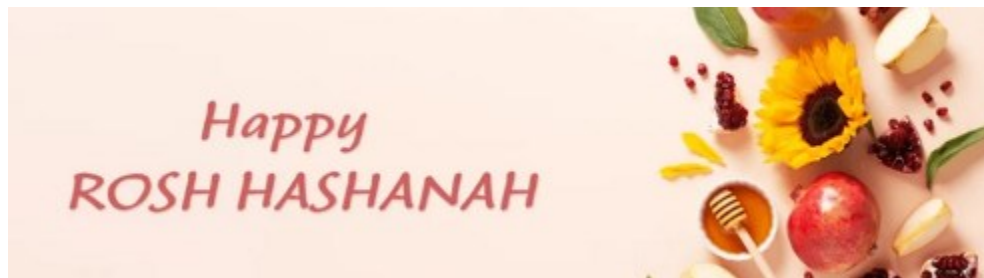




The Star:

Jewish Voices of Central Massachusetts



Volume 2, Issue 3
September 2025/5786

Published by:

Jewish Federation of Central MA
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Worcester, MA 01609

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Include your idea, relevant experience and any other information that may help explain your story.

Wow! It's almost Rosh Hashanah! If as you reflect on this past year, you feel weighed down by the unrest we are witnessing in Israel, the United States, and throughout the world, we hope you will take some time to read this issue of *The Star*. It is filled with feel-good stories of our Central Mass neighbors who found ways to reach beyond themselves to bring a little sweetness into their lives and the lives of others, or found ways to cope with what first seemed to be insurmountable problems. Here's a taste:

-Learn about women from the Willows who knit afghans to bring comfort to Israelis in hospitals, refugee centers, and youth villages.

-Read about some local group participants in the national "Run for Their Lives" movement.

-Steve Sadow, Professor Emeritus of Latin American Literature and Jewish Studies at Northeastern University, talks with contributing writer Marsha Nourse about his latest book, *I am of the Tribe of Judah: Poems from Jewish Latin America*.

-Meet the man who creates *The Star's* crossword puzzles.

-It takes a lot of years and a lot of love to grow an etrog from seed, but someone in Worcester did it!

-Cantor Gilit Shovel reminisces about the High Holy Days of her childhood in Israel.

-Maayan, our former Shlichah, bids us a fond farewell.

-Learn about the Central Massachusetts Jewish Theater Company and its new production, *Without the Evil Eye*.

Just find a comfortable chair and dig in.

Wishing you and yours a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

Carol Goodman Kaufman, Mike Smith and Karen Rothman

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Revealing the Truth About Oct. 7th

By: Steven Schimmel, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts

On May 12, 2024, local pundit Bill Shaner used his newsletter, *Worcester Sucks and I Love It*, to critique a Telegram & Gazette article about an event held at the Worcester JCC. The event, organized by Jewish Federation and Hadassah, sought to bring attention to sexual violence perpetrated by Hamas during the October 7 attacks. Shaner attacked this focus, arguing the “weaponized rape” narrative was built on discredited reporting and served only as propaganda for Israel’s war in Gaza.

At the time, his skepticism drew heavily on controversy surrounding a New York Times article from December 2023 titled “Screams Without Words”. That article did raise legitimate questions about sourcing, and critics feel that the Times has yet to fully address those concerns.

But what has since come to light fully refutes Shaner’s piece.

In July 2025, the Dinah Project, an independent initiative led by Israeli legal, medical, and academic experts, released a landmark report titled *A Quest for Justice: October 7 and Beyond*. This was not a newspaper feature, it is a rigorously documented record drawing on months of investigation and dozens of firsthand

testimonies.

-Fifteen freed hostages provided testimony, including one survivor who escaped an attempted rape at the Nova music festival.

-First responders, morgue staff, and medical professionals described in detail the evidence they encountered.

-Seventeen additional witnesses corroborated accounts of sexual violence across multiple locations.

The report concludes that sexual violence on October 7 was systematic and widespread and deliberately by Hamas as a weapon of war. Documented acts included gang rape, genital mutilation, forced nudity, and sexual abuse of hostages in captivity. These findings align with patterns prosecuted in other conflicts, such as Bosnia and Rwanda, where sexual violence was recognized as a war crime.

That is why Jewish Federation and Hadassah felt compelled to hold last year’s gathering at the Worcester JCC on May 9 2024: to break through the disbelief and denial, and to ensure the suffering of victims was not erased. To insist, as Shaner did in May 2024, that these atrocities were merely “debunked propaganda” is

not only outdated but profoundly harmful. It disregards survivors, undermines accountability and should be retracted.

It is especially troubling given Shaner’s own reputation in Worcester media. He has made a name for himself as an advocate for rape victims in other contexts, positioning himself as a voice for accountability. Yet when the victims are Israeli women, he dismisses or minimizes their testimony.

None of this means Israel’s policies in Gaza are above criticism. They should and will continue to be scrutinized. But acknowledging the atrocities of October 7 must not be contingent on one’s stance toward the war.

Worcester’s Jewish community gathered last year because we believe the truth matters. With the release of the Dinah Project report, that truth is clearer than ever. The evidence has been presented and our responsibility is to ensure it is neither silenced nor forgotten.

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A Time of Reflection and Connection: The High Holidays

By: Cantor Gilit Shoval, Temple Emanuel Sinai

As a Jewish-Israeli, the High Holidays hold a deeply special place in my heart. I remember, as a young child, how the entire country seemed to wrap itself in a cloak of holiness. Shops closed their doors, television programs shifted to stories and music celebrating Rosh Hashanah, and everywhere you turned, you could feel the spiritual anticipation of a new beginning.

Growing up in a family of musicians, we marked the occasion with beautiful harmonies of traditional Rosh Hashanah songs. Friends would gather, and together we would celebrate the start of the new year. Our blessings to one another were always focused on two things: good health and peace.

When Yom Kippur arrived, everything changed. In Israel, the country comes to a complete halt. No cars on the

road, no buses or trains. There's a quiet that is almost reverent, no television, no radio, just stillness. The only sound, on rare occasions, might be the distant wail of an ambulance siren.

And yet, for children, it becomes a magical night. With no traffic, the roads and highways transform into playgrounds. We would ride our bikes freely through the empty streets, a surreal and joyful tradition, returning home late into the night.

Sukkot followed soon after, and I always loved hosting friends in our beautifully decorated sukkah, sharing meals and laughter under the stars.

Today, many years later, I am honored to serve as the cantorial soloist and music director at Temple Emanuel Sinai in Worcester. Each High Holi-

day season, I have the privilege of standing before our congregation, lifting my voice in prayer, and feeling a connection that is truly beyond words. It is as if the soul rises, gathers light and strength, and returns renewed at the end of the service. It is, without a doubt, one of the most fulfilling experiences a person can have.

As we approach this year's High Holidays, I look forward once again to singing, praying, and connecting together with you.

Wishing you all Shanah Tovah filled with health, love, peace, and prosperity.

With heartfelt blessings,

Gitit Shoval



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Community Conversations

Stephen Sadow, Professor Emeritus at Northeastern University

By: Marsha Nourse

Stephen Sadow is Professor Emeritus in Latin American Literature and Jewish Studies at Northeastern University. Steve specializes in Jewish Latin American literature. His book *King David's Harp: Autographical Essays* by Latin American Jewish Writers won a National Jewish Book Award in 1999. He translated *Mestizo, A Novel*, arguably the best novel written by a Latin American Jew. Over the years, with the poet J. Kates, he has translated poems by 40 poets into English. Steve's publications include 20 books and over 100 book chapters, articles, reviews and translations. Earlier in his career, Steve focused his research on the relationship between creativity and foreign language learning. He wrote three books in this area. One of them, *Idea Bank: Creative Activities for the Language Classroom* is considered a classic.

Please describe your latest book.

In 2024, I edited *I Am of the Tribe of Judah: Poems from Jewish Latin America*, a collection of 100 poems, translated into English, by 74 poets from 1550-2010. The poems, from 11 countries, reflect Jewish life in America: The Inquisition, the voyage from Europe, the arrival and adjustment to the new countries, success and failure, the life cycle, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust and Israel. Many are appropriate for the Jewish holidays,

How does your work reach readers in this country and abroad?

My translations are published in books and in literary magazines from the US and England to Ireland and Sweden. They have made Latin Ameri-

can Jewish literature easily available to English readers. Also, I direct a weekly blog, jewishlatinamerica.com, featuring writers, poets, artists, architects, rabbis and even sports figures from every Latin American country. The blog is written in both Spanish or Portuguese and English. So far, its 440 entries have received 150,000 hits from over 100 countries.

While I was at Northeastern University, I created the first website on this subject: latinjewisharts.northeastern.edu, a five-part collection of writing and art. It is ongoing.

What were some of your most interesting and satisfying collaborations with artists?

In 2010, I collaborated with Perla Bajder and Irene Jaievsky, both from Argentina, to create a series of 14 artist's books. Each of these contains a poem in Spanish and an English translation, and an original work of art done in reaction to the artwork. They were first exhibited at the Jewish Museum in Buenos Aires, then in Mexico City, the Argentine Consulate in New York, Northeastern, Regis College and at many universities in the US.

In 2015, on a trip sponsored by the Argentine government, the artist Nora Seilicovich and I put on an art show in Havana, Cuba. Nora had done a series of ironic paintings, and I wrote ironic commentaries to display next to each one. The show was attended by Cubans of all social backgrounds. The Argentine ambassador took Nora and me to visit friends of hers who live in the Cuban countryside.

You currently hold the position of Professor Emeritus at Northeastern Uni-

versity, having taught for 39 years as a professor of Spanish language, Latin American and Spanish literature. How did your years at NU make your work as a professor and researcher fulfilling?

Northeastern University gave me financial support to pursue my fascination with the field providing funds for research abroad. I made 35 trips to Latin America, including 28 to Argentina alone. Northeastern also provided pre-publication expenses and video equipment. . While at Northeastern I won two grants from the Whiting Foundation.

While I never taught a full-fledged course on Latin American Jewish literature and art, I did direct much student research on projects related to the field. I particularly enjoyed working with students with Latin American Jewish backgrounds. I arranged for visiting speakers and conferences. I was an active member of the Jewish Studies Committee, which sponsored cultural events. I also gave lectures at the University of Texas, Arizona State University, the University of Denver, Regis College and many more institutions..

How did you initially discover the Jewish Argentine and Latin American writers?

I first became aware of Latin American Jewish writers, when I was a graduate student at Harvard. In Harvard's Widener Library, by chance, I discovered novels and books of poetry with Jewish names on their spines. I read them eagerly. The con-

Continued on Page 15

They Walk for Their Lives

By: Karen Rothman

Westborough/Shrewsbury Walk for their Lives is a group of people from these and neighboring towns which began meeting a few weeks after October 7, 2023. Group co-founder Nancy and her husband were horrified by the slaughter and rapes that occurred at the Nova Music Festival and several kibbutzim near the Gaza Strip. "I just really struggled, and still do, to understand why there isn't more outrage."

Nancy was raised Catholic. Her husband was raised Jewish and their children were taught to respect all religions. "As the weeks went on, the coverage of the hostages died out; we just stopped hearing about it. I saw something on Instagram about Run for Their Lives and contacted the people in charge. There were no groups around here, so we started one." She talked to her friend Rachel, and they spoke to their friends, neighbors, and religious organizations. A group soon began walking weekly, rain, snow or shine. The walkers cover about 2 miles, alternating routes down Shrewsbury's or Westborough's main streets. While proudly wearing their Run for their Lives tee shirts, the walkers carry banners and a combination United States/Israeli flag. Nancy and her family made the decision to join Congregation B'nai Shalom this summer.

I asked if many walkers quit after June's firebombing attack at a Run for Their Lives walk in Boulder, CO. Rachel, co-founder of the group, said, "At some point or another, you've got to make a stand and say I'm going to continue to walk in spite of this, or I'm going to walk because of this." Rachel and Nancy reached out to the group and asked everybody what they wanted to do and they all said, "we have to walk." Rachel continued, "So we keep walking. This is, for all of us, the right thing to do."

Their core group has about five people at this point, but many other people, including children and sometimes dogs, join

when they are able. One of the regular walkers lives in Boulder, CO, but her mom lives in Holden. She was with the group in Boulder on June 4 when they were fire-bombed. Right now she's walking in CO but will rejoin the MA group when she's back in town.

For the first couple of weeks after the Colorado bombing the police were more present up and down their route (as the group had requested), but the walkers say they are not afraid to walk for this cause. Nancy adds, "There is so much anti-Semitism going around. A lot of people are divided in terms of what they think about Israel, but I can't understand people divided about this. I've had to block some people on Instagram and Facebook from seeing the posts about our walks because they were so nasty about it."

Our group members do have different opinions about what's happening with Israel and Gaza, but we talk it out respectfully." Rachel continues, "We're doing it mostly for the families of the hostages, to show them that we didn't forget about them or those still held captive. That's what I care about the most." Rachel adds, "We're apolitical. We feel betrayed by people on both the left and the right of the political spectrum in the United States. The hostages are civilians, not soldiers. Nobody in power cares about the hostages. When the first hostages were released, we started saying, 'Let's not see each other next week.' We're not that hopeful anymore... but we still care."

Rachel is a non-observant Jew. She explains, "My aunt grew up in Israel before it was Israel. Much of my family is there. I have relatives in the IDF." I asked if walking with the group has changed her. She responded, "Yeah. I haven't really been dialed into the Jewish community here that much. This has definitely connected me. In America there's not a lot of understanding of what October 7 really meant. To have this group of people who are not



necessarily like-minded in every way but certainly are in our understanding of what this means to the Jewish community, has been huge, and has given me a certain amount of faith."

Rachel continued, "We are not directly affecting whether hostages get released, but we take a video every week that goes to the international group and Israelis. The hostage families see them and hopefully it helps them feel a little less alone in the world."

Every week, walker Eli stays in front of the group, scanning the area and each car that passes, always on the lookout for potential trouble. He also counts the reactions from passing cars. "We usually get about 20 thumbs up or car honks for every thumbs down. We've never gotten anything worse so far. But today we hit 48 thumbs up. I think that's the most ever, and only 2 thumbs down!"

Feeling inspired to join the group or another one in your area? Go to <https://share.google/2RN3R7Xb58qriJzv5> to register. New walkers are always welcome.

Note: Writer/ Editor Karen Rothman walked with the group and interviewed group members on July 27, 2025, recording their comments with their permission for this article. On behalf of the Central Mass Jewish Community, we thank the Westborough/Shrewsbury Run for Their Lives group and pray for the day when they can just walk to strengthen the tight bonds they had formed.

"A Bit Like Writing a Song or a Poem"

A Conversation with David Scholder, Creator of *The Star's* Popular Crossword Puzzles

By: Mike Smith

Since last year, *The Star* has been providing our readers with original crossword puzzles in every issue (including this one.) Meet Maine resident David Scholder, the creative force behind *The Star's* specially created crossword puzzles.

When did you begin creating crosswords?

I think the first one I did was for my late father when he turned 75. My father loved to do the Sunday New York Times crossword puzzle and I thought it would be fun to have a "themed" puzzle with personalized clues about events in his own life as well as around world events during his lifetime. I've since created similar crossword puzzles for other relatives and friends who were celebrating milestone birthdays, and of course I enjoy creating puzzles for *The Star*!

Only crossword puzzles, or have you tried your hand at making other puzzles?

I guess in that sense I am a purist. I have not dabbled in trying to create other kinds of puzzles.

How long does it take you to create the crosswords we publish in *The Star*?

It typically takes me a few days - though often over a longer span of time. For me, puzzles are a bit like writing a song or a poem - I often start them, get stuck, put them aside, and return later in hopes that with fresh eyes I can find solutions.

In addition to sprinkling in pertinent Jewish clues timed to coincide with the holidays, how do you come up with all those very creative secular clues?

I try to "vary it up". If all of the clues are straightforward, the puzzle is too easy and therefore boring. I want to throw the puzzler a little off balance.

Are you also a trivia fan, and a fan of shows like Jeopardy?

A fan perhaps, but certainly not a skilled player. To put it in crossword puzzling terms, high level Jeopardy players are like people who can do a Sunday New York Times crossword in ink, and finish it in under five minutes. Impossible for a mere mortal like me!

Are you a fan of newer puzzles such as the original Wordle and/or its spinoff versions?

I tried Wordle and Connections, etc, but the luster faded for me after a short time. There is an intangible allure to the classic crossword for me, I guess.

When Dave Scholder is not coming up with crosswords for *The Star*, what are your other hobbies?

I hope your readers won't be disappointed, but my hobbies really aren't all that exciting or exotic. I'm blessed to live in Maine, where every season offers something wonderful. In the winter I like to ski, in the Summer and Fall I like to hike. To add a little spice



David Scholder, creator of The Star's popular crossword puzzles

to the mix I also love to travel.

In addition to being *The Star's* "Puzzler in Chief," you also have long been involved with running the Maine Jewish Film Festival. Tell us a bit about that.

Many people, residents and visitors to the State alike, are surprised to learn that a Jewish film festival exists in Maine. For nearly 30 years, our organization has been offering a wide range of programming to engage, entertain and educate a diverse audience. Despite our name, we're more than just a once-a-year Festival. Throughout the year we host films and other cultural events, in communities across the state.

We're gearing up now for our Spring Festival which will be held in April. Visit our website to learn more: mjff.org.

My Shlichut Journey in Worcester, Massachusetts

By: Maayan

This past year has been one of the most meaningful years of my life. I had the privilege to serve as a Jewish Agency Shlichah in Worcester, Massachusetts, and to become part of a warm and vibrant community that combines Jewish identity, love for Israel, and meaningful communal life.

After October 7th I felt I needed a change, but I also knew I wanted it to be something meaningful. Education and working with people have always spoken to me, and when I saw the opportunity to become a shlichah, I felt this was the step I had been waiting for. Before arriving in the community I had many fears, I didn't really know what it meant to live in a different culture and language, but together with the fears there was also a lot of excitement after the long selection process and months of waiting.



From the very first moment in Worcester I was welcomed with open arms and endless warmth. I could see how important the Shlichut program is for the community, and how happy everyone was to have me. One of the first and most meaningful moments for me was the October 7th memorial, where Alex, my fiancé, spoke. I saw how our personal story touched people deeply and created a strong sense of solidarity. In that moment I realized that Jewish pain and unity go beyond geography, and that no matter where Jews live, we are deeply connected.

During the year I had the privilege of teaching in all the Hebrew schools in the community, including Bnei Shalom, Agudat Achim, Rimon, Torah Center, Emanuel Sinai, and Beth Tikvah. Meeting the children and teens gave me the strength to understand my role in connecting people to Israel, but it also



allowed me to learn from them about what it means to be Jewish in the world, especially during such a difficult time. I also worked with many synagogues in Central Massachusetts and with Hillel at Clark University, and I was inspired by how much young people truly care about Israel and feel a deep connection to it.

One of the highlights for me was the chance to teach about Israel at Worcester Academy. It was my first time teaching about Israel to non-Jewish students, breaking stereotypes, answering real questions, and showing my own perspective. I hope I was able to create even a small change, especially in these times.

There were also many small, meaningful moments during my shlichut, conversations with students, smiles at community events, and the simple feeling of really connecting with people. I especially remember one student who was going through a hard time. We spoke for hours, not necessarily about Israel, but heart to heart, and built a genuine friendship. Later she sent me a very moving message thanking me for seeing her as she truly is. That message reminded me that shlichut is first of all about human connection.



The High Holidays were also an unforgettable experience. Seeing people take time off from work to celebrate, and choosing to live close to synagogues in order to keep Shabbat and holidays, made me appreciate even more what it means to be Jewish, and how it should never be taken for granted.

Of course, not everything was easy. Being far from home, adjusting to a new life, the cold and the snow, were all real challenges. But I chose to face them by building new connections, going to synagogues on weekends, and searching for ways to feel a true sense of belonging. I discovered that I am independent, optimistic, and able to see the good in every situation, and



this gave me the confidence I needed. This year of shlichut helped me realize how meaningful and fascinating it is to work with Jewish communities abroad. Today, I continue working for the Jewish Agency as a community liaison for the West Coast, which allows me to keep exploring and strengthening the relationship between Israel and world Jewry. I learned that in the end, you are never truly alone; it is all about how you choose to look at it.

I want to thank the Worcester community for welcoming me so warmly, for giving me a new home and surrounding me with love. Thank you for letting me be myself.

Because to me, shlichut means creating a real, honest, and deep connection.

Etrog: A Botanic Love Story

By: Carol Goodman Kaufman

Like hundreds of thousands of Jews around the globe, we buy a lulav and etrog every Sukkot. But because I like nothing more than a good experiment, several times over the last few decades I have planted the etrog's seeds post-holiday, with the hope of growing my own citron tree. Silly, really. After all, I live in New England, a place known for record-setting snowfall. Having an etrog here requires moving the tree out to the patio in late spring, then schlepping it back to the sunroom every fall before the cold weather can kill it. And as it grows larger, the schlep is more difficult.

Then there is the practical side of the fruit itself. Aside from having one to shake with a lulav and one to use as a sachet, what is one to do with a bushel of citrons? Although it certainly not widely used, fans of this citrus have incorporated it into candy, jam, and even salad. My energetic rabbi, Aviva Fellman, makes a potent limoncello-like liqueur, cedrello, and an intrepid group of women from the Beth Israel Sisterhood once managed to prepare—and sell—etrog marmalade. It was a gooey, sickly-sweet concoction.

So, back to my experiment. Twenty-five years ago, on my third attempt at growing an etrog tree, I resolved to pay closer attention to the agricultural project, and we got two lovely trees. How they came to be is a tale of botanic love.

About two weeks after scooping the seeds from my etrog and carefully placing them in brand-new potting soil, we noticed tiny green shoots popping out of the deep brown earth. Within a couple of months, we had a few seedlings. After another few months, I threw out the runts of the litter and repotted the two heartiest plants. I placed them in opposite spots in the sunroom, about 12 feet apart. Within a week, one of the

plants had begun to shrivel and turn brown, while the other was still green and healthy.

It was time for an intervention.

I brought them out of the sunroom and set both onto the kitchen windowsill, where I could keep an eye on my charges. After about a week, the brown and shriveled plant began to revive. But strangely, neither of the plants was growing toward the sun, as is the habit of every other plant I've ever owned. They were growing toward each other, arching their tender, narrow stems in a manner suggesting that they were whispering in a secret language, reminiscent of twins who had once shared a crib.

Both trees were now healthy. They grew branches and have been repotted again and again. Like siblings, one began to grow taller, while the other was a bit stouter, and I pruned both several times to prevent their hitting the ceiling. They stood next to each other night and day, outdoors in summer, indoors in winter. And they continued to lean toward each other, no matter how many times I rotated them to face the sun.

Every season, they produced lovely bunches of blossoms that emitted a heavenly scent reminiscent of my Israeli family's citrus trees. Their perfume complemented the tangy fragrance of the leaves. But I still had no useable fruit. At one exhilarating point, a microscopic citron did appear on the tip of a branch. I was so excited that I visited it several times a day, kvelling and excitedly posting a photo on my Facebook page. Unfortunately, my helicopter parenting must have annoyed the tree, because one morning I found that the miniscule fruit had fallen—jumped?—off its branch.



Now, everything I had read about citron cultivation warned me not to expect anything for at least seven years. As if that weren't enough, my Israeli exotic fruit-growing cousin Reuven told me that growing from seed would yield nothing important, and that if I wanted an etrog like its parent, I would need to graft. Yet I remained hopeful. And patient. My optimism remained strong that one day I would harvest the bright yellow fruit.

Alas, after twenty years, I gave up. I removed the two trees from the sunroom, cut them to the quick, and set them outside for the lawn guy to take away. Oddly, he only took one tree and never took the other.

So, I brought the remaining stump back into the house, with a stern warning: Produce or I will throw you out. Really.

The tree grew back and yet again produced flowers, but no fruits. Given its attachment to its sibling tree, I was surprised that it managed to grow at all. Perhaps it had completed its mourning period and was ready to live independently.

But another four years went by when suddenly this past year, I was surprised—nay, shocked—to find nine fruits. Orange, round, and the size of golf balls, these etrogim seemed to have nothing in common with the traditional citrus fruits we find in foam-lined boxes at Sukkot.

Just as Cousin Reuven had warned, these were nothing like the parent fruit.

No matter, I was over the moon.

But what to do with them, now that I had them? They're not edible on their own. I decided on two recipes. First,



with the peels I made a very potent cedrello that brought back memories of sultry Mediterranean evenings. Then I made marmalade with the rest of the fruit. The nine tiny fruits only yielded half a cup, but it was delicious, probably because these fruits had not been treated with either pesticides or coated with wax.

Once the experiment came to its successful conclusion, I cut the tree down again, thinking I was done. It had taken

twenty-five years, but I had had success.

Don't you know, it's growing back. If it takes another twenty-five years, my grandkids can write the next story.

Cedrello

An etrog's take on limoncello. L'chaim!

Note: Over the last twenty years it has come to light that because the Torah (Leviticus 23:40) demands an unblemished and beautiful fruit, nearly all etrog growers use pesticides and fungicides right up till the time they are picked. This causes an extremely high accumulation of pesticides, which are potentially toxic... so enjoy their beautiful color and smell during Sukkot, but if you want to eat something made from an etrog, be sure that pesticides are not used in the weeks leading up to their harvest (The Jewish Chronicle, September 21, 2010).

5-to-6 organically grown citrons, thoroughly scrubbed and dried

1 (750 ml) bottle 100-proof vodka

2 cups superfine sugar (if you don't have any, just zap some regular sugar in a food processor)

2 1/2 cups water

Pour 1/2 the vodka into a large glass jar. With a vegetable peeler or grater, remove yellow peel only, avoiding the white pith. Add the lemon zest directly to the jar. Cover the jar and let sit at room temperature for a full month.

After the first month:

In a large saucepan, combine the sugar and water. Cook, stirring frequently, until sugar is dissolved. Cool syrup before adding it to the vodka. Add the remaining vodka. Allow to rest for another month.

After the second month:

Strain the mixture, discarding the lemon zest. Pour into bottles. Place bottles in the freezer until ready to serve.

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 21 - Hadassah Membership Event
- Sept. 23 - Torah Center - Luncheon
- Sept. 27 - CBS High Holy Day Tot Shabbat
- Sept. 28 - JHC Road Race 2025
- Sept. 30 - Center for Civic Friendship Event
- October 5 - October 7th Memorial Program
- October 5 - TES - Tot Sukkot Party
- October 7 - Torah Center - Family Luncheon
- October 10 - BT - Potluck/Service
- October 10 - TES - Musical Service
- October 11 - BI - Sukkot Hop 5786
- October 12 - CAA - Post Mitzvah Kulam
- October 12 - CAA/PJ - Pizza in the Hut
- October 14 - Torah Center - Simchat Torah
- October 16 - JFCM Annual Meeting
- October 19 - Hadassah NE Walk
- October 19 - Worcester ALZ Walk
- October 26 - Special Event: Central MA Jewish Theater Company at Bnai Shalom

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www.jewishcentralmass.org/calendar

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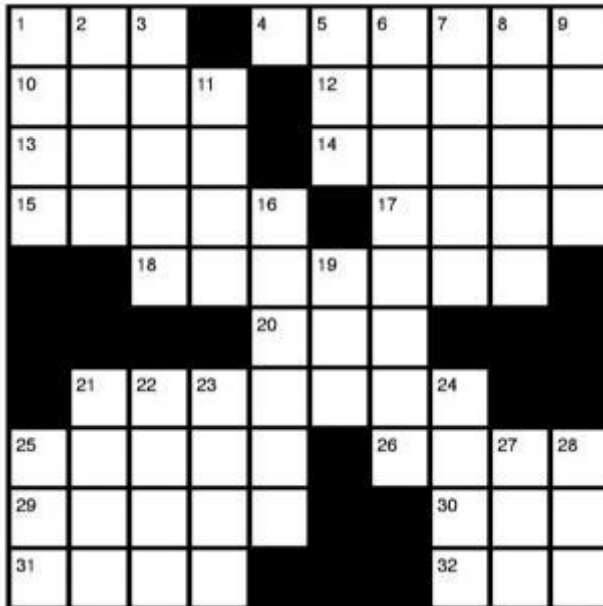
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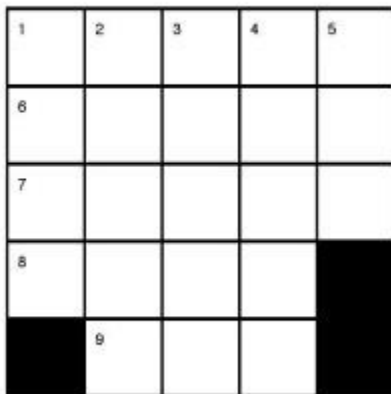
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- 1 With 4 across, a Jewish High Holiday
- 4 See 1 across
- 10 Certain Egyptian God
- 12 Came up
- 13 Key ingredient in a Japanese soup
- 14 Frasier's brother on TV
- 15 Oft grilled slab of meat
- 17 Place to shop
- 18 Sacred horns sounded on the Jewish High Holidays
- 20 Drunkard
- 21 Autumn High Holidays Hebrew month
- 25 This is on your Yom Kippur "to do" list
- 26 Prison weapon
- 29 Coastal town in Montenegro
- 30 What comes out of mines
- 31 Trouble between lovers
- 32 Layer

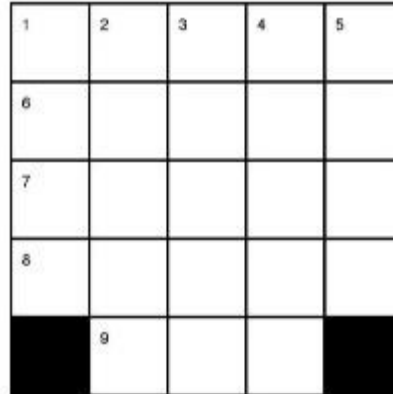


- 1 They feature on many Thanksgiving menus
- 2 Leave out
- 3 Biblical brother of Aaron
- 5 Common British male name
- 6 Apes and others
- 7 _____ opposite
- 8 They are in front of computers
- 9 Time out
- 11 Ark builder
- 16 Legitimate
- 19 Not against
- 21 Feature of some sporty cars
- 22 Very small amount
- 23 Arrogant person
- 24 Denny's competitor
- 25 Kalaschnikows, informally (abbr)
- 27 Texter's "in the flesh"?
- 28 Oy _____ (Yiddish exclamation)



- 1 German sweet stuff
- 6 Actress Woods
- 7 Very Kosher?
- 8 Bring on
- 9 Common night school course offering (abbr)

- 1 _____ Holidays
- 2 Skateboarding trick
- 3 Gets closer to
- 4 Valuable info
- 5 Obtain



- 1 Verb on a Yom Kippur "to do" list?
- 6 Relating to the moon
- 7 Very overweight
- 8 _____iv (Israeli city)
- 9 Size letters?

- 1 A ton of
- 2 Televisions used to have them
- 3 Where The Nightmare took place?
- 4 Relating to the nose
- 5 The day before a Jewish holiday

David Scholder is a crossword puzzle enthusiast, traveler and lover of a good pun. He is a long-serving Board member of the Maine Jewish Film Festival. He currently lives with his wife and two cats in the small town of Denmark, Maine.

Answer Keys can be found here: [Jewish Crossword Answer Key - September 2025](#)



**Assumption
University**



The Center for Civic Friendship at Assumption University
and the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts present

THE ANNUAL RABBI JOSEPH KLEIN LECTURE

Catholic-Jewish Friendship: 60 Years After Nostra Aetate

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th | 6:00pm

Assumption University, Curtis Performance Hall,
Tsotsis Family Academic Center

A reception to follow the lecture
Free and open to the public

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Director, Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought,
Yeshiva University

Dr. Matthew Tapie

Associate Professor of Theology
Director, Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies
Saint Leo University, Florida

Don't Miss the Show!

By: Karen Rothman

Editor Karen Rothman recently spoke to Hal Schneider, Executive Director and Founder of the Central Massachusetts Jewish Theatre Company (CMJTC), to discuss their upcoming performance.

Between 1880 and the 1920s, Jewish immigrants poured into the United States from Europe and Russia to escape oppression and antisemitism. Yiddish theater had a significant role in their lives, particularly in New York. Today there are only a few theater companies in the United States that celebrate Jewish heritage and values. These are: the National Jewish Theater Foundation, 24/6: A Jewish Theater Company, the Jewish Plays Project, the Alliance for Jewish Theatre. And now, thanks to Hal Schneider, The Central Massachusetts Jewish Theater Company.

In 2019, Hal saw a play about the

Holocaust called Survivors in Rochester, NY. He brought up the idea of producing that play with a local Worcester theater company. They weren't interested in producing it so decided to start his own Jewish theater company. CMJTC was born! COVID quarantines began, and on-stage productions were out, so Hal used online videos of existing plays for almost 2 years. Hal then decided to bring in Israeli theater troupes, rather than producing shows locally. All of CMJTC's plays focus on issues of social significance and are about Jews/Israel.

CMJTC's next play, entitled "Without the Evil Eye," is autobiographical and was co-written by Israelis Assaf Ben Shimon and Sarel Piterman. Assaf also stars in the play, which is about his inspiring journey as he navigates his gradual loss of vision from a genetic disease while fulfilling his dream of becoming an actor. He tells the story with

humor, mirroring his positive outlook on life and his belief in the goodness of people.

Without an Evil Eye will be performed live at Congregation B'nai Shalom in Westborough on October 26, 2025, at 7 pm, and will be the first time it is performed in English. Tickets are \$36 and may be purchased in advance here: <https://cmjtc.org/home> or at the door.

CMJTC is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization and is supported in part by the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts. Hal also acknowledged his gratitude to The Torah Center (Worcester), which has helped support the actors who perform at CMJTC with food and housing, and to Congregation B'nai Shalom for providing the space for this inspiring production.

NEW BOOK BY LOCAL AUTHOR FEATURES MAH JONG DETECTIVES

Worcesterite Carol Goodman Kaufman has just published her second mystery book, *Crak, Bam, Dead: Mah Jong Mayhem* (Next Chapter Press). The collection of cozy mystery short stories features food writer/aspiring investigative reporter Kiki Coben and her Mah Jong group as they follow clues from a "Black Widow" murder at sea to a suspicious death at a senior home charity event. Armed with a curious mind and her formidable group of friends, Kiki is ready to prove that the only thing you need to catch a killer is persistence - and maybe just a little bit of luck.

Crak, Bam, Dead is available in stores and online.



Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts
and
Central Massachusetts Jewish Theatre Company
proudly present a Nephesh Theatre production



The show recounts the remarkable story of Asaf Ben Shimon and his inspiring journey as he navigates the loss of his vision and ultimately fulfills his dream of becoming an actor. This is a hilarious and moving monodrama about faith, dreams, and recognition of the goodness all around.

Asaf's genetic disease, known as RP (retinitis pigmentosa), is a slow and gradual loss of vision. His daily challenge to solve and overcome obstacles yields infinite solutions: how to navigate a first date in darkness, how to get home by bus, and how to muster the courage to audition for acting school. The stigma of considering a blind person as a victim is broken by allowing the spectator to experience things from Asaf's perspective. Emphasis is on the human soul with its dreams, aspirations, and abilities, rather than on the physical handicap. To achieve one's goals, one must live in the present and continually battle negative feelings from the past and fears for the future.

The show incorporates theatrical elements from Assaf's roots: the culture of North Africa, symbols, music, songs, and set design. These, plus his remarkable story, provide an amazing theatrical experience.

One Show Only!
Sunday, October 26, 2025, at 7:00 pm
Congregation B'nai Shalom
117E Main Street, Westborough, MA
Tickets: General Admission \$36.00
To Purchase Tickets - www.cmjtc.org
For additional information, email - hal@cmjtc.org

Presenting Sponsors



Congregation
B'nai Shalom



Jewish Federation
OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS



Central
Massachusetts
Jewish Theatre
Company

Doing a Knitzvah

By: Carol Goodman Kaufman

If it's Wednesday afternoon at The Willows, it's time for the Greater Worcester Chapter Hadassah's knitting group. The local project started about eight months ago. Just after October 7, 2023, Barbara Patashnik, a Willows resident and avid knitter, saw an article in the organization's weekly Shabbat newsletter. Anita Young of North Eastham had begun a new project that she called Knitzvah. Members were asked to make hats for Israeli soldiers to keep help keep them warm in the upcoming winter.

Barbara stepped right up and organized her group at The Willows. "I saw all these people that I knew, and asked, "Would you like to do that?" Ruth Bibace, Amy Tessier, Betsy Douglas, and Lois Edinburg said "yes," but there was a catch. To comply with IDF requirements, the hats had to be black—not a good choice for aging eyes. As the war continued and Israelis were injured or became refugees in their own country, blankets were added to the list of must-haves. So, the group switched to knitting or crocheting colorful five-inch squares to be made

into afghans.

As Barbara says, "We have a craft room here, so we have all kinds of yarn, so nobody had to go out and buy any. We have an endless supply of yarn."

Barbara sends packages filled with the squares to Anita, who assembles them and then arranges for people to bring them when they travel to Israel. The blankets are distributed to patients in Hadassah's hospitals in Jerusalem and to people who had to flee their border homes without their belongings.

"It's a wonderful project. It's the kind of thing you can do at night, and you don't have to think about it," Barbara says.

The response to the Knitzvah Project has so enthusiastic that it has now been adopted by chapters throughout New England, Florida, New York, Con-

necticut, Vermont, Illinois, and beyond.

As Anita Young says, "The Knitzvah project has sparked a sense of solidarity with Israel and has mobilized a community of passionate knitters to contribute to a greater cause."

Anybody who likes to knit or crochet is welcome to join them on Wednesday afternoons at The Willows. You can contact Barbara at bbpatashnik1346@gmail.com.



HOLIDAY CRAFTER & VENDOR EVENT

TO BENEFIT THE PJ LIBRARY OF CENTRAL MA LITERACY PROGRAM

When: Sunday November 16, 2025 10am-2pm

Where: Worcester JCC 633 Salisbury St, Worcester MA

For more information or if you are
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email pjlibrarycentralma@gmail.com



SPONSORED BY Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts

nection was made personal when I began corresponding with the novelist and poet Ricardo Feierstein in Buenos Aires. Later, Ricardo introduced me to many Jewish writers and gave me copies of their books. In 1994, the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires (AMIA,) was destroyed by a car bomb sponsored by Iran. A secretary in the building, whom I knew, was murdered that day. I was so affected by this event that I decided that my subsequent research would focus on the literature and art of the Jews of Buenos Aires and other Latin American countries.

Talk about your research unfolding the identities, diaspora and culture of the many authors you have translated.

My experiences with individual writers, artists and professors truly changed my life. The warmth and acceptance that I found in Buenos Aires, Mexico City, São Paulo, Montevideo,

San José, Costa Rica and Havana impressed me greatly. I loved the importance given to extended families and life-long friendships. With friends, I discussed Jewish affairs and Israel, in cafés and private homes, sometimes until three o'clock in the morning.

I learned and sometimes collaborated with Susana Satinovsky, Angelina Muñiz-Huberman, Luis Krausz, Eliah Germani, Ana Wien, Juana García Abás and many, many more. They told me about growing up in their respective Jewish communities and the difficulties they had faced. Ricardo Feierstein and I planned and directed three large Jewish consecutive cultural conferences in Buenos Aires, and Rosario, Argentina, entitled "Culture in Stressful Times." One of them had 100 writers, artists, sculptors, musicians and journalists as speakers. Professors from the United States came to Buenos Aires to participate. Attendance was free. Over 1,300 people attended. In Argentina, too, I collaborated on books, written in Spanish, that were distributed widely.

In Argentina, I spent a great deal of time at the Jewish and Holocaust museums, at art galleries and poetry readings. I was a regular at the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary and several synagogues. I traveled to see Moisés Ville, the first of the nineteenth-century Jewish farming collaboratives on the Pampas. I was delighted when the leaders of the rebuilt AMIA community center recognized me for my achievements; they called me an "Honorary Latin American Jew." My scholarship in English and Spanish was deeply enhanced by these experiences.

The editorial staff of The Star thanks guest editor Marsha Nourse for this interview. Marsha is currently a senior lecturer at Brandeis University, having spent her career as a college professor. Both Marsha and Stephen are members of Congregation B'nai Shalom in Westborough.

SPECIAL EVENT Jewish Federation of Central MA Annual Meeting

Our community - today and into the future.

**Welcoming Incoming Federation
Board President Joel Baker**

Join us as we report on the past year of Federation's leadership of our community, and hear about priorities for the coming year.

**Thursday, October 16, 2025
7:00pm at Worcester JCC
Please RSVP to info@jfcma.org**



SAVE THE DATE!

Torathon 2025: A Celebration of Jewish Arts and Entertainment!

November 15

at Congregation Beth Israel

Come join us as we celebrate the joy of Judaism, through music, dance, art, comedy, and other modes of Jewish entertainment.

Jewish survival has, in part, been sustained by our ability to be uplifted and filled with joy and hope. Come and discover some of the origins and ways the Jewish People have managed this (and still do)!!

Details to follow.



This Passover, consider four more questions ...

Do you value Central
Massachusetts
Jewish organizations?

Do you support these
organizations on an annual
basis?

Do you want them to exist
for future generations?

How will you assure Jewish
tomorrows?



Life & Legacy
ASSURE JEWISH TOMORROWS

**Be remembered forever with a gift to Jewish Federation of Central MA in
your will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy.**

To learn more about leaving a legacy, contact
Lisa Thurlow, Legacy Coordinator, LThurlow@jfcma.org 508.756.1543



ASSURE JEWISH TOMORROWS

The Jewish Federation of Central Mass would like to honor our local community members who have committed to leaving a legacy gift as part of our LIFE & LEGACY program.

We are proud to present the list of LIFE & LEGACY donors as of May 6, 2025.

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Events Around the Community

Pictures by Mindy Hall



YAD enjoys a summer hike on the West Boylston Rail Trail



July's Monthly YAD Happy Hour at Vintage Grill in Worcester



YAD's "Kosher Cooking with Sylvia" in July



YAD's monthly Shabbat with a yummy lunch at Sean's house



YAD Summer fun at the Leominster JCC Spec Pond in Lancaster



PJ Library family fun at Dean Park in Shrewsbury



Ladies of Chaverim meet for a weekly summertime coffee break at Cafe Chaverot



Federation hosts the screening of the film "October Hate (Eight)" at Worcester JCC



"Hate Ends Now" exhibit hosted by Federation and Congregation Beth Israel



Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut community commemoration with new Magen David Adom Ambulance presented by the Honig family.

Events Around the Community

Pictures by Mindy Hall



Central Mass Theater Company/Federation present the Hebrew version of the play "Without an Evil Eye" at The Willows of Worcester



The gangs all here at Jewish Heritage Night at the Woo Sox 2025



Ladies Night Out for Shavuot decorating cheesecake, sponsored by Federation and The Torah Center



Federation's Annual Young Adult Newcomer Brunch in Dean Park in August



Food, fun, and friends at Chaverim's Summer Vibes hosted at the home of Mindy Hall and Errol Mortimer



Multi-generational Ladies' Night Out with Jewish Federation and The Torah Center