

Program notes

By Debbie Sanford, Program Director

I can't say it enough...Thank you to all of our Jewish Film Festival Sponsors and those who have registered and donated to support the festival.

The number of registrations is overwhelming. I am so thrilled to see that you want this virtual festival. I know it's different and certainly not as much fun than sitting together in a theater and visiting with friends you don't see most of the year.

But just think...you will be much

more comfortable at home and safer at home. Plus, no traffic, no parking and, best of all, no fee for tickets. This gift is our thank you, EVERYONE, for your support over the last 25 years.

Please see the instructions block below where I list what to expect over the month. On the evening before each film, you will receive an email with a household link and password. This is for your family. Please do not share it with anyone else. You can use this link on any device in your home.

The links are active for 48 hours from the start times listed on the schedule, not when you receive your emails.

The confirmation email you received when you registered also lists step-by-step directions on how to connect your devices to your TV so you can watch on a larger screen.

Please check your spam folder if you do not see these emails. I have listed my email address everywhere, so if you have any issues, please email

me. I will be checking it constantly for anyone who reaches out for assistance. Please do not call the office. I will be watching from home with everyone else, so email is the easiest way to reach me. My email is debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org.

ENJOY the film festival! Feel free to email me to share your comments about the films.▲

Instructions on how to participate in the Virtual Jewish Film Festival

Step One: Register online at www.JewishFederationlcc.org/JFF2021.

Step Two: After you register, look for your confirmation email. If you don't receive it right away, check your SPAM folder.

Step Three: The evening before the film, keep an eye out for an email with your household's link and password. Films can be accessed from multiple devices.

Step Four: Use your links and passwords on the dates & times listed to access the films for up to 48 hours. Please Do NOT share!

Step Five: ENJOY!!

If you encounter any problems, please email Debbie:

debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org



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Jewish Family Services update

By Jodi Cohen, Senior Outreach & Food Pantry Coordinator

My antenna is always on the lookout for kindness and connection. These are just a few of the incidents I experience in my role as the Federation's Jewish Family Services Department:



■ Jodi Cohen

* The people who call to make food pantry appointments and end the call by saying, "Blessings to you," or "Thank you and God bless you" or "See you soon *ma cherie*."

* The person who showed up to donate many Publix gift cards with his 11-year-old son.

* The Federation member who called to ask a question and ended up telling me about hearing the phrase "East Kishinev" while growing up, as in "The store was so far away – in East Kishinev," only to recently find out it's the name of the city where his relatives actually lived.

* The people who called asking if I could use a fold-up wheelchair and an infant car seat. At the drop off, I mentioned the clients who are in need and the woman's hand flew to her heart when she said, "I'm so glad this will be helpful."

* The two families who came to The Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry for the first time and were in absolute awe at the abundance of food, toiletries and gift cards they received. I handed the woman who was driving a gift card for gas and she did a double take.

* I reread the notes I wrote about each home health care agency/provider on the list that JFS shares with clients. The relationships and connections are deep. The Federation receives so much support from its community partners.

There is a family that the Federation has helped intermittently over the past several years, and in particular this last year. We've provided support in large and small ways, although when you are a family in need without any resources, everything feels big. The teenage daughter wrote me a note thanking me and the Federation for making a

difference in their lives. She wrote, "You showed me that with a little help...you can make other people's dreams come true." What touched me the most was this sentence: "I'll never forget how much you helped us when no one else would." In case you ever doubt, or wonder, if your support of the Federation makes a difference, please know that it does.

Our community's level of support continues to be inspiring. Thank you to everyone who drops off food, makes donations and gives gift cards. The Progressive Women of SW Florida did a food drive on the Federation's behalf, and Valerie and Michael Franklin delivered a ton of food, along with financial donations from members. Congregations all over Southwest Florida contribute food as well as financially on a regular basis. Without all of your support it would be impossible for Jewish Family Services to provide the level and kind of support that it does. We are all affected by the ongoing Coronavirus, and some people need more help than others. Every single thing

continued on page 5



Valerie and Michael Franklin deliver food and cash donations from The Progressive Women of Southwest Florida

**J.f.S food Pantry
generously donated
by
The Cadkin foundation**

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.

TRIBUTES

In memory of Natalie
from Paul Cornez

In memory of Raymond Follador
from Lynn & Lory Kirby

In memory of Annette Goodman
from Toni & Steve Goodman
from James & JoAnn Lewin

In memory of Linda Idelson
from Ira & Sherri Zucker
from Ronny & Marie Taschner
from Martin & Betteann Sherman

In celebration of Marsha Kistler
from Peter Goldberg & Lynn Jaffe

In memory of Harvey Cohen
from Allyson Cellini

In honor of Chavurat Shalom
from Tobi Mackler

In memory of Marcia Cohen
from The Tokyo Rochmans
from Julie Rochman

In memory of Natalie Levitt, mother of Eric Levitt,
who passed away at age 81 on December 9, 2020

Each month, L'CHAYIM will list your Tributes.
Please send them to Lori Ramos
at the Federation at loriramos@jfedlcc.org.

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HOW THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES SERVES



Local Jewish Education and Culture

- ✧ Community-wide Jewish Education and Culture Programs for all ages including the Jewish Film Festival, Jewish Author Events, Israel Celebration, Jewish genealogy, Israeli folk dancing, social groups, etc.
- ✧ **L'CHAYIM** published monthly to keep the Jewish community informed about local, national and international Jewish issues.
- ✧ Community Relations activities include monitoring anti-Semitism and issues of separation of church and state in the community.
- ✧ Israel Advocacy and Initiatives to strengthen local Jewish community ties with Israel. Holocaust Education through the Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida to middle and high school students in the community.



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.



Local Seniors Services

- ✧ Holiday baskets and teen visits to seniors and senior facilities for Rosh Hashanah, Hanukah and Passover.
- ✧ Seniors & Volunteers Lunch Program.
- ✧ Emerging and pressing needs related to senior housing, health and socialization.



Local Case Management Services

- ✧ Non-sectarian, individual and family outreach, information and referral services.
- ✧ Individual life coaching and support services.

Local Emergency Services

- ✧ Food Pantry and Publix food cards.
- ✧ Emergency financial assistance grants.
- ✧ Education and aid associated with natural disasters.



Local Community Services

- ✧ Support families of children with special needs.
- ✧ Addressing pressing community needs related to volunteerism, institutional cooperation and community assessment and planning.

Jewish Community Foundation

- ✧ An endowment that ensures the long-term financial base of charitable, social and educational programs in our community.
- ✧ Needs-based college scholarships and study scholarships in Israel.
- ✧ Projects and programs aimed at Jewish community enrichment.



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Jewish Family Services update...continued from page 2

you do to support the Federation makes a difference. I cannot say this enough. I am grateful for the spirit and fortitude of the volunteers who work in The Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry. Man-O-Manischewitz – they keep me going. Laurie McConville and I set up the new shelves for the pantry and I'm pretty sure that experience bonded us for life. Some volunteers yelp with delight when they spot snacks while unloading food donations, knowing our clients will appreciate the treats. The volunteers are conscientious about unloading the food donations, putting everything away, keeping track of what we're low on, packing the bags and always thinking about how to best serve Federation clients. I love listening to everyone talking about their lives and what they are doing to stay strong during this challenging time. I also en-

joy the jokes and the shtick. There is a camaraderie that occurs as we work together to provide resources for people in need. So many people have volunteered at The Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry because they "want to do something helpful; they want to be of use." I am aware of how isolated so many people feel during this pandemic and am humbled to be a part of this dedicated Volunteer Village.

Thank you to the following Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry volunteers for their hard work: Carolyn Gora, Barbara Gribin, Barbara Henry, Debbie Feinberg, Doreen Kostel, Elise Sewall, Harriet Lipschutz, Karen Whitman, Laurie McConville, Laurie Morris, Linda Silver, Mary Beth & Rachel Mandelkorn, Randi & Payton Wolf, Robert Thomas, Suzanne Orkin, Tracey Seigel, Valerie Franklin, Sander Simon.▲



INDIGENT FUND PACESETTERS

The Federation expresses special gratitude to our Indigent Fund Pacesetters for the example they set for the rest of us.

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| Jack Cohen - Marcia Can Help | Karin Fine |
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| Linda Sweet | Temple Beth El |
| Temple Judea "Tzedakah Fund" | |
| Chavurat Shalom of SW Florida | |

FOOD PANTRY

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Temple Beth El | Ellen & Eric Levitt |
| Temple Judea | Barb & Neil Henry |
| Lindy Smith | Ruth Lefberg |
| Summerlin Lab | Shalom Life Center |
| The Simon family | Diane & Neil Greene |
| Moe Folb | Shalom Dancers |
| Victor Gold | Laurie Morris |
| Keith & Elisa Grossman | |

JEWISH FEDERATION FOOD PANTRY FACTS

- Q: Does the food that I donate have to be kosher?**
A: Nope!
- Q: Can only Jewish people come to the food pantry?**
A: Nope! Anyone living in Lee or Charlotte Counties is eligible.
- Q: When can I drop off food at the Federation?**
A: Monday-Thursday between 9am - 3pm. Put your donations in the big blue bin on the porch. Let us know you've dropped off food or leave your name with your donation.
- Q: Do I have to call first if I'm planning to drop off food?**
A: Nope! (Unless it's a big load, in which case please call Jodi to arrange a drop-off time.)
- Q: How do I know what the food pantry needs?**
A: Debbie always lists what the pantry is low on in the weekly e-blast.
- Q: In general, what's in each bag of food given to clients?**
A: Cereal, peanut butter, tuna, vegetables, beans, pasta, tomato sauce, fruit, rice, mac & cheese.
- Q: How much food does each family receive and how often?**
A: We provide one bag of food per person in a household up to six bags. People can come to get food and toiletries once a month.
- Q: What if I want to volunteer for the pantry?**
A: *Tres bienski!* Call Jodi Cohen at 239.481.4449, x2 or email: jodicohen@jfedlcc.org.

FEDERATION FOOD DRIVE

Three easy ways to donate:

- 1** Drop off food in the **BIG BLUE BIN** on the Federation porch Monday - Thursday.
- 2** Buy gift cards online or at the store. Drop off or mail to Federation.
- 3** Go online to donate at: www.jewishfederationlcc.org or call 239-481-4449, x2.



The Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties
9701 Commerce Center Ct. | Fort Myers, FL 33908

Down the rabbit hole

By Brian Simon, Federation Past-President

Sometimes it's fun to go down a YouTube rabbit hole. I started by searching Israel Eurovision 1990. Don't ask me how I picked that as a starting point. Yeah, I saw the Will Ferrell movie (very enjoyable), but it wasn't top of mind. Eurovision is a song contest where various European countries and Israel submit one act and compete for votes to choose a winner. It was *American Idol* long before *American Idol*, except for the "American" part. Anyway, the 1990 song by Rita didn't spark anything, so I moved to 1991.

Israel's entry that year was Duo Datz. There was definitely some unintentional comedy watching their routine, especially with the four back-up singers/dancers who seemed to start about 100 yards behind Moshe and Orna on the stage. Moshe and Orna Datz were the duo (also known as Datz

v'Datzah). Anyway, Duo Datz actually finished third in the contest that year, which led me to look up Israel's finishes in Eurovision.

First appearance, 1973. Winner 1978, 1979, 1998, 2018... Wait, Israel won in 2018? Why didn't I know this?

And that led to Netta.

Netta Barzilai is a unique performer. Part singer, part DJ, part sound effect machine. You haven't seen or heard anyone quite like her. Go watch the video of her live semifinal performance. I'll wait. Here's the link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2wSNKD8MXQ

She brought the house down. Yes, we are going all the way down this rabbit hole.

From Wikipedia: Born in Hod Ha-Sharon. Her mom is Sephardic. Her father is Ashkenazi. She lived four years in Nigeria while her father worked on a project for an Israeli company. Her winning song "Toy" hit Number One on Billboard's U.S. Dance Club Chart.

From Billboard: Netta is one of their favorite LGBTQ artists (although

she has described herself as "a straight girl with a gay story," whatever that means). Her new music release, "The Best of Netta's Office, Vol. 1" is based on her performance series on YouTube.



Photo courtesy of Netta Barzilai

So, I had to watch "Netta's Office." It's a series of simple performance videos – just Netta in her bedroom with her looping machine making unique covers of hit songs. Her choices are all over the place. She covers Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are a Changin'." She covers Disney's "Supercalifragilistic-expialidocious." She raps in Spanish.

The first episode, from 2019, has almost a million hits on YouTube. She introduces herself and tells us, "I just want a free channel with my audience, like something really direct. Lately, it's been really, really hard to release new music because of a lot of obstacles." In the second episode, she calls her YouTube series a chance for her and the viewer to "find (her) artistic direction and musical identity."

Netta makes ridiculous lyrics sound cool, "Everybody want to get chicken in a bucket. Everybody want to put their finger in a socket."

The thing about Netta is that her music seems to be less an arrangement of notes than an arrangement of

sounds. In one video, she's whispering and telling us that she's fascinated by a sound she makes with her fingernails.

In a video from June 30, she starts by addressing a "tipping point of racism." "Yes, I am fat and Jewish, and I have been getting just a little bit of troubles for that, but I'm so privileged and so lucky not to experience racism like other people do."

In 2019, Netta walked the runway for Tel Aviv's Fashion Week wearing a bathing suit and a plunging neckline. According to *The Jerusalem Post*, she earned both praise and criticism.

Fashion blogger and body-positive activist Zohar Vasievitsky wrote, "This was a PR move that exposed (the designer) to hundreds of thousands of new potential customers, including fat women who are sure their size will be in the store – but it's a lie. They're using us – fat women – for their PR spin... a woman who is Netta's size has nowhere to buy a bathing suit."

"For years I would sit on the side when my friends swam in the water," said Netta. "There is no feeling worse than that, to be afraid of what people will say about you, or to be embarrassed by who you are and what you are. I'm proud to do this today... I'm really proud to be a part of this."

So, that's probably far enough down the rabbit hole. But one more thing. If you do watch the Eurovision movie on Netflix, Netta has a quick solo in the "Song-Along" scene, coming out of the limo. I had no idea.▲

Brian Simon is former president of the Federation. His views are not necessarily those of the Federation or its board.

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Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center update

By Susan Suarez, President & CEO

With a tumultuous year behind us, and the growing availability of multiple Covid-19 vaccines, the world has hope for a better year.

A recent webinar about “Hope Theory” noted “hope” is more than just a feeling – it is a powerful state of being. If we can learn how to find and amplify hope in our lives, we have a focus that will help us through the darkest of times. Sometimes it takes great courage to be hopeful.



■ Susan Suarez

Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, in his book *Man’s Search for Meaning*, talks about the terrible effects the loss of hope had on his fellow prisoners. Once they lost it, many often died soon after. But during the horror of the Holocaust, he also saw examples of the extraordinary power having hope gave people.

You will find examples of this power in the exhibit currently on display in the Museum’s Estelle and

Stuart Price Gallery. “Girl Power – How Women Impacted the Holocaust and Beyond” profiles a variety of women whose hope prompted them to take astoundingly brave actions on behalf of others. Their stories span the 20th and 21st centuries and include younger and older women from a wide variety of backgrounds.

The exhibit is based on the theme for this year’s education programming: “Heroes, Heroines and Helpers.” The personal stories of the Holocaust our programs share help students and the public remember the lessons of the Holocaust and inspire them to act against the bigotry, hatred and violence in our world today. The programs serve to ensure the memories of hope and action do not fade away.

Covid-19 has delayed the return of visitors to SWFL classrooms, so our Education Department has revised many of our key student programs for online use. This availability, along with active contact through phone calls and emails, enables us to continue assisting teachers, students and parents to meet the state-mandated requirements for teaching about the Holocaust. Our

Teacher Workshops on the theme of “Genocide” are available monthly online and on our YouTube Channel. They come complete with lesson plans and student activities. The Workshops are sponsored by the Merrill Kuller Educator Series and the Florida Department of Education Commissioner’s Task Force on Holocaust Education.

A very special Zoom program about parents’ hope for their children’s survival during the Holocaust will be presented on February 24 at 4:00 p.m. “Hidden Children” will feature interviews with three SWFL residents who were hidden during the Holocaust. Renee Beddouk, Maud Dahme and Renee Fritz will share their stories of the brave people who took them in and saved their lives. All of these women have graciously participated many times in the Survivor Presentation programs we offer to both student and public audiences. RSVPs are required to receive the Zoom link. There is no charge to attend. Visit HMCEC.org for more information and to register.

In case you hadn’t heard, the Museum is now offering three new in-person tours for small groups of 4-12 people. As with our small group Student Education Museum Field

Trips, all safety protocols are followed, among them social distancing, use of masks by guests and staff, and sanitizing of commonly touched areas such as door handles. The new tours are the “Private Group Self-Guided Tour” which uses tablets, the “Morning Docent-led Tour” and the new “Perfectly Paradise Authentic Experience Tour,” created in conjunction with the Naples/Marco Island/Everglades Convention & Visitors Bureau. Pre-registration and a minimum of four attendees is required. More information on rates and schedules is available on HMCEC.org under the “Visit” tab. Select the “Special Tour Programs” in the drop-down menu. Please visit our website for updates on other programs and to sign up for our monthly e-newsletter.

We know the next several months will be difficult, but hang on to your hope. As the “Hope Theory” webinar noted, “When things are hard and hope is low, remember that hope is always present, and that hope is sparked by desire. As desire grows, so does hope. Allow that to be your tether to better times ahead.” Thanks for your support of our mission and the programs which allow us to spread the message of hope for a better world to students and the public.▲

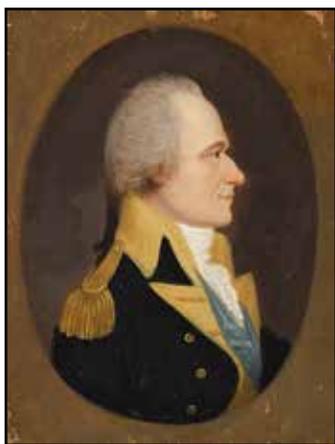
Was Alexander Hamilton Jewish?

“Thousands of miles from the Old World, on a sun-kissed island in the West Indies, a young boy named Alexander Hamilton began a most unlikely journey in the 1750s. His meteoric rise from Caribbean obscurity to American founder has long captivated historians and, more recently, theater audiences. Yet one crucial aspect of Hamilton’s life has remained submerged for centuries: the weight of the evidence suggests that he was in fact Jewish.”

So writes Dr. Andrew Porwancher who is the Wick Cary Associate Professor at the University of Oklahoma, where he teaches legal history. Drawing on untapped sources in the West Indies, Dr. Porwancher makes the case for Hamilton’s Jewish upbringing and explores its implications for the republic he fought to create.

Dr. Porwancher, a native of Princ-

eton, New Jersey, earned degrees from Brown and Northwestern before completing his PhD in history at Cambridge. His third book, *The Jewish World of Alexander Hamilton*, will be published this year by Princeton University Press. He is currently working



on his fourth book, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Jews*.

The community is invited to a Zoom presentation by Dr. Porwancher on Tuesday, February 2 at 7:00 p.m. There will be time for questions after his talk.

The event is sponsored by Chaverot of

Temple Judea. There is no cost to attend, but donations to help underwrite the cost of the presentation would be welcome.

Please call the synagogue office at 239.433.0201 to RSVP and get the Zoom ID and password information.▲

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Hannah Senesh: You may not know her heroic story

By Ida Margolis

My God, My God
May these never end...
The sand and the sea
The rustle of the waters
The brilliance of the sky
The prayer of Man.

Did you recognize "Eli Eli," the poem above? You likely heard it as a song in English or the original Hebrew. It is nearly always included in Yom



HaShoah programs. This is only one of the many beautiful poems written by young poet Hannah Senesh.

Senesh was born in Budapest on July 17, 1921, to a distinguished Hungarian Jewish family. Her father, who died when she was a child, had been a well-known writer. When Senesh encountered antisemitism during her

high school years, she decided to learn more about her Jewish origins and discovered the Zionist movement. She joined a Zionist youth movement and learned Hebrew. In 1939, after finishing her high school studies, Senesh went to Palestine to study agriculture. Hannah joined a kibbutz and continued the writing there that she had begun in Hungary.

In 1941, she joined the Haganah, and in 1943, she enlisted in the British Women's Auxiliary Air Force. Later that year she was recruited to join a clandestine military project whose ultimate purpose was to offer aid to beleaguered European Jewry. She became a member of the Palmah and was trained as a paratrooper.

In mid-March 1944, she and several others were dropped into Yugoslavia in order to aid the anti-Nazi forces and enter Hungary. Within hours of entering Hungary, she was captured and was sent to prison where she was tortured to get information, which she never gave.

Senesh would not be broken even after she discovered her mother was arrested and was told that her mother would



Hannah Senesh

be killed if Hannah did not cooperate. Only 22, refusing to beg for clemency and refusing a blindfold, she faced her murderers. Hannah was buried in the Jewish graveyard at Budapest. Her mother survived, immigrated to Palestine and told of her daughter's courageous life and death, and brought to the public her daughter's diary, poetry and plays. In 1950, Hannah Senesh's

remains were brought to Israel where they were buried in the "Parachutists' section" in the military cemetery on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. In the same year, a kibbutz was founded and called Yad Hannah in her memory. Senesh is a figure of great renown in Israel, though largely unknown in most of the world, even though many people have heard her words and been moved by her beautiful poetry.

Fortunately, her poetry is easily available, books about her have been written and, recently, a very moving play about her was produced by the Folksbiene National Yiddish Theater. A wonderful film, *Blessed is the Match*, was made about Senesh and has been on PBS and shown locally.

Hannah Senesh is like the stars and special people she wrote about: "There are stars whose radiance is visible on Earth though they have long been extinct. There are people whose brilliance continues to light the world even though they are no longer among the living. These lights are particularly bright when the night is dark. They light the way for humankind."

Hannah Senesh is indeed a light for humankind, a heroine worth remembering. ▲

Earning a degree, interest-free... JELF provides funds to more students than ever before!

In 2020, JELF (Jewish Educational Loan Fund) provided 394 interest-free loans to Jewish college, graduate and vocational students. This jump in loans came from an increase of 66% more applications over the previous year.

JELF serves students in the five-state region of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia (excluding metro DC) as they pursue their higher education. The total student need for all the students in the JELF region was \$2,352,906.

Through student repayments, increased fundraising and the generosity of the Marcus Foundation, JELF

was able to allocate \$1,553,739 in interest-free, last-dollar loans to these students.

JELF's mission is to help reduce students' financial burden so that they can pursue their higher education full time. JELF's interest-free loans of last resort help students pay for crucial living and medical expenses, books, supplies, transportation and many other costs. By borrowing through JELF, this year's 394 student loan recipients are estimated to save nearly \$1 million in interest payments over the life of their loans.

Since JELF first started providing interest-free loans in 1961, the

organization has loaned \$16 million to 2,400+ Jewish students. JELF is proud to consistently maintain a 99%



student repayment rate, even during this difficult year.

"What I love about JELF is that your contribution continuously pays it forward," said JELF's Board President, Jane Aronoff. "Dollars used for one student when paid back, are

used for the next. Every dollar lives on and on."

About JELF @JELFLoans

JELF provides interest-free loans for Jewish students in need to meet their post-high school educational goals. Undergraduate, graduate and vocational school students are eligible to apply. The application process is open from March 1 - April 30 for the full academic year, and September 1-30 for spring and/or summer semester(s) only. Sign up at jelf.org/ app to get a reminder or visit jelf.org/donate to learn more or to make a contribution.

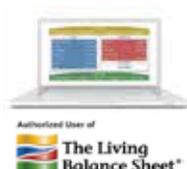
For more information, contact David Cohen at 404.217.3724, email info@jelf.org or visit jelf.org. ▲

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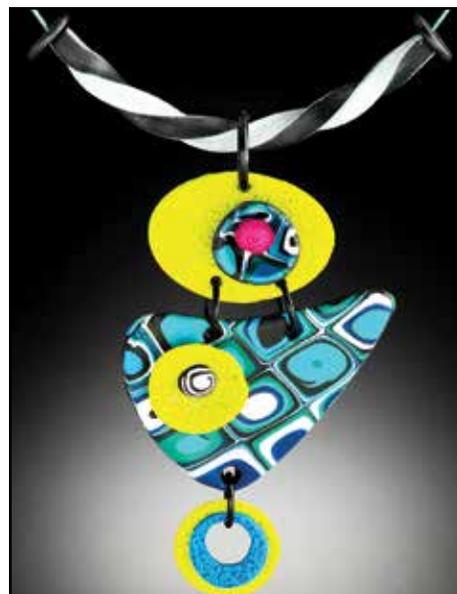
ArtFest Fort Myers 2021 – Let art elevate your everyday!

ArtFest Fort Myers, the annual art festival, taking place this year on February 6 & 7 on the downtown Fort Myers riverfront, is excited to announce the stars of the 2021 art festival – the artists! Amazing ceramics, gorgeous jewelry, remarkable glass, unique paintings, wearable art and so much more await you at ArtFest Fort Myers. This family friendly, safety-protocol-filled festival connects art and artists with our community in a way that is so much fun. This is an art experience that delights every sense!

Want to see all the artists? Do a little pre-shopping? You can visit the Online Gallery at ArtFestFortMyers.com and the artists will all be there with their artwork and links to their websites. And beginning January 29, you can visit and shop the artists on ArtFest@Home – right from the art festival's main website.

You may be asking how ArtFest Fort Myers is stepping up to meet the challenge of being a “safe” event in this challenging Covid time. The art festival staff has attended too many best-practices trainings to count (virtually, of course). Following best-

practices, ArtFest Fort Myers is limiting crowd size by fencing the entire festival site and designating five entrance and exit gates; instituting timed ticket access – with advance online ticket sales to avoid the queue; installing



Charise Bundesen - Jewelry

120+ hand sanitizer stations; requiring masks at all times; hiring professional cleaning crews for all touch points; reducing food vendors; creating tables and chairs relax locations for two or four only; and most selling locations

are touchless and cashless. ArtFest Fort Myers values the safety and enjoyment of everyone participating – attendees, artists and volunteers.

The entire family will enjoy Southwest Florida's premier art festival. Take time to enjoy the talented high school artists' work at the *Art Under 20* Exhibit and Competition and prepare to be astonished as the students create large street paintings in the *Chalk Block*. Check out the *We Are Overflowing* sculptural exhibit, featuring the recycling, reuse and upcycling message through art. Food and beverage areas provide a relaxing break.

Not quite ready to venture to a large gathering – even outdoors? ArtFest Fort Myers hears you and has launched an all-new online virtual art festival – ArtFest@Home – as close as your computer, phone or iPad. You will find:

- ◆ An easy shopping experience featuring all the artists who are at the art festival in person: One shopping cart with one-click checkout. Shop from all the artists; talk to them via Zoom; watch their demo videos; listen to their roundtable discussions; see how to use their artwork in decorating your home.
- ◆ All the fun activities from ArtFest Fort Myers: *Art Under 20*, high school art show; *Chalk Block* street painting; *Publix Art Yard* with art projects and entertainment; *We Are Overflowing* art installation based on recycled items; Food and Entertainment for all to enjoy.
- ◆ VIP Club experiences in a virtual art gallery and more
- ◆ Festival posters and t-shirts to order shipped directly to you

Where do you find ArtFest@Home? Just go to ArtFestFortMyers.com and click on the big ArtFest@Home logo and we will see you there beginning January 29.

Join ArtFest's VIP Club and take advantage of reserved weekend parking; relaxing on the VIP Club Terrace with morning treats and coffee; a delightful lunch and beverages all weekend long. The VIP Club packages start

at \$45 per person and quantities are limited. Visit ArtFestFortMyers.com for all the options. Your support helps ArtFest Fort Myers through this chal-

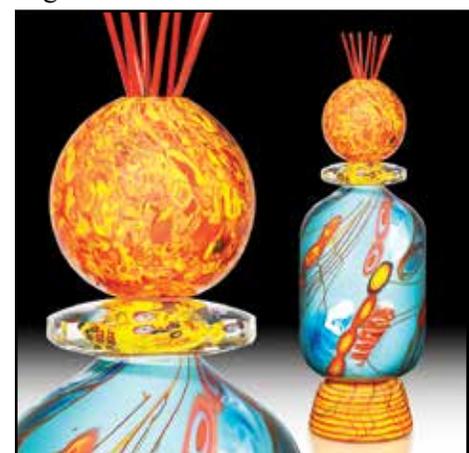


Kathleen Murphy Willer - Poster Artist

lenging time when all arts organizations are focused on getting to the other side financially intact.

Attendees often ask, “How do the 150 festival artists get chosen?” These artists are the best-of-the-best as a jury panel of five professional artists spent an entire Zoom day selecting them from the 700 artists who applied.

For more information, please visit ArtFestFortMyers.com. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram - Tag us #artfestfm.▲



Steve Palmer - Glass

Quick facts:

WHAT: Southwest Florida's premier art festival featuring 150 national artists, high school art competition, street chalk art competition, fun food. Safety protocols added for everyone's comfort and enjoyment.

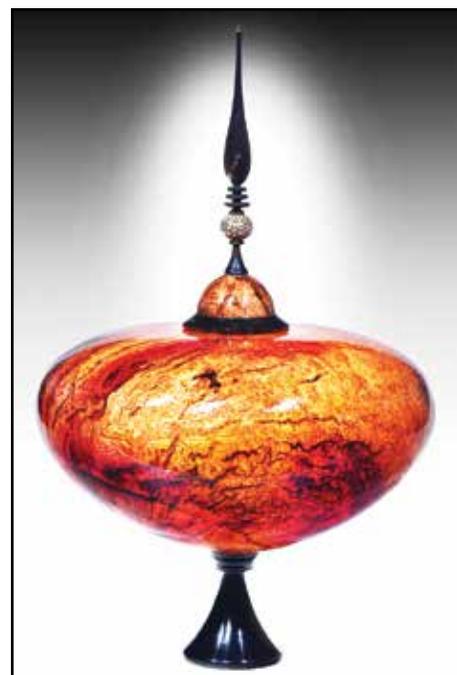
WHEN: February 6 & 7: Saturday 9 am - 5 pm & Sunday 9 am - 4 pm

WHERE: Downtown Fort Myers River District on Edwards Drive

TICKETS: Timed tickets and entrances for everyone's safety and peace of mind. Tickets starting at \$5 and increasing closer to the festival. Purchase in advance for best price and time option, and avoid lines at the gate. Order tickets at ArtFestFortMyers.com

PAYMENTS: Most locations in the art festival are cashless. Please bring your credit or debit card or phone payment app for touchless payments.

PARKING: Look for bright Event Parking signs and flags. Parking lots adjacent to festival; street parking; City Garages are open; remote parking lots with free trolley service.



Matthew Hatala - Wood

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Pharaoh's Daughter unplugged

By Arlene Stolnitz

We are just past Hanukkah and not even close to Passover, but I am anxious to write my column this month about a group called Pharaoh's Daughter. That name intrigued me when I heard its unique sound.

Basya Shechter, founder and lead singer of the seven-piece world/rock folk band, is also a cantor and haz-zanista at Fire Island Synagogue, which features an egalitarian conservative-style service. Her earthy voice blends beautifully with the soulful sounds of the oud (a pear-shaped guitar-like instrument), strings and keyboard, creating a meditative sound at times. Currently, besides acting as cantor at Fire Island Synagogue, Basya is music director and cantor at Romemu Brooklyn. Its mission is to create a place where music can empower us, cause us to feel more deeply, and be of service to the world. She is also associated with a group called Darshan, whose project is to bring Jewish mysticism to prayer through music. And she is part of an ensemble at B'nai Jeshuran's Shabbat services in Manhattan, where she plays unique instruments such as the darbuka (drum), riq (tambourine), frame drum (ancient early drum) and saz (stringed instrument).



Arlene Stolnitz

I learned a lot about Basya while watching her in an interview with Matthew Lazar on a Zoom program called "Taking Note: Conversations About Music in Challenging Times," hosted by the Zamir Choral Foundation.

Basya grew up in Borough Park, Brooklyn, in an Orthodox Haredi family. As a young person, she began to question the lifestyle she was born into. More and more she felt a pull to get away from the Brooklyn/Manhattan/Catskills scene. She took a gap year in Israel and, eventually, due to attitude and behavior issues, was kicked out of the Yeshiva she was attending. From there she went to Egypt and, while in Cairo, she had an "aha" moment when she heard Mediterranean-style music played in a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant! Listening to the Middle Eastern melodies, she came to realize her musical talents were being stifled by her Orthodox lifestyle. At that time, she had not yet formed her first band, which later was known as "Band Anonymous."

Influenced by music from folk traditions of the Middle East, she came to realize that West African music is the "mother" of Egyptian music. Other influences were Arabic, Turkish, Israeli, Chassidic, Gypsy and random forms of Eastern music. In time, she formed the group she is known for today, Pharaoh's Daughter.

So how did the band get the name Pharaoh's Daughter, which attracted me in the first place? It all has to do with

her name, Basya. According to sources I read, in "Shmot" (Exodus), Moshe is saved by Pharaoh's daughter, who was renamed Basya. Given the name by her parents, Basya means "daughter of a higher spiritual source."

And finally, how does Basya's family accept her leaving Orthodoxy? Her father is not thrilled with her decision, and she has a complex relationship with her mother. Presently, though, there is no tension in the rest of the family. And she is the mother of a wonderful three-year-old daughter.

Basya has turned to a branch of progressive Judaism known as Jewish Renewal, which seems more relevant to her.

I encourage you to listen to the

recording on YouTube of the Zamir conversation with Matthew Lazar which gives a more complete understanding of Basya's passion and enthusiasm.

To hear her music, I refer you to "Songs of Wonder," containing the poetry of Abraham Joshua Heschel, which Basya has set to music. ▲

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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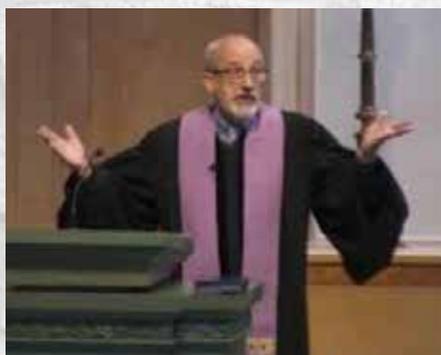



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The challah that got us through 2020 – recipe by Chef Dalia

2020... What a year! We have done so much this year. When there is an excess of time at home and a constant hunger, an addiction to baking only makes sense. If there is one good that happened as a result of the Coronavirus, it has improved our cooking and baking skills, which have been upgraded, without us even noticing. Everyone is baking their way through the pandemic.

Not to sound like a quarantine cliché, I too, have turned to baking as a source of comfort. But upon devouring my 20 loaves of challah bread in two weeks, I realized that perhaps I was turning to cooking for more than just

emotional and physical escape. My nightly ritual had started to border on meditative. I began to savor my time spent listening to Israeli music and losing myself in chopping, mashing, folding and mixing. This made me think that culinary art cooking, but mostly baking, is actually therapeutic and it just hit me exactly how it works!

Professionals in culinary art therapy confirmed that cooking can certainly be a form of meditation. In other words, cooking and baking involves thoughtful meditation that can help a person become more grounded, happier, less anxious and so much more.

So now we have a good reason to

go back to bake and eat an extra challah bread every day, without any guilt. Challah is my favorite Friday bread. Well, it is my favorite anytime bread.

Everyone who is afraid of making bread, please raise your hand. Well, I wish I could see you and come into your kitchen, hold your hand, and make this bread with you. There are a few reasons for this: First, I'd love to meet more people who read this column. Second, I would like to help dispel the myth that challah bread is scary and hard to make. Third, I would love to share the joy and wonder that is bread baking. Fourth, maybe you would let me take some of the challah bread home because mine is all gone.

The first thing you should know about making challah is this: do not be afraid! I find that many people are overwhelmed by the thought of making their own challah. Well, fear no more!

I have a secret...I was not born a great challah baker. I start making challah at a young age and I made a lot of bad challah. Bread baking is a life-long learning process. Just remember that practice make perfect. Great bread sometimes takes a lot of practice and precision. Even the bad homemade challah is still delicious and perfect warm out of the oven. Just enjoy the making of your own challah. You can always try again next week.

Another thing I always say: the difference between good challah and great challah is a high-quality flour. Flour quality matters and will make the difference in your dough. Please do not use just any flour. Here comes my secret ingredient and I hope you are sitting down for it. I am using pizza flour (also called flour 00 and is sold in every supermarket), and it has made a world of difference for my challah baking.

I'm giving you a great recipe, but the real magic comes in the simple way of braiding this challah. The simple braid is impressive and will bring the house down.

One of the main stars of the carb attack in Israel this year more than any other year, belongs to the challah and the truth is, after you try this easy and tasty challah recipe, you will fully understand why.

Challah bread is a treat, but I know the distinctive braiding of the loaf might be something you're not quite ready to handle. Instead, try this pull-apart challah recipe that is baked in an



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

oval challah baking pan.

Before you know it, you'll be pulling off pieces of this delicious challah bread and telling everyone nearby that "they must try this bread NOW!" before you eat it all.

Ingredients

(makes two large challahs):

- 7 cups pizza flour
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons dry yeast
- 6 tablespoons white sugar
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1¾ cup water

For Topping:

- 8 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- ▶ Add water to the bowl of a stand mixer with dough hook. Sprinkle water with sugar and yeast. Stir and let stand 5-10 minutes until foamy.
- ▶ Mix in oil, eggs, salt and 3 cups flour. Stir in additional flour slowly. Add enough flour until dough is smooth. Knead for 10 minutes. Dough should stick to the bottom of the bowl but clears sides. It will be soft and slightly sticky. (Kneading can also be done by hand by will take closer to 10 minutes to achieve a smooth dough.) Cover the dough and let rise until doubled, about 2 hours.
- ▶ Divide dough into 2 equal portions.
- ▶ In a small bowl, combine the oil, basil, oregano, thyme and garlic salt. Set aside.
- ▶ Cut each piece of dough into 12 (total of 24) ping pong size pieces.
- ▶ Roll the pieces into dough balls.
- ▶ Grease 2 oval challah pans and place parchment paper in the bottom of the pans.
- ▶ Layer the balls into 2 pans and brush on top half of the oil mixture. Cover loaves and let rise until doubled, about 1 hour. Meanwhile preheat oven to 350° for 15 minutes prior to the full rise.
- ▶ Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from the oven and immediately brush the rest of the oil mixture on top.▲

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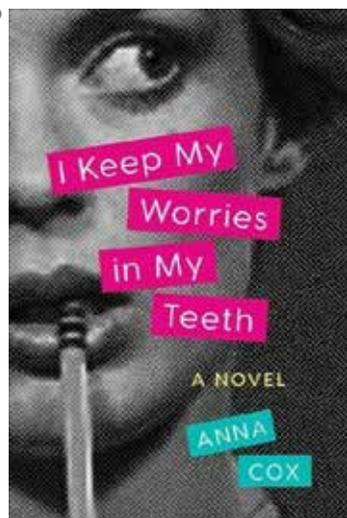


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Stars of David

By Nate Bloom, Contributing Columnist

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

New Television Series

Coyote, a new series, started streaming on CBS All-Access on Thursday, January 7. Michael Chiklis stars as Ben Clemens, a veteran Border Patrol agent who is forced to work for Mexican smugglers of undocumented immigrants. **MARK FEUERSTEIN**, 49, (*Royal Pains*) has an important recurring role as Frank Kerr, a successful psychologist who is married to Clemens' ex-wife. Over on ABC, the comedy/drama *Call Your Mother* premiered on Wednesday, January 13. **KYRA SEDGWICK**, 55, (*The Closer*) stars as an "empty-nester" mom whose adult children live far away. She decides to move near them and re-insert herself in their lives – and the kids are surprised that they do need her. Sedgwick's mother was Jewish and she identifies as Jewish.

A re-boot or new version of the '80s TV series *The Equalizer* starts on CBS on Sunday, February 7. Queen Latifah stars as Robyn McCall, an enigmatic woman with a mysterious background who uses her extensive skills to help those with nowhere else to turn. **ADAM GOLDBERG**, 50, is a main cast member. He's best known as the star of the *Hebrew Hammer* movies and as the Jewish army soldier who tragically dies in a one-on-one fight with a Nazi soldier near the end of *Saving Private Ryan*.

Another CBS new series, *Clarice*, starts on Thursday, February 11. It follows FBI agent Clarice Sterling a year after (1993) the events depicted in the film *The Silence of the Lambs*. **MICHAEL CUDLITZ**, 56, a big burly guy whose father is Jewish, plays a main cast character. The series was created by **ALEX KURTZMAN**, 47, and **JENNY LUMET**, 53. Lumet is the daughter of the late, great director **SIDNEY LUMET** (*Dog Day Afternoon* and *12 Angry Men*). Lena Horne was her maternal grandmother. Her husband, **ALEX WEINSTEIN**, is an artist.

Obit Catch-Up

Dawn Wells, who played Mary Ann – the "Girl Next Door" – on the ever-popular *Gilligan's Island*, died on December 30, age 82, from Covid-19 complications. In interviews, she seemed to be just the same sweet person she was on the series, which was

created by the late **SHERWOOD SCHWARTZ**. Her death leaves **TINA LOUISE**, 86, ("Ginger") as the only surviving cast member. Yes, Louise, born Tina Blacker, is Jewish. She has never talked about being Jewish, but her only husband was Jewish and he was the father of her only child. Wells was not close to Louise, but she was very friendly with the others offstage. She stayed very much in touch with **NATALIE SCHAFER**, who played Mrs. "Lovey" Howell. Schafer, who was born into a rich New York Jewish family, would never tell Wells her age. But, in her 1991 obituary, it said she was 91 at the time of her death. Wells contacted her doctor, who told her Schafer wanted her age in her obituary. She wanted the world to know that "even at 91 she would go out every day for lunch and swim nude in her pool."

As I write this (January 5), actress **TANYA ROBERTS** has just died. On January 3, there were many premature reports that she had died, age 65. Roberts wasn't a major star, but she had some good roles: she was an "angel" in the last season (1981) of *Charlie's Angels*; she co-starred in the cult fantasy classic *The Beastmaster* (1982) opposite actor **MARC SINGER**, now 72; she was the "Bond Girl" in "*A View to a Kill*" (1985); and she was a cast member of *That '70s Show*. She played the mother of lead character Donna (**LAURA PREPON**, 40) from 1998-2001. Years later, she revealed that she left the series because her husband, writer **BARRY ROBERTS**, was terminally ill with encephalitis. Barry, like Tanya, was from the Bronx. A personal source who knew Barry in high school told me he was Jewish. Barry and Tanya wed in 1974. She nursed him for five years until he died in 2006.

For decades, her bios repeated the same thing – that she was born in 1955, the daughter of a Jewish mother and an Irish father. Well, a friend and I did some record checking. Turns out that Tanya, born Victoria Blum, was born in 1949. Her father, **OSCAR BLUM**, was Jewish. Her mother, Dorothy Smith, was English, and it's unclear if she was Jewish. I don't fault Roberts for shaving six years off her age in youth-obsessed Hollywood. But maybe it explains why she had no interest in correcting online bio details.▲

Interested in Your Family's History?

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

So here's the deal:

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



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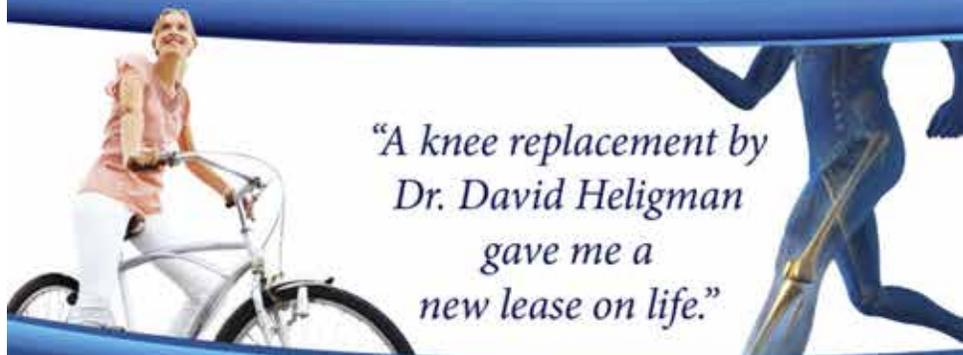


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Aging Jewishly – What our traditions teach us about growing old

Elderly, oldster or senior – What do older people prefer to be called?

By Rabbi Barbara Aiello

The supermarket checkout line was long and social distancing made it seem longer. As Dorothea and her granddaughter Lisa moved forward, the young man ahead of them turned abruptly and left the line.

When Lisa called out to him, “Hey mister, you’re next,” the man sneered and responded, “You can stand there and wait for ‘Gramps’ to count out his pennies. I’m finding another line.”

As Lisa watched her grandmother’s smile become a frown, she said to her grandmother, “How disrespectful, calling that old guy ‘Gramps.’” Dorothea nodded. “‘Old Guy’ isn’t such a good choice either.” Lisa acquiesced. “Well, Grandma, if ‘Gramps’ and ‘Old Guy’ are wrong, what’s the right way to talk about older people. What’s the right thing to say?”

Lisa’s question is a timely one, especially in our politically correct world where the way someone is described can lead to upset, hurt feelings or misunderstanding.

Having been a special education teacher, Dorothea had direct experience with negative stereotypes. She explained that, “Years ago, persons with disabilities were called ‘crippled’ or ‘handicapped.’ The image those words portrayed was a negative one. Persons with differences lobbied hard for terms that focused on the positive – on the individual; terms that didn’t lump them together in a group. That’s how we got away from ‘handicapped’ and began to use ‘person with a disability or difference.’ I wish we’d do the same for older people.”

Dorothea isn’t alone. In a recent AARP publication, an article titled, “Who You Calling ‘Young Lady?’” (February 2, 2018), authors Amanda Duarte and Mike Albo tackle what they term ‘ageist language,’ and emphasize that pejorative and patronizing terms that describe older adults are harmful, hurtful and should not be used.

Like what? Gerontology specialists and professionals who work with older adults explain that terms like ‘over the hill,’ ‘feisty,’ ‘Blue-Hairs,’ ‘Gramps’ and even ‘the elderly’ are demeaning. And older adults report that when they are addressed as ‘Sweetie’ or ‘Honey’ and told that they are ‘adorable’ or ‘cute,’ they feel as though they are being

treated like children.

AJAS, the Association for Jewish Aging Services, uses the term ‘aging population,’ while most academic journals and *The New York Times*’ stylebook caution against using ‘the elderly’ and instead advise that ‘older adults’ and ‘seniors’ are the preferred descriptors.

Interestingly, even the term ‘senior citizen’ has fallen out of favor with some. Susan Jacoby, the author of *Never Say Die: The Myth and Marketing of the New Old Age*, takes issue, surprisingly, with the term ‘senior’ to describe older adults. Quoted in a recent article in *The Atlantic*, Jacoby says, “The word ‘senior’ is one of the most common euphemisms for old people, and happens to be the one I hate the most.” Jacoby goes on to say, “Imagine if a newspaper called young voters ‘juniors’ instead of ‘young voters.’” She reminds us that the term ‘senior citizen’ can be inaccurate in that “not every older resident of the U.S. is an American citizen.”

In that same *Atlantic* article (Jan-

uary 2020), author Joe Pinsker poses the question in the title, “When Does Someone Become ‘Old?’” Pinsker found that, “It’s surprisingly hard to find a good term for people in late life.”

So let’s ask the experts – seniors themselves. What do older adults in our own community think and feel about how they are described and addressed?

Michael R., a man in his 70s, says, “I prefer ‘old person.’ It’s short, sweet and that’s what we are.” Josie C., who just turned 70, votes for ‘mature person,’ and advises that how one prefers to be addressed is related to “a person’s own view of their place in life.”

Carol K., in her 90s, gets straight to the point. “I have no problem with being referred to as part of ‘the elderly.’ I mean, that’s what we are.”

Frank J. observes that, “When we ‘oldsters’ get together we call each other ‘geezer,’ ‘codger’ and ‘old coot.’ But we don’t want younger people calling us those names. I guess we’re like all

continued on next page



Rabbi Barbara Aiello

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Rolling out the (whiskey) barrels

By The Wine Whisperer

Right around 2014, a new trend in winemaking emerged, and it's started to gain a lot of traction...and attention. Some winemakers have begun to age their wines in used Bourbon whiskey barrels. They call it "cross-aging."



■ Jerry Greenfield

The venerable oak barrel plays a critical role in the way wine ages and tastes. There are dozens of ways winemakers can use oak to flavor and "season" wine, but until now they've mainly stored and aged their wines in new or used French or American oak barrels. But apparently, this new trend of putting red wine in used whiskey barrels opens a new world of flavors and textures. And this is no "underground" phenomenon. Even major wineries like Mondavi and the Australian Jacob's Creek are doing it.

White wines are also getting the treatment, being aged in barrels that formerly contained tequila or other clear spirits. And the situation gets

more interesting from there.

Jeff Kasavan, Cellarmaster at Cooper & Thief in Lodi, California, has over 30 years of experience as a winemaker, and says that "cross-aging" is a relatively new trend because "Bourbon barrels present a new array of aromas and richness that you can't extract from traditional new oak barrel aging." He also ages his white Sauvignon Blanc in used tequila barrels. "Sauvignon Blanc is one of my favorite varieties," he says, "so I experimented with how the barrels could enhance the wine's flavor experience. The acidity and citrus notes of Sauvignon Blanc are complemented by the subtle heat and toasty vanilla flavors imparted by the former tequila barrels."

However, this technique may not work with all wines. The reds that Kasavan chooses to age in Bourbon barrels need significant tannin structure and flavor intensity. "For my red blend," he says, "I use predominantly Merlot and Syrah complemented by Zinfandel, Petit Sirah and Cabernet Sauvignon. They stand up the best to the big bold aromas and flavors imparted by the whiskey barrel aging process."

All cross-aged wines start out in

traditional oak barrels, but then winemakers like Kasavan and 1000 Stories winemaker Bob Blue put their wines in used whiskey barrels for an additional two or three months.

Blue agrees that richly flavored wines are the ones to use for this technique. "Big, bold wines are best for the intensity of Bourbon barrel-aging," says Blue, "which is why Zinfandel is our flagship variety." He continues, "Bourbon barrels are intense. Most wines can't tolerate that kind of barrel intensity, but Zinfandel seems to fit the bill just right."

He also sees a bright future for wines made this way. "At first, we thought 1000 Stories would be more appealing to men, but women have become very enthusiastic. And the wine also cuts across various age groups, which shows that the category really has universal appeal."

Discover the appeal for yourself with these new recommendations:

1000 Stories Gold Rush Red California 2016 (\$20) – Deep rich garnet in the glass with toasty oak and vanilla aromas. Charred vanilla and smoke flavors with blackberry, blueberry and 15% alcohol. WW 89-90

1000 Stories Zinfandel California 2014 (\$20) – Contains about 19% Petite Sirah, so it's big, bold and concentrated. Some minerality on the nose, fresh black cherry that lingers on the finish. Smoke and vanilla. Aged in old and new Bourbon barrels. WW 90

Cooper & Thief Sauvignon Blanc Napa Valley 2016 (\$33) – With a whopping 16.5% alcohol, this is not a typical example of the varietal. Vanilla and smoke, with almond notes and a creamy texture. Long finish of oak, vanilla and crème brulee. Blended with Colombard, Semillon and "other whites." WW 86-87

Cooper & Thief Red Blend California 2014 (\$33) – Almost a Port, with 17% alcohol, this blend of Cabernet, Syrah, Zinfandel and Petite Sirah is all about smoke, vanilla and deep black fruit. Nothing subtle about it, and lots more smoke and vanilla on the finish. WW 89

Ask the Wine Whisperer

There are so many shapes and sizes of wine glasses. What's the best kind to use? – Peter S., Naples

Generally, larger glasses are better because they allow you to swirl the wine more vigorously to release aromas and flavors. The glass should hold perhaps 20-22 ounces, be thin, with a long stem, and should curve inward at the top.▲

Jerry Greenfield is the Wine Whisperer, a wine author, educator and consultant. He is Creative Director of Greenfield Media & Marketing, and an adjunct professor in the wine program at Florida Gulf Coast University. His book, Ask the Wine Whisperer, is available on his website. Read his blog at www.winewhisperer.com.

Aging Jewishly...continued from previous page

the other groups. We say stuff to each other that we wouldn't want others to say to us."

Larry K., who will be 99 in July, takes a practical approach. "Doctors, nurses and caregivers should ask us how we like to be called and then proceed with caution." Larry says, "Don't go using words you don't understand. There's a Yiddish word, 'altakaker,' that is offensive. I won't define it. Just take my advice and don't say it."

Authors Duarte and Albo seem to agree with Larry when they emphasize, "Except for a few incredibly insensitive jerks, most of us are increasingly careful to avoid using hurtful language toward people different from us."

Or as Lisa remarked to her grandmother after the incident in the checkout line, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but names can *really* hurt me," – an admonishment that holds true not only in the schoolyard but at the 'senior' center, too. Authors Duarte and Albo also key in on an important issue when they ask, "Why eliminate hurtful language? The answer is simple. Because it hurts."▲

Rabbi Barbara Aiello served the Aviva Campus for Senior Life as resident rabbi for 10 years. She now lives and works in Italy where she is rabbi of Italy's first Reconstructionist synagogue. Contact her at Rabbi@RabbiBarbara.com.

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New FIDF CEO: The more you know us, the more you'll want to join us

By Alan Rosenbaum

"I spent the past 30 years trying to build American Jewry," says Steven Weil. "Now, I have the opportunity to have a small – but significant – hand in building the future of Israeli society." Weil, the newly appointed National Director and Chief Executive Officer of Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF), enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a prominent educator, pulpit rabbi and, most recently, Senior Managing Director of the Orthodox Union before joining FIDF in September.

Articulate, polite and self-effacing, Weil sees similarities between the outreach that he performed in his previous positions and the goals that he has set for himself in his new post at FIDF. "At the Orthodox Union," he notes, "a great deal of what we did was engaging American Jewry, and the majority of those under the age of 50 are unaffiliated Jews. One of my goals now for FIDF going forward is to expand our core base and connect all of American Jewry – no matter their background, no matter where they are coming from politically, religiously or otherwise – to the future of Israel through the lives of the soldiers."

FIDF is a non-political, non-military organization whose goal is to provide sustainable solutions to all of Israel's soldiers through social, educational, financial, cultural and recreational programs and facilities. It was established in 1981 by a group of Holocaust survivors and operates 25 regional

offices in the United States and Panama, with headquarters in New York City. It is the single organization authorized to represent the IDF soldiers across the United States and Panama, as designated by Lt. Gen. (Res.) Gadi Eizenkot, IDF Chief of the General Staff, in March 2017, and again by Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi, IDF Chief of the General Staff, in February 2019. Today, the organization assists more than 118,000 soldiers each year.

Weil wants to broaden the appeal of FIDF beyond the older generation that remembers the Six-Day War of 1967 and the 1973 Yom Kippur War, when Israel's very existence was at stake, to a new generation of American Jews, who take the existence of a State of Israel as a given. "Most American Jews are coming from a mindset of social justice and don't necessarily have a positive affiliation with the military in general," he notes. The activities that FIDF supports within the IDF, says Weil, will resonate with the younger generation as these programs are more closely aligned with social justice than military activities.

Weil points with pride to a number of FIDF programs that are helping to transform IDF soldiers in a positive and meaningful way. FIDF's IMPACT

Scholarship program is tailored for former combat soldiers who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and enables them to achieve their dreams of higher education. The program also provides funds to cover soldiers' living expenses while they study and gives them the unique benefit of direct contact with their FIDF sponsors.

Since the program's founding in 2002, FIDF has sponsored students from 66 countries of origin, studying at over 80 academic institutions in Israel. With the success of the program, some 16,130 students and alumni are represented in nearly every field, and dozens are now donors themselves.

"We've provided the opportunity for them, through the army, to transcend the cycle of poverty," says Weil. "And, we've provided for them the opportunity post-service, not only to give to Israel and the Jewish people three years of military service, but to give to Israel and the Jewish people for the next 60 years of their lives."

Weil cites two other educational programs that FIDF sponsors as examples of the groundbreaking work that the organization is doing on behalf of IDF soldiers and their communities. One, called the "Formal Education"

program, allows soldiers who were previously unable to attain 12 years of education or a high school degree to pursue an educational equivalent while performing military service. FIDF seeks to increase opportunities for these soldiers to reenter civilian life on an even footing with their peers.

A second initiative, entitled "Project Overcome," assists young Israeli citizens who struggle with emotional problems, addictions, low self-esteem or lack of ambition, often exacerbated by poverty and criminal backgrounds. These youths were traditionally not considered fit for service in the IDF and had few opportunities to gain successful employment. Through Project Overcome, at-risk youth can reform their behavior and gain tools and life skills relevant for army service and as professionals in the civilian market.

The program, which takes place during the course of their IDF service, offers them a clean slate, a chance to discover exciting new capabilities in themselves, and a path to change their future. "This program gives them the opportunity to have self-worth and self-dignity," says Weil. He adds that many soldiers who have been in the program become officers and mentors to other soldiers who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

FIDF assists soldiers in numerous ways – through education, financial assistance and preparation for life after the army. Weil lights up when speaking

continued on next page



Steven Weil

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FIDF CEO..continued from page 16

about FIDF's "Dignity" program that provides soldiers in-need and their families with essential items such as furniture, electrical appliances and other living necessities. For those with severe financial difficulties, FIDF provides monetary assistance through special grants and vouchers. He explains that Dignity is much more than just a name. Soldiers with financial hardships are provided with assistance, discreetly and privately. "Until now," says Weil, "we have taken care of 8,000 soldiers every year who are under the poverty line. This year, the army has asked us to support more than 29,000 soldiers in-need. It's a huge responsibility. Soldiers are provided with gift card vouchers for use at supermarkets. When they return home from the army for weekends, not only are they not a burden on their family, but they end up being able to buy food and supplies for the family."

FIDF's "Witnesses in Uniform" program, through visits to the sites of death camps in Poland with delegations comprised of career officers and commanders, reserve soldiers, family members of fallen soldiers and Holocaust survivors, offers soldiers a firsthand look at the horrors of the Holocaust, providing them with a deeper understanding of their Jewish identity and purpose.

FIDF also assists wounded soldiers through various platforms, and supports widows, orphans and other family members of fallen IDF soldiers with camps in the U.S., retreats in Israel and major life-cycle celebrations.

FIDF has centered many of its activities around the growing population of Lone Soldiers, with about 3,500 of them coming from 70 countries. FIDF provides them with housing, social gatherings, financial assistance, fun days, 24/7 call center and flights home to visit their families.

Steven Weil is confident that his message of providing transformative opportunities to build the future of Israel and the Jewish people will resonate with Jews throughout the United States. In the coming months, he plans to expand the FIDF message to philanthropic foundations that support Israel, extend the support of existing donors to the next generation, and make sure that FIDF's work becomes a major part of the conversation of American Jewry. The IDF, says Weil, is the great unifier of Jews from five continents, 70 countries and multiple cultures and perspectives. "We are funding that opportunity to give the IDF the role of the great unifier within world Jewry."

Weil's background makes him uniquely qualified to be a unifier of support for Israel. His family was in the cattle business in Germany for hundreds of years, and his parents escaped from the Nazis to the United States in 1939. They sought to remain in the livestock business and purchased a farm 50 miles from Buffalo, New York, where his father raised crops and bought and sold livestock. Weil's father, while visiting his customers – most of whom could quote Isaiah by heart – would convince them to invest in Israel bonds, offering them an opportunity to play a role in building the dream of Zionism. "I was a little kid sitting in the truck," he recalls. "We would deliver the Israel bonds, and he connected all these people to Israel. It made a huge impact on me growing up."

Just as decades ago, Weil's father encouraged and promoted support for the fledgling country of Israel, Steven Weil relishes the opportunity, as the new head of FIDF, to create solutions that will transform Israeli society and the future of the Jewish people, one soldier at a time. ▲

BRIEFS

ISRAEL'S POPULATION AT END OF 2020: 9.3 MILLION

Israel's population stands at nearly 9.3 million, including 6,870,000 Jews (73.9%), 1,956,000 Arabs (21.1%) and 465,000 people (5%) belonging to other ethnic groups, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported recently.

In 2020, 176,000 babies were born in Israel, 73.8% to Jewish families, 23.4% to Arab families and 2.8% to other groups. (Tobias Siegal, *Jerusalem Post*)

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SIX ISRAELI CREATIONS AMONG TIME'S 100 BEST INVENTIONS FOR 2020

Six Israeli tech firms have been named in *TIME* magazine's annual list of 100 Best Inventions.

Beewise offers a smart home for bees, the Beehome, that helps bees thrive at a time when 40% die every year as a result of disease, pesticides and climate change. It uses precision robotics, computer vision and artificial intelligence (AI).

TrialJectory's software uses AI to read through thousands of clinical trials and extract information about patients for researchers.

Augmedics' xvision headset uses augmented reality to turn a patient's CT scan into a 3-D image to help guide spinal surgeons.

Mifold has developed a compact, portable child's booster seat with a design that keeps the seatbelt off the child's stomach and neck for better safety and comfort.

City Transformer offers a folding electric two-seater car that can reach up to 55 miles per hour. Four of them fit into a standard parking spot.

DouxMatok's Inredo Sugar allows bakers and food companies to reduce sugar content by 30-50% while retaining the same level of sweetness. The sugar grains are engineered so that most of the flavor reaches the taste buds. (Shoshanna Solomon, *Times of Israel*)

IDF SEES RECORD NUMBER OF ISRAELI ARAB VOLUNTEERS

More than 1,000 Israeli Arabs volunteered to serve in the IDF in the past year, more than twice that of previous years, the military's Manpower Directorate said recently. They include Muslims from Taibe, Qalansuwa and eastern Jerusalem, Bedouin from the Galilee and Christian Arabs from the north. Four hundred and fifty new soldiers enlisted as scouts and fighters in the Bedouin patrol unit, while dozens more have joined infantry brigades and others are serving in the Border Police.

Four thousand possible volunteers expressed their interest online in joining the IDF this year. Seven hundred were from Arab countries such as Lebanon and Syria and had to be declined due to security considerations. "We could not believe the demand," the IDF said. This year also saw a new willingness to enlist by Druze in the Golan Heights. (Yoav Zitun, *Ynet News*)

continued on page 21

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Sunday, February 7–

Sunday, February 28



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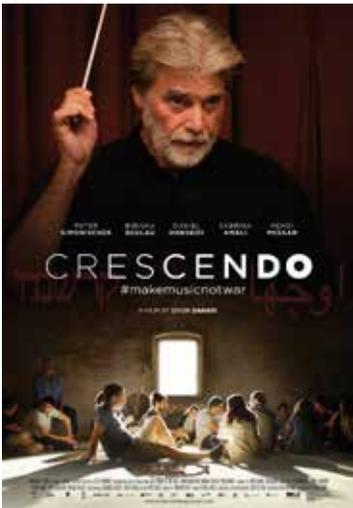


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Opening Day
Sunday, February 7



Sarah and Daniel are Jewish and are to be deported out of the country. Hiding in the basement of Otto and Gerda's family, they are discovered, and the parents are arrested. Otto and Gerda decide to help their new friends. The goal is to get to Sweden. Life and death are on the line for their escape.

Drama
1 hour 30 minutes
Norway

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Tuesday, February 9



The often forgotten story of the coalition and friendship between the Jewish and African-American communities during the Civil Rights Movement.

Documentary
1 hour 35 minutes
USA

Tuesday, February 16



Set against the enchanting backdrop of 1960's Brooklyn, Extra Innings tell the story of a young man who is caught between pursuing his dream and staying devoted to his Syrian Jewish family that is afflicted with mental illness.

Based on a True Story.
Drama
1 hour 57 minutes
USA

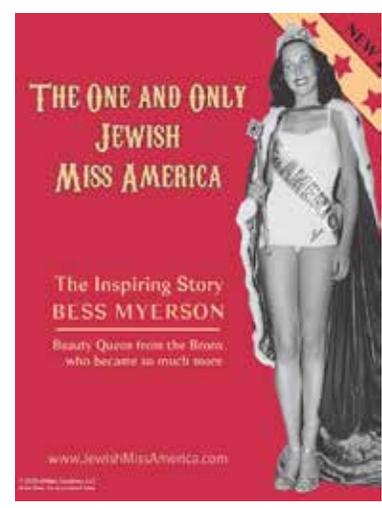
Tuesday, February 23



The film tells the story of Mrs. Lea Gottlieb, the legendary designer, founder and owner of the Gottex swimwear empire. A woman full of contradictions, but knew how to recover from periods of crisis - from surviving the Holocaust, establishing a small factory in Israel, to her phenomenal success abroad.

Documentary
1 hour 35 minutes
Israel

Double Feature
Sunday, February 28



The One and Only Jewish Miss America is the surprising story of Bess Myerson, the talented beauty queen from the Bronx, and how she won the world's most famous beauty pageant 75 years ago, at the tail end of World War II. It is also a story of courage and breaking down barriers.

Documentary
51 Minutes
USA

Double Feature
Sunday, February 28

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Nine corona-proof ways to tour Israel with a guide, from home

From scavenger hunts to interactive tours where you choose the next stop, Israeli guides have cooked up some virtual fun.

By Abigail Klein Leichman, israel21c.org

We miss you here in Israel. And so do all the incredibly knowledgeable Israelis who make their living as guides to Israel's unique tourist sites, cuisine and culture.

While hoping for a return of tourists – may it be soon! – many of them have found creative ways to bring the land alive from afar.

We review nine fun options below. For eight more excellent ideas on touring Israel from the comfort of your home, visit <https://www.israel21c.org/8-ways-to-visit-israel-from-the-comfort-of-home/>.

Tour in a Bag

"I've been guiding for 20 years, and suddenly I was all dressed up with no place to go," Esti Herskowitz tells ISRAEL21c.

"I love to play and create, and so I had to do something to connect my passion for guiding with the people I guide."

She and her husband Ben, a graphic designer, invented Esti's "Roaring & Touring" Tour in a Bag.

The activity kit, with a Jerusalem lions theme, includes supplies such as clay, fabric, puzzle pieces and yarn, plus instructions to create a lion mosaic, mask and flag among other crafts designed for school-aged children.

It contains a trivia quiz, Israel map search, Hebrew and English word search, a lion story and quiz, a matching game, an "unmask the Israeli hero" game and more.

Since the end of July, orders have come in from places including Chile,

England, Canada, Philadelphia, New York, Seattle, Miami Beach and Detroit.

Choose Your Own Adventure

With its free 10-day guided tours of Israel on hold, Taglit Birthright Israel offers "Choose Your Own Adventure," a first-of-its-kind interactive online tour created by Eko – the Israeli media and technology company that teamed up with Procter & Gamble to make an interactive ad for last January's Super Bowl.

The online tour led by Israeli guide Navee allows you to shape your itinerary in real time. For instance, you can



choose to "visit" Masada or the Western Wall; an Arab bistro or a vegan restaurant; Birthright's Tel Aviv Center for Israeli Innovation or a local winery. You can surf in a Tel Aviv beach or float in the Dead Sea.

In each location, Navee introduces local Israelis to provide a deeper perspective on Israeli culture. The tour takes about 10 minutes and you can do it again and again with different choices each time.

"Since mid-March we've reached 4.4 million people around the world," said Noa Bauer, VP of Global Marketing at Birthright.

"Today we invite the thousands of Birthright applicants whose trips were cancelled, as well as past and future Birthright participants, their families and loved ones, to take part in a virtual tour of Israel using unprecedented technology."

Online/offline scavenger hunt

Over the past decade, 34,500 people have participated in one of Tali Tarlow's popular ScaVentures, engaging and educational scavenger hunts in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Safed, Masada and other locations.

Tarlow and her team now offer Quarantine Quest 2020, a variety of team-based virtual ScaVentures you can play at home with teammates from anywhere, for ages eight to adult. Each game includes offline challenges each

team must complete and document.

Quarantine Quest choices include Israel Trail Dash, Yom Yerushalayim, Shavuot, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Birthday, Corporate Group, Pesach, Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Lag Ba'Omer, custom and more. Each game takes about 90 minutes and is guided by a ScaVentures professional.

Virtual week-long mission

Jewish National Fund-USA is offering virtual Israel missions led live by a staff of 27 licensed Israeli tour guides.

Each "busload" of participants experiences a week of touring biblical and modern Israel, famous tourist sites, off-the-beaten-path sites, JNF projects and hidden gems.

Among stops are the Old City of Jerusalem, the Ayalon Institute (War of Independence secret bullet factory) in Rehovot, Rosh HaNikra, Acre (Akko), JNF's Sderot Indoor Recreation Center, Be'er Sheva and Timna Park.

Your \$50 Zoom experience includes one hour of "travel" Monday to Thursday followed by a break and then a social dinner/cocktail hour. Fridays feature a one-hour pre-Shabbat experience. Proceeds benefit tourism in Israel.

Birding from your bedroom

Get a front-row virtual seat to the magnificent show of bird migration in Israel, and other live nature webinars courtesy of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

So far, more than 20 Zoom events

have included "The Secret Lives of Israel's Wild Mammals" and "Birds and Birding of the Holyland," live bird ringing (banding) and tours of bird observatories in Israel and abroad, including the Jerusalem Bird Observatory.

To register for upcoming events or to watch past webinars, <https://natureisrael.org/webinars>.

Live interactive virtual tours

This tour company is called Amazing Jerusalem, but the 27 tours you can take from your armchair explore the breadth of Israel. Among the choices are trips geared to Christian tourists, such as "In the Footsteps of Jesus in the Galilee" and "The Hidden Years of John the Baptist."

Actual tour guides present these hourlong Zoom tours with the aid of panoramic views, Google Street View, 3D satellite views and maps. There is time for a Q&A. You decide how much to pay and donate it via PayPal.

Machane Yehuda with Tali

In normal times, Chef Tali Friedman takes tourists through Jerusalem's famed Machane Yehuda Market choosing ingredients to taste and take to her atelier in the heart of the market to cook Mediterranean delicacies.

Friedman, who also chairs the Machane Yehuda Merchants' Association, says the pandemic has devastated the market, where a typical day would see thousands of customers, both Israelis and tourists.



Tali Friedman leading her virtual Feast Market Cooking Workshop

So she created an 80-minute Video on Demand workshop, Feast Market, that takes the experience online.

Participants pay to watch the workshop on iOS, Android, Apple TV, Roku or Chromecast. They get a quick tour of the market and then follow Friedman to her kitchen, where she demonstrates six recipes for an authentic Jerusalem feast. Additional on-location cooking workshops are planned.

Virtual Israel Travel Series

The America-Israel Friendship League sponsors monthly livestreamed explorations through photos, maps and stories

continued on next page

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BRIEFS

*continued from page 17***VACCINATION MIRACLE BRINGS ISRAEL BACK TO ITS ROOTS**

At the vaccination station at a large Jerusalem sports arena, a small army of nurses and medical techs injected one person after another with utter efficiency. We were reminded of the old Israel, the Israel that knows how to show our national resilience when facing a mortal enemy.

This is still a country that when a little kid is crying outside without an adult in obvious proximity, people scoop him or her up and wait for someone to show. These past few weeks have evoked once again that Israel that sees itself as a family.

I was momentarily confused as we waited the required 15 minutes after the shot, as staff members walked around handing out copies of little booklets: games for children. "What on earth are these for?" I wondered. "There isn't a kid in sight. We're all over 60." And then it struck me, as people happily and gratefully took copies of the booklet – and then asked for another copy or two. The booklets weren't for us – they were for our grandchildren.

There are still moments here when we recognize that this is not a country like any other. It is a country that was founded to give sanctuary to a particular people that desperately needed it, one that has weathered more in seven decades than most countries do in centuries, and that has produced a sort of familial resilience that can't be replicated anywhere else. (Daniel Gordis, Bloomberg)

THE ARAB CARETAKER OF THE LARGEST JEWISH CEMETERY

Ibrahim Sayyed, 59, is the Muslim caretaker of the world's largest Jewish cemetery located atop the Mount of

Olives in Jerusalem. He is the third-generation of caretakers for the cemetery, where Jews have been burying their dead for 3,000 years.

"I have been taking care of the graveyard for more than 40 years now. I took over the mantle from my father and grandfather."

There are between 60,000 and 150,000 tombs from various periods in history.

Sayyed says, "I know each and every one of these tombs by name. Families from different parts of the world come here often to look for a family member who passed away years ago. And if they tell me the name, I know where they are resting in peace."

But Sayyad says none of his children is interested in continuing the family tradition. (Anjana Sankar, Khaleej Times - UAE)

3,000-YEAR-OLD GOLD BEAD DISCOVERED IN TEMPLE MOUNT EARTH

A First Temple-era gold bead was discovered in August during sifting of earth from the Temple Mount by Binjamin Milt, age 9, from Jerusalem. The bead was in such outstanding condition that it was initially dismissed as modern. But Temple Mount Sifting Project co-director Prof. Gabriel Barkay took a closer look and dated the bead to the First Temple period, based on almost-identical silver beads manufactured using the same "granulation" technique, which Barkay had excavated in Jerusalem in the 1970s.

The handmade bead is fashioned from four layers, each made of tiny gold balls that adhere to each other. To produce it required the ability to melt the metal at high temperatures, and a high level of skill from the artisan.

In the past 15 years, through the help of some 200,000 paying volunteers, the sifting project has recovered over 500,000 artifacts, including 5,000 coins. (Amanda Borschel-Dan, *Times of Israel*)

Nine corona-proof ways to tour Israel...continued from page 20

presented by tour guide Reuven Solomon. Since April, seven regions have been explored in hour-long segments: Haifa and Nazareth, the Galilee, Akko, Masada, Jerusalem, Caesarea and Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Registration is free; donations welcome.

Video voyages

Some tour guides have put their knowledge and experience into videos exploring different parts of Israel.

"Experience Israel with David Hyman" features YouTube video tours such as Montfort Castle, Ramon Crater, Red Sea swimming, Red Canyon hike, Negev stargazing, Zippori, Acre, Jerusalem's Old City, Zichron Ya'akov, Nazareth, Yodfat, Caesarea, Safed, Tel Shimron and Nahariya. One option is "Bible as a tour book," and another explores an underground cave church.

Joe Yudin of Touring Israel has done about 30 video podcasts with personalities from Israel's tourism industry such as the manager of Tel Aviv's storied Norman Hotel, Inbal Baum of Delicious Israel and TLVStyle's Galit Reismann.

Yudin's series of five-minute video tours created since the start of the pandemic include, among others, Masada, Mount of Olives, Jerusalem's Jaffa Gate, Via Dolorosa, David's Citadel and a rooftop tour of Jerusalem's Old City.

Tour guide/educator Uri Feinberg also posted some five-minute Israel tours on YouTube, including one that brings you to Katzrin in the Golan Heights, a bit off the beaten track.

Husband-and-wife tour guides Gadi and Amy Ben-Dov created a Virtual Israel menu of customizable lectures and tours via Zoom (www.bendovisrael.com/virtualisrael). Selections include "Israeli Culture through Poetry and Song," "Judaism and Christianity: Intersecting Histories" and "The Jewish Superhero Justice League." ▲

Abigail Klein Leichman is a writer and associate editor at ISRAEL21c. Prior to moving to Israel in 2007, she was a specialty writer and copy editor at a major daily newspaper in New Jersey and has freelanced for a variety of newspapers and periodicals since 1984.

ISRAEL'S IRON DOME TO BE INTEGRATED WITH AMERICAN COMMAND NETWORKS

With the second battery of the Iron Dome missile defense system en route from Israel to the U.S. Army, manufacturer Rafael's Pini Yungman said, "We have a very detailed plan" to integrate the batteries into the Army's new missile defense network (IBCS) "and to conduct a demonstration [at] White Sands" in early 2021.

Rafael and its U.S. partner, Raytheon, want to sell the Pentagon a lot more than two batteries.

Raytheon has already integrated Iron Dome with Marine Corps command systems, complete with a live-fire test in 2019.

"This year we will conduct another test with the Marines," Yungman said, with a more extensive integration into American systems. (Sydney J. Freedberg, Jr., *Breaking Defense*)

ASSASSINATION OF SENIOR AL-QAEDA LEADER IS CLEAR MESSAGE TO IRAN

The story surrounding the assassination of senior al-Qaeda leader Abu Mohammed al-Masri was intentionally leaked. The report is replete with accurate details. Whoever relayed the information wanted to send a message to al-Qaeda, which lost yet another senior leader. It was also meant for Iran, which was exposed as harboring al-Masri. And it was meant for any other extremist actor in the region, that the U.S. and Isra-

el will continue working together in the war on terror.

According to foreign reports, this level of cooperation has been evidenced many times in the past. For the past 15 years, Israel and the U.S. have shared operational intelligence. The operation indicates the Americans lack a sufficient operational infrastructure in Iran while, based on foreign reports, Israel has proven over the past decade to possess impressive operational capabilities on Iranian soil.

Iran understands it is again penetrated and is in the crosshairs of the Israelis and Americans. As Iran is mulling its nuclear options, it must know this comes with zero-tolerance. (Yoav Limor, *Israel Hayom*)

ALLIED FORCES SAVED 400,000 JEWS IN NORTH AFRICA IN WORLD WAR II

During World War II, 400,000 Jews living in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco came under the German sphere of influence, as French North Africa came under control of the new Vichy regime of Field-Marshal Petain, who collaborated with Hitler. Jews living in French territory on both sides of the Mediterranean were identified, ostracized, discriminated against and deprived of their civil rights and property as the machinery to implement the "Final Solution" was set for them.

On November 8, 1942, U.S. and British forces in Operation Torch landed on the beaches of North Africa and fought against Vichy French forces. U.S. Gen. Eisenhower wrote in his

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High time to stop treating Israel differently

By David Harris, CEO of American Jewish Committee (AJC), December 28, 2020

The recent spate of annual anti-Israel resolutions at the UN is a telling reminder that Israel is treated according to a totally different standard than all other countries in the international system.

Of course, Israel deserves attention and scrutiny, as does every other nation. But it also merits equal treatment – nothing more, nothing less.

First, Israel is the only state whose capital city, Jerusalem, with which the Jewish people have been umbilically linked for more than 3,000 years, is not recognized by almost all other countries, with the notable exception of the United States and a handful of others.

Imagine the absurdity of this. Foreign diplomats live in Tel Aviv while conducting virtually all their business in Jerusalem, an hour's drive away, where the prime minister's office, the Knesset (Parliament), the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are all located.

In fact, look at listings of world cities, including places of birth in passports (with the exception again of the U.S.), and you'll see something striking – Paris, France; Tokyo, Japan; Pretoria, South Africa; Lima, Peru; and Jerusalem, sans country – orphaned, if you will.

Second, Israel is the only UN member state whose very right to exist is under constant challenge.

Notwithstanding the fact that Israel embodies an age-old connection with the Jewish people, as repeatedly

cited in the most widely read book in the world, the Bible; that it was reborn based on the recommendations of both the League of Nations and UN; and that it has been a UN member since 1949, there's a relentless chorus denying Israel's very political legitimacy.

No one would dare assail the right to exist of many other countries whose basis for statehood is infinitely more questionable than Israel's, such as those that were created by brute force, occupation or imperialist mapmakers. Just look around at how many nations fit those categories – including, by the way, quite a few Arab countries. Why, then, is it open hunting season only on Israel? Could it possibly have anything to do with the fact that it's the one Jewish-majority country in the world?

Third, Israel is the only UN member state that's been targeted for annihilation by another UN member state.

Think about it. The leadership of Iran, together with Iran-funded proxies in Lebanon and Gaza, has repeatedly called for wiping Israel off the map. Is there any other country facing such a stated goal of genocidal destruction? Meanwhile, a majority of UN member states continues to conduct business as usual with Tehran, as if this threat to another nation was either welcome or somehow irrelevant.

Fourth, the UN has two agencies dealing with refugees.

One, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), focuses on all the world's ref-

ugee populations, except for the Palestinians. The other, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA), handles only the Palestinians.

But the difference goes beyond the anomaly of two structures, two bureaucracies and two budgets. In fact, they have two strikingly different mandates.

UNHCR seeks to resettle refugees; UNRWA does not. When, in 1951, John Blanford, UNRWA's then-director, proposed resettling up to 250,000 refugees in nearby Arab countries, those countries reacted with rage and refused, leading to his departure. The message got through. No UN official since has pushed for resettlement.

Moreover, the UNRWA and UNHCR definitions of a refugee differ markedly. Whereas the UNHCR services only those who've actually fled their homelands, the UNRWA definition covers "the descendants of persons who became refugees in 1948," without any generational limitations.

Fifth, Israel is the only country that has won all its major wars for survival and self-defense, yet is confronted by some defeated adversaries who have insisted on dictating the terms of peace.

In doing so, ironically, they've found support from a number of countries which, victorious in war themselves, demanded – and, yes, got – border adjustments. A quick glance at, say, earlier maps of Europe and today's, amply illustrates the point.

Sixth, Israel is the only country in the world with a separate – and permanent – agenda item, #7, at the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council.

No other member state, including serial human-rights violators like Iran, North Korea, Syria and Venezuela, gets its own agenda item. Only the sole

liberal democracy in the Middle East is treated in this blatantly biased manner because that's the way it works – the bad guys circle the wagons to protect one another and, at the same time, gang up on Israel, creating an automatic majority against it.

Seventh, Israel is the only country condemned by name at the World Health Organization as a "violator" of health rights.

This canard happens despite the fact that Israel has achieved one of the world's highest life expectancy rates for all its citizens, Jewish and non-Jewish alike; is among the very first medical responders to humanitarian crises wherever they may occur; and is daily advancing the frontiers of medicine for everyone, including in response to Covid-19, something that can't be said for too many other nations.

Eighth, Israel is the only country that's the continuous target of three standing UN bodies established, staffed and funded solely for the purpose of advancing the Palestinian cause and bashing Israel – the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People; and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the UN's Department of Political Affairs.

Ninth, Israel is the only country annually targeted by double-digit UN General Assembly resolutions and countless measures in other UN bodies, such as the Human Rights Council.

Indeed, astonishingly, every year Israel is pretty much on the receiving end of more such efforts than the other 192 UN member states combined. No one can seriously argue that this is remotely warranted, but it's a reality

continued on next page

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David Harris...continued from previous page

because in every UN body except the Security Council, where each of the five permanent members has a veto, it's all about majority voting.

When close to two-thirds of the world's nations belong to the Non-Aligned Movement, and when member states in recent years elected chairs from Iran and Venezuela, that just about says it all.

And tenth, Israel is the only state targeted by the BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) movement.

Has anyone seen any significant campus activity that targets true human rights offenders, including some in Israel's neighborhood, who have dropped chemically-laced barrel bombs on civilians; taken aim at Christians; denied Palestinians full rights; persecuted LGBT communities; and used capital punishment, even for minors, with abandon?

Would a student government official be forced to resign over her support for the existence of any country other than Israel, as happened at University of Southern California? Would any campus tolerate a student senate president who likens any other country's government to Nazi Germany, as happened with Israel at Florida State?

Have the Democratic Socialists of America tried to prevent New York City Council members from traveling to any country other than Israel?

Has anyone seen any flotillas or flytillas organized by European far-left

groups that don't involve an anti-Israel angle?

Has anyone seen movements demanding entertainers pull out from scheduled performances in any country except Israel?

Turkey, to take just one example, has brazenly and illegally occupied more than one-third of the island nation of Cyprus for 46 years, deployed an estimated 40,000 Turkish troops there, and transferred countless settlers from Anatolia, yet not a peep about Ankara from those who purport to act in the name of "justice" and against "occupation."

Given political realities, tackling any of these instances of egregious double standards and blatant hypocrisy can be a daunting challenge. And, still worse, this list is not complete.

The old advertisement proclaimed that you don't have to be Jewish to love Levy's Jewish rye bread.

Well, surely, you don't have to be a pro-Israel activist to be troubled by the grotesquely unjust treatment of Israel. All it takes is a capacity for moral outrage that things like this are happening in today's world. ▲

The AJC West Coast Florida office, located in Sarasota, can be reached at 941.365.4955.

Connecting the dots

Carl Jung once said that "in all chaos there is cosmos, in all disorder a secret order." This past year of 2020 seemed to carry a lot more chaos than cosmos! I am sure



■ Rabbi Michael J. Schorin

there was some order involved, but it was greatly overshadowed by the chaos we endured. We have seen bars, restaurants and movie theaters closed, and travel has become well-nigh impossible. Socializing with friends and neighbors has only been possible from a distance. Even davening at a real (non-Zoom) shul has been put on hold. Wearing masks has become routine. So where, you might ask, is all of the cosmos in this chaos? Where is the order that used to be and when is it coming back?

Now that several Covid-19 vaccines have arrived in Southwest Florida, I wonder if they are the light in the darkness that we couldn't have perceived six months ago? Who knew, and who was able to believe, that these vaccines would be ready, and safe, for distribution and inoculation so soon? For these vaccines, and for all of the scientists and researchers who developed them, we should be grateful and give thanks.

Traditionally in Judaism, we give thanks by saying a 'b'racha,' a blessing. But which blessing should we say? Vaccines were unknown until very recent times, so there really isn't that much to go on. Lucky for us, the Codes of Jewish Law have a potential answer. If you delve into the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 230:4), you will find the following prayer: "May it be Your will, Hashem, that this procedure should cure me, for You are a doctor who heals graciously." Some rabbis would also add the following verse afterwards: "Blessed is the One who heals the ill."

If you have already received the Covid-19 vaccine, feel free to say this prayer belatedly. If you haven't received it yet, I hope you will give some thought to saying it before you are inoculated. And, if you don't know anyone personally who has struggled with the disease, you could even feel free to recite the "shehechyanu" prayer as well, for G-d has kept us alive, sustained us and allowed us to reach this miraculous time. May we all be protected from this plague and may we all be grateful for every step we take toward health. ▲

Rabbi Dr. Michael J. Schorin, MAPC, BCC is a Chaplain in Lee Health's Department of Spiritual Services, and ministers at the Gulf Coast Medical Center.



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When the server is served

The command to love the stranger is not only deeply ethical but it also enriches us emotionally.

We accept as natural the fact that we will help our family and friends, but



■ Rabbi Solomon Agin

when we go beyond that, we derive a unique and satisfying pleasure from it. To help those near to us is only right, but to help those who are more distant from us is righteous. When we help the needy, the homeless, those who lack food or shelter, we feel a sense of inner peace.

A successful businessman in New York City was bored. He had all the money that he needed, and his work was no longer challenging. He became irritable and acutely depressed. His physician, being a very wise and practical man, ordered him to go to Grand Central Station, sit down, look around and find someone who needed help. The executive felt foolish doing

this, but since his doctor had recommended it, he proceeded to carry out the assignment. As he was waiting in the railroad station, he suddenly saw an elderly woman sitting on her suitcase, weeping. The man went over to her and asked what her problem was. She replied that someone had not shown up to meet her. He found out where she was going, took her in his car and delivered her to her daughter's home. As soon as he left her, he rushed to the corner telephone, called his physician and said, "Doc, it works! I feel better already."

Whenever we help someone else, often not necessarily someone near and dear but just a stranger, we find our life fulfilled because we have supplied it with meaning. To put it in the words of a philosopher, "To live well we must have a faith to live by, a self fit to live with, and a cause to live for."

As Israel I. Mattuck said, "Religion should have not only the sacrament of prayer but also the sacrament of social service." ▲

Rabbi Solomon Agin serves at Temple Shalom in Port Charlotte.

Interpret your dreams

Do you think your dreams have meaning? In the Talmud, Rav Hisda said that a dream not interpreted is like a letter not read. In our Jewish tradition, dreams are meant



■ Rabbi Nicole Luna

to be explored. They are not just the messy remains of our unconsciousness or unspoken desires, they are a hint of prophecy. The ancient rabbis even said dreams are 1/60th of prophecy. If we do not interpret our dreams, we might miss the message and the dream will not be fulfilled. The status quo will remain the same. It is the interpretation of a dream that creates its meaning and its realization.

The Talmud outlines a list of symbols, actions and objects that signify the future. For example, sitting in a small boat in a dream means a good reputation will spread. Olives mean a business will flourish, and geese signify wisdom (Berakhot 57a).

But what happens when you have a bad dream or one that doesn't seem to make sense? How are we supposed to interpret those? Here is where the ultimate optimism of the Jewish spirit emerges. Dreams are meant to be interpreted positively. The Talmud gives instructions for when someone has a bad dream: "The dreamer should better it before three people. Bring three [people and say to them]: I saw a good dream. And they say: It is good, and

let it be good, may God make it good. May they decree upon you from heaven seven times that it will be good, and it will be good. Afterwards they recite three verses of transformation [from bad to good], three of redemption and three of peace." (Berakhot 55b).

Similarly, if someone has a dream and does not know what it means, they are instructed to stand before the priests when they lift their hands during the Priestly Benediction and say, "Master of the Universe, I am Yours and my dreams are Yours, I dreamed a dream and I do not know what it is...if the dreams are good, strengthen them and reinforce them like the dreams of Joseph. And if the dreams require healing, heal them like the [bitter] waters of Mara by Moses our teacher and like Miriam from her leprosy, and like Hezekiah from his illness, and like the [bitter] waters of Jericho by Elisha. And just as you transformed the curse of Balaam the wicked into a blessing, so transform all of my dreams for me for the best."

Dreams are ultimately about the unknown. But our tradition understands that they can be powerful and can influence us. So Judaism encourages us to interpret them, to take responsibility for their meaning, and to transform them into something positive. By finding the good, we are ultimately inspired to act. May we view our dreams as inspiration to create a better life for ourselves and create a better world. ▲

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

BRIEFS

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memoir, *Crusade in Europe*, "Underground resistance forces staged a coup d'état in Algiers and were able to neutralize the French XIX Army Corps.... Of the 377 participants in the coup, 315 were French Jews."

On November 9, the Allied landings triggered the invasion of Vichy Tunisia by Hitler's forces. An Einsatzkommando unit led by SS commander Walter Rauff, who was responsible for the murder of Jews in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe using mobile gas vans, also entered Tunis to implement the "Final Solution" there. During its six months of occupation, the Nazi regime created a local Judenrat, forced Jews to wear a yellow badge, and sent more than 5,000 Jews to forced labor camps. In May 1943, the Allies liberated Nazi-occupied Tunisia, liberating the 100,000 Jews there after 260 had died in the forced labor camps. (Edith Shaked, *Jerusalem Post*)

WORLD'S VIEW OF ISRAEL IS SHIFTING

The implications of Israel's peace deals with Arab countries go far beyond the issue of the Palestinians. It's about Israel's decades-long struggle to shift the diplomatic paradigm that seeks to undermine Israel's standing in the world and force it into reckless compromises.

Having failed to eliminate it through terrorism and war, Israel's enemies have successfully delegitimized Israel by taking advantage of post-colonial guilt in the West and the anti-semitic tendencies prevalent in Europe. The U.S. and Europe came to believe that forcing "the will of the international community" on Israel, the conditions of which crippled Israel's ability to defend itself, would end hostilities in the region.

Egypt is in partnership with Israel against three common enemies – the Muslim Brotherhood, Iran and Turkey. Jordan is aware of the dangers of the Palestinian national movement and

continued on next page

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We are mishpacha

Why is it that before the Torah gives us any laws and commandments it describes the blessings and challenges of being part of a family? Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca – their lives, like ours, were not simple or straightforward. Children fought and made up, couples connected and broke up, there was love, loyalty and happiness as well as lying, deceit and jealousy. The full range of emotions existed and through those familial bonds and challenges the Jewish people were born.



■ Rabbi Lawrence Dermer

Family is the foundation upon which our Torah rests and is at the core of who we are as a Jewish people. G-d's promise to Abraham, "your children shall be as numerous as stars in the sky," was not in vain. Despite tremendous odds, the power of love and togetherness prevailed and the first families of Judaism birthed the 12 tribes of Israel. The Jewish people as a whole are described as "B'nei Yisrael – The Children of Israel," not descendants of the land, but of our patriarch Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. All the children of Israel, all of us, are part of one connected extended family.

Our family relationships teach us how to relate to others and how to understand ourselves. Family is where we first experience loss and sadness while learning about joy and happiness. In Hebrew we say "mishpacha," which means a Jewish family or social unit that includes both close and distant relatives. Simply put, we are all *mishpacha*.

From Creation in the book of Genesis to the present day, a family, for better or worse, is forever. Families are at the heart of Jewish culture, tradition and religious practice, but they can also be the source of so much conflict.

In our Torah, our matriarchs and patriarchs and the families depicted

from Bereishit, from the very beginning are far from perfect. Nowhere does our Torah describe any family as the Biblical Brady Bunch. From Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, to Joseph and his brothers – all are dysfunctional familial relationships. It's not the exception, it's the norm. Hashem is telling us it's hard to have interpersonal relationships, but you can look to the Torah to learn how to work out your differences. In every generation, there will be conflict between siblings and tension between extended family members as well.

Our Torah shows us the way. Jacob blessed all of his sons despite their transgressions. Joseph forgave his brothers for leaving him for dead once they admitted they were wrong and demonstrated *teshuvah*.

Conflict is part of the Jewish way of life and we have elevated Jewish familial conflict to comedic heights. But at some point, the laughter gives way to something that is much more serious.

And especially over the past year, it has felt as though conflict has become prevalent in our society in a way that is extremely dangerous. We can't solve all the world's problems, but we can begin at home. Our Torah teaches that building a strong network around us is of major importance. To achieve that, we need to be open and honest with each other – to practice *teshuvah*, admitting our mistakes and forgiving others when they are genuinely remorseful.

By improving our relationships with each other, we can do our small part to eliminate conflict from our world.

May 2021 bring us all one step closer to a world filled with compassion, tolerance, healing, understanding, communication, acceptance, peace, contentment, serenity, joy, strength, good health and love for all who live in this beautiful world of G-d's creation.▲

Rabbi Lawrence Dermer serves at Shalom Life Center in Fort Myers.

Israel, chairman of Israel's National Council for Research and Development, said, "Israel was the first country to understand and come to the conclusion that cyber...required a national program. Israel has many more advanced systems that can be impaired than our neighbors. We created a national program for critical infrastructure like electricity and water, as well as for safeguarding hospitals and transportation."

Inside the directorate in Beersheba, which employs 350 people, the Cyber Emergency Response Team (CERT) handles hundreds of reports about cyberattack attempts daily.

From September 2019 through September 2020, CERT dealt with 10,200 incidents. (Joshua Shuman, Media Line - *Jerusalem Post*)▲

Family and community treasures

I am a keeper of old family stuff. I have the Shabbat candlesticks my great, great aunt brought to this country, the pocket watch my great grandfather bought when he arrived in America, and the dining room set my grandparents bought in the 1940s. I have piles of family pictures from the 1920s, '30s and '40s. These things remind me where I came from and how hard people worked so I could have what I have.



■ Rabbi Marc Sack

They are physical symbols of how important Jewish tradition was to my family. (The dining room set was where we all gathered for Seder and other holiday meals.) Sometime in the future, I will pass these treasures on to my children.

It was with this same personal inclination that I was fascinated to read a story in *Forward* about the effort to save a 91-year-old synagogue in Margate, England. Margate, a seaside town in southeast England, has a dwindling Jewish community. There are currently 11 members of the congregation. They have not held a service since 2017.

Recently, a Jewish musician moved to the area and went looking for the synagogue only to learn that it was put up for auction. If sold, the synagogue would be torn down for redevelopment. So, the woman created the project of purchasing the synagogue and converting it into a regional cultur-

al center, preserving the stories of the Jewish and other small communities in the area, and opening the building to cultural events. Using Crowdfunder and reaching out to other sources, she began her campaign. On December 16, an anonymous donor purchased the building on the campaign's behalf. The synagogue building in Margate will become a museum to the Jewish community and a regional cultural center.

While I preserve the items from my family, I have mixed feelings about this project and the preservation of old Jewish buildings by our community. We have limited resources. I wonder if the money would be better spent endowing Jewish day schools and camps. Putting our communal resources toward increasing the affordability of programs for children would strengthen the Jewish people for the future. A synagogue in a town where there are few Jews living? I don't know.

I get encouragement from one thing. A young Jewish musician moved to Margate, went looking for a synagogue, and felt strongly enough to preserve it. If her commitment to the Jewish past is matched by her Jewish commitment in general, then I am hopeful for our future.

If I travel to England, I'll look for a cultural center in Margate. Perhaps I'll find ongoing Jewish activity there as well.▲

Rabbi Marc Sack serves at Temple Judea in Fort Myers.

BRIEFS

continued from previous page

knows that its very existence depends on Israel's strength. The Gulf states understand the existential threat from Iran.

The democratic West no longer needs to choose between Israel and the Arabs. Israel and the core states of the Arab world are on the same side. (Dr. Dan Schueftan, *Israel Hayom*)

ISRAEL'S NATIONAL CYBER DIRECTORATE

The Israel National Cyber Directorate was created to become involved in the aftermath of cyberattacks.

Maj.-Gen. (ret.) Prof. Isaac Ben-

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.

Your name: _____
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Phone: _____
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Send your response to Federation Board member Robert Thomas ritritrit@hotmail.com. We will contact you as needed. Thank you.

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If they accused you of being Jewish, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

When I addressed the Kristallnacht commemoration of The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee in November, a couple was in the Zoom room who belonged to the first congregation I served in Columbia, Maryland. They contacted my wife Vickie and me, and the outdoor lunch we enjoyed together was the first time we had seen them since 1984.



■ Rabbi Stephen Fuchs

As we ate, the woman shared, "I remember very few of the hundreds of sermons I have heard over the years, but I distinctly remember one of yours. You asked, 'If they accused you of being Jewish, would there be enough evidence to convict you?'"

Flattered by and thankful for the memory jog, I remembered that I en-

visioned an investigator examining our homes and our lifestyles to determine whether enough about us would convince a jury that we were indeed Jews.

Some of the things the investigator would look for are: Is there Jewish art on the walls? Are there Jewish books on the shelves? Is there a connection with the Jewish community through synagogue, Federation, JCC and/or Jewish charities?

Looking at our tradition, the great first century sage Shimon HaTzadik postulated the balanced tripod of Jewish living: "Al Shelosha Devarim – Upon Three Things the world stands: Torah, worship, and deeds of kindness and compassion." (Pirke Avot 1:2)

Recently, my friend and colleague Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin shared a modern iteration of Shimon HaTzadik's famous teaching that he learned from Rabbi Neil Gilman, of blessed memory, renowned former Professor of Philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

The idea is that there are "Three H's" of Jewish life, "Head, Heart and Hand." The head stands for intellectual engagement with Judaism or serious Jewish study. The heart represents prayer, worship and liturgy. The hand stands for social justice initiatives and other acts of kindness to others.

Taking the analogy of a college student, Rabbi Gilman's thesis is that a "good Jew" must major in one of the three H's, and minor in another. If he or she has some familiarity with or connection to the third, so much the better.

I find the Three H model very useful as we navigate our identity as Jews in the secular world.

Fortunately, the Torah presents us with excellent role models of highly successful Jews who enjoyed high station in the secular world, but who did not forsake their Jewish identity.

Joseph and Moses, of course, lived long before there was organized Jewish learning or worship, but their "Hands" – their actions – clearly indicated the primacy of their connection to the covenant of their ancestors.

For all his success in Egypt, Joseph made his brothers swear that his

ultimate resting place would not be in Egypt, but in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

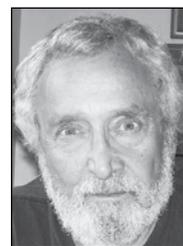
Moses was an Egyptian prince, but as tradition has it, his mother Yocheved inculcated in him the Jewish Covenantal values of justice, caring and compassion which emerged when he saw an Egyptian taskmaster beating a Hebrew slave. Later, when he had established a new life for himself as Chief Shepherd over his father-in-law's vast flock, Moses could not resist God's call to return to Egypt and take up the task of freeing his people from bondage.

These examples bid us to ask: How do our Jewish souls call to us? Is it through the study of our text and traditions? Is it through regular worship and participation in synagogue life? Or is it through social action or acts of kindness to others. If we major in one of these, minor in another and, hopefully, have some involvement with the third, then without question, if they accused us of being Jewish, there would be ample evidence to convict us.▲

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

I value your life

Here's a new word I just made up: vacillating. It means being unable to decide whether to get a vaccine, in this instance, the one which confers near complete immunity to Covid-19.



■ Rabbi Bruce Diamond

As part of the first generation of kids who were protected from the ravages of polio, on the whole, I regard vaccinations as one of the great achievements of medical science. The near eradication of not only polio, but also smallpox, measles and other diseases, are tributes to the power of vaccines.

Of course, like all products of human ingenuity, some vaccines are more effective and useful than others, but I place "anti-vaxxers" in same basket as flat-Earthers, moon-landing deniers and election faux frauders.

I've given a lot thought to my own behaviors during this plague and these have become my driving principle, which also applies to my decision to take this new vaccine.

First, don't be a spreader. Don't make anyone else sick by being lax about safety measures be it through laziness, indifference or skepticism. Of course, as an American, I was indoctrinated early on to place my personal liberty above all else, but as a Jew I know it cannot be at the expense of endangering or harming others, a moral principle called "ahimsa" in Southeast Asian tradition.

Second, do what you can to make things better by not being part of the

problem. By doing what I can to not get sickened by the new virus, God-willing, I won't be tying up medical personnel and facilities desperately needed by others. It is the Jewish ethical principle of not allowing yourself to become a "burden on the community" (*torekh al hatseeboor*).

You see, I don't believe in the Golden Rule, "Love your neighbor as yourself," because it is self-centered. Why should the way I feel about myself be my guide for how I should feel about and treat you? This is where I break with the Jewish ethical tradition, since I value your life immeasurably more than I do my own, which is hardly at all. Traditional Jewish ethics teach that, with the exception of three explicit situations, if have the power to choose between my life and yours in a given circumstance, I must save myself first. In fact, my truth is that whatever worth I see in myself comes completely from the way I value yours. I wasn't always like this, but I am now.

So that's why I am getting inoculated against Covid-19. It's not to extend my own life for even a minute. It's to make sure I don't become a burden on others and on the medical resources others might need.

By the time you read this, I imagine that the initial inoculation disorganization, which put Lee County in the national spotlight as an example of what not to do, has given way to a more orderly approach and that getting the shots has become a lot easier, *im yirtseh hashem* (God willing). So nu?▲
Rabbi Bruce Diamond serves at The Community Free Synagogue in Fort Myers.



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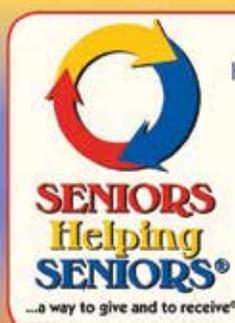
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Temple Judea Religious School
Tab Scribner,
Director of Congregational Learning
It's 2021 and we couldn't be happier. Religious School activities resumed at Temple Judea on January 10 with hybrid classes. It was good to see the kids again after a long break, even if some were only visible from the chin up.

On Sunday, January 31 we will meet outside to celebrate Tu Bishvat. When you don't see the kids in person every week, it is a bit of a surprise to see how much they have grown. Hopefully, our plants grow as well as the children have.

On Thursday, February 25 we will celebrate Purim with the congregation

with our children reading parts of the Megillah. This will be the third year our students have stepped

up to read from the Megillah with the congregation.

On Sunday, February 28, we will celebrate Purim with our friends from Temple Beth El with the annual Purim Carnival. Plans are underway to make children's activities as germ-free, socially distanced and Covid-safe as possible. For more details about our safety measures, please contact me in the Temple Judea office at 239.433.0201. Safety is our priority, and good, clean fun is the by-product.

For more information about Temple Judea Religious School, or our religious school programming, contact me at 239.433.0201 or tjswfledu@gmail.com.

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Chabad at FGCU: Students find a way to light the menorah

By Rabbi Mendel Gordon

With the first night of Chanukah falling two days before the end of the semester, many students were thinking they would just have to wait until they got home to celebrate, knowing they would not be able to light a menorah on campus or in their dorms.

Chabad at FGCU stepped in to secure the requisite permits to allow students to kindle their Chanukah lights in the safety of the outdoors, in a purpose-built glass enclosure outside the dining hall – in fact, the ideal place to kindle the lights so that they may be seen by the public and add light to the lives of all those who pass by.

This provided a safe space for students to mingle and celebrate together.

Rachel, a freshman from Ft. Lauderdale, never missed a Chanukah celebration. This year, however, she was away from home and busy finishing finals. Feeling down about missing the Chanukah lights, she was walking toward the dining hall when she encountered students about to light their menorahs. Thrilled, Rachel joined them in the mitzvah, her holiday spirit reinvigorated.

During the last days of Chanukah, after students returned home for break, Chabad hosted a virtual Chanukah party for students and their families, continuing the celebration across the country. Students joined in from their homes, spanning from New York to all over Florida and between, and enjoyed a virtual dreidel game, live menorah lighting and Chanukah-themed Kahoot!

2020 was a year of great challenges and uncertainty. One thing, however, is certain: we will continue to celebrate our heritage proudly, notwithstanding the difficulties that come our way, just as our forefathers did so many years ago.

If this year has taught us one thing, perhaps it's flexibility.

Certainly, much of our routine has been upended, but if we are determined, we can still find safe ways to observe

our timeless traditions even in these uncertain times, bringing back some stability and providing comfort in such a trying time.

Chabad at FGCU caters to all Jewish students in Southwest Florida, providing a home away from home. Join

us to learn, celebrate or just meet Jewish students your age. For more information or to get involved, contact Rabbi Mendel Gordon at 347.452.0489 or chabadfgcu@gmail.com. Or visit our website at chabadfgcu.com.



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Eryka Aptaker

It's been a long time since I've written an article for the Victor Paul Tuchman Post 400 Jewish War Veterans. The year 2020 brought a lot of confusion and dismay. We have not been able to hold an in-person meeting since February of last year. May 2021 bring better times to us all.

homeless veterans by playing "Taps" at the ceremony.

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of one of our members, Bernie Lurye. Bernie passed December 17, 2020. Bernie was a Korean War veteran. He served as Post 400 adjutant for quite some time before stepping down a few years ago. A shiva was held for him via Zoom on December 20. Our Commander was able to attend the funeral in Naples to honor Bernie as

of the passing of one of our members, Bernie Lurye. Bernie passed December 17, 2020. Bernie was a Korean War veteran. He served as Post 400 adjutant for quite some time before stepping down a few years ago. A shiva was held for him via Zoom on December 20. Our Commander was able to attend the funeral in Naples to honor Bernie as



(top) Bob Ruberto, Sr. Vice Commander; Don Peyton, President of Hearts & Homes for Vets; Commander Harvey Charter; (bottom) Bernie Lurye going on Honor Flight; Sgt. Bogie

The Jewish War Veterans continues to be a loyal servant to the veterans community. While activities have been limited due to the pandemic, Commander Harvey Charter attended the Lee County Homeless Coalition. There, he honored the memory of our

a veteran by playing "Taps" and firing a rifle. Bernie was an outspoken and unique individual who will be missed.

Our Post has been actively helping American Legion Post 38 preserve the Holocaust Flag made by the Jewish inmates of the Nordhausen Concentra-

tion Camp. This flag was made from inmates' uniforms and presented to the commander of the liberating American troops. All the stars on the flag are Jewish stars. Mold has recently appeared on the top of the flag. The Post, after consulting with The Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center

This must be received no later than May 27, 2021. The scholarship will be awarded by the end of July 2021.

Our meetings are held monthly, on a Sunday morning. At the moment, our meetings are held via Zoom. The next meeting date has not been determined as I write this article. Come join



Holocaust Flag

in Naples, purchased the needed dehumidifier and HEPA filter required to stop further decomposition of the flag. We are looking into further conservation needed to ensure the flag's survival. This is a piece of history which we cannot lose. We will keep you posted on the progress in finding a resolution to keep the flag properly preserved.

Our Post is pleased to announce the eighth annual Herb Schwartz Memorial Scholarship Award. Our Post annually gives a \$500 scholarship to one deserving high school senior or student presently attending a college or university. To qualify, the student must be Jewish and from the Lee/Charlotte community. The scholarship will be awarded to a student with good grades and a financial need. The Post committee will pick the scholarship winner. To qualify, please send a copy of grades and a letter expressing achievements and need to Victor Paul Tuchman Post 400 JWV, c/o Harvey Charter, 11024 Lakeland Cir., Fort Myers, FL 33913.

this wonderful and committed group. To become a member, or if you have questions, please contact Commander Harvey Charter at hbcharter@aol.com or 239.246.3151.

The Jewish War Veterans, founded in 1896, is the oldest continuing veterans organization in America. We are challenged in the pursuit of new members to keep our organization alive. With the loss of many of our WWII veterans, we are striving to have members of our younger generation(s) join and show support to the JWV. We have a Patron membership for non-veterans. If your family members were veterans, think about honoring their memory by joining the JWV Post 400. I joined in honoring the memory of my father, a Korean War veteran. Best decision I have ever made. This group has been a blessing in my life and some of the members have become like family to me. We hope to see you at our future meetings!

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True stories of hidden children are fascinating, including those of several locals

Ida Margolis
You have all heard of the “Hidden Children of the Holocaust.” The story of one hidden child, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, has sold over 30 million copies and has been translated into 70 languages. Millions have seen the play (first produced in 1955) and the film. For many students, this book was their first introduction to the Holocaust. But every hidden child has a story, along with every survivor.

It has been documented that as many as 1.5 million children were murdered or died at the hands of the Nazis during WWII in one of the most appalling chapters of Holocaust history. Only 6-11% of Europe’s prewar Jewish population of children survived. Among the European Jewish children who survived, thousands of children amazingly did so because they were hidden. These children, who were usually in constant fear and danger, were often given a new identity, facing constant difficulties.

In some instances, the children were in hiding with Christian families or religious institutions where they hoped the child could pass as “Aryan.” Some children were hidden in basements or attics and were always in fear of being discovered. Some were left abandoned, and used their own resourcefulness in order to survive.

When the war finally ended, many children who were adopted or in religious institutions, were never told about their earlier lives and never learned their true identities. Many families were never able to be reunited, and some who were reunited often suffered scars from the trauma of war.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has an extensive bibliography of books about hidden children including historical works, testimonies, video and museum web resources (USHMM.org). Reading and hearing the true stories of Hidden Children range from gut-wrenching to fascinating to unbelievable. No fiction is necessary.

We are fortunate to have in our community extraordinary individuals who were Hidden Children of the Holocaust who are willing to share their stories with us. Three of these individuals will share their amazing stories at a virtual program on Wednesday, February 24 at 4:00 p.m. All that is necessary to view this program is to go The Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center website at hmcec.org or call 239.263.9200. You will get to hear the stories of Maud Dahme, Renee Fritz and Renee Beddouk.

Maud Dahme was hidden by Christian families as a child in the

Netherlands. She was six and her sister was four when they were taken to families and hidden. Renee Fritz was just three when she, her mother and relatives were hidden in Belgium, but Renee was taken to a convent where she began her “new life.” Renee Beddouk lived in Paris, but in 1940, with the encouragement of an aunt, her family went to the free zone. Her aunt had found a family for her with whom she lived for over three years. There is much more to these stories of courage and struggle, so please be sure to join us and encourage others, including older children to watch.

The Annual “Our Stories” for 2gs and their guests will have to be on Zoom this year. Nevertheless, it will be good to see the 2gs who will join in to share their stories. One positive aspect of Zoom is that 2gs can join us from wherever they are. The theme for the stories this year is “A Hero in Your Life,” which relates to the theme for our programs this year, “Heroes, Heroines and Helpers.” Visit the Holocaust Museum website at hmcec.org to get the Zoom link. The program will take place on Sunday, February 14 at 2:00 p.m. For more information, email me at genshoahswfl@gmail.com.



Renee Fritz



Renee Beddouk



Maud Dahme



**Fall 2021
Educational Scholarships
Available**

DEADLINE: April 30, 2021

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 are made available from designated funds held by the Jewish Community Foundation.



*Women's
Giving
Circle*

What is a Women's Giving Circle?

The Women's Giving Circle empowers women as funders, decision makers and agents of change. Members contribute \$360 and have an equal vote where funds are distributed.

- * A chance to make an impact on the lives of women and children in Israel & Overseas
- * Decide collectively where funds will be dispersed
 - * Achieve greater impact as a circle
- * Meet new people & enjoy the company of other like-minded women of all ages in our community

**To join and for more information call Debbie Sanford
239.481.4449 x4 or debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org**

HADASSAH Collier/Lee Chapter (732) 539-4011

Joyce Toub

Grateful, that's what I feel since 2020 has ended. My children and grandchildren are healthy. They've all been working remotely, have been resourceful, and have grown physically, mentally and emotionally. We all have plenty of food, shelter, good friends and families we care about and who care for us. I learned to be thankful for what I have, and what I can give to others. Hadassah is that outlet for me.

There are miracles happening all around us. The Covid vaccine was created in record time, and the outreach that people from every walk of life are doing to assist others is remarkable.

Medical personnel, food banks, delivery people and other essential workers have been taxed to the utmost. We live in our protected environment (Florida really is "Paradise") and we are far away from the epicenter of all this mayhem. The weather enables us to go outside, to walk, exercise and wave to others, whereas our northern neighbors cannot.

Hadassah hospitals, Ein Krem and

Mt. Scopus, have a multiracial, multi-religious, multilingual staff that provides care to patients of all races, ethnicities and religious affiliations.

It doesn't matter if you are Muslim, Christian or Jewish. It doesn't matter if you are black, white or brown.

Hadassah advances medical knowledge and transcends traditional ways moving forward. We recently discovered new ways to regenerate bone, using carbon rods instead of metal. Carbon is not only lighter in weight but has the benefit of preserving the visibility of bone on x-ray. These rods provide the scaffolding for mere bone fragments to regenerate, slowly growing toward each other to produce a fully fused bone.

Hadassah research is also bringing us closer to understanding how to regenerate cartilage, potentially creating new treatment options for arthritis and connective tissue disorders.

The need is always there, and YOUR help is greatly needed. Hadassah, as you know, is always about education, opening your eyes and soul to the miseries of others to achieve the greatest good going forward. And, though we ask for donations, in re-

turn you get immense pride in knowing you've helped advance medicine. Pride, in knowing Hadassah is an international sensation helping others throughout the world, be it in Africa,

India, Europe or right here in the USA.

This coming year we hope to reveal some of these miracles through Zoom and webinars. Please stay tuned.

HAZAK 55+ CHAPTER at Temple Judea (239) 433-0201

In December, HAZAK had an enjoyable time watching the movie *The Awakening of Motti Wolkenbruch*. A Zoom discussion was held after the movie. In January, we had another movie program, *The Resistance Banker*, and a Zoom discussion after.

For February, we are planning to once again have a bring-your-own lunch or snacks social-distanced Lakes Park get together. We hope to also have another movie program in March. See the Federation's weekly eblast for

additional information.

Temple Judea's active HAZAK 55+ Chapter is a chartered member of the United Synagogue

of Conservative Judaism. HAZAK Chapters are for singles or couples. Join HAZAK and meet new friends. It's an organization that enables members to meet and socialize with each other. Our monthly programs vary in nature.

Members of the community are always welcome to join and attend our programs. Dues are a moderate \$10 per year. For more information, email tjhazak@gmail.com or call the Temple Judea office at 239.433.0201.

**Changing your address? Keep
L'CHAYIM coming to your home.
Email loriramos@jfedlcc.org.**

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.



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 Alan Isaacs at (239) 481-4449 or alanisaacs@jfedlcc.org.

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

(239) 566-1771

A Jewish Valentine?

Marina Berkovich

February 14, 1850. Major General David Emanuel Twiggs, nicknamed "Bengal Tiger" for his fierce temper during his offensive actions in the Seminole Wars in Florida, signs an order for the new fort to be built where Fort Harvie was destroyed by fire eight years prior.

The General was about to part with his Southern belle daughter Marion, who unluckily inherited her father's disposition and sharp tongue, and was soon to wed Colonel Abraham C. Myers, the Chief Quartermaster of Florida. The fort was renamed in his honor. There is no record that Myers ever visited it. Every building, however, had to be constructed in accordance with plans he personally approved. The new fort soon became one of the finest, if not the most expensive, in the country. So much government money was spent on it during the 1850s that the War Department opened an investigation. This tangentially Jewish beginning of Fort Myers is not only anecdotally entertaining, but prophetic, as QM General

Myers would ultimately face the blame for the Confederate provisions shortages and be forced into exile.

In the Southwest Florida Jewish Pioneers documentary film, *The Labodas of Fort Myers* (2017), Dr. Jerry Laboda covers the fascinating story of Abraham Myers.

As part of The Society's broader mission of historical preservation, we remember and honor the local Jewish heroes, from the pioneers to the migrants with important stories and legacies that would impact the following generations for decades, hopefully centuries, into the future. The Southwest Florida Jewish Pioneers films inspire and educate. Each broadcast-quality film was created for The Society from the eyewitness testimonies it recorded.

Recently, we lost Irving Berzon, one of several nonagenarian Jewish Pioneers featured in The Society's film series. Integrity of purpose, strength, wisdom, and the desire to share the gains are just a few commonalities entwined in their stories.

By popular demand, we are restarting the weekly screenings of the Southwest Florida Jewish Pioneers film series on Sundays at 5:00 p.m. begin-

ning February 7. Register for ongoing events at jhsswf.org/swfl-jewish-masterclasses to receive your zoom login credentials and reminders.

February 7: *Stuart Kaye, A Mensch For All Reasons*

Raised on the East Coast of Florida, a very young Jewish professional moves to Naples in the early 1980s and becomes a leader of its Jewish community.

February 14: *The Labodas of Fort Myers*

They came to Fort Myers in 1965. The very first Oral Surgeon of the region, whose mother co-started the local Hadassah Chapter, and wife, helping to start the Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties.

February 21: *Elena Rosner, When Destiny Called*

Holocaust survivor who talked Marco Island developer into granting her a plot that was designated as "church" to start up a Jewish temple.

February 28: *Judith and Samuel Friedland, The Power of Two*

Dr. Judith and Samuel Friedland moved to Naples and found success in their professional careers, Jewish community and beyond.

If you have a suggestion for the next Southwest Florida Jewish Pioneer story, please email office@jhsswf.org.

We thank you for 10 years of your unwavering support of our small, all-volunteer, local organization.

Have you joined our mission yet? Family Membership is \$54; Individual Membership is \$36. Mail checks to: The Jewish Historical Society of Southwest Florida 8805 Tamiami Trail North, Suite # 255, Naples FL 34108 833.547.7935 (833.JHS.SWFL) www.jhsswf.org ~ office@jhsswf.org Virtual Museum of SWFL Jewish History <http://jewishhistorysouthwestflorida.org/>

Send updates and changes to the Jewish Directory below to loriramos@jfedlcc.org.

TEMPLE BETH EL

REFORM
16225 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33908
Rabbi Nicole Luna
E-mail: info@templebethel.com
Learning Tree Preschool Director: : Jesyca Virnig
Email: LearningTree15@yahoo.com
President: Hank Betchen
Email: HankTBE@gmail.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
Judaica Gift Gallery
Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

REFORM
702 S.E. 24th Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33990
Rabbi Devora Buchen
President: Peter Simenauer
Phone: 239-772-4555 • Fax: 239-772-4625
E-mail: office@templebethshalomcc.org
Web site: www.templebethshalomcc.org
Services: 7:30 p.m. Friday
Religious School: Wednesday 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
Torah study with Rabbi Buchen: Shabbat 10:30 a.m.
Organizations: Brotherhood, Sisterhood, Family Service (1st Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m.)

BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS

REFORM
Meets at Sanibel Congregational Church
2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel Island
Rabbi Stephen L. Fuchs
President: Michael Hochschild
Phone: 971-561-7888
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
Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

TEMPLE SHALOM CHARLOTTE HARBOR AND THE GULF ISLANDS

REFORM
23190 Utica Ave., P.O. Box 494675
Port Charlotte, FL 33949-4675
Rabbi Solomon Agin
President: Judith Migdol
Phone: 941-625-2116
E-mail: shalom06@netzero.com
Web site: templeshalomfl.com
Services: 7:30 p.m. Friday
Religious school: Sunday 10 a.m.
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

SYNAGOGUES & ORGANIZATIONS

IN LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE

REFORM
10868 Metro Parkway, South Fort Myers
(The Southwest Florida Masonic Center)
P.O. Box 07144, Fort Myers, FL 33919
Rabbi Bruce Diamond
(bdiamond5@comcast.net)
Coordinator: Natalie Fulton
Phone: 239-466-6671
E-mail: synfree@comcast.net
Web site: www.fortmyerssynagogue.com
Community Sabbath eve dinner each Friday at 6:30 p.m.
Sabbath eve worship every Friday at 7:30 p.m.
Light breakfast and Torah study with the rabbi every Saturday morning from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

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: Joann Goldman
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. Saturday Minyan: 9:00 a.m. Monday
Religious School: Sun. 9:30 a.m.-noon; Wed. 4:30-6 p.m.
Early childhood education:
Preschool, M-F, ages 18 months-5 years;
"Mommy & Me," 12 months-2 years
Affiliated: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

SHALOM LIFE CENTER TRANS DENOMINATIONAL

19691 Cypress View Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33967
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.

CHABAD OF BONITA SPRINGS/ ESTERO

ORTHODOX
24850 Old 41 Road, Suite 20 (in the Bernwood Centre) Bonita Springs, FL 34135-7024
Rabbi Mendy Greenberg
Phone: 239-949-6900
Web site: www.JewishBonita.com
Services: Saturday at 10 a.m., followed by a Kiddush

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 a.m. followed by a kiddush
Torah study: Wednesday at 8 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 a.m.; Shacharit 10 a.m.; Kiddush at noon
Minyan: Monday & Thursday 7:00 a.m.

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: www.chabadcape.com
Services: Friday Evening 7:30 p.m.
Saturday morning 9:30 a.m. followed by Kiddush luncheon
Sunday morning 8:00 a.m.
Monday-Friday morning 7:00 a.m.
JLI Courses: Monday evening at 7:00 p.m.
Weekly Torah Study: Tuesday evening 7:30 p.m.
Hebrew School: Sunday 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Jgirls: Tuesday 6:00-7:00 p.m.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- 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
- Chevra Kadisha: Gene Sipe - 239-841-4615
- Generations of the Shoah SWFL: 963-9347
- Hadassah - Collier/Lee Chapter: Diane Schwartz - 732-539-4011
- 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: Joshua Mellits, Director, Western Florida 941-462-1330 ext. 865
Memorial Tree Planting in Israel - 1-800-542-8733
- Jewish War Veterans: Post 400: Commander Harvey Charter - 239-246-3151
- Mikvah Basha of Southwest Florida: Nechamie Minkowicz - 239-822-2784

COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE**Fort Myers****(239) 466-6671****www.fortmyerssynagogue.com**

Our congregation mourns the December passing of long-time C.F.S. participant Bernie Lurye. A nationally recognized labor leader and passionate advocate for working people, Bernie was truly one of a kind and a dear friend to Rabbi and Mrs. Diamond.

Art Funk was taken from us in November. A proud veteran collector of military memorabilia, and a fine man, he and Barbara have been C.F.S. regulars for many years.

Polly Talbott, Natalie Fulton's *machtainista*, also passed away in December. She was the mother of Richard Talbott, Natalie's daughter Sue's husband.

We are saddened by the early July passing of Jerry Arzi, born on a kibbutz in mandatory Palestine, long-time Fort Myers resident and businessman, and committed supporter of Israel, where he will be interred.

The Community Free Synagogue will continue to use Zoom for its worship and educational programs until the pandemic threat has substantially diminished. For easy Zoom logon instructions, visit the C.F.S. website at

www.fortmyerssynagogue.com.

Each week, Sabbath Eve worship begins at 7:00 p.m. led by Rabbi Diamond with liturgists Rich McConville and Traci Pavel. Toward the end of the worship, Zoom mics are opened to all with names to be shared at the recitation of the Qaddish.

At 24 years, Rabbi Diamond's immensely popular 9:30 a.m. Sabbath morning Torah Study is our area's longest running Jewish Adult Education program. Selection of each week's Torah *sedra* are examined in-depth, and the lively give-and-take make this 90-minute class absorbing and fly by too quickly. A prayer for healing and the Qaddish are recited at the conclusion of each study session.

C.F.S. has used this time at home for intensive weekly at-home Adult Education. During February, the *Book of Daniel* will be studied. Classes are at 7:00 p.m. each Tuesday for an hour. For weekly reading assignments, email synfree@comcast.net.

Rabbi Diamond continues to teach prayerbook Hebrew reading skills online to community young people at no charge. Email synfree@comcast.net to make arrangements for your children to learn with him.

Stay current with C.F.S. events and donate by visiting www.fortmyerssynagogue.com. The synagogue is an open Jewish community resource with no membership requirements, dues or other charges.

TEMPLE BETH EL**Fort Myers****(239) 433-0018****www.templebethel.com**

While the pandemic has made most days seem longer, Temple Beth El is most certainly not slowing down this month! Join our new discussion group, Handling Covid-19 With Jewish Wisdom, led by Paul Kling and Roberto Luna every Sunday at 2:30 p.m. It will focus on Jewish values and psychological principles in line with the book *Here I Am* by Leonard Felder. While you are encouraged to read the book, it is not required for attendance. If interested, contact Paul Kling at paul@paulkling.com.

The 2021 Winter History Series with Gerald Ziedenisberg has been a success over Zoom! Last month, our members learned about Henry Ford and the presence of antisemitism at the highest level, the heroic story of Janusz Korczak, and the life of Mordechai

Anielewicz. Please join us for this month's lectures every Monday from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. from February 1 through March 1. The lectures are free, and the TBE office

will announce the Zoom ID information as we get closer to the dates.

TBE's Sisterhood has not slowed down either. Sisterhood girls' night Paid-Up Event with Christine Sherlock of Image Matters was incredible. In addition, Phyllis Aronson taught a class on how to make vegetarian chopped liver. Join Sisterhood on Thursday, February 11 at 7:00 p.m. to hear guest speaker Professor Robert Watson discuss "The Presidents' Wives and Their Influence in Presidential Politics." The cost is \$18 per household. For some much-needed relaxation, join certified yoga instructor Joe Krashin for a 40-minute session on Wednesday, February 17 at 9:30 a.m.

Our Quarantine Bingos sponsored by TBE's Men's Club have been a huge success! They have been packed. Make

sure to virtually attend the next Quarantine Bingo on Sunday, February 28 at 7:00 p.m. The prices are \$5 for two playing cards and \$10 for five playing cards. Register on templebethel.com. For additional information, email tbe.mens.group@gmail.com.

On Sunday, January 31, our members will attend the Fundraising Committee's "A Jewish Sunday in the Big Apple." Participants will pick up their gift boxes from the temple containing bagels, cream cheese and a surprise gift from The Jewish Museum of New York. Later that afternoon, participants will be treated with a docent-led Zoom tour of The Jewish Museum of New York.

Thank you to those who have been contributing to our Food and Feminine Product Drive, organized by the TBE Mitzvah Committee. Donations can be dropped off at the front of TBE on a designated Tuesday from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Monetary donations in the form of checks can be written out to Cycle Forward, Jewish Federation Food Bank or Harry Chapin Food

Bank, as well as mailed to TBE.

Our youth are excited to partake in the Fort Myers chapter of BBYO, Or Shemesh. The Or Shemesh chapter has just had its election and is excited to plan their calendar for the upcoming month. Email President Jalen Goodman for details at cg03804@gmail.com or direct message the chapter on Instagram at [orshemeshbbyo](https://www.instagram.com/orshemeshbbyo).

TBE's brand new Media and Marketing Committee is working to bring ease of access and widespread knowledge of our events to you. Visit our website and follow us on Facebook (Temple Beth El Fort Myers) and on Instagram (@templebethelfortmyers) for updates, information and for an online community experience.

Just as the Jewish people have risen above challenges for years, the TBE community is rising above the challenges Covid has presented. Come join us and take part in Zoom Hebrew classes, current events discussions, Shabbat services on Friday nights and much more. We look forward to seeing you in person soon!

BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS**Sanibel****(732) 780-2016****www.batyam.org**

Bat Yam Temple of the Islands' calendar of events quickly filled with instructive, entertaining and heartwarming events. Kicking off 2021, Lenny Hochschild, founding partner at Environmental Commodity Partners, gave a Zoom talk entitled "The Economics of Climate Change and Its Importance to Judaism" on Wednesday, January

6. Lenny spent one hour providing an overview of the current state of global Greenhouse Gas emissions, and the emerging public policy and private sector response to the threat of climate change.

"Have You Ever Wanted to Lead the Torah Blessings But Weren't Sure How" was the title of an informative virtual workshop led by Vickie Fuchs on Wednesday, January 13, which left the participants with greater confidence in accepting ritual honors for Shabbat services.

On Sunday, January 31 the 2021 Interfaith Shared Scholar Lecture will feature Dr. Susannah Heschel, the Eli M. Black Distinguished Professor and chair of the Jewish Studies Program at Dartmouth College. This program usually held at the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC) will be on Zoom. Dr. Heschel is the daughter of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, a colleague of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. She will speak about how her father might respond to the current issues surrounding systemic racism in the United States. All lectures are recorded and are available by emailing batyamsanibel@gmail.com.

Bat Yam members are looking forward to participating in the Federation's 25th Annual Jewish Film Festival taking place in February. Bat Yam is the sponsor of the last of the six films, *The One and Only Jewish Miss America*, about the surprising story of Bess Myerson, which opens at the Festival on Sunday, February 28.

Coming up on Sunday, March 7 at 4:00 p.m. is Nashville's very own Nefesh Mountain Blue Grass Band, which combines bluegrass with Jewish musical styles. Doni Zasloff and Eric Lindberg, the husband-and-wife team who started the band, will per-

form for the annual Bat Yam Temple of the Islands fundraiser concert, which, in previous years, has enjoyed sold-out performances. This year the concert can accommodate up to 500 "Zoom Rooms." Accompanying Doni and Eric, the principal members of the band, will be performances of favorite songs from Bat Yam's Cantor Murray Simon and Rev. Dr. John Danner of the Sanibel Congregational Church of Christ. Rabbi Stephen Fuchs will also be part of the festivities.

We are excited to have Nefesh Mountain, a favorite of both Jewish and non-Jewish fans, performing their mashup of Jewish liturgy and bluegrass melodies. Nefesh is the Hebrew word for soul. They characterize their music, much of which they write themselves, as a continuation of the cultural exchange between Jews and the countries they live in.

This promises to be a not-to-be-missed afternoon, and the word is spreading to family and friends throughout the U.S. and to other countries. The Zoom hall is likely to be packed. Be one of the fortunate ones to score a ticket! For further information, email batyamsanibel@gmail.com. See you there!

What do you think?**L'CHAYIM wants to know!**

Send your letters and comments to Ted Epstein, L'CHAYIM Editor, at LChayim36@gmail.com.

Letters Policy

Letters must include the writer's full name, full address and daytime phone. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. We reserve the right to edit for length and/or accuracy. Letters do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of L'CHAYIM nor its advertisers. We cannot acknowledge or publish every letter received.

TEMPLE JUDEA

Fort Myers

(239) 433-0201

www.tjswfl.org

On Tuesday, February 2 at 7:00 p.m., Chaverot of Temple Judea invites the community to join in a Zoom presentation on “The Jewish World of Alexander Hamilton” presented by Dr. Andrew Porwancher a professor of legal history at the University of Oklahoma. Drawing on sources in the West Indies, Professor Porwancher makes the case of Hamilton’s Jewish upbringing. There will be time for questions at the end of his presentation. There is no cost, but donations to help underwrite the cost of the presentation will be welcome! Please call the synagogue office to RSVP and to get the Zoom code and password. More about Dr. Porwancher and his upcoming book

“The Jewish World of Alexander Hamilton” is in an article in this issue.

Chaverot will also sponsor Sisterhood Shabbat on Saturday, February 6 beginning at 9:30 a.m.

The service will be held in the synagogue’s new outdoor sanctuary and social hall – its parking lot! There will be social distancing and a great service led by the women of Temple Judea.

Festivities will continue in the new outdoor social hall with celebration of Purim on Thursday, February 25 at 5:30 p.m. There will be pizza and salad followed by the reading of the Megillah. Costumes are encouraged and, of course, there will be delicious hamentaschen for dessert.

On Sunday, February 28 from 10:00 a.m. to noon, there will be a Purim Carnival at Temple Judea, sponsored by Temple Judea and Temple Beth El. The carnival is open to all

in the community. There will be new games, as well as familiar games, and safety measures will be followed. What a great way to spend a Sunday morning.

Lunchtime Torah study with Rabbi Sack is the first Thursday of each month at noon, with the next class on Thursday, February 4. At this time, the class is held on Zoom. There is no cost to attend and all levels of Jewish background are welcome.

Religious School classes continue to be a combination of in-person and Zoom options. Any families wishing to enroll their children in our Religious School should call the synagogue office to speak to Education Director Tab Scribner.

Tab will lead an interactive and lively Tot Shabbat service via Zoom on Friday, February 12 at 5:00 p.m. All families with young children are invited to participate.

On Tuesday, March 2 at 7:00 p.m.,

there will be a Chaverot Book Club meeting to discuss Kristin Hannah’s novel, *The Winemaker’s Wife*. Contact Leni Sack at mssack@aol.com for more information.

Temple Judea members continue to donate food to the Jewish Federation Food Pantry and continue to volunteer at the Harry Chapin Food Bank.

Regularly scheduled events:

- “Like” the Temple Judea Facebook page to livestream services or call the office for the Zoom link.
- Friday evening Shabbat services at 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday morning Shabbat services at 9:30 a.m.
- Morning minyan every Monday at 9:00 a.m.
- Tot Shabbat the second Friday night of each month at 5:00 p.m.
- Rabbi Sack’s monthly lunchtime Torah study sessions the first Thursday of each month

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

Cape Coral

(239) 772-4555

www.templebethshalomcc.org

The new year has brought new ideas and new optimism at Temple Beth Shalom. Although, as of this writing, the number of Covid-19 cases has been rising, the availability of the vaccine has given us hope that we will soon be able to meet in person and get back to a more social life. Some of our members have been vaccinated already and others are working on getting

appointments. However, we are not waiting. The number of safe, socially distanced activities is increasing and we plan to do the best we can with the resources we have.

Our book group is now meeting outside at Jaycees Park in Cape Coral. Members are careful to wear masks and social distance while enjoying the discussion, breezes and views of the river. In January we discussed *The Weight of Ink* by Rachael Kadish. And on Thursday, February 4 at 1:00 p.m. we will discuss *The Fixer* by Bernard Malamud.

Tobi Gold is volunteering her time to hold a chair yoga class in the parking lot on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. The class is free and open to people of all levels of experience or none at all.

Weather permitting, we will be hold Havdalah services outside, and if that goes well we will try having a Friday night service outside as well. We are working on a Purim extravaganza via Zoom, choreographing the reading of the Megillah in a whole new way. Even more exciting, we have several new babies and are looking forward to baby namings in the parking lot.

While experimenting with these new activities, we are not forgetting

the tried and true. Kabbalat Shabbat services are continuing on Zoom and have made it possible for members who have moved away and new members to join us.

Denise Simenauer has come up with fascinating movies and topics for Thursday night enrichment, and Saturday night movies are always light and entertaining. Study with the Rabbi has attracted quite a following.

We welcome you to join us for services and other activities. Please call us at 239.772.4555 for updated times and links to join.

SHALOM LIFE CENTER

Fort Myers

(239) 218-3433

www.shalomlifecenter.org

Shalom Life Center is Southwest Florida’s warm and welcoming home for contemporary Jewish life with a passionate commitment to community and spiritual growth where everyone is always welcome!

We are hoping to be safely welcoming everyone back into our building for in-person services, clubs and special events soon. In the meantime, we all remain connected and engaged through Livestream services and

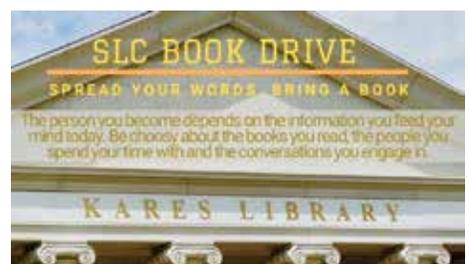
Zoom meetings.

We invite the entire community to join us in person every Friday at 5:00 p.m. to drop off donations of canned goods, pet food and supplies,

clothing, books, games and toys. This is a great way for us to help the needy while getting together safely and with social distancing while doing a great mitzvah!

In addition to supporting the food pantries at the local Federations, the Gulf Coast Animal Shelter, Lee County Domestic Animal Services and The Children’s Network of SWFL, we’ve added even more to our already ambitious lineup of mitzvahs!

Many thanks to David Lenz and Judy Rosenberg for coordinating our Hearts and Homes drive to help the homeless veterans in SWFL. And a great big thank you to Rozzie and Eli Berkofsky for coordinating our ACT Shelter drive helping victims of domestic abuse. We are also collecting Jewish and Israel-themed books to bring Yiddishkeit and Jewish light to the Kares library in Athens, Alabama, where it is very needed. Thank you to all the wonderful members of our Jewish community who continue to support our outreach week after



week. We are making a difference.

Every Friday at 7:30 p.m. we experience an uplifting, musical and meaningful Livestream Shabbat service. To join with us, just visit www.shalomlifecenter.org and click on SLC TV.

Every Saturday at 10:00 a.m. SLC

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

SLC also has a dynamic Women’s Circle led by Rebbetzin Robin Dermer with an emphasis on women’s spirituality and personal growth.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation, Torah study, Women’s Circle Ladies Night, What’s Up Wednesday, Book Club, Green Team, Yiddish Culture Club, Genesis Study Group, monthly

healing services and our Virtual Oneg Shabbat are taking place in our SLC Zoom room for the time being. 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, and 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 or email us at info@shalomlifecenter.org.

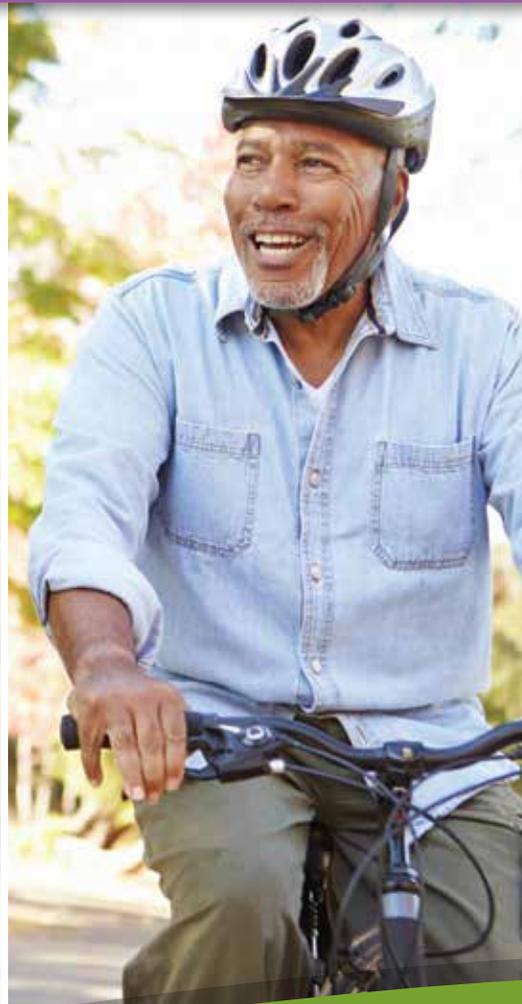
WE NEED YOUR HELP!

HELP US HELP VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE

Bring in gently loved clothing, blankets, towels and shoes for us to deliver to the Act Shelter of Southwest Florida

HELP US HELP THE HOMELESS VETERANS

Bring in gently loved clothing, blankets, towels and shoes for us to deliver to Hearts and Homes for Veterans of Southwest Florida



Love Living at Home?

Attend one of our
lunch & learn events at

The Plantation
Golf & Country Club

10500 Dartington Dr. in Fort Myers

Learn how you can stay in your home as you age,
with a safety net built on the solid foundation
of Volunteers of America.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16th at 11am
Meet Your Care Coordinator

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26th at 11am
Life Plan Overview



1333 Santa Barbara Blvd.
Cape Coral, FL 33991
www.SeniorChoiceAtHome.com

We are taking precautionary measures to ensure the safety of our guests, residents & staff. This includes keeping guests 6 feet apart during events. Upon entering, you will need to fill out a health screening form, get a temperature check, wear a mask, and wash hands or use hand sanitizer.



Senior Choice at Home is a Volunteers of America membership-based community. Learn more at voa.org. AL #12982, HHA #299993155, HHA #299991969, SNF #1188096

RSVP
239.932.6587

**for you and your friend to
reserve your seats today!**