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Jewish Federation
Lee & Charlotte Counties

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*Chag Pesach
Sameach*

L'CHAYIM

Published by the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties

April 2023 / 5783 JewishFederationLCC.org Volume 45, Number 8

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Celebrate Israel's 75th Birthday with us!
We'll be showcasing live music, Israeli folk dancing, Israeli artists, food trucks and activities for the whole family.



Holocaust Remembrance Program
Attend our community program featuring guest speaker Dr. Robert Hilliard with a musical performance by Chuck and Diane Coffman.

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36th Anniversary
of the Jewish Federation

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4:30 ~ 6:30 P.M.

4:30 ~ 5:00 P.M. ~ Chamber Ribbon Cutting
5:00 ~ 5:30 P.M. ~ Light Refreshments
5:30 ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Program

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Photographs should be clear, black-and-white or color prints. If you wish a photograph returned, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope of appropriate size.

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**MAY ISSUE
 EDITORIAL
 DEADLINE:
 Monday, April 3**



OUR MISSION

To strengthen and enrich the Jewish Community by providing and supporting philanthropic, educational and social service programs locally, in Israel and throughout the world.

OUR VISION

A Jewish Community that is based on Jewish values such as Tzedakah (benevolence), Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) and K'lal Yisrael (taking responsibility for one another).

Our Double Chai Anniversary – Celebrating 36 years

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

■ Debbie Sanford



Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties will celebrate its 36th anniversary on May 10 at our Annual Meeting. That's right, Double Chai! While the commemoration of this milestone will continue throughout the year, as will the celebration of Israel's 75th birthday, we will look back at major events and the people in our history; and give special recognition to the presidents who have served as volunteer Federation leaders over the past years will be included at the event.

Thanks to the volunteer leadership of these former Federation presidents, the local Jewish community has been able to help Israeli terror victims, assist in freeing Soviet Jewry, resettle

Ukrainian families, come to the aid of those affected by natural disasters and provide for local people in need.

It is said that having a *lev tov*, or a good heart, is the best character trait a person can have. Our Federation has been blessed to have 25 individuals who, with their good hearts, visionary leadership and extraordinary dedication have led this Jewish community in growth, learning and vibrancy these past 36 years.

Year after year, Federation continues to evolve to meet the needs of the Jewish community as they arise. What remains the same is our mission — to strengthen and enrich the Jewish community by providing and supporting philanthropic, educational and social service programs locally, in Israel and throughout the world.

We strive to help our community celebrate and strengthen Jewish life, and to act in partnership with organizations throughout Lee and Charlotte

counties to help improve the community at large.

It is important we strengthen our culture of collaboration. For 36 years, this Federation has brought together people, organizations, ideas and resources to address systemic challenges. Your Federation will continue to bring together critical resources. But today, we also convene ideas, develop strategies and build new platforms to move our community's agenda. Instead of simply supporting organizations, we strive to strengthen the whole fabric of our community.

I look back over my years here in amazement at the work we have done in the community, what we have accomplished in the past few months since the hurricane and the plans we have for the future of our Jewish community.

I hope you will join us at our celebration on May 10, at our Federation building. Let's cheer to another successful 36 years. I wish you and your family a wonderful Passover. 🌟



Jewish Federation
 OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

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Mahjong - Tuesday Afternoons 12pm-3pm

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For more info visit:

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Celebrate Israel’s 75th birthday with us!

By Aimee Levine-Miles, Director of Programs and Engagement

April is going to be an exciting month for programs. Come celebrate Israel’s 75th birthday with us on Sunday, April 2, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Alliance for the Arts. We will be showcasing Israeli musicians on the big stage, Israeli folk dancing, Israeli artists, food trucks, face painting, henna, a bounce house and fun for the whole family. Admission is free and the event is open to the public.

The food is going to be delicious with many options from which to choose. Carnivore will be a kosher food truck; Go Pita will offer an Israeli salad, falafel and shawarma; the Doughnut Station will serve mouthwatering sufganiyots, filled with delicious jellies; and McGregor Pizza will serve a variety of pizza pies. There will also be amazing vendors for your shopping pleasure. Many Jewish organizations in Lee and Charlotte counties

are taking part. If you would like to volunteer, please email me.

JFED Men’s Division

We’ve gotten a great response from the launch of JFED Men’s Division last month. The JFED Men’s Division’s purpose is to create friendship and camaraderie among its members in Lee and Charlotte counties, through social, intellectual and athletic events. I will be adding luncheons as well as educational and recreational activities.

Sunday, April 23, 10 a.m.-noon, we will have an NBA Brunch and conversation with Dan Grunfeld, who is a former professional basketball player, an accomplished writer and a proud graduate of Stanford University. Grunfeld played professionally for eight seasons in top leagues around the world, including Germany, Spain and Israel. Tickets cost \$15 and reservations are needed. Please register on our website to hold your spot.

Holocaust Remembrance Day

Sunday, April 16, we will be showing a special movie, “J’Accuse!” at Regal Belltower for Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Lithuanian Jewish community was decimated in the Holocaust, when over 220,000 Jews, more than 95% of the Jewish population, were murdered. A key player in the massacre was Lithuanian nationalist Jonas Noreika, who today is revered as a national hero and protected by the contemporary government’s official policy.

In this galvanizing documentary, the experiences of two dissident campaigners are followed — Grant Gochin’s family was murdered by Noreika; and Silvia Foti, a brave Lithuanian woman fighting for the truth, was the granddaughter of Jonas Noreika. Together, the two push against Lithuania’s systemic Holocaust denial to bring justice to victims and insist that the truth be

told. This movie is powerful. If you have not seen it, it is necessary.

PJ Library

PJ Library Moms, I have an exciting event planned for Saturday, May 6. Please join us for a Tiki Sunset Cruise from 6:45-8:30 p.m. Moms, mojitos and a beautiful sunset. Please let me know if you plan to attend as soon as possible; limited seats are available. It was a pleasure meeting each of you at the Purim Carnival. I look forward to more fun events.

As we enter Passover, I wish everyone a happy and safe holiday. I hope you get to spend quality time with your friends and family. Please check our website often for new events and any pertinent information concerning them. I look forward to seeing everyone. Have a healthy and happy April. 🌸

Reflection and joy

By Rabbi Michael J. Schorin

We all know the joys of the Passover Seder and the highlights of the Haggadah. There are so many joyous aspects to celebrate: the lit candles, the wine glass that never empties and the familiar melodies that reverberate around the room. As to the highlights of the Haggadah, they are also abundant: we have the “Four Questions” and the singsong melody that accompanies it; the recital of the Ten Plagues; and, of course, we have the famous song, “Dayenu,” to which many of us actually know the first word — dinner!

If we listen closely, behind this theme of joy, we will hear a different theme. There is a counterpoint of pain and sorrow that accompanies the text. Eating ‘maror’ or bitter herbs may refresh our sinuses, but it is really trying to remind us of the bitter times we have experienced in all off our lives. Eating ‘matzah’ is like a yearly dip into the swimming pool of slavery, the lack of taste reminding us of the tortures we were subject to in our servitude. It even tries to remind us of the bland days that go by, one by one. Reading the Ten Plagues reminds us, often uncomfortably so, of how much the Egyptian people had to endure.

When we read of the degradation of our people, it is natural to feel sad and depressed.

So, is this a holiday of joy? Or is it a time for re-experiencing all the travails of slavery? For Rebbe Nachman of Bratzlav, it is both. He claims the two themes are inextricably connected

and cannot be separated. More simply put, we cannot have one without the other. As he says, “Every human being is himself an entire world. And it is into that world which G-d wants to bring joy, to instill awareness of the Divine, to bestow the joy of creation. But that joy, that awareness, can only be found in the awareness of our individual ‘maror’ or bitterness.” (The Breslov Haggadah, Page 18).

Later in the Haggadah, we read “in every generation, one must regard himself/herself as though he/she had personally gone forth from Egypt.” What I believe Rebbe Nachman is teaching us is that we are obligated to feel the pain and bitterness of our personal life in “Mitzrayim” (Egypt) before we can feel the joy of liberation.

For many of us, the last few years have been difficult — filled with COVID-19 and, more recently, the ravages of Hurricane Ian. Whether we have lost family members and friends, whether we have lost homes, cars and lanai cages, we need to bring our personal losses with us to the Seder. If we can allow our personal ‘maror’ to accompany us on this evening, our sense of liberation will be all the greater.

So, whether we are young or old, healthy or not-so-healthy, depressed or not, the Seder is for each and every one of us. The Seder is for you — for your sense of suffering and for your sense of redemption.

As has been said, “Passover is a time of reflection and joy. When we emerge from our cocoon of doubt to fly freely on the wings of faith.”

May we each have a wonderfully blessed journey towards freedom! 🌸

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The Jewish Federation Annual Campaign provides the resources to strengthen and enrich our Jewish community locally, in Israel and around the world.



This year please consider making an additional campaign contribution in honor or memory of a loved one. Because kindness is contagious, we would like to highlight your generosity in L'CHAYIM and notify personally those whom you honor. You may choose how your generosity is noted and how we share your mitzvah with the community.



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In memory of Esther Share
from Joyce Rose

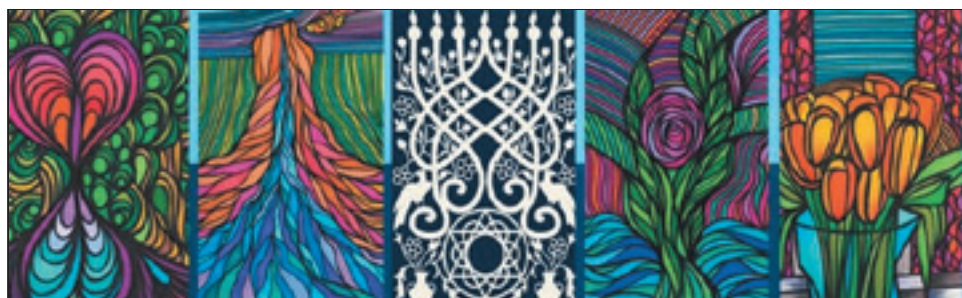
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Jewish Federation
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

Get the latest information on upcoming community events and cultural activities, breaking news items, updates from Israel and lots more.

Send an email to
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MAKE A
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Honoring a special person through a tribute gift to Jewish Family Services of Lee & Charlotte Counties is a wonderful way to recognize a simcha or remember a loved one. Not only does your gift show your family and friends that you care, it goes to work helping Jews in need and building vibrant communities locally, in Israel and around the world.



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HOW THE JEWISH FEDERATION SERVES

Local Jewish Education and Culture

- ☆ Community-wide Jewish Education and Cultural Programs for all ages including the Jewish Film Festival, Jewish author events, Out & About Films, Israel celebration, day trips, Israeli folk dancing, PJ Library & TRIBE, a young adult group.
- ☆ L'CHAYIM published monthly to keep the Jewish community informed about local, national and international Jewish issues.
- ☆ New CRC-Community Relations Council to address issues of anti-Semitism and Interfaith Relations.
- ☆ Israel Advocacy and Initiatives to strengthen local Jewish community ties with Israel. Holocaust education for middle and high school students in the community and a college campus Jewish life experience committee.
- ☆ Volunteer opportunities for all ages.



Overseas

- ☆ Funding to the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) for full-spectrum social services to Israel and Jewish communities in 60+ countries around the world.
- ☆ Partnership 2Gether relationship with the Hadera-Eiron Region in Israel.

Jewish Community Foundation

- ☆ An endowment that ensures future social and educational programming and support for our community.
- ☆ Needs-based college scholarships and study scholarships in Israel.
- ☆ Jewish camp scholarships.
- ☆ Projects and programs aimed at Jewish community enrichment.



Jewish Family Services
A Division of the Jewish Federation
of Lee & Charlotte Counties

Local Seniors Services

- ☆ Lunch Bunch, a monthly gathering with a free lunch for older adults to meet and schmooze.
- ☆ Holiday baskets and teen visits to seniors and senior facilities for Rosh Hashanah, Hanukkah and Passover.
- ☆ Holocaust survivor outreach.

Local Social Services

- ☆ Non-sectarian, individual and family outreach, information and referral services.
- ☆ Friendly Visitor Program.

Local Emergency Services

- ☆ Food Pantry and gift cards.
- ☆ Emergency financial assistance grants to families and individuals in crisis.
- ☆ Local disaster outreach and assistance.

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Jewish Family Services update

By Jodi Cohen, Jewish Family Services Coordinator

The Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry receives food on a weekly basis from Harry Chapin Food Bank and monthly from Midwest Food Bank. Several congregations, as



■ Jodi Cohen

well as some people, drop off food on a semi-regular basis. People are surprised to learn that Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties purchases all the other food that gets packed in the two bags given to every household, each weighing between 10-15 pounds.

The number of pantry clients increased dramatically after the pandemic started. Since Hurricane Ian, Federation has been serving more than 300 people a month, and that number doesn't include the clients who visit the pantry twice a month.

More people who are living in their cars are showing up. While FEMA was able to help many people affected by the hurricane, most of the people who visit the pantry received little to no help from FEMA or other organizations and are facing serious financial and housing issues. Because of your support, Jewish Family Services is able to provide food, financial assistance, information and resources while our wonderful volunteers provide quiet compassion and kindness to every single person who shows up.

Lunch Bunch update

The February Lunch Bunch was held at Word of Life Church, our cosponsor of the Israel @75 event being held Sunday, April 2 at Alliance for the Arts. Short films were shown at the lunch

that reflect Israeli life. The Jewish Film Institute features short Jewish-related films you can watch online for free. Just go to <https://jfi.org/watch-online>.

Federation is grateful for its community partnership with Word of Life Church and would like to thank Paula Harris, Pastor Gaspar Anastasi and Pastor Keith Schoep for hosting us.

Federation profile

Lindy Smith teaches movement to seniors with Parkinson's Disease, playing classical music during the class because, as she says, "not everyone wants to move to music that's 126 beats per minute." The classes are called, "Making a Liszt," "Moving Bach and Forth" and "Where Are You Haydn?"

When I asked Smith if I could interview her for a profile, she tried to wiggle out of it by saying that Carolyn



beaming light wherever she appears.


Her earliest memory of being of service was as a girl scout in a troop of Jewish girls with Jewish group leaders. They crocheted afghan squares for quilts, created puppet shows to perform in senior living communities, and baked and delivered treats. Smith shared that, "the leaders made us aware of social needs and economic differences in different

parts of society that white, Jewish, middle-class girls in Skokie typically wouldn't see."

My favorite question to ask anyone is, "So what makes your heart sing?" Smith emitted a big sigh after I posed the question and said, "So many things! Laughter, nature, people out in nature, music, seeing people in my classes move with smiles on their faces while using the scarves, light sticks and paper plates that I give them."

Anyone in Smith's orbit can't help but notice her sparkle. Thank you, Lindy Smith, for being a cherished member of the Federation family. 🌟






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At the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center

By Susan Suarez, President & CEO

The Museum's annual Triumph event at the Arthrex Conference Center was a great success! Thank you to our sponsors and all who attended for your support. Guest speaker Michael Abramowitz from Freedom House gave a most insightful presentation on the current state of international human rights and pro-



■ Susan Suarez

democracy movements. He is well qualified to speak on the subject due to personal contact with people on the ground in those movements. Net funds raised benefited our education programs.

Education department update

Our work with students and schools, to teach about the Holocaust and combat antisemitism, was featured in *Neapolitan Family Magazine* in its March issue. The article includes comments from high school student Bailey Reum. We applaud Bailey for being an upstander by speaking out and serving as a volunteer docent at the Museum. You can read the article at https://issuu.com/neafam/docs/march_2023_a/22.

Museum Education Specialist David Nelson and Keith Stringfellow, a USHMM teaching fellow from Winter Haven, FL, conducted a spring teacher workshop at the Museum. Participants in the all-day session came from elementary schools, middle schools, high schools and colleges across Southwest Florida. The agenda focused on the latest trends in Holocaust education and provided teachers with information and resources to use with their students. The group took advantage of the opportunity to share their insights and experiences of teaching about the Holocaust in the variety of grade levels represented.

Our Education department has also been working with 6th-grade students at Temple Shalom's Sunday School as they learn about the Holocaust. David Nelson gave a presentation on Holocaust Hero Irena Sendler, and Museum Board Member, Docent and Education Volunteer Stuart Mest, M.D. spoke to the class about children in the Holocaust. Dr. Mest's parents were Holocaust survivors. Survivor Rob Nossen, a board member, docent and education volunteer at the Museum, shared his



Teacher workshop room

family's experiences, as did survivor Judit Price. The class also had a private tour of the Museum led by Docent and Education Volunteer Irving Waldman.

The Education department continues to see an increase in the number of student and private group tours being scheduled. If you would like more information about the variety of educational options we offer, including bringing displays and speakers to your school, please email David Nelson at David@hmcec.org.

The Boxcar Exhibit, on loan to the Museum from F.E. and Jack Nortman and The Boxcar Foundation, will be at the Lehigh Acres Middle School this month. It then travels to the Punta Gorda Library for May.

Two Regimes exhibit

Our temporary exhibit in the Estelle and Stuart Price Gallery is on display through April. Through special arrangement, giclee prints of some of the paintings in the exhibit by Artist Nadia Werbitzky are available for \$35, plus tax. Please contact Museum Curator Cody Rademacher at Cody@hmcec.org for more information.

"Movies that Matter" update

The next "Movies that Matter – Steve Brazina Memorial Film Series" Zoom panel discussion will be held on Wednesday, May 3 from 4 to 5 p.m. (EST). The documentary, "APART," looks at the impact on women incarcerated on drug-related charges and their families. The film follows Tomika, Amanda and Malika as they try to restore family life during and after their prison terms.

Zoom panelists will include Tammy Franklin, associate director, academy programs at Prison Fellowship. Prison

volunteers shaped her life. Today, Franklin is bringing that same ray of hope back to incarcerated women.

Also joining the panel will be a representative from Avow Hospice, Inc.'s counseling program for children with incarcerated parents. One week prior to the Zoom discussion, a link to watch "APART" will be sent to all people who signed up. A link to the Zoom will be sent 24 hours before the program. To RSVP, please visit www.hmcec.org.

North wing update

Construction continues on our new north wing. The interior walls are up, and lighting and new window installations are nearly complete. The additional space will allow for a new classroom, an Auschwitz gallery, another gallery for other genocides and human rights, larger temporary exhibit space, and more. Upon completion, the Museum will increase

from 6,000 square feet to 9,600 square feet. This will allow us to serve thousands more students and guests each year. North wing naming opportunities are available. For more information, please contact me at 239-263-9200 or susan@hmcec.org.

Condolences

Our condolences to the families of local Holocaust survivors Paul Simko and Max Weisglass. We received word that both gentlemen recently passed away.

Yom HaShoah

This year, the annual community commemoration of Yom HaShoah will take place on Monday, April 17, 7 p.m., at the Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center. For more information, visit jewishnaples.org.

We look forward to seeing you at the Museum! 🌍

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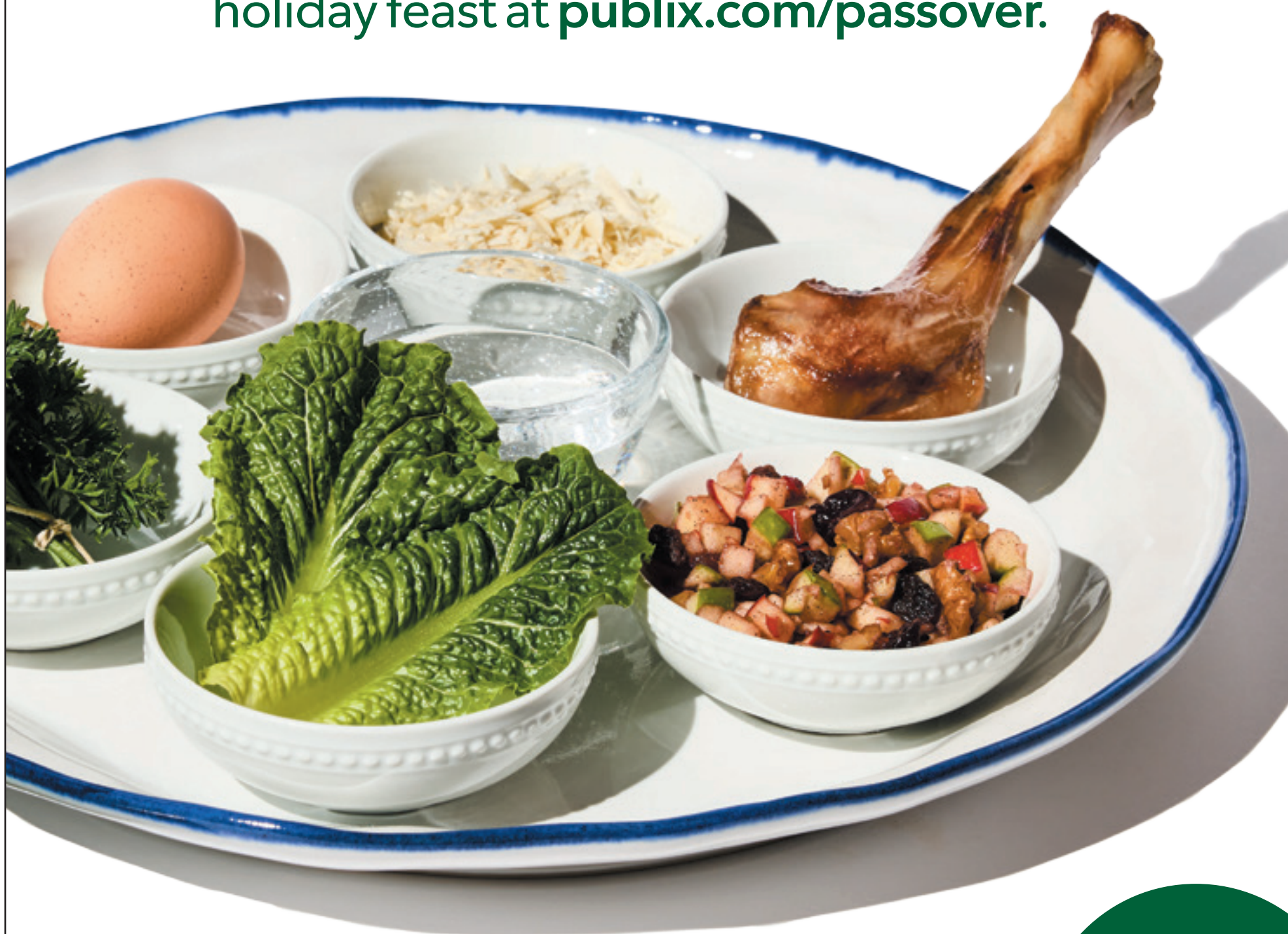
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North wing light installation

Chag Pesach Sameach!

Find the perfect dishes for your family's holiday feast at publix.com/passover.





Collier/Lee Hadassah celebrated inspiring women at second annual event

By Diane Schwartz

Collier/Lee Hadassah proudly celebrated and honored three women as its 2023 Inspiring Women event:

- Dr. Jaclynn Faffer, president/CEO of Baker Senior Center Naples and a visionary community leader and human services executive.
- Gail Markham, the founding partner of Markham Norton Mosteller

Wright & Company, P.A. Certified Public Accountants and Consultants. Markham is a well-known and recognized community leader and philanthropist.

- Mia Hyatt, vice president and private banker in the Naples office of J.P. Morgan Private Bank. Hyatt is a private wealth advisor and noted community leader.

Each honoree received the Lynn Wilner Award in recognition of the chapter's late past president who inspired so many to join and become active in Hadassah. 🌟



Dr. Jaclynn Faffer, Gail Markham and Mia Hyatt after each receiving the Lynn Wilner Award

Avoiding trauma at the Seder table

Aging Jewishly – What our traditions teach us about growing old

By Rabbi Barbara Aiello

With the “good dishes” gracing the table, wine glasses gleaming and places set for 26 guests, the annual Passover Seder was, as PopPop pronounced, “ready for prime time.” But in seconds, the tranquility of the evening was disturbed by the shrieks of the two youngest granddaughters.



■ Rabbi Barbara Aiello

“It’s my turn to put the parsley on the plates,” said granddaughter Keeley.

“Uh Uh, No way. That’s the job I always do,”

was granddaughter Naomi’s response.

“Well, I’m in charge of the parsley this year!” Keeley yelled.

“No way.” Naomi shot back. The girls continued what was escalating into a big fight until Bubby intervened.

“Girls, Girls, this year like we always do, we’ll be dipping parsley in salt water but this year we have a Sephardic family joining us, so we’ll be dipping celery in vinegar as well. There’s no need to fight. You both have jobs to do.”

That’s when PopPop looked up from his iPad and commented, “I wish all of

our family quarrels could be resolved so easily. Some of our Seder dinners turned into battlegrounds. Frankly, I don’t look forward to family gatherings so much anymore.”

Bubby agreed. “Remember last Passover, when we got to the Ten Plagues and our son wanted to go around the table a second time to list modern day plagues ...”

“Oy vey, what a mess! When politics got into the mix, we almost had a fistfight at the table! What’s it going to be like this year?”

Bubby and PopPop’s concerns are not unique. In recent years, controversy, particularly political concerns, have dominated traditional family gatherings — so much so that sociology and psychology experts have devoted hours of counseling time and pages in professional journals to the issue of contention around the family table.

According to the online news service, Health Partners, “Scientific research shows that we need healthy relationships in order to be in good health” and, specifically, humans need social support — that special connection with other people “who make you feel loved, heard and cared about.” However, when social support is damaged or even absent, family gatherings like Easter dinner or the Passover Seder can deteriorate into a

battleground where old grievances surface, where generational differences provoke misunderstandings and where differing values and opinions can ignite conflict.

Just ask Andrea M. Darcy, whose article “How to Survive a Family Gathering Emotionally Intact,” appeared recently (January 2023) on the Harley Therapy Mental Health Blog. Darcy’s counseling initiatives have resulted in seven steps to diffuse negativity when families come together.

Step 1: Show up neutral

Darcy cautions “If there are any lingering disagreements between you and your family members and you show up charged with either anxiety, anger or righteousness,” you have created fertile ground for having a difficult time.

Step 2: Don’t create triangles

Darcy explains that “triangles” is a group dynamics term that “refers to what happens when two people disagree and one person pulls a third bystander into the situation ... that creates an “us against them” energy that can snowball into a full-blown argument.” Instead, Darcy advises “There is nothing wrong with disagreeing with someone in your family. But disagree by yourself. “

Step 3: Lower your expectations

Darcy emphasizes that “The less you expect from a family gathering, the more likely you are to enjoy yourself.”

Step 4: Stop judging yourself

Darcy offers the example of the daughter who beat herself up for snapping at her father after he began his usual pattern of hurtful teasing. Alternatively, it is less painful to hold reasonable expectations of your family and of yourself, acknowledging that no gathering is perfect.

Step 5: Stick to one time zone

According to Darcy, “The problem with families is that we all go way, way back. And this means we can spend every family gathering noticing

what our family members do wrong ‘just like always.’” A focus on the present rather than past annoyances allows family members to ignore past hurts and slights and enjoy the present moment as best they can.

Step 6: Save it for later

Regarding the cumulative nature of years of family turmoil, Darcy reminds us that the family gathering is rarely the place to sort out lingering issues “once and for all.” For serious issues, Darcy recommends professional support.

Step 7: When in doubt, use your ears

Darcy believes that listening is key and notes that listening is perhaps the most underrated way to avoid overreacting and thus to improve relationships. Rather than nodding one’s head in agreement while thinking about a million other unrelated issues, actively listening requires staying in the “now” and reflecting back certain key phrases and pointed comments that demonstrate that the other person has been heard and understood.

Where families are concerned, conflict is a given. In fact, our Jewish traditions acknowledge that it is normal for family members to disagree. As a midrash emphasizes, “Even a father and son, when they sit to study Torah together, become enemies to one another. But they do not move from there until they have become beloved to one another.”

Here’s hoping that none of us leaves the Seder table until we’ve reestablished respect, compassion and the bonds of love.

Note: Link to the complete article by Andrea Darcey: <https://www.harleytherapy.co.uk/counselling/family-gathering-tips.htm>

For 10 years, Rabbi Barbara Aiello served the Aviva Campus for Senior Life as resident rabbi. Her most popular columns are now published in her new book, “Aging Jewishly,” available on Amazon books. Rabbi Barbara now lives and works in Italy, where she is rabbi of Italy’s first Reconstructionist synagogue. Contact her at rabbibarbara.com.

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“Wear it with pride, the yellow star!”

By Paul R. Bartrop, Professor Emeritus of History, Florida Gulf Coast University

Ninety years ago this month, in April 1933, a massive statement of Jewish self-assertion in the light of Nazi antisemitism was made by Robert Weltsch, the prewar editor of a twice-weekly Berlin Jewish newspaper, the *Jüdische Rundschau* (*Jewish Review*).

Born on June 20, 1891, to a long-established Jewish family in Prague, his father, Theodore Weltsch, was an active member of the Jewish community and played an important administrative role in communal organizations.

Robert Weltsch studied law at the Karl-Ferdinand German University of Prague, where he joined *Bar Kochba*, a Zionist student association to which many young Jewish intellectuals were attracted. He served as the association’s leader in 1911-1912. Between 1910 and 1914, he published articles in German-language Zionist newspapers, an activity he continued when serving as an officer on the Russian front in the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I.

After the war, Weltsch became editor-in-chief of the *Jüdische Rundschau* in Berlin, where he remained until he left Germany in 1938. A committed Zionist, he was keen to develop the

idea of a joint Jewish-Arab commonwealth for Palestine, in which statehood would be rarely discussed.

One of the reasons behind his opposition to a singular Jewish state in Palestine stemmed from his reaction to any form of nationalism or chauvinism, which he attributed to the horrors of war. Given this, he was fearful as to where the organized Zionist movement might lead.

Accordingly, he became one of the leading lights of the movement *Brit Shalom*, which advocated a binational Arab-Jewish presence in Palestine focusing on ideals such as political equality, cultural autonomy and socioeconomic coexistence. This led to hostility from some circles within the Zionist movement and, periodically, there were unsuccessful moves to have him removed as editor of the *Jüdische Rundschau*.

As one who wielded influence within the German Jewish community through the pages of his newspaper, Weltsch saw that he had an important responsibility to somehow accommodate Nazi antisemitic measures while at the same time showing that the Jewish community would not be cowed.

On April 1, 1933, the Nazis organized a boycott of all Jewish businesses in what was arguably the first overtly antisemitic measure adopted by the new Nazi government, and it was a failure.

Weltsch, alert to the possibilities the boycott signified for the future, reacted by publishing an article on April 4,

which became famous as one of the earliest Jewish responses to Nazi anti-Jewish persecution. Entitled “*Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck!*” (known by its English title as “Wear it with Pride, the Yellow Badge!”), Weltsch’s editorial was a call for the Jews of Germany to confront their changed situation with dignity and in solidarity.

He wrote that, in view of the new regime, “Today the Jews cannot speak except as Jews. Anything else is utterly senseless. ... We live in a new period ... indicating that the world of our previous concepts has collapsed. That may be painful for many, but in this world only those will be able to survive who are able to look reality in the eye.” He continued, in italics that, in view of the Jewish self-deception that they would always be accepted as Germans, “*It is not true that the Jews betrayed Germany. If they betrayed anyone, it was themselves, the Jews.*” Because the Jew did not display his Judaism with pride, because he tried to avoid the Jewish issue, he must bear part of the blame for the degradation of the Jews.”

He noted that, during the boycott, one often saw “windows bearing a large Magen David, the Shield of David the King. It was intended as dishonor.” Given this development, in which “the Jew is marked as a Jew” with “the yellow badge,” he now called upon the Jews of Germany to “take it up, the Shield of David, and wear it with pride!”

While the Nazis did not require Jews to wear yellow armbands with the Star of David until September 19, 1941, Weltsch was instead referring to a German-Jewish community that had, until that time, seen itself as a thoroughly integrated part of German society. Now that the Jews were being marked out, he was alerting them to the need to unite in view of what was now their “difference” — a metaphoric “yellow star,” so to speak.

During these early years of the Third Reich, Weltsch made trips to Palestine, reporting back to the *Jüdische Rundschau*. Though unconvinced that Palestine was the right place for German Jews to live, he tried to encourage them to leave. He was, however, concerned that whatever befell Germany’s Jews would, soon enough, extend across all of Europe, so any refuge — including Palestine — would have to be considered. War, he held, would mean that all German Jews “would be lost.”

He also acknowledged that, with things getting worse by the day, he’d be lucky to escape with his life, something he was able to do in September 1938, when he left Germany for Palestine.

He worked for many years as a correspondent for the newspaper *Haaretz* and, in 1945, moved to London as the newspaper’s European correspondent, covering the Nuremberg Trials during 1945-1946. He remained in London as a political journalist until his return to Jerusalem in 1978, where he died at age 91.



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Stars of David

By Nate Bloom, Stars of David Contributing Columnist

Editor's Note: Persons in **bold** are deemed by Nate Bloom to be Jewish for the purpose of this column. Persons identified as Jewish have at least one Jewish parent and were not raised in, or identify with, a faith other than Judaism. Converts to Judaism, of course, are also identified as Jewish.

"Paint"

Opening in theaters on April 7, "Paint" centers on Carl Nargle (Owen Wilson), who has hosted Vermont's No. 1 painting (TV) show for about 30 years. (The Nargle character is clearly inspired by the late Bob Ross of PBS fame. But Carl is not nearly as famous as Ross was).

Things change when Carl's TV station hires a younger, better painter and "steals" everything (and everyone) that Carl loves.

Michela Watkins, 51, has second billing as "Katherine," but advance publicity doesn't disclose her exact connection to Carl. You "know" Watkins — even though it's hard to point to a "signature credit."

"Sweetwater"

In theaters April 14, "Sweetwater" chronicles the career of Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton, who was one of the first two African-American players to break the NBA "color line" in 1950. (Two Black players broke into the NBA within days of each other). Clifton played for the NY Knicks from 1950-57.

A number of real-life Jews are featured in the film. It would take a column to lay out who they were and why they are important to the Clifton story. Here they are, with their titles and the actor playing them: **Maurice Podoloff** (**Richard Dreyfuss**, 75), highly respected attorney and head of the NBA in 1950; **Joe Laphick** (**Jeremy Piven**, 57), he was the coach of the Knicks in 1950 and a great player before coaching; **Abe Saperstein** (**Kevin Pollak**, 65), founder and coach of the all-black Harlem Globetrotters. Clifton played for the Trotters before joining the Knicks; and **Eddie Gottlieb**, big-time coach (Mike Star)

"The Last of Us"

I was reluctant to watch "The Last of Us," a "dystopian" HBO series that premiered in January and ended its first season a week ago. I like a relatively quick conclusion and I'm tired of movies and series that are set in a "screwed-up" fictional world and go on and on (sequels or new seasons).

For example, "The Walking Dead," about a zombie apocalypse, ran 11(!) seasons. It concluded when viewers would no longer watch repetitive storylines.

"The Last of Us" may "go the way" of "The Walking Dead." But, right now, it is an exciting, very well-written program. I tuned in and "binge-watched" it when I saw great reviews and articles that said that HBO had its biggest ratings hit since "Games of Thrones."

Here's the essential set-up: in 2003, a mutant fungus infects people all over the world. There is no vaccine or treatment. The infection turns victims into zombies whose only aim is to infect other people (via a bite). The storyline focuses on Joel Miller (Pedro Pascal), a small-time construction contractor who deftly stays uninfected. In flashbacks, and jumps forward, we follow him from 2003 to 2023. (No Jewish actor has appeared in a main or important guest role).

"Last" is based on a series of very popular and literate(!) video games (entitled "Naughty Dog"). For the most part, the plot of the first HBO season, and the characters, were created for the video game first.

The original video game and its sequels were created by and written (scripts) by **Neil Druckmann**, 44. He was born in Israel, and lived there until 1989, when his family moved to the States. He has the technical ability to create video games (programming, etc.) and the talent to write very good stories.

Druckmann and **Craig Mazin**, 51, co-created the HBO series and Mazin has adapted the video scripts for the HBO series. He is best known for writing and directing the HBO series "Chernobyl."

"So Help Me Todd"

Last September, I very briefly noted the premiere of the CBS drama "So Help Me Todd." This series stars Marcia Gay Harden as Margaret Wright, a buttoned-down, tough defense attorney.

Her son, Todd, played by co-star **Skyler Astin**, 30, screws up as a private investigator and loses his license. His mother, however, can legally hire him as an investigator for her law firm and that's what she does. Wright figures she can keep a close eye on Todd. Todd figures if he does well at his mother's firm, he can quickly get back his license.

Reviews have been pretty good, and the series drew a big enough audience that it was renewed for a second season last month.

Harden won a best supporting actress Oscar for playing painter **Lee Krasner** (1908-1984), in the 2000 movie "Pollock." It's about the famous abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock. Krasner was married to Pollock.

By coincidence, I recently looked up Krasner's bio and was surprised to learn that her reputation has soared since "Pollock" opened. Krasner's paintings now often sell for a million dollars or more. 🎨

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The best part of Passover

By Chef Dalia

The best part of Passover is when it's over. One of the most special parts of the holiday for me has always been Mimouna, a Moroccan tradition that celebrates the end of Pesach, the return to eating chametz. Mimouna is one of my favorite holidays of the entire year. After a full week of eating matzo and lots of potatoes, the end of Pesach really feels like freedom as we patiently await the Mimouna (pronounced mee-moo-nah) celebration. In my Moroccan family, we calmly count the minutes for this special occasion to come.

When I was growing up in Israel, the way my family finished Passover was very different from most of my friends' families. My age group was mostly Ashkenazi Jews and, as the holiday ended, their parents would obediently pack away their Passover dishes for another year. In our small Jaffa apartment, though, something paranormal was happening. My parents — immigrants from Morocco and Spain — were preparing for one of the best parts of our family's Jewish year, a remarkable celebration called Mimouna.

Mimouna, which falls on the night when Passover ends, is one of Sephardic Judaism's most beautiful celebrations. For our family, it was an all-night party. My mother, dressed in a beautiful kaftan, would lay out a luxurious spread of Moroccan sweets on our Mimouna table — marzipan pastries, dates and fried dough pancakes dipped in honey, called mufleta, to name just a few. My father would crank up Arabic music on the stereo. We'd swing open the doors and welcome scores of guests — fellow Moroccan Jews, Israelis, Muslims, Christians and a fair share of neighbors who just wanted to see what the excitement was all about.

My mom describes the eve of the Mimouna, where families held a gathering, like an "open house," where anyone could stop by, enjoy a sweet treat and visit with others. Since it

was an open house, everyone was welcome, no questions asked. When the muflettot (the plural of mufletta, the yeasted pancake served at Mimouna) were served, blessings for prosperity, fertility, luck and success were offered. Visitors who were single at the time were blessed to find a partner for marriage so that they could build a Jewish home together.

If you've never been to a post-Passover Mimouna celebration, you have no idea what you've been missing. This Moroccan tradition is celebrated by inviting friends and relatives over to enjoy table after table of prepared pastries and sweet treats that hail from North African Jewish cuisine. Traditionally, many of the cookies are adorned with marzipan flowers and mint leaves.

During Passover, we restrict leavened dough and Mimouna celebrates all the delicious, leavened dough that we return to our dietary repertoire. Traditionally, in my family, we make sfinge for Mimouna, which is a Moroccan donut that we also eat on Hanukkah. We also eat various traditional cookies, some stuffed with dates, almonds, pistachios and chocolate, and others with rose water and coconut. My family, which loves to bake and cook, is big on fancy presentation, so Mimouna ends up showcasing a plentiful spread of the most beautiful desserts.

However, the most popular dish served on this night is a thin yeast pancake called mufleta, which is eaten spread with butter and honey. Mufleta is the most favorite part of the celebration, and the Mimouna simply wouldn't be complete without it.

Mimouna is first and foremost about opening up your home and, no matter how many people show up, there's always plenty of room and food for everyone. That's part of the sweet magic of Mimouna. There are no formal invitations, and food is abundant and seemingly endless. The traditional greeting at Mimouna is *Tirbah*

u'tissad (May you prosper and succeed), and it seems that the atmosphere of wealth and success hovers over every Mimouna.

On Thursday night, April 13, I am going to host a Mimouna celebration — a traditional Israeli Mimouna fest to celebrate the end of Passover exactly like I used to do in Israel. Come, listen to traditional music, connect with friends and, of course, eat mufleta, the Moroccan crepe-like pancakes dipped in honey. Drop by if you want to join in the fun!

Even if you can't get to my house, Israel or Morocco to join in one of the many community parties, you can get in on the Mimouna celebrations by trying your hand at mufleta. It takes a bit of practice to make perfectly but are easy to make. 🍷



Personal Chef Dalia Hemed can be reached at daliahemed@msn.com.



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Mufleta Recipe

Ingredients

- 3 Tbsp. active dry yeast
- 3 cups warm water
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- About 7½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- About 1 cup vegetable oil for dipping
- Melted butter for drizzling
- Honey for drizzling

Instructions

1. Dissolve the yeast in ½ cup water. Stir in the sugar and let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes. In a large bowl, combine the yeast mixture, remaining water, salt and 4 cups flour. Gradually add enough remaining flour to make dough slightly softer than regular bread dough. On a lightly floured surface, knead until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes.

2. Divide the dough into 40 egg-sized balls. The traditional way is to grab the mass of dough and squeeze the desired amount between a forefinger and thumb, then twist and pinch off the protruding ball. Dip and roll the balls in the oil to coat, place on a flat surface and let stand for 30 minutes.

3. Heat an ungreased large cast-iron or nonstick skillet over medium heat.

4. On an oiled flat surface and using oiled hands, flatten the balls into ⅛-inch-thick rounds. Cook the dough rounds until golden brown on the bottom, about 2 minutes. Turn and cook until golden and cooked through, about 1 minute. Cover the mufletas with a kitchen towel until serving to keep soft. Eat warm, drizzled with butter and honey.



Chad Gadya — why a goat?

Why, you may ask, have Jews always celebrated goats?

By Arlene Stolnitz

Editor's note: This is a repeat of this column's April 2022 article due to its timeliness.

Why? Because they have always lived with goats. In every shtetl, even the poorest family kept a goat to provide milk for the children. Throughout the centuries, Jews have identified with the *klor vays tsigele*, the small white goat, a familiar figure in Jewish culture.



■ Arlene Stolnitz

According to folklore, it was not unusual for Jews to have their beloved goat sleep inside the house on a cold night!

Who doesn't know the light-hearted, but symbolic, "Chad Gadya," sung in a mix of Aramaic and Hebrew every year at the Passover Seder? Or the beloved "Roshinkez Mit Mandlen-Raisins and Almonds," especially revered by Ashkenazi European Jews. And there is the lesser-known children's musical game dance, "Yesh Lanu Taish – We Have a Goat."

Passover will be here soon and a discussion of the symbolism in "Chad Gadya" is appropriate. According to Biblical scripture (Exodus 12:5), the Pesach offering can be either a lamb or a goat. Its sacrifice has come to represent

the oppression of the Jewish people throughout the centuries, much like that of the Israelites' experience in Egypt.

"Roshinkez" tells the story from Yiddish folklore of a small white goat asleep under a baby's cradle. Written by Abraham Goldfaden, the song has become, in modern times, a metaphor for the extinction of European Jewry during the Holocaust.

We also know "the goat" has appeared in well-known works of art and literature. Many of Chagall's paintings portray a "goat." Poems and stories by Shalom Aleichem, Issac Bashevis Singer and I.L. Peretz often include "the goat" in their literature. I recently read "The Enchanted Tailor" by Shalom Aleichem, which tells a "shtetl" story about the importance of goats to villagers.

As described in the Shalom Aleichem story, "...if there is a goat in the house, you can have a glass of milk for the children, you can cook porridge with milk, you can make a milk soup for dinner, noodles and milk for supper and, besides, you can count on a pitcher of sour cream, a piece of cheese, a bit of butter. Think of it. If we only had a goat! ...There is an ancient law that every Jew must own a goat. Let me quote you..."

So, back to the beginning...why a goat? Let's go back in time. My research shows that goats have been

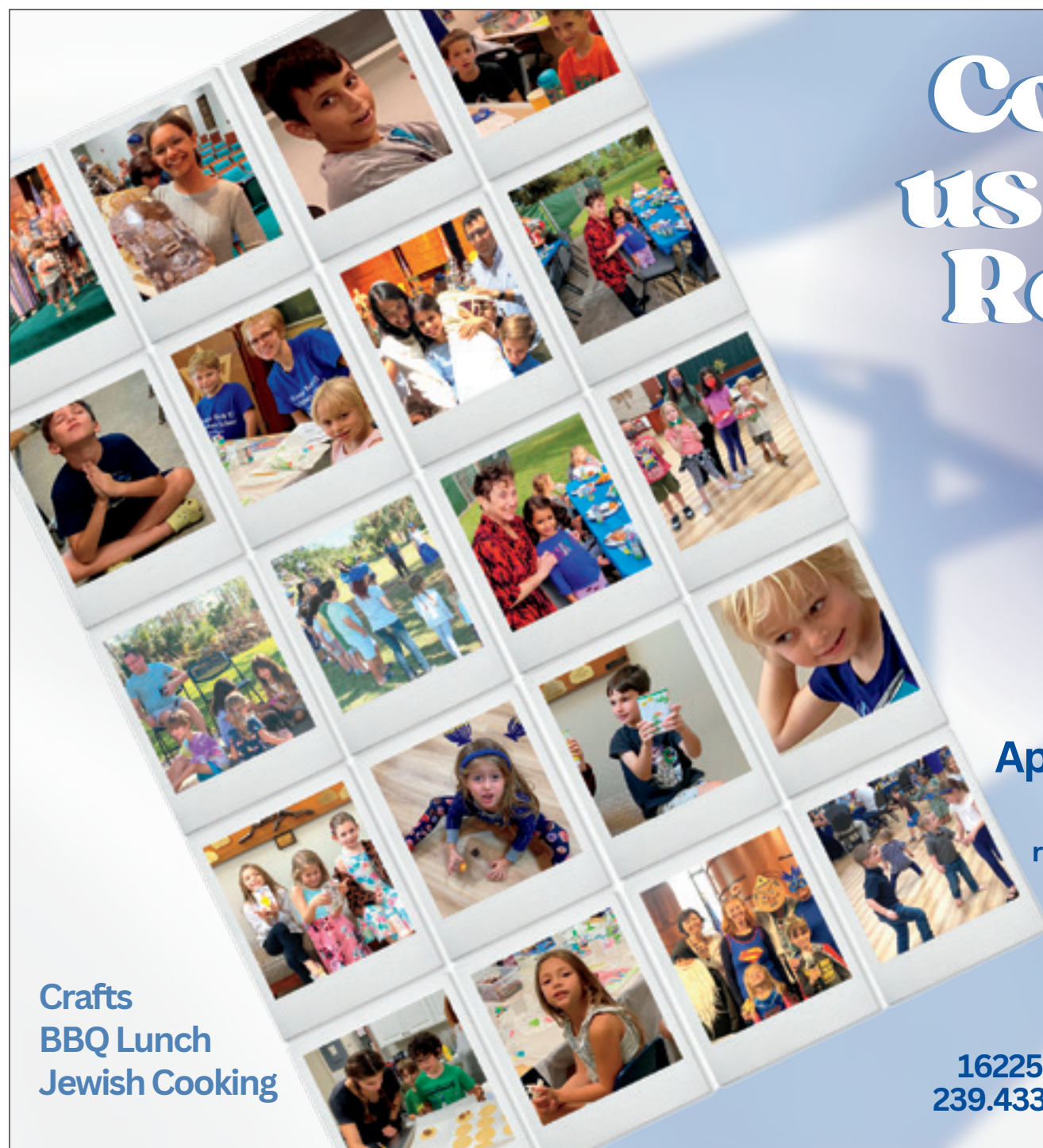


around as far back as prehistoric times. Goats were the first animal to be tamed by humans and were being herded over 9,000 years ago! Earliest remnants of domesticated goats were found in Iran over 10,000 years ago.

This small, useful animal was important in ancient civilizations, especially in the Fertile Crescent. Goats were animals of unique intelligence, virility and behavior. Because of their usefulness and hardiness, the goat is often depicted as a symbol of fertility, abundance, aggression and good luck in many ancient cultures. It is clear to me that, through the centuries, goats played an important role both in household and temple rituals.

My interest in goats was piqued when I visited the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA. Their logo is a goat, and I was curious to know why they had chosen this as their symbol. And all of this led me to the article you are reading today.

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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Loving the Loire

By Jerry Greenfield, the Wine Whisperer

The Loire Valley in France offers abundant attractions to the wine lover. Let's start with the chateaux. In days past, before the Revolution, the rich and famous from Paris retreated in the summer months to their homes along the river. Some of these "cottages" covered hundreds of thousands of square feet and had over 200 rooms. These days, many of them are either operated as luxury hotels or, better yet, as bed and breakfast inns at delightfully moderate prices.



■ Jerry Greenfield

Then, of course, there are the wines. The Loire is the longest river in France, running northward from the eastern highlands and bending around to the west, ultimately emptying in to the Atlantic at Nantes. At the bend are two villages, Sancerre and Pouilly, and it is from here that many of the zingiest, classiest

examples of sauvignon blanc have their origins.

While we might first associate sauvignon blanc with New Zealand, the grape is indigenous to the Loire, where it has been cultivated since around 400 AD. Luckily, sauvignon blanc is one of the most food-friendly wines you can buy. I subscribe to my own personal "lemon law:" if you can put lemon on it, you can drink sauvignon blanc with it. Perfect for broiled fish, shellfish and similar dishes.

The Loire is a diverse area, and wines are made in a very wide range of styles. Some wineries use stainless steel tanks for fermentation, then age the wine in small oak barrels, which makes it fuller and rounder. In other wineries, there's not a stick of oak to be seen.

Generally, the Pouilly wines are fuller, while Sancerres are lighter and easier to drink young. Since the villages are directly across the river from each other, they share the same climate but not the same winemaking traditions. With a cool climate, the major

characteristic of both areas is acidity. They are "zippy" whites, often with agreeable vegetal overtones such as hay, straw and grass.

Sidebar: In addition to the fine wines of Pouilly and Sancerre, don't pass up the offerings from a region called Menetou-Salon. These lesser-known wines offer great value.

As we travel farther west, we come to the central region, anchored by the towns of Chinon and Bourgueil (pronounced boor-GOOEY, or something like that). In this area, there's hardly a white grape to be seen. It's the home of cabernet franc, a big, bold red that's a major component of the Bordeaux blend but bottled here as a single varietal. If you like solid, mouth-filling reds, this is the stuff for you.

Keep going, and you'll find yourself in the areas of Samur and Anjou, the home of chenin blanc, another refreshing, acidic white. Though it originates in this region, the South Africans, who call it "Steen," make some excellent versions at decent prices.

Since the area is so diverse (we haven't even discussed Vouvray or Melon de Bourgogne yet), it may be worth a more extended visit in a future article. For now, however, I'd like to suggest a few producers to watch for. If you see their names on the label, chances are you're in for a treat ... and a great value.

For sauvignon blanc, look for **Pascal Jolivet**, **Alphonse Mellot**, and **Henri Bourgeois**. For cabernet franc, our favorites are **Yannick Amirault** (the big dog in the region) and **Bernard Baudry**.

Sample widely. Please email questions, comments or suggestions for future articles. Here's to you!

Jerry Greenfield, the Wine Whisperer, is Creative Director of Greenfield Advertising Group. His book, "Secrets of the Wine Whisperer," is now available through his website or on Amazon. Read his other writings on his website, www.winewhisperer.com.

Dignity for the body, peace for the soul

By Malka Forshner, SW Florida Chevra Kadisha

My first encounter with Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society) was when my mother passed away 24 years ago. I was clueless. All I knew was that "they" would take care of "everything." And they did, quickly, quietly and professionally. She was buried according to our age-old traditions — simple shrouds, no makeup, no fancy casket, in-ground burial — as our ancestors have done since the very first Jew, Abraham, purchased the field of the Machpela in Hebron to bury his wife, Sara.

Fast forward to 10 years ago, when I was asked to attend a training session

for prospective members of the Chevra Kadisha — a job I never thought I'd do but remembered four Jewish women did for my mother somewhere in the Greater Washington, D.C. area. Now it was my turn to do the mitzvah.

So, what's the deal with Jewish burial? We all really need to know, since there is a shockingly high rate of cremation, not just in the population at large but within our Jewish community. One or two generations ago, this was unheard of. A generation of Jews was beyond shocked with grief when they heard the unfathomable report of the crematoriums of Nazi

Germany. The notion of doing that to one of our own was unthinkable. Reform, conservative, orthodox or unaffiliated, we could not, would not, entertain such a plan.

But every generation has its challenges, and one of ours is insipid media pressure to consider the cremation option as 1) more ecological, 2) more suited to the demographics of parents and children not living in the same geographic area, 3) cleaner and quicker, and 4) cheaper (that last argument is the only valid one, but a myriad of Jewish organizations will help with that).

Fast forward to just a month ago, when we hosted an extensive training session for current and prospective members of this organization, right here, for residents of Collier, Lee, Charlotte and Sarasota counties. We were educated by the Florida representative of the National Association of Chevra Kadisha, Rabbi Jay Lyons (Nasck.org), a man of vast knowledge and sensitivity on the topic of Jewish burial and all it entails.

Why do you need to know about our organization, especially if you've never had the notion to perform this particular mitzvah? (You should know it's the only mitzvah called "chesed shel emes" — "the kindness of truth," since we can never expect to get the favor returned) You need to know about us because you'll need our services. It's for every

Jew, and you shouldn't assume that it happens automatically.

We are here for every Jew, and we hope that all your loved ones (and you) have the proper paperwork in place so that, when the time comes, there will be no concerns or delays about how everything should be done.

To quote a brochure written by the renowned Doron Kornbluth, author of "Cremation or Burial:" "Why should I care if I am dead anyway? Our bodies are a gift, and we have no right to hurt ourselves in life or death. Cremation is often chosen due to social or cultural influences based on misconceptions about its impact on our family, our soul, our environment and our Jewish traditions On a deeper ... level, when a soul departs from its body ... it has a much greater understanding of the spiritual implications of cremation. Looking "down" at its body, there is nothing a soul wants more than a proper Jewish burial. No matter how religious you were or weren't, choosing burial means: you were born a Jew and want to be remembered as a Jew."

Do you need help with this decision or finding the proper paperwork to make sure everything will go smoothly at the right time? Do you want reading material? We're here to assist you in attaining dignity for the body and peace for the soul. Email us at swfloridachevrakadisha@gmail.com.



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Connecting with distant family is possible and important

The first picture below is exquisite. Taken in the early 1900s, it's remarkable to think technology was capable of capturing a family photo so clearly that long ago. Just left of center is Yitzhak Kroker. He is seated, wearing a tall, black yarmulke. Around him are his wife, Golda, and their eight children. Some of the older kids appear to be in their late teens. In fact, it's a little hard to tell if the woman standing behind Yitzhak is his wife or daughter. Golda is actually seated with their youngest child in her lap. It's a beautiful Latvian Jewish family. And it's about to break apart.

There is another photo, taken maybe 15 years later. Yitzhak and Golda are seated in the center, still very recognizable. Same yarmulke. Golda's hair is still dark. Yitzhak's beard has grayed. The Kroker children have grown up. Some have married, and there is a



■ **Brian Simon**

new generation of children seated on the floor in front. The family has grown but two of the older children have moved far away.

Between 1914-1920, half of Latvia's Jewish population fled the country. Golda was killed in a pogrom. Yitzhak also died before leaving. The second-youngest daughter, Dora, moved to Pittsburgh, sponsored by an aunt. The rest of her



siblings moved to Australia, and she never saw them again.

This is the story of how later generations of the Kroker family reconnected 100 years later.

The story starts in the early 2000s with a second-grade project at Canterbury School in Ft. Myers. Benji Osterman was assigned to write about a foreign country. His mother, Rozzi, suggested he do something about Australia, and she started her own project.

"I always knew we had family in Australia," Rozzi says. "Grandma didn't talk about it. Clearly, the memories were painful."

Dora, the daughter that moved to Pittsburgh, was Osterman's maternal grandmother. The internet, followed by the iPhone and Facebook, have shrunk the world in a way that would have been impossible for her to imagine.

Rozzi contacted the Australian Jewish Genealogy Society. Her only clue was the name Alex Sharp, a distant cousin who had once visited Pittsburgh. He owned a cinema in Melbourne. She emailed him. Alex connected her with Janette Lange, whose mother was Dora's closest sister. Four years later, Rozzi and her sister, Linda, met Janette in Israel. They stayed in touch through Facebook and Linda connected with another cousin, Anita.

More years go by. It's 2020. COVID-19 has changed the world, but Zoom has connected it in a new way. Anita's daughter has a bat mitzvah. Rozzi and her husband, John, are touring the U.S. in an RV. They stop at a Walmart somewhere in Tennessee to join the Zoom call. It's midnight.

That was when Rozzi decided she and her sisters had to go to Australia.

"Grandma died when I was in the eighth grade. I never got those stories," she said. "My life has been devoted to Holocaust survivor stories. How do I not know her story?"

Osterman had spent years helping interview and videotape Holocaust survivors to record their oral histories for the Shoah Foundation. She also has some understanding of having far-flung family members. Her younger sister, Linda, lives in Israel. Her older sister, Elisa, is in Los Angeles.

Ironically, the three sisters have each traveled the world, but they had never done a trip together. Scheduling was tricky. The length of the trip kept shrinking. It was suggested they postpone. Rozzi pushed forward.

"I've seen beautiful scenery my whole life. I need to meet people. I need to have connection."

They met Anita and another cousin in Sydney, then flew across the continent to Perth. They were greeted at the airport by a sign that read "Dora's Girls."

"We walk into all these cousins, and we're greeted

with 'I'm Morris's granddaughter. I'm Sara's granddaughter.' It was just so fun."

Their cousin Denise had a smile that reminded the sisters of Dora.

"I think the Australians thought my grandmother had a fabulous life in America. They asked me, 'Was it glorious?' I thought to myself, 'glorious?' Grandma lived a modest life with three daughters and her husband's extended family in Squirrel Hill, Pittsburgh."

Family photos came out of bags and big envelopes. Someone had a picture of Dora with Rozzi's parents on their wedding day. It was a family reunion, not only for the long-lost relatives from America but also for the Australians who hadn't seen each other in a long time.

"They couldn't believe we came. It was expensive and far. But it was life-changing, so circle-of-life completion for me. We didn't get all the family stories, but we know Dora had a lovely family. They missed her and thought of her."

There had been some contact between continents before this year. Sporadic phone calls between Dora and her siblings. Elisa and her parents had met Janette's sister, Golda, in Los Angeles in the 1970s.

Back home in Ft. Myers, Osterman still gets Facebook messages, emails and even an occasional phone call.

"Hello, is this Rozzi? This is Deanna. I'm Barney's daughter. I'm in Melbourne, how are you?" She passes the phone around to her family to "meet my cousin in America!"

If you live in Southwest Florida, you probably know what it's like to live apart from family. Maybe you came here for a job. Maybe you retired here. Maybe you even came here from another country.

We are from Missouri and Pennsylvania as well as Venezuela and Argentina as well as Israel and South Africa.

People move. Call them refugees or immigrants or snowbirds. We go toward opportunity and away from conflict. Yitzhak and Golda Kroker's family were not unique in leaving Eastern Europe for a better life. The difference between then and now is the ease and speed of communication and travel.

Dora Kroker Spokane died too soon to enjoy video chats and cross continental flights. Her descendants still enjoy the connection. 🌐





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Daily blessings for everyone

By Rabbi Nicole Luna

In Judaism, we are encouraged to recite 100 blessings a day. This may seem like a lot until you realize that there is a blessing for every day, for routine actions we do every single morning. There's a blessing for opening your eyes when you wake up, stretching your arms, getting out of bed and planting your feet on the ground. That's four blessings before you've even taken your first step. And, by the way, that first step has a blessing, also. So does getting dressed and going to the bathroom. And since there's a blessing for drink and food, your first cup of coffee is covered and your breakfast, too.

But, for many people, especially those with chronic illness and disabilities, essential parts of their morning routine are left out and ignored. While I was on sabbatical last summer at a rabbinic retreat, I met Rabbi Emily Aronson, who founded Chronic Congregation, an online community whose mission is to reframe how Judaism has talked about disability and illness and to offer new prayers and rituals that reflect the lived experience of disabled and chronically ill Jews.

Unfortunately, Judaism has often ignored or even rejected these experiences. Rabbi Aronson wrote a new blessing for a very common morning

ritual for those living with chronic illness and disability — taking one's daily medication. It does not ask for a complete cure or for God to grant healing but reaches out to God as a partner in creation and hope.

The prayer reads: *"Partner in creation, Modeh/Modah/Modet Ani, I offer thanks: for the awakening of my body and soul, for the wisdom of scientists, for the potential that this day holds. May this medication fulfill its purpose. May my soul find meaning in this day. May I treat my body compassionately as I create myself anew each day."*

I encourage you to explore Chronic Congregation, which also has a prayer for starting a new medication, a prayer for dealing with frustration with health insurance and a meditation for when loved ones don't understand.

Chronic illness and disability were certainly present when the rabbis discussed saying 100 blessings a day. But they were not able to imagine a world when the daily routines and needs of those chronically ill and disabled were worthy of reaching out to God.

Today, our understanding and our liturgical options have expanded, allowing for those experiences to be expressed and honored. Today, we lift up those in our community dealing with chronic illness and disability — you are not alone. Your experiences are worthy of prayer and blessing.

Rabbi Nicole Luna serves at Temple Beth El in Fort Myers.

... there is a blessing for every day, for routine actions we do every single morning.

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Passover: A war between Gods

By Rabbi Stephen Fuchs

More Jews will celebrate Passover, beginning this year on Wednesday evening, April 5, than any other event in the Jewish religious calendar.



■ Rabbi
Stephen
Fuchs

Too many of us, though, have a fuzzy perception of what Passover is all about. To fully understand Passover and the Exodus narrative that is the basis of our Festival of Freedom, we must view it as a war — a boxing match, if you will — between gods.

In one corner, we have the Egyptian god, Pharaoh. Pharaoh is like any pagan god that one worships by glorifying him with monuments, pyramids, sphinxes and garrison cities. If slaves are necessary to build these structures, so be it. If beating those slaves keeps them working, that is fine, too. And if over-population becomes an issue (see the First Chapter of Exodus), simply throw their baby boys into the Nile.

In the other corner, though, we have the one true God of the Hebrew Bible. God wants us to treat one another with respect and dignity and not to steal, cheat, exploit others or lie. God has particular concern for the powerlessness of society: the widow, the orphan, the refugee, the abused and the impoverished. The contrasting value systems represented by Pharaoh and God cannot coexist peacefully. So, in the Exodus narrative, God goes to war with Pharaoh.

Yes, it would be lovely if war was never necessary, but do tyrants ever give up their power peacefully? Was the Civil War in our country not a necessity to end slavery? Torah is not always about the way life should be but about the way life is.

Imagine the scene from many a Western movie in which the sheriff says to the bad guy, "This town ain't big enough for both of us," and a showdown ensues. Well, Exodus is a showdown between God and Pharaoh.

Because God saved us from a hopeless existence of oppression and drudgery, we freely choose how we will earn a living, how we will spend our leisure and how or if we will worship. In short, we believe we owe God a debt that we can never repay.

Yet, we try. We try by performing acts of kindness, caring, compromise and compassion. Passover is more than a lesson in biblical history. During our Seder (the name for the Jewish Passover ritual), we smell, taste, feel, hear and

**Because God
saved us from a
hopeless existence
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Yet, we try.**

see the ardor of slavery and the joy of redemption. We act as if we were there. Because we know what it is like to be slaves, we vow to do our utmost to free others in captivity. Because we know the joy of liberation, we pledge our talent to help liberate those enslaved today.

Passover is as much about our present and the future as the past. We prove its validity and our desire to serve the one true God, by working in whatever ways we can to foster justice and righteousness in our world.

Rabbi Stephen Lewis Fuchs serves at Bat Yam Temple of the Islands on Sanibel Island.



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Let “our” people go

By Cantor Barry Butensky

In a few days, Jewish families all over the world will sit down and tell the ancient story of the Hebrews’ exodus from Egyptian bondage.



■ Cantor Barry Butensky

The conversations will cover any number of subjects — from the ancient exodus itself to politics to who makes the best matzah ball soup! The goal, however, is to make the meal not just an eating extravaganza of holiday and ritual foods by itself but to create a spiritual platform to delve into the deeper meanings of the Exodus for these times and for the timeless lessons of being enslaved and having faith in God, who delivered the Jewish people out of bondage.

One of the most relevant topics about the Exodus is not mentioned — that is the power struggle between Pharaoh and Moses. Moses returns from a self-imposed exile in the desert and faces Pharaoh by saying, “Let my people go.” His use of the term “let,” or *sh’lach*, is a command form of the verb to send forth. What hutzpah to command Pharaoh, who was treated as a god in Egyptian culture.

It wasn’t until the final plague, consisting of the death of the first born, that Pharaoh succumbed to the demand of Moses. Then, when they left Egypt and headed for the “Sea of Reeds,” Pharaoh reneged on his decree to release the Hebrews. He pursued them until he cornered them with their backs to the water, hoping to drive them all into the sea. Again, God intervened and split the sea and they passed through the waters. Only after they all reached the other side did the soldiers chase after them and drown.

Each time, Pharaoh, whose military might was far superior to the Hebrews, tried to assert his power, he failed. Each time, the faith of the Hebrews and the support of God defeated Pharaoh’s worldly powers. Each side was fighting two different battles with completely different strengths. Pharaoh’s strength was the whip and brute force. Moses’ strength was being the servant of God and wielding the staff of faith.

In fact, the faith of the Hebrews was just as important as Moses’ own faith. The Ukrainians today fight

valiantly against Putin’s armed forces, and it reminds me of the same power dynamic. Putin’s forces and weaponry are far superior, yet, the Ukrainians have strength not only in using weapons, but in their spirit and belief in their cause and in protecting their land and nation. It may not be a strictly religious motivation but their determination comes from deep within their souls.

Clearly, Moses spoke truth to power and triumphed in the end and we, too, must speak the same truth to Putin. His pride, like Pharaoh’s pride, is on the

The faith of the Hebrews was just as important as Moses’ own faith.

line. The millions of Ukrainian refugees remind me of the Hebrews leaving Egypt where they lived for over 400 years.

In the case of the Hebrews, their story was about an escape from four centuries of servitude. But here, the Ukrainians are fighting to protect themselves from being turned into slaves to Putin and Russia.

The ultimate battle for Ukraine is a fight for the soul and dignity of the Ukrainian nation. For Putin, one has to wonder, is it all about asserting his power and protecting his authority


under the guise of being an invincible despot ruling over not only Ukraine but all of Eastern Europe?

Delusions of grandeur was Pharaoh’s Achilles heel and, I maintain, that it, too, will bring Putin down in the end. NATO will give Ukraine more weapons, but it is the self-determination in the heart and soul of the Ukrainian people that will enable them to prevail in the long run.

I feel deeply that speaking truth to power was Moses’ greatest weapon beside his faith in God. The suffering and violence somehow made us stronger and that may have been another source of our faith and strength. Ukrainian President Zelensky embodies that ethos and I pray that he and his leadership will demonstrate that spirit and determination to survive and prevail for his people as Moses did for his.

That is why we conclude the meal and recite the last line of the Narrative story, “Next Year in Jerusalem.” For the Ukrainians, it might be “Next Year in a free Kiev.”

A Zissen Pesach.

Cantor Barry Butensky serves at Temple Beth Shalom in Cape Coral. 



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We deeply appreciate your support. Your contributions have gone a long way in helping both our local and global Jewish community.

This Passover, as you gather with family and friends around the Seder table and ask the four questions, what will your fifth be? Ours may simply be: “What can we do on this night to repair the world?” With your continued support, you can help us answer it.

Thank you again for your compassion and commitment. From our family to yours, we wish you a happy, healthy, and meaningful Passover.

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The season of our freedom

By Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz

In the Haggadah, we say, “Even if we are all wise, all men of understanding, and all know the Torah, it is a *mitzvah* for us to tell of the Exodus from Egypt.” This quote indicates that the point of the Seder is not merely an intellectual experience. For, after all, if we are wise and know the Torah, then we also know the story of the Exodus.

Instead, the intent is that the Seder enables us to relive the Exodus, to realize — as we say later in the Haggadah — that “not only our ancestors [were] redeemed from Egypt, but G-d redeemed us as well.” Every Seder is an opportunity for each one of us to leave Egypt.

What does it mean for us to leave Egypt, when many of us have never seen that part of the world?

Mitzrayim — the Hebrew name for Egypt — shares a connection with the term *meitzarim*, meaning “boundaries” or “limitations.” Leaving Egypt means going beyond those forces that hold us back and prevent us from expressing who we really are. The idea of leaving Egypt reminds us that, in a certain way, we are all slaves.

Each one of us has a soul that is “an actual part of G-d.” This is the core of our being, our real “I.” But we find ourselves in Egypt, for there are forces, both external and internal, that prevent

us from being in touch with this spiritual potential and giving it expression.

The Seder night is a time when these forces do not have the power to hold us back. For Passover is “The Season

Passover should initiate a process of endless growth, empowering us to continuously break through ever subtle levels of limitations and express our spiritual potential ...

of Our Freedom.” From the time of the Exodus — indeed, from the beginning of time — this night was chosen as a night on which the potential is granted to express our G-dly core. Every year, at this time, within the spiritual hierarchy of

the world, there is “an exodus from Egypt.” All restrictions fall away and transcendent G-dliness is revealed.

This spiritual awakening filters down within our souls, prompting us to tap our spiritual core, express our unbounded

G-dly potential and leave Egypt, i.e., to break through any and all restraints.

This experience should not remain an isolated spiritual peak. Instead, Passover should initiate a process of endless growth, empowering us to continuously break through ever subtle levels of limitations and express our spiritual potential at all times.

This concept is reflected in the Lubavitch custom not to recite the passage “*Chasal Siddur Pesach*” (“The Passover Seder is concluded”) which others say at the end of the Seder. The intent of the omission is to emphasize that our Passover experience should be ongoing. Throughout the year, we should look to the Seder as the beginning of a pattern of new growth and spiritual expression.

Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz serves at Chabad Lubavitch of Southwest Florida.



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The Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties is creating a Holocaust Education department in response to growing antisemitism and a need for education and remembrance. The new department will sponsor outreach programs in the schools and community as well as host speaking, author and film events. We are also in the process of creating a remembrance wall that will highlight local loved ones lost in the Shoah. For naming and other donor opportunities, or to share stories, please contact JFED Holocaust Education Director Ella Naylor at 239-281-7874 or via email at jfedholocaustdirector@gmail.com



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A world of wholeness and peace is possible

By Rabbi Marc Sack

We end the Pesach Seder with the words, “Next Year in Jerusalem.” What does this mean? Is it a commitment to make Aliyah in the next year? Or, at least to make a family pilgrimage to celebrate the holiday at an Israeli hotel?

These actions are possible for many of us but few, if any of us, take them. But what about those who currently live in Jerusalem? Do they say, “Next Year We’ll Stay Home?” Even those who celebrate Pesach in Jerusalem end their Seder with a revised version of these



■ Rabbi Marc Sack

words: “Next Year in a Rebuilt Jerusalem.” In a city now full of building cranes, this surely cannot refer to a new hotel. For some, it is a prayer for a rebuilt Temple on the Temple Mount. For most of us, it must have another meaning.

Jerusalem is, for us Jews, more than a particular city in the state of Israel. Like the root of its name, *sh-l-m*, it represents a place of wholeness and peace. It is the place where all Jews can live with dignity and practice our tradition in comfort. Moreover, since we opened our Seder with the words, “Let all who are hungry, enter and eat,” Jerusalem represents the time when the poor will be fed and housed, and no one will be persecuted or enslaved. Jerusalem

represents the world we Jews are building for ourselves and others.

“Next Year in Jerusalem” is a call to action, not (just) to get on an airplane, but to build a world of wholeness and peace. We Jews believe that such a world is possible.

But it feels like we’re ending the Seder, the most widely observed Jewish celebration, on a down note. Why would we do that? Because we are not completely free; because too many are satisfied with where they are, without a vision or longing for a better future. Is the world we live in as good as it gets? Can there be no peace for us Jews? Can there be no peace between other peoples? Have

we given up on eradicating hunger and disease? As delicious and fun as our Seder is, the haggadah ends with the charge that we must not give up on that better future.

There is a place and a time where all Jews will live in peace. But not only us; the peace of Jerusalem will be felt throughout the world. We end the Seder with “Next Year in Jerusalem” to say, “Get up tomorrow and build that city.” That dream and vision of wholeness is what we Jews strive for.

Rabbi Marc Sack serves at Temple

Judea in Fort Myers. 

“Next Year in Jerusalem” is a call to action, not (just) to get on an airplane, but to build a world of wholeness and peace.



"Let all who are hungry, come and eat. Let all who are in need (and, who are alone), come and celebrate the Passover."

Temple Judea Second Night Seder
Thursday, April 6 at 6:15 p.m.


Open to all Jews and their families regardless of synagogue affiliation or financial position.

Reservations are required by Tuesday, April 4, and will be taken until we reach our maximum capacity.

To make your reservation, please call or email Temple Judea at (239) 433-0201, or tjswfl@gmail.com.


While there is no set fee, we ask all participants to donate from the heart, whatever dollar amount is meaningful to them. Any donation you wish to make can be sent to Temple Judea, or by calling the synagogue office. Please note your donation for the "Passover Seder".






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Candle lighting times:

Apr. 7: 7:29 p.m.

Apr. 14: 7:32 p.m.

Apr. 21: 7:35 p.m.

Apr. 28: 7:39 p.m.

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“Work of the sacred”

By Rabbi Bruce Diamond



■ Rabbi Bruce Diamond

Work does more than just put bread on the table. It also binds us to reality by giving us structure, especially the flow of our time. If you work in a tedious job, requiring you to do the same thing over and over again, work slows down your sense of time. If you have a job with deadlines, work speeds it up. Work also anchors you on the calendar, keeping you mindful of which day of week it is and where you are in your year.

Without the anchor of work, we are adrift and lose track of time. Often, we need to remind ourselves of the day of the week and how close we are getting to a milestone event like a birthday, anniversary or the *jahrzeit* of those taken from us. Without work, we kill time until time kills us.

If you know exactly what I am talking about, then you need work in your life. But work can mean more than a mundane job. The traditional Jewish term for public worship is *avodat haqodesh*, a translation of the Greek word *leitourgia*, meaning “public work” in the service of the divine. In modern Hebrew, *avodah* simply means

“work,” but in classical Hebrew, it is often referred to public worship.

If you are watching too much TV or futzing around a lot on the computer and have to think about which day of the week it is, time to get to work, my friend! Avoid disorientation by using the “Work of the sacred” on the Sabbath as your North Star point of orientation.

I know nothing about what God is, but a lot about what God isn’t. I am certain that God does not need public worship or anything else that we mortals can offer.

Our synagogue does not need you to attend its public worship, since atten-

dance is always more than adequate to do what must be done. And to be perfectly frank with you, I don’t need to see you in synagogue to feel a connection since, for me, how you are is more important than where you are! And,

as you might know, it doesn’t affect my paycheck since I don’t get one!

However, I am equally certain that you may need *avodat haqodesh* if you are getting *farmisht*, *tsedrayt* and *farblunget*, not Greek for confused, disoriented and lost. Make this your new work.

Rabbi Bruce Diamond serves at Community Free Synagogue in Fort Myers. 🌍

The traditional Jewish term for public worship is ... a translation of the Greek word *leitourgia*, meaning “public work” in the service of the divine.

The Jewish Federation Seeks Volunteers with Foreign Language Skills.

The Jewish Family Services division of the Jewish Federation has found that clients with limited English language skills encounter difficulty accessing social services otherwise available in our community. We would like to help break this language barrier.

If you speak languages besides English, we invite you to serve as an occasional interpreter, by phone or in person, for our clients, when they communicate with various social service agencies.

Do you speak

Spanish, Russian, French, Creole, Haitian, Mandarin, etc.?
Please share your gift of language with the needy in our area.



Send your response to Jodi Cohen at 239.481.4449 x1 or jodicohen@jfedlcc.org. She will contact you as needed. Thank you.

The meaning behind the Seder

By Rabbi Lawrence Dermer



■ Rabbi Lawrence Dermer

Have you ever really thought about the meaning behind the Seder? Each year during Pesach, we fulfill the

commandment, “You shall tell your child on that day, ‘Because of what G-d did for me when I went out of Egypt.’”

Through the story of Passover and the miracles of the Exodus, we understand that there’s a G-d who loves and cares for and about us, and that we need to join together with Divine purpose in morally perfecting the world.

How do we accomplish this? The physical shackles of bondage might

What we celebrate is not slavery, but freedom. As Jews, we chose life.

be no more, but we could remain trapped in a slave mentality filled with all the rage and hatred of the slave. So, at our Seder, we chant “Avadim Hayinu! — We were slaves!” — but then we move right ahead to our redemption.

The time and place may have changed but we’re still moving from slavery to redemption. Just under 100 years ago, six million Jews were systematically murdered by the most culturally advanced society in Europe. Had the rest of the world stood unified against this atrocity, we could say that Germany was acting alone, but there was apathy and others stood by while millions were enslaved and slaughtered. Our own country turned back many of our people to return to Auschwitz.

After this tragic loss of millions of souls, our families, it seemed the

world learned very little. The decades that have followed the Shoah have been repeat performances of inhumanity with one genocide after another. It’s estimated that since the Holocaust, over 30 million people have lost their lives in campaigns of mass extermination.

Each year, at the Seder, our children ask “What is the meaning of all of this? In the midst of this seemingly endless violence, why continue with all of this ritual and prayer?” The real meaning is not in the slavery and murder, it’s found in our response. Over the centuries, we could have given up and surrendered our Jewish ideals, retreating into a law of the jungle, survival of the fittest mentality.

We could have abandoned the responsibility of our Divine covenant, but we didn’t, precisely because we have Passover. What we celebrate is not slavery, but freedom. As Jews, we chose life.

We created the state of Israel, where we have an opportunity to live the ethics of Torah in a real society. The meaning of Pesach reinforces our faith: “It was we ourselves that *He* brought out of there, so that *He* might lead us, and give us the land that *He* swore to our ancestors.”

May we all enjoy a transformative, joyous and meaningful Passover and may we find ways to bring the light of freedom to those who suffer from persecution and despair.

Rabbi Lawrence Dermer serves at Shalom Life Center of Southwest Florida. 🌍

90% of PJ Library families say that they are very likely to recommend PJ Library to their family and friends.



Parents in Lee and Charlotte counties whose children are enrolled in PJ Library participated in the survey.

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TEMPLE JUDEA RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Fort Myers

Tab Scribner, Director of Congregational Learning

Another turn of the page in our calendar and Pesach is ahead of us. Before we turn that page ahead, I'd like to take a look back on what we accomplished in March.

Our month began on March 5 with tremendous fun as we gathered with our friends from Temple Beth El and PJ Library for a Purim Carnival celebration. An informal poll suggests that the squirt game was the favorite event at the carnival, but I'm not convinced of the statistical reliability of the poll. My gut (and the chocolate-covered faces of the children) suggests the favorite "event" was the Lee County Sheriff's Office ice cream truck. I cannot thank the sheriff's office and the amazing volunteers that brought the celebration to life enough. It's not a carnival until the kids are bouncing about and covered in schmutz (or sand).

Not to outdo ourselves, but the children of the Temple Judea Religious School came back the next evening to join the congregation in reading the megillah ... and eating even more ice

cream. (I believe ice cream may be on the Shavuot menu, too). We're big fans of ice cream.

To cap off our Purim celebration, we hosted a final hurrah to Mordecai and Esther with our Tot Shabbat program on March 10.

Going forward, we have an action-packed Pesach. Getting a jump start on things, we will host a children's Pesach program on Sunday, April 2, during normal religious school time. Temple Judea is hosting a second night Seder on Thursday, April 6. I am scheming a plan to rescue the children from the Seder. To cap off our Pesach programming, we will host a Tot and Family Shabbat program with matzah pizza on Friday, April 14.

For more information about the Temple Judea Religious School, our spring programs or volunteer opportunities, please contact Tab Scribner, director of congregational learning in our office at 239-433-0201 or by email at tjswfledu@gmail.com.



Elijah, Sawyer and Lincoln Lefkowicz take in the fun. Credit: Michael Shapiro



Ice cream response team. Credit: Michael Shapiro



Splash! Winners at Esther's Fishpond. Credit: Michael Shapiro



Jewish Federation
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

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TEMPLE BETH EL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Fort Myers

Allison Fego, Religious School Coordinator

This past month, we were very busy celebrating Tu B'shvat and prepping for Purim. At the beginning of the month, our students learned about what Tu B'shvat was and the meaning behind it. They talked about the meaning of the seven species of Israel. While learning, they got to be hands-on in the kitchen, making

seven species of muffins, including most of the species in one way or another. The seven species included pomegranate, olives, grapes, dates, figs, barley and wheat. The kids got to taste some of the ingredients, then make them and have them for snack. They came out good and the kids mostly liked them.

Morah Jessica's second- through fourth-grade class has been talking about the Jewish value, Hakarat Hatov. The translation of Hakarat Hatov, "recognizing the good," can also be stated as "recognizing the tov" where tov is one of the names of God. Cultivating feelings of hakarat hatov may be a gateway skill for prayer, recognizing the needs of others as well as other virtues that get eclipsed by human ego.

In young people, especially adolescents, recognizing the good in people and situations may counter feelings of depression or cynicism. Living

an appreciative life reduces anxiety and heightens joy. With satisfaction comes relaxation and calm. The kids have also been reviewing the Hebrew letters that they have been practicing, including them into Hebrew words they are speaking.

In Morah Lindsay's class, which is our K-1 class, the children learned about Eretz Yisrael, the land of Israel. Students talked about something special to them and why Israel is so special to the Jewish community. The kids made the flag of Israel, showing the Star of David. They made their own passports and even wrote personal notes that they put into a makeshift Kotel. After learning about Eretz Yisrael, they moved on to the lesson about Tu B'shvat and then on to Purim. Our students made paper plate groggers with beads and beans, which they will use on Purim when they hear the word Haman!

Our older kids in Moreh Sam's class talked about Purim, human rights and being a nice person. The students also helped with our baking and then, at the end of the month, they helped prepare and bake hamantaschen in preparation for Purim, filling them with all kinds of delicious fillings such as Nutella, poppy seed, strawberry preserves and apricot preserves.

As we head into springtime, we get ready for our Passover Seder and our upcoming open house for new incoming religious school families, on April 23, while celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel's birthday).

Look for more information and great pictures of our wonderful events and the fun we have at religious school. 🌟



Students learn what the seven species are from Rabbi Luna.



Students make hamantaschen.



Zara Luna Bord and Emily Raab make hamantaschen.



Children put notes in a makeshift Western Wall like people do in Israel.



Morah Jessica, Mason Benedon, Noah Schiff and Cyrus Katz make Nutella and strawberry hamantaschen.



Students work on the seven species muffins for Tu B'shvat.

Chabad FGCU
Estero
Rabbi Mendel Gordon

Another amazing Chabad at FGCU month flew by

By Rabbi Mendel Gordon

Some special highlights we had for the FGCU students in March include a special Hakel Shabbat, joining students from schools all over Florida for a shabbat together at UF. What a special feeling it was to sing shalom aleichem and welcome in shabbat with more than 300 Jewish students from all over.

Another highlight was a shabbat dinner in North Lake, where one of the students hosted shabbat for the clan.

We had a fun night at Headpinz for bowling organized by our student leaders, and how could I forget the pre-Purim hamentashen bake?

We had a fun course called paradigm shift, learning the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s positive outlook on life — allowing us to see things in a whole new light, and a great text-based class on the weekly Parsha.

We look forward to celebrating Passover together with our student community. Our Seders are open to any college-age Jews in Southwest Florida. Reach out for more information.

Chabad at FGCU services students at FGCU other local college-age Jews. For more information or to connect, reach out to Rabbi Mendel at 239-355-8481 or Rabbi@chabadfgcu.com. 🌐



Hayley, Jack, Robyn, Max and Rabbi Mendel delving into the parsha




Courtney at hamentashen bake



Gabe and Andrew enjoy hamentashen bake



Max, Barrell, Jonah and Jonathan at bowling night



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Friday evening Services at the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties
9701 Commerce Center Court, Forty Myers
Rabbi Stephen L. Fuchs
President: Alan Lessack
Phone: 773-251-8862
Email: batyamsanibel@gmail.com
Cantor: Murray Simon
Web site: www.batyam.org
Services: 7:30 p.m. Friday (Oct-Apr)
7:00 p.m. Friday (May-Sept)
Adult Education:
Saturday, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. (Nov-Apr)
Jewish Current Events: Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. (Nov-Apr)
Write: P.O. Box 84, Sanibel, FL 33957

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24611 S. Tamiami Trail
Bonita Springs, FL 34135-7024
Rabbi Mendy Greenberg
Phone: 239-949-6900
Web site: www.JewishBonita.com
Services: Saturday at 10:00 a.m. followed by a Kiddush

CHABAD JEWISH CENTER OF CAPE CORAL ORTHODOX

1716 Cape Coral Pkwy. W.
Cape Coral, FL 33914
Rabbi Yossi Labkowski
Phone: 239-963-4770
E-mail: info@chabadcape.com
Web site: chabadcape.com
Sunday - Friday 8:00 A.M. Shacharit
Friday Evening 5:30 P.M.
Saturday Kabbalah Class 9:00 A.M.
Shabbat Services 9:30 A.M.
Kiddush Luncheon 12:00 P.M.
Hebrew School of the Arts Sunday 10:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.
JLI Classes Monday 7:00 P.M.
Torah Study Tuesday 7:30 P.M.
Women's Weekly Class Wednesday 11:30 A.M.

CHABAD OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY ORTHODOX

204 E McKenzie St Unit B,
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
Rabbi Simon Jacobson
Phone: 941-833-3381
E-mail: chabadpg@yahoo.com
Web site:
www.chabadofcharlottecounty.com
Services: Saturday at 10:00 a.m. followed by a kiddush
Torah study: Wednesday at 8:00 p.m.

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ORTHODOX

5620 Winkler Road
Fort Myers, FL 33919
Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz
Phone: 239-433-7708 • Fax: 481-9109
E-mail: rabbi@chabadswf.org
Web site: www.chabadswf.org
Services: Friday 5:15 p.m.;
Saturday Kabbalah
class 9:00 a.m.; Shacharit 10:00 a.m.;
Kiddush at noon
Minyan: Monday & Thursday 7:00 a.m.

SYNAGOGUES & JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS IN LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES



Jewish Federation
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

www.JewishFederationLCC.org

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SHALOM LIFE CENTER

TRANS DENOMINATIONAL
19691 Cypress View Drive
Fort Myers, FL 339067
Rabbi Lawrence Dermer
Phone: 239-218-3433
E-mail: info@shalomlifecenter.org
Web site: www.shalomlifecenter.org
Shabbat Evening Services
7:30 p.m. (Oct-Apr)
7:00 p.m. (May-Sept)
Saturday Torah & Kabbalah Study
10:00 a.m.

TEMPLE BETH EL

REFORM
16225 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33908
Rabbi Nicole Luna
E-mail: info@templebethel.com
Learning Tree Preschool Director:
Amy Amon
Email: LearningTree15@yahoo.com
President: Reina Schlager
Email: reinaschlager@aol.com
Phone: 239-433-0018 • Fax: 239-433-3235
Web site: www.templebethel.com
Shabbat services: 7:30 p.m. Friday;
Torah study 9:00 a.m. Saturday; B'nai Mitzvah
10:30 a.m. Saturday Religious &
Hebrew School: 9:00 a.m.-12:30 Sunday
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TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

REFORM
702 S.E. 24th Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33990
President: Peter Simenauer
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Email: templebethshalomcommunications@gmail.com
Web site: www.templebethshalomcc.org
Services: 7:30 p.m. Friday
Enrichment night every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
Shabbat 10:30 a.m.

CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SWFL

CHAVURA
20031 Sanibel View Circle unit 202
Fort Myers, FL 33908
Chavuratshalom@gmail.com
www.chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org
Cheryl Fulmer, President
Shabbat services - 7:30 p.m. Friday
Jewish current events - 11:00 a.m. Saturday
Speakers series - 11:00 a.m. Thursday

TEMPLE JUDEA

CONSERVATIVE
14486 A&W Bulb Road
Fort Myers, FL 33908
Rabbi Marc Sack
E-mail: rabbi@tjswfl.org
President: Dan Fox
Director of Congregational Learning:
Tab Scribner
Preschool Director: Suki Kelly
templejudeapreschool@gmail.com
Phone: 239-433-0201 • Fax: 239-433-3371
E-mail: tjswfl@gmail.com
Web site: www.tjswfl.org
Services: 6:15 p.m. Friday and 9:30 a.m.
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Rabbi Solomon Agin
President: Judith Migdol
Phone: 941-625-2116
E-mail: shalom06@netzero.com
Web site: templeshalomfl
Beginning Hebrew:
Tuesday 4:15 - 5:15 p.m.
Advanced Hebrew:
Thursday 4:15 - 5:15 p.m.
Organizations: Sisterhood
Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

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- AIPAC
(American Israel Public Affairs Committee):
Jacki Waksman - 954-653-9053
- AJC (American Jewish Committee):
Brian Lipton - 941-365-4955
- Anti-Defamation League: 561-988-2900
- B'Nai B'rith International: 941-302-4500
- Chabad Jewish Student Life at FGCU
Rabbi Mendel Gordon - 347-452-0489
mendelgordon@gmail.com
- Chevra Kadisha: Gene Sipe - 239-841-4615
- Generations of the Shoah SWFL: 263-9200
- Hadassah - Collier/Lee Chapter:
Joyce Toub - 518-330-1559
- Hadassah-Sharon Chapter (Charlotte County):
Odette Port - 941-505-1409
- Hazak 55+ Chapter:
Joyce Rosinger - 239-437-1566
- Israel Bonds: Regional Headquarters:
800-622-8017
- Jewish Community Services:
239-481-4449
- Jewish National Fund:
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- Mikvah Bashka of Southwest Florida:
Nechamie Minkowicz - 239-822-2784

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM
Cape Coral

(239) 772-4555 • www.templebethshalomcc.org

Fifty years! Do you believe it? On April 1, Temple Beth Shalom (TBS) is celebrating the 50th Jubilee of our temple with a fantastic gala — cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, presentations, dinner and dancing. We are honoring Dr. Lawrence Antonucci, president and CEO of Lee Health for all the contributions he has made to our Southwest Florida community. We are looking forward to celebrating this important event with community members, friends and family.

Every Friday evening at 7:30 p.m., we celebrate shabbat in person and on Zoom with a service led by Cantor Barry Butensky, followed by a delicious Oneg.

On the first Saturday of each month at 10 a.m., we have a Torah service, followed by Torah study and a scrumptious breakfast Kiddush.

Our TBS book club is reading “The Song of the Jade Lily,” and we will meet to discuss it on Monday, March 27, 1 p.m., in Jaycee Park.

If you live in Cape Coral or the surrounding area and you would enjoy spending time with other Jews, come for a visit. While we are pleased that TBS is our Jewish spiritual center, it is much more than that! Our members are busy and involved with lots of activities with other TBS members — going out to lunch or dinner, playing

mahjong, doing arts and crafts, community events, visiting Florida arts and cultural attractions, photography club, dancing, boating, book club and sharing lots of adventures (which usually involve food)!


Come for a visit and become a friend! No doubt, you will find someone that is from your area up north and others who share your same interests. It’s guaranteed that you will feel at home.

Passover is coming and we would love to have you join us! We will have a community Seder on the second night, Thursday, April 6. The catered meal will be held in our social hall and the cost is \$36 per adult and \$18 per child 6-18. Children 5 and under are free.

We are pleased to honor all our new members at a New Member Shabbat on May 13. Everyone is invited.

Each week, we offer TBS Enrichment Night, where we view a film and discuss a different topic of Jewish history and culture. This happens every Wednesday or Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. Please join us!

Also, don’t forget to stop by our booth at IsraelFest on April 2 at the Alliance for the Arts and say “hello!”

If you haven’t had the chance, take a look at our new website! Visit www.templebethshalom.org. 

SHALOM LIFE CENTER
Fort Myers

(239) 218-3433 • www.shalomlifecenter.org

Shalom Life Center is Southwest Florida’s premier warm and welcoming home for contemporary Jewish life with a passionate commitment to community and spiritual growth, where everyone is always welcome to be a part of our amazing SLC family!


We are so excited to be celebrating Passover with our entire community! This year, our Shalom Life Center Seder will be even more wonderful than ever before. If you’ve celebrated Pesach with us before, you know that an SLC Seder is beautiful, traditional, musical, interactive and probably unlike any Seder you’ve ever attended. Please join us for the best Seder experience of your life, which will be held on Wednesday, April 5 at Shalom Life Center. For more information and to RSVP, call 239-218-3433 or email us at info@shalomlifecenter.org. We look forward to seeing you there!

Every Saturday morning at 10 a.m., SLC offers an interactive and

participatory Torah and Kabbalah study led by Rabbi Dermer with a focus on the relevance of our timeless traditions and bringing the ancient wisdom of Torah into our daily lives.

SLC offers individualized bar/bat mitzvah preparation, Torah and Kabbalah study, Women’s Circle, Men’s Club, Book Club, Yiddish Culture Club, Shalom Schmoozers Social Club, special events, concerts, dinners, and so much more. If you’d like to learn more, please send us an email or give us a call.

SLC also offers many other opportunities to enhance your Jewish life and learning. Further your involvement in community service while making friends in a warm and welcoming community.

Let your spirit soar at Shalom Life Center where community is family and prayer is always inspirational, meaningful and musical. For more information, visit www.shalomlifecenter.org 

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For assistance, please call 239.481.4449 ext. 1 and leave a message. Your Federation is here to assist with resources, financial assistance, claim paperwork and mental health.



Jewish Federation
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES



Visit JewishFederationLCC.org to
complete a disaster assistance form.



CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA Fort Myers

(239) 433-7708 • www.Chabadswf.org

We had a beautiful Purim Party as seen in these photos we share.

The following are services and events we would love you to join us for.

Daily Prayer Service & Torah Study

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 6:30 a.m. Kabbalah class; 7 a.m. Prayer service; and 7:30 p.m. Mincha & Maariv Prayers

Shabbat Prayer Service & Torah Study

• Friday evening at 7:30 p.m.
• Saturday: 9 a.m. Kabbalah class; 10 a.m. Prayer service; 12:15 p.m. Kiddush; and 7:15 p.m. Evening Prayers

Passover

• Please reach out to sell your Chametz.

• Please reach out to join our community Passover Seder.

Passover schedule of services

- Wednesday, April 5, 7:30 p.m. Prayer service; 8:15 p.m. community Passover Seder
 - Thursday, April 6, 10 a.m. Prayer service; 7:30 p.m. Prayer service
 - Friday, April 7, 10 a.m. Prayer service; 7:30 p.m. Prayer service
 - Saturday, April 8, 10 a.m. Prayer service; 7:30 p.m. Prayer service
 - Tuesday, April 11, 7:30 p.m. Prayer service
 - Wednesday, April 12, 10 a.m. Prayer service; 7:30 p.m. Prayer service
 - Thursday, April 13, 10 a.m. Prayer service & Yizkor; 7 p.m. Prayer service & Moshiah Feast
- Happy Passover! 🌟



**COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE
Fort Myers**

(239) 247-4556 • www.fortmyerssynagogue.com

The Purim Bingo event on Purim Eve raised hundreds of dollars to help reconstruct the Center for Rehabilitation of Wildlife on Sanibel after the ravages of Hurricane Ian. Using the Hebrew letters equivalent to BINGO, Master of Ceremonies Charlie Flores called the computer-generated numbers during the games between the chanting of the Megillah’s chapters. There was no charge to play, but the players were most generous with their donations to C.R.O.W.

Heartfelt thanks to Broadway Palm, Gulfcoast Symphony Orchestra and some other wonderful donors for the terrific BINGO prizes. A special thanks to Community Free Synagogue (CFS) “Holy Rollers” Alan and Louise Siegel, Ilene Flores, Natalie Fulton and Melinda Diamond for preparing close to 200 hamantaschen for the evening’s celebration. Be sure to visit the synagogue’s booth during the April 2 IsraelFest to pick up your special gift!

CFS will return to the Southwest Florida Masonic Center for both of its Community Free Seder Suppers Wednesday and Thursday, April 5 and 6, starting at 6:30 p.m. Invitations to these free ritual meals were mailed in early March to everyone on the CFS mailing list so both dinners are nearly filled to capacity. If you would

like to check on availability, please email synfree@comcast.net or call 239-333-9911.


Those with Seder reservations for parties larger than three people are urged to come a bit earlier to save places, since seating is open. If you are coming with children, don’t forget little aphikomen gifts. Participants are encouraged to bring their choice of wine for the ritual meal.

Once again, we are deeply indebted to Baron and Kim Cohen of Cohen & Cohen Catering for donating the wonderful food for our sederim. On Friday evening, April 21, the Cohens will also prepare the Friday evening meal to celebrate Baron’s son, Sean’s, first birthday since his tragic death earlier this year. Love never dies.

Free Sabbath eve meals begin at 6:30 p.m. each and every Friday, are open to the public and are free. You are welcome to bring

a nondairy dish to share, dessert or a bottle of wine. Worship follows at 7:30 p.m. followed by a social hour.

Sabbath morning Torah Study at the Rabbi’s home (7210 Falcon Crest Court in the Forest Country Club) is from 9:30 to 11 a.m. each week. A light breakfast is served. It is also Zoomed to students around the world via the CFS Zoom room easily accessed through the synagogue’s website, www.fortmyerssynagogue.com.

Now in its 18th year, Rabbi Diamond leads the Community Free Synagogue, which is “modern traditional,” meaning it observes traditional forms of worship and study while embracing more inclusive contemporary values and ethical standards. It meets on the Unity of Fort Myers campus at 11120 Ranchette Road. Its events and programs are open to all, free of charge and free of financial solicitations. 



Al and Louise Siegel, Melinda Diamond, Natalie Fulton and Ileana Flores prepare hamantaschen for the CFS Purim celebration.



Marcia Can Help

MARCIA CAN HELP, a fund of the Jewish Federation and Jewish Family Services, provides for emergency nutritional needs through our Food Pantry, gift card distribution, and crisis grants to prevent utility cut-offs, evictions, loss of transportation and other essential services without which none of us can live.



Jewish Federation
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES



Inspired by the recognition that these needs must be addressed in our community, and as a tribute to Marcia Cohen, a long-time resident of Sanibel and social activist, her husband Jack established the **MARCIA CAN HELP** fund in 2017.



Help us meet these pressing needs by contributing to the **MARCIA CAN HELP** fund.
For further information please contact Debbie Sanford at (239) 481-4449 ext. 6 or debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org



TEMPLE BETH EL Fort Myers

(239) 433-0018 • www.templebethel.com

Celebrate Israel's 75th birthday with us at Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties' IsraelFest held at the Alliance for the Arts, April 2 from 2 to 4 p.m. Bring the kids for cotton candy and arts and crafts, courtesy of our Religious School. Sisterhood will make your Judaica shopping easy with their beautiful and affordable items laid out for your convenience. The Israel Committee, Mitzvah Committee, and more, will be there, sharing stories and welcoming you at the Temple Beth El booths.

On April 6, we'll be at The Club at Grandezza for Sisterhood's second night Seder. Join us for great food, the Passover story and strong community. Make your reservation by calling 239-433-0018 or visit our website, templebethel.com.

Due to the holidays, Tot Shabbat in April will be on April 14 at 6 p.m. This is a kid-friendly service. Come for the fellowship, the pizza and the fun. Kindly RSVP at 239-433-0018 to allow us to be sure we have enough food.

The Men's Club completely sold out for the Red Sox game last month. This month is Wigs & Waffles on April 16, 12:30 p.m., at The Standard Restaurant, Page Field Commons. Come enjoy these female impersonators extraordinaire.

In observance of Yom HaShoah, our Sisterhood, the History & Heritage Club and the Israel Committee jointly present the film "Shalom Italia," the story of three Italian Jewish brothers who journey through Tuscany in search of a cave where they hid as children to escape the Nazis. Please join us for this on April 18; never forget.

Our Religious School children will participate in Friday night services on April 21. Attending services with us that evening supports our children who represent the future of Judaism. The Religious School will celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut while holding an open house on April 23, then look for our Israel Committee fundraiser on April 26 supporting Israel committee activities and the IDF Lone Soldiers Fund.

The month ends with our new choir director and choir gracing our bima for services on April 28. We are excited about this musical addition to our services.

Our regular monthly program

- Nonperishable food items can be dropped off in the temple lobby shopping cart whenever the building is open.
- Our Caring Visitors program is underway. Rachelle can provide more information at luna@exis.net.

- Mentor children through the Children's Network. For more information, email info@templebethel.com.
- Shabbat services open to all – Fridays at 7:30 p.m. live in the sanctuary, via Zoom and streaming on Facebook. Check the calendar for special programming.
- All are welcome to Zoom on Saturday mornings at 9 a.m. for Torah study with Rabbi Luna.
- 12-Step Recovery Group – Saturdays at 11 a.m. via Zoom. Experience the Twelve Steps from a Jewish perspective, recovery through Judaic spiritual principles. We are a fellowship of people who are recovering from alcohol, drugs and process addictions such as overeating, gambling, sex, shopping, etc. We use the book Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery by Rabbi Kerry Olitzky and Stuart Copans, M.D., second edition.

- Book club – first Wednesday of the month at 2:45 p.m. via Zoom. The April book is "Matzah Ball" by Jean Meltzer.
- Jewish History & Heritage Club is held the third Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

To learn more about Temple Beth El and our special events, Shabbat services and recurring programs, visit our website at templebethel.com or call the office at 239-433-0018.

There's always something happening here: Caring Visitors, Current Events, Coffee & Chat, Adult Hebrew class, Book Club, Jewish History & Heritage Club, Men's Club, Sisterhood, Theology & Life, Francophone Group, Hispanophone Group, Environmental Group and Solo Travelers.

We're on Facebook @TempleBethElFortMyers and on Instagram @templebethelfortmyers. 🌐

TEMPLE JUDEA Fort Myers

(239) 433-0201 • www.tjswfl.org

Celebrations and holidays continue in April at Temple Judea.

Tab Scribner, director of congregational learning, continues Temple Judea Religious School with Sunday classes and weekday Hebrew classes on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. A children's Pesach program will take place Sunday, April 2, during religious school hours. The Tot Shabbat service will be Friday, April 14 at 5 p.m. with music, stories, crafts and matzah pizza!

Lunchtime Torah study with Rabbi Sack is Thursday, April 13. Classes are held at noon on Zoom. All levels of Jewish background are welcome. For login information, please call the office at 239-433-0201.

Passover services are Thursday, April 6 at 9:30 a.m. Services on the seventh day, April 12, are at 9:30 a.m., including Yizkor.

Temple Judea's Second Night Seder, April 6 at 6:15 p.m., is open to all Jews in our community, regardless of synagogue affiliation or financial position. There is no set fee – all participants, please donate from the heart. To reserve or donate, call Temple Judea by April 4 or email tjswfl@gmail.com. Donations may be mailed to Temple Judea, 14486 A & W Bulb Road, Fort Myers, FL 33908 or via email to tjswfl@gmail.org, please note for 'Passover Seder.'

Let all who are hungry, come and eat! Let all who are in need (who are alone), come and celebrate the Passover!

Temple Judea continues to support the Heights Center with school supplies. The past three years, we have collected, sorted and helped distribute supplies to the Heights community.

Hazak continues to meet at Lakes Park the third Thursday each month.

Bring your own lunch and chair on April 14.

Chaverot is hosting jewelry making with Jodi Cohen on Sunday, April 23 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. All materials are provided to learn basic techniques and create your own designs. No previous experience is needed. Be prepared to laugh and learn. The cost is \$18 for Chaverot members, \$25 for nonmember. RSVP by Sunday, April 16 to Leni at mssack@aol.com or 813-220-2363.

Joshua Fox will celebrate his bar mitzvah on April 28 and 29.

Temple Judea continues to accept food donations to the Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry at Jewish Federation and feminine hygiene products for Cycle Forward. There are collection envelopes near the front door for contactless monetary or gift card contributions. Contributions may be mailed. Please call the office to ensure your contribution has been received.

Temple Judea is conducting in-person services with a virtual Zoom option. Synagogue members can use the Zoom ID and password as published in our weekly Megillah. Non-local residents can contact the synagogue for information.

Regularly scheduled events

Friday evening Shabbat services are preceded by wine and cheese at 6:15 p.m.; services at 6:30 p.m. Saturday morning Shabbat services are at 9:30 a.m. Kiddush luncheons will be served every Shabbat. To sponsor, contact JoAnn Lewin. Morning minyan is every Monday at 9 a.m. Rabbi Sack's lunchtime Torah study is the first Thursday each month via Zoom.

We'd love to see you in person or on Zoom. 🌐

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CRC Mission Statement:

The mission of the CRC of Lee & Charlotte is to proactively advocate for and ensure the rights, interests, and values of our Jewish community.

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For more information or to join, contact
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debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org

**Need to reach the editor of L'CHAYIM?
Send an email to Sharon@marketcrank.com.**

BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS
Sanibel

(773) 251-8862 • www.batyam.org

Temple Bat Yam is experiencing a challenging and exciting period. It is a pleasure to bring all of you up to date on what has been happening and what we can expect in the coming months.

On March 8, Shell Point welcomed Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer, who presented “Chosen Island – a History of the Jews of Cuba.” If you were lucky enough to see it, you were impressed by his knowledge, his wonderful pictures and his commitment to this small but vibrant community.

Rabbi Schnitzer has worked 20 years with the Jewish communities of Cuba. He is president of the Cuba America Jewish Mission, helping to build synagogues and providing ritual, spiritual and material support. He has visited Cuba 21 times over the past 20 years and has shared his time and his heart for the benefit of improving the lives of the Jewish community there. He is a member of Rabbis for Human Rights, T’ruah, the Jewish Islamic Dialogue Society of Greater Washington D.C. and Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence, just to name a few of the advocacy organizations with which he associates.

Our annual meeting took place March 23 at the Jewish Federation Building. Attendance was excellent, and all who came were treated to a delicious pizza dinner following the meeting. Alan Lessack became past president emeritus, after a long and outstanding tenure encompassing two different periods in the congregation’s history.

Officers installed included incoming President Janice Block Chaddock, 1st Vice President Sandra Teger, 2nd Vice President Annette Pacyga, Treasurer Joel Vogel, Corresponding Secretary Sheila Sklar and Recording Secretary, Nancy Greenberg. Trustees are Mel Bleiberg, Alan Fisher, Tanya

Hochschild, Howard Lorsch, Allan Sacks, Mort Tavel, Riv Swartz and Garry Weiss. We thank all these motivated and motivating individuals and wish them all the best.

Bat Yam was pleased to host the movie “God on Trial,” which will be shown at Federation on Thursday, March 30. The movie, based on a British television play, takes place in Auschwitz during World War II. The Jewish prisoners put God on trial in absentia for abandoning them. The question is whether God has broken his covenant with the Jewish people by allowing the Germans to commit genocide. The movie will be followed by an animated discussion.

Rabbi Fuchs has found a clever way to motivate our congregation to take a bit of time to read each week’s Torah portion. It is based on the use of sweet treats and peer competition, and it works. In his weekly letter to the congregation, he provides a link to the portion for the week along with a question, which he invites everyone to answer via an email with the subject line: QQ. During the Friday night service, he publicly rewards those who answered the question by reading their name and tossing a chocolate goody to them. Sound silly? Maybe, but it actually gets most people reading the portion and looking for the answer.

In his weekly letter before our Purim service on March 4, Rabbi Fuchs asked everyone to read the Book of Esther and to be prepared for many questions he would ask during the service. Correct answers to these questions were rewarded with one, two or even three packages of hamantaschen. We all brought plastic pill bottles which we filled with coins and used them as groggers each time Haman was mentioned. Following services, the pill bottles were emptied out and the coins



Our hamantaschen bakers

given to F.I.S.H. Several people in the congregation were dressed in costume, and everyone enjoyed the camaraderie and lightheartedness of the evening (not to mention the hamantaschen).

Looking ahead, and much to the joy of everyone, we will host a face-to-face Seder. Janice Block Chaddock and Ron Chaddock have graciously offered the use of the first floor in their post-Ian

newly renovated home in Sanibel. Unfortunately, our Haggadahs were lost in the hurricane, so Rabbi Fuchs and Rabbi Schnitzer will co-lead an abbreviated service using “tools” they will provide. A typical Seder meal, just as you remember, will be provided. Cost is \$50 per person; reservations/questions should be directed to batyamsanibel@gmail.com.

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Jewish Family Services
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CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

chavuratshalom@gmail.com

Worship and learn together

By Cheryl Fulmer, Ellen Feingold and Marcia Rudin

This year, our Passover holiday begins at sundown Wednesday, April 5 (the first Seder) and ends at sundown Thursday, April 13. Your friends at Chavurat Shalom of SWFL wish you a 'zissen' Pesach, the Yiddish way of saying a sweet holiday.

Many of us will celebrate the exodus from Egypt to freedom by joining relatives and friends far and wide for the first Seder or perhaps two Seders. The Pew Research Center reports that 70% of Jews attend a Seder. This religious activity has the highest percentage participation than any other, including Yom Kippur services. Understandable, since a Seder includes lots of wine and very good home cooking of chicken soup with kneidlach (matzoh balls), gefilte fish with more sharp horseradish, brisket, chicken and special desserts for Passover.

Yom HaShoah

April contains other significant dates. On April 18, Yom HaShoah or Holocaust Remembrance Day begins when Jews in the U.S. and in Israel remember the six million Jews who were murdered by the Nazis. Israelis mark this day with a country-wide siren at 10 a.m. Upon hearing the siren, all activity and traffic cease, everyone stops what they are doing, gets out of their cars and observes two minutes of silence.

Yom Hazikkaron

April 25 is Yom Hazikkaron, the Israel Memorial Day, the day to commemorate all those who died to establish the state of Israel and to keep it alive since 1948. The following day, on April 26, Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day, is when Israel will celebrate 75 years of statehood, an amazing accomplishment.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut

On Thursday, April 27 at 11 a.m., Chavurat Shalom member Rabbi James Rudin will discuss the importance of Israel's 75th Yom Ha'Atzmaut via Zoom. With his almost encyclopedic knowledge, multiple trips to Israel and years of interreligious work for the AJC, Rabbi Rudin will educate us.

Parashat Shemini

On Thursday, April 20 at 11 a.m., Dr. Ellen Feingold will lead a discussion of Parashat Shemini (Leviticus 9:1-11:47) via Zoom. Everyone is encouraged to participate and learn. To obtain the Zoom link and a copy of the text, email chavuratshalom@gmail.com.

Friday evening Shabbat services

Chavurat Shalom continues its tradition of holding Friday evening Shabbat services every week throughout the year at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. Everyone from all religious traditions is welcome to participate. Services are planned and led by Chavurat Shalom members. They are a blend of English readings and poems, Hebrew prayers and songs, and Torah readings and commentary, all offered by volunteers. Participants may take whatever part is comfortable for them. Come to one of the Friday Shabbat services, lasting for about one hour, by sending an email to chavuratshalom@gmail.com to obtain the link.

Jewish current events

Len Minsky Jewish Current Events on Saturday mornings will begin its summer break early. It is coordinated by Dr. Don Bachman. Volunteers moderate the weekly sessions. It is an opportunity to share your opinion about important current events concerning Jews in the U.S., Israel and anywhere in the world. It will resume next season.

Schmooze sessions

The monthly "Schmooze" sessions, on the second Tuesday of every month via Zoom, provide an opportunity to keep in touch informally with each other and share good news. For those still struggling to rebuild their lives and homes post-Hurricane Ian, the "Schmooze" is an easy, comfortable way to learn how others are faring and share hurricane stories. The next one will be on April 11 at 7:30 p.m.

You are welcome

Chavurat Shalom is a welcoming community committed to the study and celebration of our Jewish cultural heritage and religious traditions. It is an informal group from every Jewish religious tradition that meets to worship and learn together. People of all faiths and from all localities are welcome. We are not affiliated with any organized movement. The chavurah is led by its members. Your participation and input would be welcome.

Visit the up-to-date website at www.chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org or email chavuratshalom@gmail.com for more information about our group and to obtain Zoom links to our programs. 🌐

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Our stories

By Ida Margolis and Shelley Lieb

Many of the 2G members of GenShoah SWFL have been willing to share the stories of their parents. New members who attended the Welcome Brunch told the stories to those in attendance as did those who attended the annual Our Stories. This year, in addition to the stories, members shared meaningful family photos. Even though every story is different, there is a commonality and special bond when shared.

In addition to telling the stories of our parents who lived through a most horrific time, another way to share these important stories is to write them so that they will be preserved. Many 2Gs have already written their parent's stories, which are posted on the Holocaust Museum website (hmcec.org). Any local 2Gs who would like to write their stories and have them posted can do so. And, if

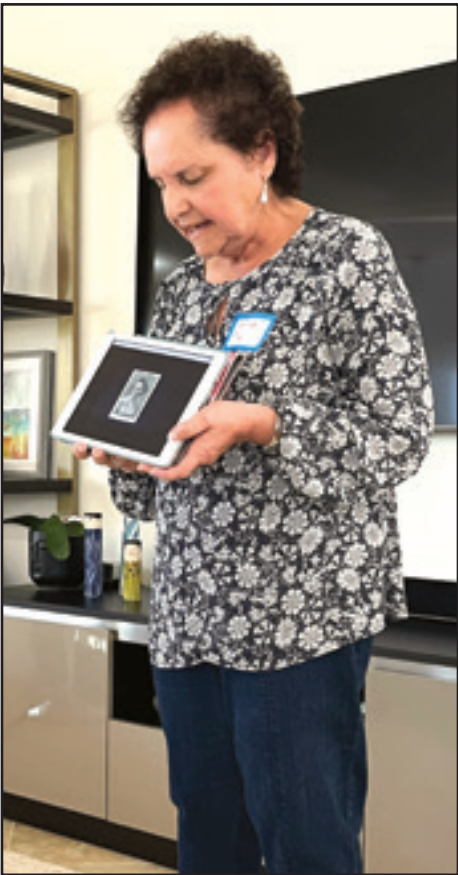
help is needed, contact Shelley at liebro@gmail.com.

Sharing requires remembering, something that is often not easy but, in reference to the Holocaust, is an imperative. "Memory is what shapes us. Memory is what teaches us. We must understand that's where our redemption is," said Rabbi M. Bruce Lustig of the Washington Hebrew Congregation. "Days of Remembrance is an opportunity for us to remember the suffering that was and the efforts that were made to put an end to such suffering, and it's a call to conscience today in our world to make sure that we aren't the silent ones standing by, contributing to the suffering of others."

According to genocide prevention educator Bridget Conley-Zilic, we can honor those who suffered and died in the Holocaust by not being silent. Remembering ties the past to the present, bringing them together.




Bronia Ichel



Denise Pine

"We owe it, not only to the living, to remember the killing of 6 million Jews during the Nazi Holocaust, but to those who died as well. To forget the dead is akin to killing them a second time," said Ellie Wiesel.

Remember Wiesel's words and remember the victims, survivors of the Holocaust and the rescuers at our community Yom HaShoah Commemoration of April 17, 7 p.m., at the Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center. 



Rolly Jacob



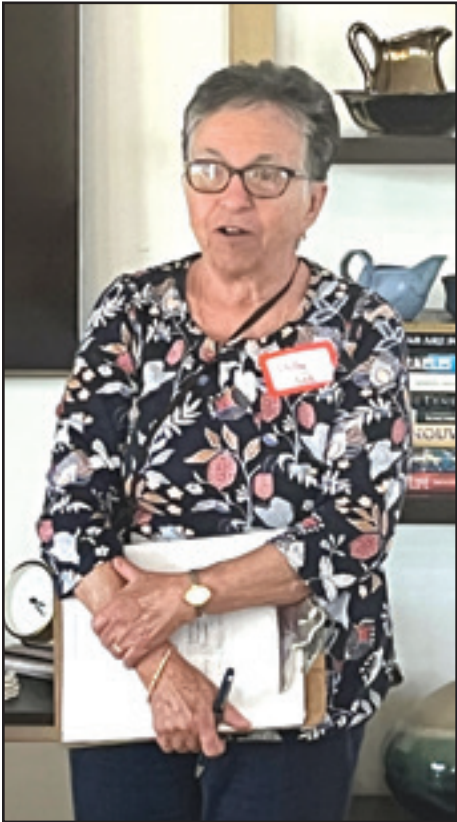
Michael Gurtman



Sam Geist



Betsy Dougatz



Shelley Lieb



Shirley Moskowitz



Rene Geist



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HADASSAH
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Brave women impact the world

By Joyce Toub, Collier/Lee Hadassah President

On Purim, we read the Megillah, the story of Esther, a heroic woman who risked her life going to King Ahasuerus to save the Jewish people from extinction. Esther demonstrated the importance of women in our communities, encouraging us to act, even in the face of danger. Esther demonstrated the power of one and how amazing that can be.

Like Esther and the story of Purim, the story of Hadassah also began with one strong, brave woman, Henrietta Szold. Hadassah Shabbat Zachor, held March 3 at Temple Shalom and March 4 at Beth Tikvah, celebrated Hadassah's origins and all the organization has accomplished since. The week of Purim marks the anniversary of Hadassah's birth in 1912. Hadassah is the Hebrew name for Esther.

As we observe Passover, we commemorate our freedom from slavery in Egypt. Once again, we see the impact of brave women. We are thankful that five courageous women followed their conscience, helping the Israelites on a path to freedom.

The Torah tells us that Shifra and Puah were two midwives who disobeyed Pharaoh's orders to kill every Israelite boy born. Yocheved hid her baby, Moses, for three months before placing him in the basket on the riverbank with Miriam, Moses' older sister, watching over him. Pharaoh's daughter, Batia, finds Moses

and rears him as her own. These five courageous women — Shifra, Puah, Yocheved, Miriam and Batia — opposed Pharaoh's mandates. Who knew that this baby would one day save the Hebrew nation? True power comes from standing up for what you believe is right and ethical no matter the obstacles.

All of us can take powerful actions today. If you are concerned about challenges to a woman's right to choose, let your voice be heard. If you are distressed about the increase in antisemitism, let your voice be heard. We have to move beyond our comfort level to act on our beliefs.

Henrietta's Szold's passion and desire to bring "modern healthcare" to poor, unhealthy people living in overcrowded conditions began in 1912 in what was then Palestine. It has since transformed into the Hadassah Medical Organization. Our two hospitals in Jerusalem, Ein Kerem and Mount Scopus, are recognized among the 250 best hospitals in the world! Doctors of different faiths and nationalities care for patients of all faiths and nationalities.

Through compassion and perseverance, Hadassah has kept the eternal light of Henrietta's Szold's vision burning brightly even as it has grown into an organization with over 300,000 members, associates and supporters.

A zissen Pesach to all! 🌟



Fall 2023 Educational Scholarships Available

DEADLINE: April 28, 2023

ELIGIBILITY: Scholarship applications are now available for Jewish residents of Lee and Charlotte Counties, Florida, wishing to pursue postsecondary education.

Applicants must be under 30 years of age and priority will be given to full-time students. Funding is limited and decisions will be based primarily on financial need.

APPLICATION PROCESS: For guidelines and application process, visit our website at jewishfederationlcc.org/scholarships

Scholarships are made available from designated funds held by TOP Jewish Foundation.

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JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

(239) 566-1771

Do you hear what I hear?

By Marina Berkovich, JHSSWF President

An old Arab proverb says, “If you do not know where you are going, you will find yourself somewhere else.” Jewish Historical Society of Southwest Florida has been on a steady trek of collecting, documenting, preserving and celebrating local Jewish history since April 2010. It is our 13th anniversary, and our painstaking work resonates as far as Israel, where all our Southwest Florida Jewish Pioneers films are now a part of ANU Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv. All our films are broadcast-quality original productions.

The resonance after the Feb. 6 premiere of “Spaier Family Story” and March Local Jewish History Film Festival was loud and clear — please make more films like this; there are many interesting people in Southwest Florida, each with a story to capture. We hear you, we absolutely agree and we need extra resources to complete these wonderful community expectations.

After we all celebrate Passover, we will commemorate Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM). Why is it important to celebrate it? The month of May has been selected for annual nationwide recognition of achievements and contributions by Jews to the U.S. We are all immigrants and descendants of immigrants of various times, countries, degree of religiousness and different cultural practices. What unifies us unfailingly is that we are Jews, and we stand together in times of peace and prosperity as well as in times of adversity, as one people, dispersed, yet united in our

Jewish identity, whatever it may mean to each of us.

On Tuesday, May 2 at 3 p.m., we will present “SWFL Florida Jewish Pioneers: Helen Weinfeld.” This documentary is about Naples’ very first and self-appointed Jewish historian, who documented and preserved much of the early story of Jewish life in Collier County. This free-of-charge event is of particular interest and value to newcomers, who are typically unfamiliar with local Jewish history. But old-timers and repeat viewers are welcome to experience it again. In person events are

as nostalgic as Weinfeld’s recollection of her early days in Naples. As of the date of this publication, Weinfeld is about a Chai short of 120. May she be blessed with good health to live to this historic age.

On Tuesday, May 9 at 3 p.m., we will share the story of “Southwest Florida Jewish Pioneers: The Labodas of Fort Myers,” our original production. This film covers the days of the Jewish communities in Lee and Charlotte counties as told by its Jewish Federation co-founder Sheila Laboda. Dr. Jerry Laboda is an expert on the life and history of Abraham C. Myers, a Confederate Provisions General and southern Jewish gentleman, after whom the city of Fort Myers is named. A short film about that will also be a part of that afternoon’s program. The Laboda children were raised in Southwest Florida and found their successes locally.

Both May 2 and May 9 programs are no fee and will be held at the Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center.

Are you interested in sponsoring this or any other event? Please contact us at office@jhsswf.org.

You may now purchase Jewish Historical Society of SWFL memberships online or mail us a check. A family membership is \$54; individual membership is \$36; student membership is \$18; and corporate sponsorship is \$300. If mailing a check, please send to The Jewish Historical Society of Southwest Florida, 8805 Tamiami Trail North, Suite #255, Naples, FL 34108.

We can be reached at 833-547-7935 (833-JHS-SWFL), www.jhsswf.org or office@jhsswf.org. The Virtual Museum of SWFL Jewish History is located online at <http://jewishhistorysouthwestflorida.org/>.

The Jewish Historical Society of Southwest Florida is a section 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Contributions are deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.



Marina Berkovich, Alexander Goldstein, Mitch Spaser, Rabbi Fishel Zaklos, Robert Davidson and Shellie Specter at Chabad of Naples after premiere of "Spaier Family Story." Photo credit: Lois Bolin.

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Targeted Distribution

L'CHAYIM – the monthly newspaper published by Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties – is mailed to 2,300 well-informed, savvy residents in the area with additional copies available at the Federation office.

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