt to make a mockery of his position and challenge his authority.

One of the questions Korach posed to Moses with a rivalrous intention was whether or not a home filled with many Jewish books requires a mezuzah at the front doorpost. Moses’ response to this question was that despite the fact that the house is full of holy books, there is still a requirement for a mezuzah.

Korach scoffed at this idea, reasoning that a house filled with books including the entire Torah is surely enough to do the trick. Why would a small compact mezuzah, which contains just the Shema and only two more paragraphs from the Torah be necessary as well? What more can a simple Mezuzah add?

When thinking about the question Korach posed, it seems he had a valid point. What indeed is the purpose of a miniature piece of parchment on the doorway in relation to an entire library of Jewish books right inside the home?

The significance of the mezuzah placed in the doorpost is precisely its location. While the collection of Torah books is in the interior of one’s home, the mezuzah is placed on the outside doorpost. A library of Jewish books is a great and very important component of a Jewish household. It signifies and indicates to anyone entering that it is a Jewish home with Jewish values.

The question remaining though is: What happens when exiting and leaving the comforts of one’s home? Do the values kept at home reflect one’s actions out of the home?

When transitioning from the private people we are inside our homes to public citizens out in the world, the purpose of the mezuzah is to serve as a reminder that G-d is wherever we find ourselves. Whether stationed in our private domain or outside our home, be it at work or a social event, we must take our values and traditions along with us.

May the one that guards the doors of Israel always keep us safe.

P.S. If you would like a mezuzah or if it has been a few years since you last checked your mezuzah, please feel free to contact your local rabbi, who will be more than happy to assist you. 🌍

**White supremacist groups are the single most dangerous domestic extremist threat to the nation.**

– “Homeland Threat Assessment,”  
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, OCTOBER 2020



Charlottesville, VA; August 2017  
Photo by Mykal McEldowney

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# The context of *tikkun*

By Rabbi Jonathan R. Katz, Community Chaplain

Rabbis are often asked questions about Jewish mysticism: What is it? Why does so much intrigue surround it? How is it relevant? Can you teach a class about it?

Thought to enable access to secret divine knowledge, in ancient times Jewish mysticism was veiled in an aura



Rabbi Jonathan R. Katz

of risk, a domain safely accessible only to skilled masters. Indeed, legends abound of novices who entered this esoteric realm only to emerge de-

rang-ed. The most prominent expression of Jewish mysticism is Kabbalah (a word associated with “receiving”), which arose in the Middle Ages. A particular form, Lurianic Kabbalah, was conceived in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century in the wake of the Spanish Inquisition in Safed, in Northern Israel, by Rabbi Isaac Luria, the pre-eminent Jewish scholar of his time. It remains the most widely known and studied Kabbalistic stream.

While many Jewish mystical texts appear maze-like in lending interpretation along arcane byways, what is most striking about Lurianic Kabbalah is not its perplexity but its vivid conceptualization of Jewish spirituality.

A significant focus of Lurianic Kabbalah is the mystery of Creation. If

God is ubiquitous and eternal, how could the universe have been created distinct from Him? In other words, how can God be the author of Creation if He is, a priori, already inclusive of it (Pantheism)? If, at the beginning, He was not independent of Creation but already fully part of it, how could He have brought it about?

Furthermore, if God is equal to Creation, where does external Divine moral authority reside? Why would the God claimed to have given the Torah at Mt. Sinai be considered more authoritative than another divinity who is believed to have revealed Himself somewhere else? Either God is co-extensive with the created world or God is not eternal and was created by a pre-God Creator, something that would no longer make Him a monotheistic deity. This fundamental question has quickened the minds of philosophers, theologians and scientists for thousands of years.

Lurianic Kabbalah inventively seeks to preserve an eternal, omnipresent God differentiated from the Creation He engendered by introducing the notion of *tzimtzum*, Divine self-contraction. In this figuratively novel explanation of Creation, God withdraws a part of Himself to make possible an empty, differentiated space from His own being. His willingness to undergo this diminishment is deemed a supreme act of generosity because He, essentially, made room for the Creation

as we know it.

After the *tzimtzum* took place, God brought the world into existence by sending a scaffolding of numinous lights into the void. This transfiguring effulgence constituted the 10 Divine emanations known as the *sefirot* that manifest all the physical and spiritual prosperities present in the universe.

The *sefirot* were contained and held in collective balance by what can be imagined as a set of 10 primordial beakers or vessels.

What happened next has been a source of exhaustive mystical speculation. For whatever reason, perhaps the built-up force of the emanations or the spread of sinful human behavior, the vessels shattered, destroying Creation’s exquisite harmony. Much of the light returned to God, but the rest became entrapped in shards (*klippot*) of the broken vessels and strewn throughout the world.

According to Luria, the liberation of this light from the shards is the motivating *raison d’être* of the Jewish people. His construal of Jewish mission through this lens proved to be of crucial value following the Inquisition.

Rather than regarding this calamitous event as a reflection of God’s disfavor or abandonment, the expulsion from Spain was, instead, assigned transcendent purpose. Jews had been

dispersed to the far reaches of Europe, North Africa, Asia Minor and beyond to search out and free the imprisoned sparks of Divine light. The light found in these places could be released through a *tikkun* (healing, repair), the performance of a heightened act of redemption. A multitude of human endeavors could serve as a *tikkun* if done with *kavannah*, wholehearted intention and feeling.

The opportunity to free this illumination endowed seemingly mundane activities and ritual commandments with far-reaching significance. Eating, making love, worship, lighting Shabbat candles, planting a field, studying, tzedakah and socializing all possessed the potential for spiritual elevation and potency. This orientation to religious task explains how Hasidic Jews could still behold life with such unalloyed joy even amid the tribulations and grinding poverty in Eastern Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

A *tikkun* occurs when, through empathy, conviction and enthusiasm (a word from the Greek *en theos*, “with God”), we utilize our God-implanted powers of intelligence, responsibility and even humor to raise vitalizing life sparks in ourselves and others. In Hasidism, this illumination can be so deeply encased within people that

*continued on next page*

## BRIEFS

*continued from page 29A*

### FOR ARAB ISRAELIS, THE NEW PEACE TREATIES SPELL OPPORTUNITY

Mas Watad, a Hebrew University-educated diet guru, is one of Israel’s Arab citizens playing to a vast potential market in the Arabian Peninsula, after commercial ties were initiated last year through peace agreements with Israel. Investment from the UAE and its neighbors should lead to greater economic opportunities and prosperity for Israel’s Arab population. Palestinians in the West Bank may also benefit.

Israeli Arabs – 21% of the population – have an emerging professional class concentrated heavily in the medical sector. Arab-owned businesses, which figure prominently in Israel’s construction and trucking industries, are increasingly moving into the realm of technology start-ups.

A large number of Arab Israelis are eager to enjoy the sights and sounds of Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Manama. Besides sharing language and culture, they are able to circulate in these countries more freely than in, say, Egypt, where they are generally subjected to scrutiny and sometimes harassment.

The mayor of Kafr Qasim near Tel Aviv, Adel Badir, who recently re-

turned from the Cybertech Global conference in the UAE, said, “As Arabs in Israel, we’ve always been a bridge to encourage peace between Israelis and Palestinians. We are happy to play that role now with Arab countries that have opened to us through the Gulf accords.” (Marc J. Sievers and Jonathan H. Ferziger, *Foreign Policy*)

### ISRAEL’S NEW HIGH-TECH GAZA SECURITY BARRIER

Israel is close to completing the underground component of its new security fence around Hamas-controlled Gaza and the above-ground elements are 80% complete.

Israelis understood the need for such a barrier during the 2014 Gaza conflict after uncovering several commando tunnels from Gaza into Israel.

In addition to an above-ground physical layer, an upper high-tech layer will include detection devices like robots, drones, unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs) and more. They are all equipped with visual, electronic and intelligence equipment and powered by artificial intelligence.

The underground component includes a high-tech cement wall extending tens of meters beneath the ground, equipped with a multi-dimensional sensor net to detect any activity near, at or under the barrier. (Brig.-Gen. (res.) Jacob Nagel and Jonathan Schanzer, *RealClearDefense*)

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# Iran, Israel, Natanz and negotiations

By Rabbi Howard A. Simon

On Sunday, April 11, an electrical blackout occurred at Iran's underground Natanz atomic facility. Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of Iran's atomic agency, called the Natanz incident an act of "nuclear terrorism." Natanz has been targeted by sabotage prior to this event. The Stuxnet computer virus, discovered in 2010, disrupted and destroyed Iranian centrifuges at the site.

On April 12, Iran's top diplomat, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, accused Israel of attacking the Natanz facility, saying, "The Zionists wanted to take revenge on the Iranian people for their success in lifting the oppressive sanctions, but we will not allow it and we will take revenge on the Zionists themselves."

Israel has not commented on these allegations, but numerous Israeli media outlets have said this was a Mossad led cyberattack aimed at sabotaging the Natanz site. Whether this is true or not, one thing is indisputable. Prime Minister Netanyahu has described Iran in these terms for many years: "an existential threat to Israel due to Iran's alleged pursuit of nuclear weapons and its support of militant groups like Lebanon's Hezbollah." The Prime Minister has repeatedly said Israel will do all it can to keep Iran from becoming a nuclear-armed nation. As a result of this attack, Iran has stat-

ed it will begin enriching uranium up to 60% purity. In January, Iran raised its level of uranium enrichment to 20% purity for the first time since 2013, well beyond the limits of the 2015 nuclear accord. By raising uranium enrichment to 60%, Iran would move closer to the 90% purity threshold required for weapons-grade uranium.



Rabbi Howard A. Simon

While all of this is taking place, Iran and the five parties involved in the 2015 nuclear accord are meeting in Vienna to attempt to create a path for the United States to return to the agreement the country exited in 2018.

The dual goal set for the negotiations is for the United States to lift sanctions imposed on Iran if Tehran agrees to comply with the 2015 pact that curtails Iran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons technology.

Israel worries about the future plans of Iran's leaders desiring greater impact on all that takes place in the Middle East. Reflecting on this possibility, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austen declared on his recent visit to Israel the "enduring and ironclad" American commitment to Israel, thus underscoring the support the U.S. has given to Israel in the past and will continue to provide in the future.

Israel will continue to monitor all that emanates from Iran, and Iran will continue to monitor all that emanates

from Israel. Middle East countries, many of which resent the actions of Iran, will watch as these two countries face off against each other. Israel will continue to protect her country and seek support from the Arab nations that have recently established relations with it. Problems abound and fears loom throughout this part of the world. The goal is peaceful solutions.

**Rabbi Jonathan R. Katz...continued from previous page**

an especially gifted healer, such as a *tzaddik* or rebbe, is required to draw it out.

Interestingly, many of the techniques employed by the early generations of *tzadikim* more than 200 years ago to elicit this light, anticipated methodologies that continue to inform psychotherapy today. To borrow the terminology of Martin Buber, *tikkun* is the transformation of the realm of "it" into that of "Thou."

Each of us possesses unique capacities for performing *tikkun*. Our charge is to cultivate and exercise them. At the same time, it's also incumbent on us to be open to the nourishing power of *tikkun* others demonstrate. On the willingness of people of all nations and



What will result from the tensions that are felt is unknown, but the hope is that cooler heads will prevail and the threat of increased struggles will fade away.

Rabbi Howard A. Simon is the founding chair of the Robert and Esther Heller Community Relations Committee, formerly known as the Heller IAI.

faiths to give and receive *tikkun* rests the ultimate *tikkun*, *Tikkun Olam*, the healing of the world.

I am not uncomfortable in asserting that religion in general and Judaism in particular is a human construct. Whether the construct is literally true is not the sine qua non for me, but rather the virtues, ethics and traditions it seeks to transmit. In my view, Lurianic Kabbalah is an extraordinary construct offering a sublime prism through which to appreciate and undertake exalted Jewish purpose.

Rabbi Jonathan R. Katz serves as the Community Chaplain and Director of the JFCS Jewish Healing Program. His position is underwritten by The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee.



## build. advocate. remember. support.

**Government Affairs**

Meetings with elected officials are increasingly important as we see support for Israel eroding around the world. Advocating for Jewish interests starts locally and often goes to Washington D.C. You can count on the Heller CRC when it matters most, from advocating in our local school systems to championing national bills.






- Builds Bridges
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Heller CRC assists school teachers, synagogues, churches and libraries to "Never Forget." The Holocaust Speakers Bureau brings survivors' personal stories to school children and adults alike. Classrooms Without Borders takes elite teachers each year to Poland with a survivor. These experiences change how they teach the Holocaust, helping them create upstanders in their schools.




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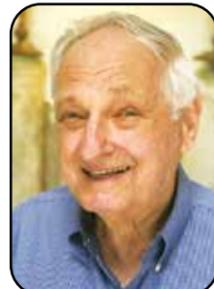



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# A new government or another election? Issues confronting the next government

By Harold M. Halpern

The politics of Israel are awaiting the outcome of the last election, the fourth in two years. The selection of a Prime Minister is currently deadlocked between the parties supporting Benjamin Netanyahu and the parties opposing him. Both groups are close but short of the required 61 majority votes of the Knesset.



Harold M. Halpern

The simplistic analysis is whether the desire to end Netanyahu's reign of 12 years overcomes policy differences among the opponents from the left, center and former right-wing supporters of Netanyahu. The negotiating process may continue for several months or we may be surprised by a coalition formed by the time this column is published.

It is entirely possible that, on the one hand, the desire to be rid of Netanyahu is too strong for anyone to switch from being his opponent to supporter but, on the other hand, the policy differences among the opponents might make it impossible for them to agree upon a Prime Minister. If so, a fifth election will be required. The thought of another election and the public pressure opposing it might push enough votes to change one way or an-

other to end the deadlock. The outcome is unpredictable.

We know that whatever government is ultimately agreed upon, it will face issues of recovery from Covid, security, West Bank and Gaza Palestinian questions, Iran's actions to develop nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and support of Hezbollah, Hamas and other terrorist groups.

On all these matters there is agreement in Israel, albeit with differences of nuance. Essentially, it is understood that it is best to maintain the status quo, reserving the right to take whatever action is necessary if the status quo is threatened in a way negatively impacting Israeli security.

However, on domestic issues there is no such consensus on religious questions and on relationship with Israeli Arabs. These differences impact the nature of Israel as both a democracy and a Jewish state, and create a social and economic divide. In this column, I will write about the religious issue, and in a later column about the relationship with Israeli Arabs.

Religiously, Israelis are described as Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) 10%, Dati (religious) 15%, Masorti (traditional) 30% and Hiloni (secular) 45%.

Before Israel's independence in 1948, the land from 1517 to 1917 was under sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire, a Muslim Caliphate which

included Jews, Christians and other minorities. Each religious group controlled matters of personal status, marriage, divorce, inheritance, burial, conversion, religious practice and related matters. The Empire was on the losing side of WWI, resulting in a division of its lands.

The League of Nations gave Great Britain the Mandate to administer the lands of Palestine west of the Jordan River. Britain retained the Ottoman delegation of religious control to the various religious groups under its Mandate. In 1921, the British Mandate appointed a Chief Rabbi as the supreme rabbinic authority for Judaism.

The worldwide Zionist movement, founded by Theodor Herzl in 1897, and energized by the Balfour Declaration in 1917, gave strong impetus for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. In 1947, the United Nations was readying to vote on a partition to fulfill the aspiration of the Jewish people to return to their ancient homeland. David Ben-Gurion, chair of the Jewish Agency, concerned that the ultra-Orthodox would oppose the establishment of a secular Jewish state, assured them in writing that they would retain control of Jewish matters. He renewed this promise on May 14, 1948, when Israel became an independent nation.

At that time, there were less than a million Jews in Israel. Today, after immigration of Jews from around the world with diverse Jewish practice and philosophy, there are more than seven million Jewish citizens of Israel. Despite the fact that the ultra-Orthodox and the Orthodox are not more than 25% of the Jewish population, the Orthodox Rabbinate continues control over marriage, divorce, burial, conversion, Shabbat public transportation, kashruth and prayer at the Western Wall. Yeshiva students are exempt from military service until the age of 35.

Moreover, the Orthodox schools are supported by the government. Their 2019 budget was the highest ever, providing significantly more than for Israeli public schools and Israeli Arab schools. In addition, the government provides subsidies and child care for families of the Yeshiva students.

The secular community resents the exclusive Orthodox Rabbinate authority over their Jewish lives and military exemption of Orthodox students as well as the public cost of maintaining religious schools and other financial

support. These costs are increasing as the average ultra-Orthodox family has seven children.

Furthermore, the religious schools do not teach basic courses of math, technology, language and science needed to get a job. As a result of the culture and lack of job skills, only 50% of the ultra-Orthodox men are working.

Worry and anger is deepening whether Israel can survive economically if it encourages a culture of not working. The allocation of the budget for the ultra-Orthodox deprives funding for other essential government needs. Tom Friedman, in *The New York Times*, recently wrote of this problem in a column entitled "Israelis and Americans Both Are Asking, Whose Country is This Anyway?"

Israel's parliamentary system of multiple parties makes change very difficult. The ultra-Orthodox parties elect 12-15 members. Usually, a governing coalition can't be formed without their votes, which gives them leverage in maintaining the status quo.

Many liberal groups, including Hiddush, headed by rabbi and attorney Uri Regev, advocate for freedom of religion and equality in Israel with some hard-fought success. They see increasing willingness in the Knesset to seek compromise. They believe the time will come when the will of the Israeli majority for a more pluralistic Judaism will be achieved.

While we wait for the next government, we ask whether it will be up to the task of answering Tom Friedman's question.

Harold Halpern is a retired attorney residing in Lakewood Ranch. He is a board member of the American Association of Jewish Jurists and Lawyers and of the West Coast Chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

## Crossword Puzzle

Solution to puzzle on page 21A

1	L	I	F	E	5	N	E	A	T	9	M	I	L	A					
13	E	T	O	N	S	15	I	N	D	O	18	I	R	I	S				
17	A	G	I	S	T	19	C	O	D	E	21	N	A	M	E	S			
20	P	O	L	L	A	21	C	K	S	22	O	M	A	N	I				
					23	A	S	H	E	24	L	O	R	I					
26	T	R	I	V	I	A	L	29	P	U	R	S	U	I	T				
32	R	A	C	E	S	33	A	D	Z	E	34	N	H	L					
36	E	M	E	S	37	T	A	B	O	O	39	A	T	E	A				
40	F	L	U		41	A	I	L	S	45	A	P	E	R	Y				
					43	A	P	P	L	E	S	T	O	A	P	P	L	E	S
					47	H	E	R	O	48	P	I	P	E					
49	L	O	R	A	X	51				52	D	E	M	E	A	N	E	D	
56	O	P	E	R	A	57	T	I	O	N	58	A	S	A	R	A			
60	S	E	E	M	61	A	D	O	E	62	L	E	V	I	N				
63	E	N	D	A	64	L	A	R	D	65	R	I	S	K					

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## OF SARASOTA-MANATEE

A program of The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, PJ Library & PJ Our Way engages children between birth and age 12, and their families, with books and activities that enhance their Jewish journey. Throughout the year, families gather for story times and other special programs where they can socialize and meet new friends. PJ is for any family raising Jewish children – affiliated, unaffiliated, interfaith or non-traditional. The program is completely free for families, thanks to the generosity of The Harold Grinspoon Foundation, Edie and David Chaifetz, the Federation and other generous donors.

## Father's guidance

By MG Berman, PJ Library Community Connector

**W**e are born to a mother and father who love us deeply in very different ways. Our Jewish biblical patriarchs have shown us many times the love of their children. Patriarchs, *Avot* in Hebrew, literally means father-ruler. Abraham (father of many), our Jewish founding father, wanted a son so badly that G-d granted this wish to him even in his old age. His wife Sarah (princess), at 90 years old, gave birth to that very son whom they named Isaac, meaning laughter. His name came from Abraham's joy of finally having a son.

Isaac and Rebecca had two sons who struggled and were at war with one another long before birth. Esau was a powerful hunter while Jacob was more spiritual. Jacob was given the blessing intended for Esau from their father and then fled to live with his uncle. Jacob fathered 12 sons, creating the 12 tribes of Israel, and also had one daughter. So what does all this mean to us and

for us today? Our three biblical patriarchs each struggled to find their way just as fathers do today. They each learned to listen and trust G-d for guidance and truth. Fathers today can learn from the lessons in the Torah for everyday life – how to help, love, guide, and laugh at and with their children.

The lessons and guidance a father imposes on us shines through to each generation with stories to tell. A father is more than just a blood relation. He is a giver, hugger, listener, guide and a person you can rely on. Fathers, step-fathers (bonus dads), grandfathers, uncles and brothers all play an important part in each of our lives.

As Father's Day approaches, celebrate the important father figures in your life. You can play catch, play golf, have good socially distant meals with family, take a hike, and watch Major League Baseball or NASCAR's Ally 400 in Nashville on TV, just to name a few!

Happy Father's Day to all of our PJ Library and PJ Our Way fathers.

For more information on PJ Library and PJ Our Way, please email me at [mgpjconnector@gmail.com](mailto:mgpjconnector@gmail.com).

## Science Sunday – enable your curiosity!

Jessi Sheslow, Teen & Family Programs Manager

**I**f you are between the ages of 9-12 and have a curiosity about science, this is the program for you! Meet a local inventor, Dennis Brock, who created his very own type of microscope called the Magiscope. The Magiscope is a Parent's Choice award winner and will most definitely spark an excitement for science in everyone.

With a decade of working with the most sophisticated microscopes on the planet, Dennis Brock knew something was missing – something vivid, something exciting and inspiring to the young nature lover/scientist. He knew what was possible, as well as what was not available to everyone. Well-designed optics produce spectacular images that would certainly inspire any bright mind regardless of their background.

Thirty years ago, "microscopes" designed for children were merely small plastic versions of the real thing. They came in thin plywood boxes with meaningless accessories such as a tiny

spatula, a needle for sticking things, forceps and some blank slides. The main problem was that the scope did not work as well as the more professionally designed ones. The low power was barely functional and the other little plastic lenses were useless. Eye floaters were often mistaken for signs of life. Not in the Magiscope, though! Want to see the difference?

Join PJ Our Way and Dennis Brock on Sunday, June 6 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. to look through the amazing Magiscope and really see what nature looks like, super zoomed in and close up. You will not want to miss it!

This program is in-person and will comply with CDC guidelines for health and safety on The Larry & Mary Greenspon Family Campus for Jewish Life, 580 McIntosh Road, Sarasota.

For more information about Science Sunday or PJ Our Way, please contact me at [jsheslow@jfedrsq.org](mailto:jsheslow@jfedrsq.org) or 941.343.2109.



## READ—GATHER—GROW

PJ Library<sup>®</sup> has partnered with The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee to provide families raising Jewish children with the gift of free, high-quality children's books, music, and resources that foster deeper engagement with Jewish life in our community.

Join one of our PJ programs below to start enhancing your family's Jewish journey.

<p>Children 6 mo. - 8 yrs.</p> <p><b>PJ Library</b></p> <p>Sign-up at <a href="http://JFEDSRQ.org/PJ">JFEDSRQ.org/PJ</a></p>	<p>Children 8-12</p> <p><b>PJ OUR WAY</b></p> <p>Sign-up at <a href="http://pjourway.org">pjourway.org</a></p>
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For more information, contact  
**Jessi Sheslow**  
[jsheslow@jfedrsq.org](mailto:jsheslow@jfedrsq.org)  
 941.343.2109



PJ Library Sarasota-Manatee is generously funded in part by Edie and David Chaifetz.



## CAMP-STYLE SHABBAT

Thank you to all who spent Shabbat with us at our Camp-style Shabbat in early May! We sang our favorite summer camp tunes, wore our best camp shirts and white outfits and smiled about seeing our friends in person!



## Family summer fun with a Jewish twist



### Education Corner

By Sabrina Silverberg, MARE

By the time you read this article, we will have slipped into the hazy, lazy long days of summer. The school year is over, or soon to be over, and time presents itself as an open canvas of opportunities. Summer might sound like a great time to relax, but if you do not plan thoughtfully, you may soon hear those two dreaded words: “I’m bored.” Do not despair! With some planning and exploration, summer can be a great time to incorporate fun and meaningful activities into your family’s schedule. Adding a Jewish component to your pastime will also serve to enhance your child’s Jewish identity.

Jewish educators often joke that everything can be made Jewish and, in a way, it is true! After all, who created the birds and the bees? Who introduced the ideas of *Tzedakah* (righteousness) and *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) to the rest of humanity? Who proposed the concept of home as a *Mikdash Me’at* (a small sanctuary)? We can go on and on, and indeed opportunities for Jewish, engaging learning is all around us.

The activities below are simple, fun and inexpensive. They are grounded in Jewish values in three categories: *Shechinah* (God’s dwelling or presence), *Tikkun Olam* and *Mikdash Me’at*, making our homes and families Jewishly holy.

The concept of *Shechinah* is introduced in the first chapter of the Torah (Genesis 1:2): “...and God’s spirit was hovering over the face of the water.” Judaism tells us that God created the world and that God is everywhere. Nature speaks of God loudly. You can explore this truth, take your child outdoors, enjoy and discuss the many wonders that surround us every day. Here are some fun *Shechinah* activities:

- ◆ Visit the beach and collect shells, and try to identify the many varieties.

- ◆ Go canoeing on a local lake.
- ◆ Volunteer at a nature center.
- ◆ Visit a farmers’ market.
- ◆ Pick berries.
- ◆ Have a picnic at a state park.
- ◆ Go for a walk and make a collage from nature’s objects you find along the way.
- ◆ Go to a lake or pond to watch the ducks and birds. Use a bird guide or app to identify the various species.
- ◆ Go biking on a nature trail.
- ◆ Plant a garden of herbs and veggies.
- ◆ Go stargazing and try to identify as many planets as you can.

The Torah tells us that humans are granted stewardship of the world. The book of Genesis commands that we are to enjoy nature and its bounty, but we are expected to take care of it, and of each other. Here are some meaningful activities that will affirm the Jewish value of *Tikkun Olam*:

- ◆ Draw pictures or make a collage of issues that your child would like to work on. Discuss ways to make them happen.
- ◆ Bake cookies and take them to a local fire station.
- ◆ Volunteer at an animal shelter.
- ◆ Foster a dog or cat.
- ◆ Volunteer to pack food at a food bank.
- ◆ Volunteer at a senior center or nursing home.
- ◆ Collect used children’s books from your neighbors and friends, and deliver them to a children’s hospital.
- ◆ Collect used clean blankets and donate them to the homeless shelter or an animal shelter.
- ◆ Collect toys and donate them to a homeless children’s center.
- ◆ Clean up trash at a local park, beach or on your street.
- ◆ Wash cars or walk dogs in your neighborhood and donate the proceeds to your favorite charity.

Summer affords us a greater opportunity for time spent at home and for family bonding. You can begin by making your home a *Mikdash Me’at*, a little sanctuary, and by investing greater efforts in connecting with your extended family. Here are some suggested activities:

- ◆ Make mezuzot, affix them on every door (not the bathrooms) and recite

the mezuzah blessing: “Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to affix a mezuzah.” Kiss the mezuzah when you enter or leave a room.

- ◆ Create a *mizrach*, a beautiful Jewish symbol to mark the eastern wall of your home. The *mizrach* directs us to face Jerusalem when we pray.
- ◆ Make Shabbat objects such as candlesticks, a Kiddush cup or a challah cover and use them to celebrate Shabbat every week.
- ◆ Listen to Jewish music, read Jewish children’s books and watch Jewish videos or films together.
- ◆ Cook Jewish recipes and bake challah together.
- ◆ Make a tzedakah box and use it often.
- ◆ Have a board game night. Many

popular games have Jewish versions. Jewish Apples to Apples is a favorite!

- ◆ Make a family yearbook with photos you’ve taken during the year, reminisce and give it as a gift to Bubbe or Zayde.
- ◆ Send your child to spend a few days with an aunt, uncle, cousin or other relative. Have them take a photo diary of their trip.
- ◆ Interview Bubbe or Zayde and record it for posterity.
- ◆ Write and record a song as a family.

These are just a few examples of fun things to do this summer to encourage Jewish spirituality, social responsibility and family bonding. Have a happy *kayitz* (summer)! 🌞

Sabrina Silverberg, MARE, has served as the Educational Director for Temple Emanu-El since 2001.

## The joys of Jewish Day Camp for preschoolers



### Education Corner

By Laura Freedman

As summer approaches, families with young children begin to think of plans to engage their children throughout the season once the school year concludes. Day camps and all the wonderful experiences that are included spring to parents’ minds. These experiences and special activities include sports, water play, creative art projects, dress-up, story time, science discovery and dramatic play to name a few. A special option for young campers that includes all these activities and so much more is Jewish Day Camp. When selecting your child’s summer experience, consider some of these extraordinary experiences and benefits incorporated in Jewish Day Camp programs.

One of the many benefits of selecting a Jewish Day Camp is to become a part of a community with shared values. That sense of community is developed through activities that help build relationships between and among the campers and counselors. A teachable value is learning kindness and consideration for friends and welcoming new friends. This begins from the very first greeting of campers from their new counselors. And, in turn, counselors encouraging interaction and social development among the campers by helping them to find similarities, as well as understanding and accepting differences in each other, are important

parts of building this community.

Teaching the care and preservation of our Earth is another value developed in this Jewish setting. It can be taught through immersion in the great outdoors, such as tending to a garden, learning the life cycle of plants and enjoying the feast they have grown on their own. Organic materials that are usually considered waste can be collected to decompose into simpler compounds creating compost. This is rich in plant nutrients and can be used in the gardens, too! Little ones can learn about recycling materials to eliminate waste by creating projects that demonstrate reducing and reusing the use of materials. All of this can be facilitated by the use of Teaching Gardens and Outdoor Classrooms that can be found at quality Jewish Day Camps.

Camp-wide Shabbat at the culmination of a week is another beautiful benefit of Jewish Day Camps. Coming together as one big community family after a busy week brings a sense of peace to all in attendance. This shared ritual of joyous singing of familiar tunes, dancing, reciting of blessings and listening to stories prepares the children to head home to begin a Shabbat Shalom with their own families.

We teach that before Shabbat we give tzedakah (monies for charity). Children bring their coins to excitedly drop into the tzedakah box. Collecting to help others is a beautiful yearlong mitzvah (good deed). Children learn that helping others and thinking of others is what we ought to do.

Together, these shared experiences amongst campers can build the sense of belonging to a community and foster lifelong bonds.

As the school year comes to a close and you make your family’s plans for the summer months, investigate the true treasure of a Jewish Day Camp experience for your children. 🌞

Laura Freedman is the Director of Early Childhood Education at The Gan at Temple Sinai.

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# Community Day School students learn about microplastics

Environmental stewardship is a concept the students at Hershorn Schiff Community Day School learn through text and practice. Jewish tradition encourages “l’vadah ul’shamrah” – to till and to tend. With Tikkun Olam (a desire to improve the world) as a pillar of Community Day’s mission, students definitely take lessons about caring for the planet to heart.

Recently, author and scientist Holly Elmore, the founder and CEO of Elemental Impact (Ei), a U.S.-based global nonprofit committed to bringing regenerative operating practices to

the corporate community, visited the school to discuss microplastics with the agriculture classes. The students first learned about Elmore’s work and efforts to mitigate microplastics in the environment when she gifted students her book, *From Macro to Micro to Nanoplastics*, earlier in the year. Students were so inspired that they began a competition, with a goal of ridding school spaces of any microplastics they find during their time on campus – particularly outdoors.

In honor of Elmore’s recent visit, the students revived the competition for the day and realized how quickly

microplastics and other litter can pile up, even when they are actively working to keep a space trash-free.

In addition to Elmore’s presentation, Community Day’s agricultural sciences teacher, Meg Lea, shared additional information regarding microplastics and their effects on the environment – specifically from an agricultural perspective.

During Community Day’s Panther Pride/Spirit Day a couple of months earlier, all K-8 students took part in a microplastics collection competition, with each team collecting microplastics from the outdoor learning areas. Overall, the students collected approximately 3,000 pieces of microplastics.



Fourth-grader Vanessa Rossi collects microplastics on Community Day’s campus



Author and scientist Holly Elmore holds her book, *From Macro to Micro to Nanoplastics*

# Summer camp returns for Temple Beth Sholom youths

By Troy Jones

Temple Beth Sholom is proud to announce the return of its summer camp program!

In partnership with the TBS Sisterhood and the Jack Salzman Camp Ramah Fund, \$12,000 has been raised to send six lucky youths to summer camp this year. They will attend a four-week summer program held by the Ramah Camping Movement, the camping arm of Conservative Judaism.

The mission of the Ramah Camping Movement is to create and sustain excellent summer camps and Israel programs that inspire commitment to Jewish life and develop the next gen-

eration of Jewish leaders. At Ramah, thousands of children, teens and young adults congregate each summer in communities that nurture social, educational, physical and spiritual growth, creating lifelong friendships, a love for Israel and a strong Jewish identity.

Temple Beth Sholom is grateful for the chance to return a little normalcy to the youths of our community after the isolation caused by the pandemic. To learn about other youth programs, please contact Kelly Nester at [knester@templebethsholomfl.org](mailto:knester@templebethsholomfl.org) or 941.955.8121 x1002.

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# Temple Sinai Youth Group activities keep teens engaged

By Gail Glickman

Deb Bryan, Youth Group Advisor, announced that the Temple Sinai Youth Group Grades 6-12 held a Mitzvah Project on March 28 followed by SAFETY (Sarasota Area Federation of Extreme Temple Youth) board elections. She reported, “Our SAFETY Board is in place for 2021-22, and we could not be more delighted to announce the new SAFETY board members.”

**Executive Board:**

- ◆ President – Maxwell Fletcher
- ◆ Programming Vice President – Katherine Carnes
- ◆ Social Action Vice President – Phoebe Winters
- ◆ Religious and Cultural Vice President – Lucy Thomas
- ◆ Membership Vice President – Noah Leinweber

**General Board:**

- ◆ Historian – Gryffin Wilkens-Plumley
- ◆ Song Leader – Jack Fletcher
- ◆ Eighth-Grade Representative – Alix Leinweber

The Mitzvah Project, called “Leave a Legacy,” consisted of grades 6-12 painting the youth group lounge ceiling tiles. Each youth group member expressed artistic talents as well as special sentiments, and by doing so raised a total of \$105 to support Camp Jenny! This was a fun event and the youth group members bonded together to achieve an important goal while enjoying themselves. Naturally, as in all youth group events, snacks were served.

The SAFETY board provides youth group members a rewarding

and important leadership experience. Below is part of a statement by Lucy Thomas, SAFETY Religious and Cultural Vice President.

“It has been amazing to be involved in this leadership experience because it has helped me develop my skills. I became much closer with my tem-

ple friends whom I have known since I was a little kid! Being the youngest person on the SAFETY board has been a challenge and a great way to learn and grow.”

For youth group information, contact Deb Bryan at [dbryan@sinaiSRQ.org](mailto:dbryan@sinaiSRQ.org).



Temple Sinai Youth Group members with the ceiling tiles they painted for their Mitzvah Project

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More info? Contact **Bethany Leinweber:**  
[bleinweber@templesinai-sarasota.org](mailto:bleinweber@templesinai-sarasota.org)






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# Spring holidays come to life at Temple Emanu-El Religious School

By Sabrina Silverberg, MARE

In the Jewish yearly cycle, spring heralds two much-anticipated and widely celebrated Jewish holidays: Passover and Yom Ha'Atzmaut. These two holidays cannot be any more different from one another historically, while being equally life- and faith-affirming for Jews around the globe.

Passover marks the anniversary of the exodus from Egyptian bondage toward the promised land, dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebrates a more current historical event, modern Israel's independence in 1948. Both holidays are commemorated yearly in the spring with gratitude, jubilation and festivity.

Temple Emanu-El Religious School (TEERS) celebrated both holidays as a community – joyfully, mean-

ingfully, safely and outdoors. On April 4, TEERS observed Passover with Aviv Chaviv (Beloved Spring), an all-school tailgate celebration. Children and



Temple Emanu-El Religious School student Benny Labinger created a matzah cover

young families participated in a Passover sing-along, “hunted” for the 10 plagues, played Passover games, and created Passover reclining pillows and spring flowers. Each student received a Passover goodie bag to continue the learning and celebration at home.

On April 18, TEERS celebrated Yom Ha'Atzmaut with Kachol V'Lavav (Blue and White). Children and families enjoyed Israeli music, learned about Israel and participated in an Israeli-themed sing-along. Clement

Hakim, a former Israel Defense Forces soldier and TEERS dad, demonstrated Krav Maga (IDF self-defense techniques) with his five-year-old daughter Eva. It was impressive and entertaining! The event also included made-in-Israel treats, Hebrew and Israeli learning games, and a variety of Israeli-themed craft projects. Both events were well-attended and well-received.

For more information about Temple Emanu-El Religious School, please call 941.378.5567.

## Teen Travel Scholarships, Spring 2021

Jessi Sheslow, Teen & Family Programs Manager

There is nothing we love to do more than provide opportunities for our local teens to travel on a Jewish program. Each spring, our Teen Travel Scholarship Committee, made up of co-chairs Alice Cotman and Joan Levenson, along with Bart Levenson, Paula Hayden, Dan Levison, Fran Cohen, David Liner and Philip Meltzer, meet to award deserving teens scholarships to travel to Israel.

In this out-of-the-ordinary year, we saw a decrease in applicants traveling overseas. However, we look forward to the next application cycle when the world will be on the mend.

Our deserving teens have chosen

to experience Israel on BBYO and Alexander Muss High School in Israel extended-stay programs. There is no better way to strengthen your connection to Judaism and Israel than by learning the language, shopping in the stores, eating the local foods and meeting Israeli friends – speaking as a NFTY Heller High graduate myself. Your Federation is helping to provide meaningful and lasting relationships in and with Israel, and we are so proud to do so.

For more information about Teen Travel Scholarships through the Jewish Federation, contact me at [jsheslow@jfedsrq.org](mailto:jsheslow@jfedsrq.org) or 941.343.2109.



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**June anniversaries:**  
 70<sup>th</sup> Beverly & Ray Broth  
*Temple Beth Sholom*  
 70<sup>th</sup> Aaron & Meg Kestenbaum  
*Temple Emanu-El*  
 65<sup>th</sup> Leonard & Merle Nelson  
*Temple Emanu-El*  
 60<sup>th</sup> Elinor & Herbert Krasow  
*Temple Sinai*  
 60<sup>th</sup> Clare & Richard Segall  
*Temple Emanu-El*  
 55<sup>th</sup> Geraldine & Leonard Drexler  
*Temple Sinai*  
 55<sup>th</sup> Faith & Michael Goldman  
*Temple Emanu-El*  
 55<sup>th</sup> Dr. Philip & Adrienne Hutt  
*Temple Emanu-El*  
 55<sup>th</sup> Joan & Marden Paru  
*Temple Beth Sholom*  
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*Temple Emanu-El*  
 50<sup>th</sup> Leslie & Jay Cohen  
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 50<sup>th</sup> Judy & Jerry Fleischer  
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 45<sup>th</sup> Victor & Toby Behar  
*Temple Emanu-El*  
 45<sup>th</sup> Judy & Robert Handleman  
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 40<sup>th</sup> Dr. Bruce & Helene Abramowitz  
*Temple Emanu-El*  
 40<sup>th</sup> Lydia & Jack Corn  
*Temple Beth Sholom*  
 40<sup>th</sup> Susan & Marshall Horwitz  
*Temple Beth Sholom*  
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 & Stanley Goldsmith  
*Temple Sinai*  
 35<sup>th</sup> Dr. Bruce & Lori Dorman  
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 35<sup>th</sup> Daniel & Denise Hamburger  
*Temple Emanu-El*

35<sup>th</sup> Wendy & Jeffrey Starr  
*Temple Emanu-El*  
 30<sup>th</sup> Joan & Ronald Braun  
*Temple Beth Sholom*  
 30<sup>th</sup> Susan & Michael Siegel  
*Temple Sinai*  
 25<sup>th</sup> Stuart & Stacy Bayer  
*Temple Emanu-El*  
 20<sup>th</sup> Bethany & Joshua Leinweber  
*Temple Sinai*  
 15<sup>th</sup> Gillian & Chester Perlinski  
*Temple Sinai*  
 15<sup>th</sup> Alicia & Nicholas Zoller  
*Temple Emanu-El*

**July anniversaries:**  
 60<sup>th</sup> Selma & Barry Abeshaus  
*Temple Beth Sholom*  
 60<sup>th</sup> Howard & Sandy Goldberg  
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*Temple Beth Sholom*  
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IN MEMORIAM

William F. Berliner, 96, of Sarasota, April 5  
 Richard Freeman, 66, of Bradenton, April 4  
 Sheldon Jacob Gensler, 101, of Sarasota, April 22  
 Marvin Gross, 90, of Sarasota, April 23  
 Florence S. Harr, 97, of Sarasota, January 12  
 Marilyn Harwell, 91, of Sarasota, April 13  
 Steve Kadetz, 67, of Sarasota, April 6  
 Bernard (Bernie) Katz, 84, of Sarasota, April 20  
 Evelyn Lerman, 95, of Sarasota, March 17  
 Geraldine "Gerry" Ludwig, 92, of Sarasota, April 5  
 Marcia Ann Miller, 82, of Sarasota, April 10  
 Sylvia Weinberg, 90, of Sarasota, April 16

Submit your life cycle events (births, B'nai Mitzvah, anniversaries) to [jewishnews@jfedsrq.org](mailto:jewishnews@jfedsrq.org). Photos welcome for births, weddings, engagements and B'nai Mitzvah; please e-mail as JPGs at 300dpi.

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