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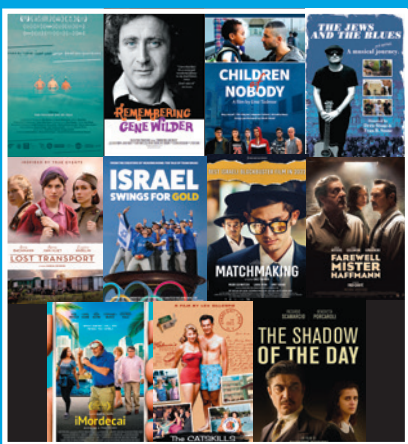


### Let's Get Groovy!

Join us for the live performance of the '60s musical "Beehive" on Jan. 19. Pg. 3, 23

### Craft a Healthier You

Learn healthy eating habits and how to improve your overall well-being with monthly nutrition classes beginning in January. Pg. 3,36



### 28th Annual Jewish Film Festival of SWFL

Get your tickets now for the screening of 11 impactful films in February. Pg. 20

## Thank you for your generous support of Israel

By Marsha Kistler, Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties Board Chair

As I sit here just shy of the two-month anniversary of the brutal attack on our brothers and sisters in Israel, I continue to be obsessed with any news I can get my hands on. JFNA has been particularly helpful with sharing on-the-ground reporting, and we have tried to pass along these up-to-the-minute reports through e-blasts. By the way, if you are not getting our e-blasts or *L'CHAYIM*, please contact Lori at the office (239-481-4449, ext. 5) with your contact information for *L'CHAYIM* and Debbie (debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org) for Federation's e-blasts.

We thank you for your generous donations to the Israel Emergency Fund. All of your donations have gone directly to JFNA, which, as of this date in early December, has raised \$638 million. \$175 million of that has already been allocated to the most pressing needs on the ground through nearly 300 partner organizations, including Victims

of Terror Fund, The Jewish Agency for Israel, JDC, World ORT, Israel Trauma Coalition, United Hatzalah, Magen David Adom, ZAKA, Chabad and over a dozen hospitals and medical organizations. Many of the latest funds were allocated toward populations with special needs such as at-risk youth and people with disabilities as well as a significant focus on treating both injuries that can be seen and those that are hidden. We are able to request that a certain percentage of the funds raised locally be used to support Hadera, our sister city in Israel through P2G, Partnership Together.

Through your efforts, we are also able to help an Israeli family, cousins of a local resident, with temporary housing here in Ft. Myers, until they are able to rebuild and return to Israel. And, finally, our local Lions of Judah are raising money



■ Marsha Kistler

through the T-shirt sale. These T-shirts were designed by Juli Bobman to support Battalion 414, which lost 11 women, three of whom are hostages.

Hopefully, you've had a chance to visit our newly renovated Jewish Family Services/ United Way House made possible through a grant from United Way and your contributions to our Annual Campaign. And, if you haven't

had a chance to make your donation to the 2023 Campaign, no worries, there's still time as we haven't yet closed our books. This can be done online or by writing a check and marking it "2023 Annual Campaign."

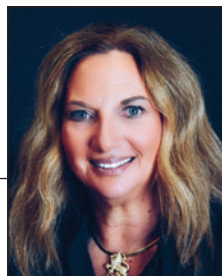
We look forward to seeing everyone at our Jewish Film Festival starting in February, which is often the highlight of our programming year! The festival pass is the most cost-effective way to view all of the films. 🌍

## Happy 2024

*May the new year bring peace to us all*

### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

■ Debbie Sanford



At the Federation, the new year is ushering in some staffing changes. Unfortunately, we are losing our Case Manager Silvia Garcia. Silvia who was hired for just a six-month term under a grant I received from JFNA to help with Hurricane Ian and to get us through recovery, has done an amazing job in JFS. Not only did she keep up on the hundreds of calls we get each week, but she transformed what once was a "pantry in a

closet" to an entire office dedicated to serving the community and a gigantic, beautiful pantry. I want to thank Silvia for all her hard work and dedication to JFS and this community.

Nancy Klein, our Friendly Visitor coordinator, is moving on up and over to the other office, to a more full-time position in JFS. She will coordinate the pantry, our nurse advocacy program, Friendly Visitor Program and the new South United Way House events in JFS. Nancy is up for the challenge, and I know she will be fantastic.

Jodi Cohen, who was the JFS Coordinator, is taking a slight turn in the direction in which she serves JFS. Jodi's new title is Life Enrichment Coordinator, concentrating on what

we all know Jodi does so well, adult programming and keeping community members happy and fulfilled spiritually. Jodi will manage the Lunch Bunch, Sharing Shabbat, Holiday Gift Bags, Shalom Singles and assist with grant writing. Jodi has helped me in the past with grants and I can tell you, she can write a narrative like nobody else. I am looking forward to working with both Nancy and Jodi on the important role Jewish Family Services has taken in our community.

JFS is supported by so many community members, and I just want to say thank you. Look at what your dedication and generosity has led us to.

Wishing you a happy and healthy new year ahead. See you at all the wonderful upcoming events we have planned for you this year. 🌍





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

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**FEBRUARY ISSUE  
 EDITORIAL  
 DEADLINE:  
 Friday, January 5**



### OUR MISSION

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

### OUR VISION

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

# Meet the Luna-Bord family

## PJ Library Family of the Month

By Danielle Bernstein, Special Events and Program Coordinator

**P**J Library's "Family of the Month" is a special recognition program that celebrates families actively engaged in fostering Jewish values and traditions. This month, we are delighted to introduce the Luna-Bord family.

### Family name:

Luna-Bord (Rabbi Nicole Luna, Joe Bord, Zara and Iris)

### Number of children and their ages:

Zara (10 years old) and Iris (6 years old)

### Years of PJ Library participation:

Over 10 years

### Discovery of PJ Library:

The Luna-Bord family joined PJ Library over a decade ago, immediately upon the birth of their older daughter. The convenience of having Jewish-themed books delivered each month resonated with them, enhancing their children's bedtime ritual, and affirming their Jewish identity.

### Fostering Jewish values and traditions:

For the Luna-Bord family, integrating Jewish values into daily life is a priority. They say Hamotzi before meals, share moments of kindness during dinner, and sing Shema at bedtime while expressing gratitude and praying for others. Celebrating Shabbat is a

cherished family tradition, with the girls actively participating in Temple Beth El's various community events and services.

As the rabbi of Temple Beth El, Rabbi Nicole Luna plays a pivotal role in shaping the spiritual and communal experiences of the congregation. Her leadership extends beyond the synagogue walls, fostering a sense of



community and shared values among families. The Luna-Bord family actively engages in

Temple Beth El's Tot Shabbat, Religious School Shabbat, regular Shabbat services, Religious School and holiday celebrations, providing their daughters with a rich cultural and spiritual upbringing.

### Hopes for the future:

The Luna-Bord family looks forward to continued involvement with PJ Library, finding joy not only in reading the books but also in exploring suggested crafts and activities. Their participation in PJ Library holiday events remains a highlight, fostering a sense of community and shared experiences.

In recognizing the Luna-Bord family, we celebrate their commitment to upholding Jewish values and traditions. Each family contributes to the richness of our shared experiences, making our community vibrant and diverse. If you're interested in joining us and becoming part of this special community, please don't hesitate to reach out for more information. You may contact me at [Danielleb@jfedlcc.org](mailto:Danielleb@jfedlcc.org) or 239-481-4449 x4.

Thank you for being a valued part of the PJ Library family! 🌟



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# 2023 Review and 2024 Preview

By Danielle Bernstein, Special Events and Program Coordinator

**H**appy New Year! Can't believe how fast 2023 went! As much as I enjoyed last year's programming, I can't wait for the year ahead of us. Before I let you all in on our upcoming programs, let's do a quick recap of the ending of 2023.



■ Danielle Bernstein

**TRIBE event**  
The first TRIBE event I organized took place at Dave and Buster's, for adults in their 20s and 30s. What an amazing turnout we had. From indulging in appetizers to competing in arcade games, we formed new connections and ended the night exchanging numbers. I would say it was an overall success. I'm eager to hear your ideas for future tribe outings. Where do you think we should all head to next?

**Rabbi Barras event**

Our collaborative event at Temple Beth El was nothing short of inspiring. Rabbi Barras, with his incredible book, "A Reason to Rise," sparked an empowering discussion. I left feeling not just motivated but also driven to advocate for our friends in Israel.

**PJ Hanukkah Party/Singles event**

Then came our Hanukkah bash at Temple Beth Shalom, where over 90 people joined us. The kids had a blast decorating donuts, crafting Lego dreidels and bouncing around on the moon bounce. On the same day, our Shalom Singles met to pack Hanukkah

bags for retirement facilities in the area. We then had pizza and some tasty treats for dessert. We even had some new faces show up. The next event will take place in February at Regal Bell Tower for the Jewish Film Festival. To find out more information, please reach out to me.

**Upcoming events**

Now, for what's to come this year. We're kicking things off with the groovy '60s musical, "The Beehive," on Jan. 19. Don't miss out, grab your tickets before the RSVP deadline.

Also, make sure to sign up for our first nutrition class on Jan. 22 held at *continued on page 4*

**PJ Hanukkah Party**



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## PJ Hanukkah Party



2024 preview...continued from page 3

the Federation. Dive into the significance of nutrition and discover how to craft a healthier you in 2024. Register for this event on the Jewish Federation website under the calendar section.

Lastly, if you haven't yet, reserve your tickets for the highly anticipated film festival. We have an amazing lineup this year, that you won't want to miss.

All in all, I'm thrilled about the lineup of new programs for this year. If you have any ideas, please shoot them my way. I'd love to hear your suggestions! 🌍

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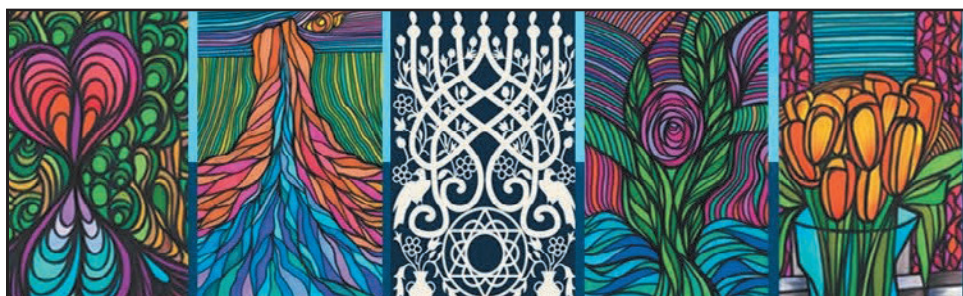


The Jewish Federation Annual Campaign provides the resources to strengthen and enrich our Jewish community locally, in Israel and around the world.



**YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN**

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.



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



Make a Gift at  
[jewishfederationlcc.org/tribute-memorials](http://jewishfederationlcc.org/tribute-memorials)

**Stay in touch throughout the month. Sign up for the Federation's e-blasts.**



Jewish Federation  
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

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Jewish Federation  
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

#### HOW THE JEWISH FEDERATION SERVES

##### Local Jewish Education and Culture

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



##### Overseas

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

##### Jewish Community Foundation

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



Jewish Family Services

A division of the Jewish Federation  
of Lee & Charlotte Counties

##### Local Seniors Services

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

##### Local Social Services

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

##### Local Emergency Services

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

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Community Breakfast 2023



Photo credit: Mike Shapiro



# The carousel of life

## Jewish Family Services update

By Jodi Cohen, Jewish Family Services Coordinator

My mother used four adjectives to describe everything from brisket to personalities to fashion: lovely, nice, adorable, darling. As I share what's happening at Jewish Family Services, I will try my best to utilize other adjectives, but please forgive me if I rely on the holy quartet.



■ Jodi Cohen

The carousel of life spins more quickly during the holidays. There is a lot happening at the Federation as our outreach and impact across Lee and Charlotte counties expands and grows. Jewish Family Services is grateful for all the generous and dedicated food pantry, Lunch Bunch, holiday gift bag, Friendly Visitor and Sharing Shabbat volunteers who make the world go round in our particular corner of the universe.



Barrington was warm and welcoming. I'm not just being polite — every single staff member was friendly and that says a lot about the environment. Lindy Smith led a chair movement session after brunch and played lively background music. Her sense of timing and humor are what make Lindy a master teacher and an exquisite human.

Florida Senior Consulting (FSC) sponsored the Hanukkah Lunch Bunch in Port Charlotte in December. Florida Senior Consulting makes senior living options simple by providing personalized guidance every step of the way. Stephen Hill and his colleague, Tina Nuttall, are both dealing with elderly parents, so they truly understand the challenges of navigating information overload, making decisions and managing situations with compassion and care. Besides being honest, and a mensch, Stephen could be a comic in the Catskills! Our community partner, Jason's Deli, provided (a lovely) lunch and Greg Wicke, our entertainer, learned Hanukkah songs for us to sing together.

### Brunch & Lunch Bunch

Barrington Terrace hosted our first-ever Brunch Bunch and, boy, did we ever *fress a hup* (eat a lot) because the food was dee-lish! Barrington Terrace Executive Director David Saunders and Community Sales Director Teresa Keating were delighted to host the Federation and everyone we encountered at

### Barrington Terrace Brunch Bunch



### Port Charlotte Lunch Bunch



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**Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry**

There are more and more new food pantry recipients every week. As the newest United Way House, JFS received 10 boxes of toys from United Way that former case manager Silvia Garcia gave to families who visited the pantry in December. All of the United Way House managers played bingo, and I won a game! The prize was a red 16" bike that was given to a family for the holidays.

While we are fortunate to get food from Harry Chapin and Midwest Food Banks, we still run out of basic items, because we never know what will be available. If you, your neighbors or your business would like to host a Food Drive, we have a terrific step-by-step kit to help you organize and run a successful one. Contact new food pantry coordinator, Nancy Klein, if you're interested: 239-481-4449, Ext. 2 or [nancyklein@jfedlcc.org](mailto:nancyklein@jfedlcc.org).

**Holiday gift bags**

Thank you to the folks who packed the gift bags and delivered them to over 150 Jewish residents at various older adult living communities throughout Lee and Charlotte counties. It certainly takes a village to bring Hanukkah to the village.

A shout out to the lovely, nice, adorable, darling people who made this happen: Wendy Schrair, Ritchie Maslow, Karen Whitman, Suzanne Orkin, Robyn Green, Phyllis SilverHenkel, Sheryl Stillman, Robert Thomas, Bonnie Kasdan, Shirley Frank, Victor Gold, Carolyn Gora, Jan and Mitchell Hoffman and Paula Timinsky.

**Sharing Shabbat**

Even though some of the facilities I've visited don't have many Jewish residents, anytime I've led a Sharing Shabbat program, I've been well received by the staff and the residents

who attend, Jewish or not. I love sharing the meaning and rituals of Shabbat and people enjoy hearing about it. We sing Shabbat songs and say the prayers over the (electric) candles, wine and challah. The lovely challah is always a big hit. Even though it's a short program, there's a feeling of connection between everyone by the end of our time together, a Shabbat alchemy, if you will. I welcome any volunteers

who would like to join me for a Sharing Shabbat.

**United Way House Update**

There will be a free breast cancer screening at Jewish Family Services on Friday, Feb. 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for anyone who is not insured. The exam is free and if any follow-up care is necessary, those services will also be free of charge. 🌐

**Sharing Shabbat at The Preserve**



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# Giving and receiving, red fish, blue fish

By Jodi Cohen, Jewish Family Services Coordinator

In the beginning, God created oceans, moonlight and humans. About a half hour later, calendars were invented because, let's face it, we're a very busy species.

Our paper calendars are color coded, adorned with Post-its, stickers and highlighters, reminding us and rewarding us for the never ending tasks and deadlines. Our electronic calendars beep and ding. Alerts are set and snooze buttons chirp as if to say, "Giddyup!"

Life is layered and complex. There is so much to do, take care of and manage. Time is a precious commodity. I personally struggle to remember that I am a human being, not a human shopping.

There is an abundance of options regarding how we spend our "free" time and energy. So how do we decide what to do? What makes us want to volunteer?

I love what Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote about volunteering because he captures the essence of the Jewish values of *Tzedakah* (benevolence), *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) and *K'lal Yisrael* (taking responsibility for one another).

"Voluntary work tells us that not all compassion can be paid for by taxes and outsourced to government agencies. A society in which there are high levels of voluntary activity will simply be a better, happier place than one where there are not. Ask any volunteer and they will usually tell you that

they gain more than they give. They don't do it for recognition. *They do it because they know volunteering helps change the world because it changes us.* [Emphasis added.] Jews know this in their bones. Our community could not exist for a day without its volunteers. They are the lifeblood of our organizations."

The Federation has four full-time and three part-time employees. For the older adults in our community, the Federation offers free monthly lunches, delivers holiday gift bags three times a year to Jewish residents in senior living facilities, coordinates visitors for older adults who are lonely or isolated, and ensures that Holocaust survivors in Lee and Charlotte counties have what they need to continue living their lives with dignity in their own homes.

The Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry is open two days a week, providing food, toiletries and diapers to several hundred families a month. Harry Chapin Food Bank delivers boxes of food every week and, once a month, we visit Midwest Food Bank. All of the inventory needs to be unpacked, organized and put away. Grocery bags need to be packed. Pantry clients need to sign in or sign up.

The Federation offers between 10-15 programs throughout the year, including the Jewish Film Festival, which runs for one month, and a variety of community-wide events that appeal



**Our community could not exist for a day without its volunteers. They are the lifeblood of our organizations.**

come to the Federation to fold letters for a big mailing or give people their tickets at the theater during the film festival. Maybe you're the one who signs up first-time clients at the food pantry. Asking someone how he or she is doing, and then really listening, is worth a million mitzvah points.

What is required is a willingness to be of service. There are many opportunities for you to become a part of the Federation family. Big tasks, small tasks, red fish, blue fish. We need you.

"Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." ~Martin Luther King, Jr. 🌍

to various groups of people within the Jewish community. All of this does not include the role that the Federation plays in its response to disaster, war and any other special circumstances.

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RSVP by Thurs., January 4

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RSVP by Mon., January 22

register online:  
[jewishfederationlcc.org/calendar](http://jewishfederationlcc.org/calendar)

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# Individuals can make a difference

By Susan Suarez, President & CEO

As we enter this new year, our wish is that more people will stand up and speak out against the antisemitism and other forms of hatred continuing to spread throughout our country and the world.

As several Holocaust survivors recently stated, "... now is not the time to give up. We will continue in the conviction that if the world truly takes history to heart, it will take a stand for humanity. And we implore you not to give up either. Step out from your corner. Extend your hand in empathy and peace."

No matter where we live or are in life, we can have a positive impact on others. Whether we take action in person, online or wherever we encounter hate, we can have an impact. The late Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor noted, "It is the individual who can and does make a difference even in this increasingly populous, complex world of ours. The individual can make things happen."

We hope that our Holocaust education programs will inspire the next generation to be among those individuals who make a difference.

January will be a busy month at the Museum. We invite you to attend these special programs:

**Wednesday, Jan. 17 at 2 p.m. – "Rescue in the Philippines: Refuge**



■ Susan Suarez

**from the Holocaust"** sheds light on a little-known effort by a group of poker-playing Americans in Manila which helped 1,200 European Jews escape the Holocaust to safety in the Philippines. Among the speakers will be some of their descendants. Reservations required — visit [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) to RSVP.

**Saturday, Jan. 20 at 12:15 p.m. and 2 p.m.**

– **Family Day Storytime** with crafts and learning activities available for grades 5 and up. The story is "The Whispering Town," an illustrated telling of the rescue of Danish Jews in 1943 by neighbors and fishermen who helped them cross to neutral Sweden. Reservations required — visit [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) for more information.

**Friday, Jan. 26, 1-4 p.m. – International Holocaust Remembrance Day Commemoration** with complimentary Museum admission and a special film. Reservations required — visit [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) to RSVP. (last guests admitted at 3 p.m.)

**Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2-5 p.m. – Screening of the film "Defiance,"** which tells the story of the Bielski brothers, World War II partisans who created forest camps which helped shelter and save Jewish refugees escaping the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. SWFL resident Ruth Bielski, daughter

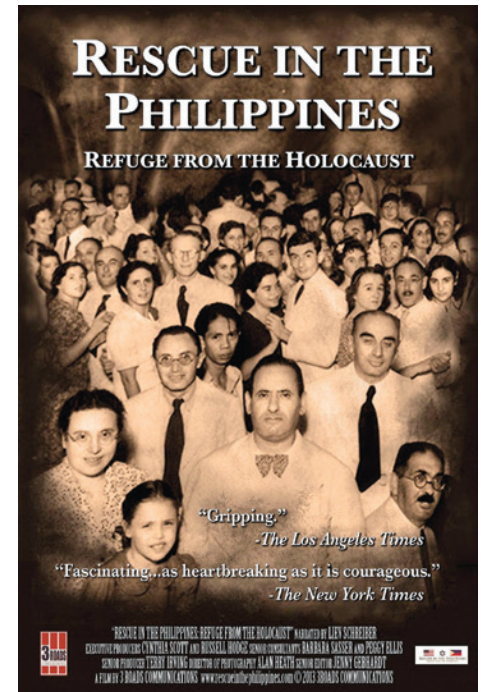


of the group's leader, Tuvia Bielski, will introduce the film. Reservations are required — visit [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) to RSVP.

Our special exhibit, "Forgeries and The Holocaust," continues through March in the Estelle and Stuart Price Gallery. Following that will be an exhibit co-created by the American Bar Association and the German Federal Bar Association, "Lawyers Without Rights: The Fate of Jewish Lawyers in Berlin after 1933."

This will also be a busy month for our Education Department. We have multiple Student Field Trips scheduled each week, as well as Private Group Tours. These tours are by appointment only. For more information and to schedule a tour, please contact Education Specialist David Nelson at [David@hmcec.org](mailto:David@hmcec.org) or call 239-263-9200.

We are now offering public docent-led tours on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 12:30 p.m. These tours are by prepaid reservation only, and guests are asked to arrive at 12:15 p.m. to watch a brief film prior to the start of the tour. A 24-hour cancellation notice is required for a full refund. Visit [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) to RSVP.

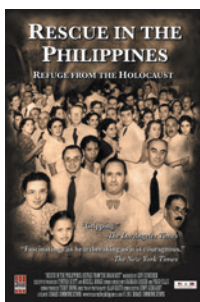


Please "save the date" for our annual fundraising event, Triumph 2024, on Wednesday evening, March 6 at the Arthrex Conference Center. Special guest speaker will be Ruth Bielski, daughter of Tuvia Bielski. Please visit [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) for more information on tickets and sponsorship packages.

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities at the Museum, please contact Development Specialist Julie Cohen at [Julie@hmcec.org](mailto:Julie@hmcec.org) for more information.

We look forward to showing you our new North Wing and updated exhibits. On behalf of everyone at the Museum, we wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and peace-filled year ahead. 🌍

## Join Us for "Rescue in the Philippines: Refuge from the Holocaust"



**Film and Discussion/Q&A  
Wednesday, January 17, 2024  
at 2:00pm  
at the Holocaust Museum &  
Cohen Education Center  
RSVP required - [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org)**

"Rescue in the Philippines" highlights the little-known story of how a small group of poker-playing, cigar-smoking friends in pre-WWII Manila manipulated the U.S. State Department into providing visas for 1,300 European Jews to immigrate to the Philippines and escape the Holocaust.

Among the poker-playing Rescuers were Manuel Quezon, first elected president of the Philippines, Paul McNutt, American diplomat and U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippines, then-Colonel Dwight D. Eisenhower, and four of the five Frieder brothers, cigar manufacturers from Cincinnati doing business in the Philippines.

Several of the Rescuers' descendants, and a producer of the film will participate in the Discussion/Q&A. "Rescue" has aired over 2,000 times on 175+ PBS stations — and qualified for an Oscar. RSVP required at [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org).

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Cohen Education Center**

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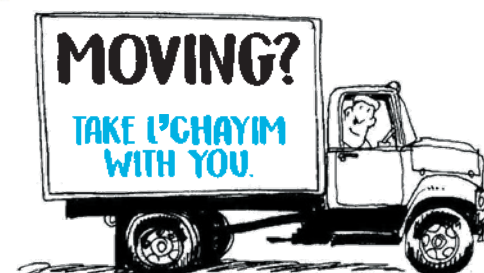
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principals and the Twelve Steps. Our guidebook is Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery by Rabbi Kerry Olitzky & Stuart Copans, M.D., second edition. All who might benefit from this group are welcome. Zoom details are available by calling the Temple Beth El office: 239-433-0018. 🌍

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# GenShoah presents

*Inside information on upcoming programs*

By Shelley Lieb and Ida Margolis

The following is information you need for GenShoah's upcoming programs.

### Not just for new members

Our Open House/New Member Reception was designed and initiated last year to make new members feel welcome. Everyone who joined between January 2023 and January 2024 will receive a personal call. All GenShoah members are welcome to attend. The date coincides with the United Nations designated Holocaust Remembrance Day, **Jan. 26**. The event will be held at **10 a.m. at the Holocaust Museum**. RSVP is required to attend. More information is available at [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) (Special Events).

### A special time to share

The "Our Stories" GenShoah member get-together brings us together in a comfortable, inviting location to talk about our past and our present in the company of other 2Gs and 3Gs. The

discussion is under the direction of Rene Geist, Ida Margolis and Shelley Lieb. We hope it will encourage the writing of more of our parents' stories of survival for the "Portraits of Remembrance" Project. **Feb. 4 at 1 pm; Location TBD**. Attendance is limited and RSVP is required to attend: Rene Geist [rene@geistgroup.com](mailto:rene@geistgroup.com)

### Planning ahead

GenShoah SWFL is already planning for the Yom HaShoah program in Collier County on Sunday, **May 5**. Although it is some time away, there are two items that need paying attention to now:

- We are encouraging you to invite your children/grandchildren to be at your side for this program. It is an opportunity to share your history with your family in a meaningful way.
- We are asking everyone in the community to submit family names for Holocaust remembrance at this program to [genshoahswfl@hmcec.org](mailto:genshoahswfl@hmcec.org).

### Information on other future programs

If you talk to Sol Awend in Yiddish, his eyes light up and he will probably tell you a story in Yiddish to make you smile. He is the energy behind a monthly get-together for Yiddish speakers at any level. Join him at **Zoog Mir in Yiddish** through April 2024; the third Sunday of the month, 3:30-5 p.m. at the Holocaust Museum. Attendance is limited to 20 people and RSVP for each session is required to attend: [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org)

### International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Jan. 26, 1-3 p.m. Complimentary admission  
Jan. 26, 2 p.m. Special program  
Will be held at Holocaust Museum, Naples. RSVP is required for both: [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) (Special Events)

### Genealogy workshops

Feb. 25 and April 7, 1 p.m.; Location TBD. Attendance is limited and RSVP

is required to attend: Shelley Lieb [liebro@gmail.com](mailto:liebro@gmail.com)

### "They Were Children: Rescue as Resistance" Exhibit

March 3, 10 a.m. at FGCU Archives. RSVP is required to attend: Shelley Lieb [liebro@gmail.com](mailto:liebro@gmail.com)

### Growing Up Sephardic in an Ashkenazi World by Sam Varsano

Wed., March 13, 2 p.m. at Holocaust Museum. RSVP is required to attend: [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) (Special Events)

### Yom HaShoah Commemoration

May 5, 4 p.m. at Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center. RSVP is requested: [jfgn.org](http://jfgn.org)  
**Pre-Event reception for GenShoah SWFL and survivors**, 3 p.m. at Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center.

Possible **Book Discussions** – Locations/dates/times TBD based on interest. Contact Estelle Kafer at [ekafer520@gmail.com](mailto:ekafer520@gmail.com).



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# Coben characters “Change,” Rock Hall of Fame, celeb roots, and more

By Nate Bloom, Stars of David Contributing Columnist

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

“Fool Me Once” is an 8-episode original series that premieres on Netflix on Dec. 31. It is based on a novel of the same name by bestselling author **Harlen Coben**, 60. His first novel, “Play Dead,” (1990) was the first in a series of big selling mysteries and thrillers. Coben, who had a bar mitzvah ceremony, grew up in New Jersey.

Recently, Coben’s books have been made into successful mini-series. In 2021, his novel “Gone for Good” (2002) was turned into a Netflix mini-series and, in 2022, his novel “Shelter” turned into an Amazon Prime series.

“Funny thing.” Both novels were set in the USA, and both had clearly Jewish major characters. Both series had no mention that any character was Jewish and “Gone for Good” was “re-set” in France.

Many kvetch that Jewish character roles go too frequently to non-Jewish actors. More damaging, I think, is the

constant practice of erasing the Jewish background of a character when a novel, etc., is filmed. Sadly, I can’t get into “whys” here.

“Fool Me Once” is re-set in Britain. The name of the novel’s lead character, Maya Stern, hasn’t been changed, and, to be fair, Stern’s background is ambiguous in the novel. Here’s the capsule plot: Maya thinks her husband has been murdered until she spots him on a recent video. Meanwhile, her nephew and niece are looking into their mother’s murder and the question is: are the two cases related?

On Jan. 1, ABC will broadcast (8 p.m.) a heavily edited video of the 2023 induction of persons into the Rock Hall of Fame. The ceremony happened on Nov. 3, 2023. Disney, which owns ABC, streamed the whole 2023 ceremony live (a first!). You can watch a video of that live event on Disney+ or you can watch the edited version on ABC.

The influential and popular four-man band “Rage for the Machine” was inducted. Their drummer is **Brad Wilk**, now 55. “Rage” was formed in 1991 and, after 2000, they had several “break-ups” and reunions. They are currently together and playing concerts. Nice to note: When “Rage” played in Israel in

2000, Wilk recited a Shabbos blessing before his Israeli audience.

**Al Kooper**, 79, was inducted in a Hall category called “the award for musical excellence.” Basically, this means people who may or may not be musicians (but usually are) who have helped create great music for a long period of time.

Kooper, who plays guitar, began backing **Bob Dylan** in 1965. First in the studio, and later in some concerts. He played in the studio with ‘60s biggies like The Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix. He founded “Blood Sweat and Tears,” but left before their big hits (I think his one LP with “BS&T” is better than their “hit stuff”). He has produced many hit albums.

On Jan. 2, the 10th season of the hit PBS series “Finding Your Roots” begins. (Check local schedules). As I write this, I know which celebs will appear on the program, but the exact date they appear has not been released. Here are this season’s Jewish celebs: **Michael Douglas**, 79. Of course, he is the son of the late **Kirk Douglas**. Michael’s mother wasn’t Jewish and Michael wasn’t religious most of his life. However, for reasons I can’t detail here, about 10 years ago, he began identifying as a Reform Jew. His son,

**Dylan**, now 21, had a bar mitzvah (2015) in Jerusalem and, in 2015, he received the Genesis Prize for “Jewish achievement.” **Lena Dunham**, 37, is the best known for starring in and writing the hit HBO series “Girls.” Her father isn’t Jewish, and her mother is Jewish. She identifies as Jewish. **Iliza Shlesinger**, 40, is a stand-up comedian and author. She’s had several Netflix specials and she’s appeared in a few acting roles. She wed (2015) her husband, **Noah Gaulten**, 40, a prominent restaurant owner and food writer, in a “very lovely” Jewish ceremony.

“Self-Reliance,” a comedy thriller, will premiere on Hulu on Jan. 14. Here’s the plot: A sad man (**Andy Samberg**, 45) receives an invitation to win \$1M by a reality TV game on the dark web. For 30 days, he must outwit hunters attempting to kill him. But there’s a loophole: the hunters can only attack him when he’s alone – so he tries to convince friends, family and strangers that they must stay with him 24/7.

The film was written and directed by **Jake Johnson**, 45. You’ve probably seen him in one of his many acting roles. His father was Jewish, but he was raised by his non-Jewish mother. Johnson is his mother’s maiden name. 🌍

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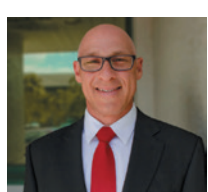
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# The 2023 dish of the year that took Israel by storm

By Chef Dalia

At the same time that many of us are at home struggling with the sadness and unpredictability that goes with war, some turn to the kitchen to alleviate their anxiety, and what could be more calming than the smell of fresh challah filling the house?

Since the flare-up of Operation Swords of Iron, more and more people are finding comfort in baking, but the trend that has taken Israel by storm goes a step further: bakers are posting photos and videos of challahs in various shapes, with the Star of David challah rising as an important symbol reflective of these times.

I made this Star of David challah for the first time on Hanukkah 2016 when invited to a Hanukkah dinner. I thought of making something that was appropriate and finally decided on Challah bread, shaped as a 6-pointed Star of David. And I liked it so much that I made it a tradition. When the Iron Swords War broke out, I felt that I wanted to show my pride in my Jewish-Israeli heritage, and I express myself through food.

It all started with a photo. It was Friday, Oct. 13, and while I was doom-scrolling online, I stumbled across a photo of a Shabbat dinner table. It was set so beautifully. The Star of David challah was golden. The wine was corked. The tablecloth was crisp white. The calla lilies stood perfectly in their vases. The children's plates and sippy cups looked just like ours. Everything on this perfectly crafted table sat untouched. And that's when I realized that no one would be eating the Star of David challah at this table. It was set to honor the 200+ hostages taken by Hamas on Oct. 7. My eyes filled with tears, understanding that these hostages don't get to eat challah bread with their families, but we do.

After seeing the photo of the empty table set for the hostages, I understood how much I needed to bake a Star of



Personal Chef Dalia Hemed can be reached at [daliahemed@msn.com](mailto:daliahemed@msn.com).

David challah right now. I understood what a sense of joy it brings to our family, especially during this time of extreme sadness, anger and grief we're feeling. And now, during one of the most depressing times I've ever had as an Israeli mother, I'm trying my hardest to give some sense of Jewish joy to my children.

I noticed that others felt the same; I was shocked to see how much people were turning to bake a Star of David challah for a sense of joy. I saw celebrities posting challah pics. I saw friends who I knew were Jewish but never did Jewish things, posting their challah. Multiple invitations to throw challah bakes popped up in my inbox. The rituals and traditions of baking a Star of David challah were bringing people back to life, giving us a sense of comfort.

I found myself rushing to bake a Star of David challah for my family and friends that first Friday after Oct. 7 — and every Friday since. It seemed like everywhere I looked, I saw a beautiful

Star of David Challah, It warmed my heart and made me smile more than I had since learning about the tragedies and ongoing conflict.

This special recipe for a Star of David-shaped challah has a rich history behind it. Grandmother-childhood-memory-evoking deliciousness! At my grandmother's house, challah was on the table every Friday night for Shabbat dinner. For years, her mother-in-law, my great-grandmother, made the bread. When she turned 90, she flat out refused to ever make it again.

We had store-bought challah for a few months until I convinced my great-grandmother to show me how to create her exceptional challah. It's still the only challah I make, it's so totally dependable.

The beauty of this challah is that it is extremely simple to make — even if you have never braided challah before, it is nearly foolproof. It can be challenging but this challah rewards patience. It's the best challah recipe you'll ever taste! 🌟



## Star of David Challah

### Ingredients

- 1 cup warm water
- 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- ¼ cup sugar (plus 1 tablespoon for egg wash)
- 4 tablespoon oil
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (for the egg wash)
- 1½ teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs (1 for the bread, 1 for the egg wash)
- 3½ cups flour (plus a little extra for kneading)
- Topping: sesame seeds

### Also needed:

- Extra-large baking pan
- Aluminum foil

### Directions

1. Pour the water into a mixing bowl and sprinkle the yeast over the water. Let the yeast set for 10 minutes until its nice and bubbly.

2. Add the sugar, oil, salt, 1 egg and 3 cups of the flour and mix well. Add the last 1/2 cup of flour as needed. Mix the dough until all ingredients are just holding together.

3. Set the dough in a warm spot and allow it to rise for about 2 hours.

4. Oil the baking pan lightly.

5. Take the raised dough and cut it into 2 equal parts. Roll out each piece of dough into equally shaped, long ropes. Shape one rope into a triangle, directly onto your pan. Use the 2nd



rope to make an inverted triangle over the first to a shape of Star of David. I prefer to just set them on top of each other, but you could certainly weave these together if you wish.

6. Take aluminum foil and make into 6 small balls. Tuck one ball in each of the points of the star. These balls keep the bread from closing up the points when rising and baking.

7. Set the challah in a warm place and let it rise a second time for an hour.

8. Break the 2nd egg into a small bowl and add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and 1 tablespoon of sugar to it and beat it well. Brush the egg wash all over the top of the challah. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.

9. Preheat the oven to 375°. Bake the challah for 25 minutes. Allow it to cool before attempting to remove the foil. I find it easiest to remove the foil by crushing it a bit then pulling it out from the back of the loaf.



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# Lights ... Camera ... Wine!

By Jerry Greenfield, the Wine Whisperer

One of our favorite genres of feature films is the movie about wine. Documentaries can be very informative and entertaining, like “Somm — Into the Bottle,” which I show to my university wine class. It consists of 10 short segments that deal (often irreverently) with all aspects of winemaking, appreciation and consumption.

But what we really love are the films that depict the world of wine and the people in it, sometimes with tongue in cheek and sometimes with reverence, even awe. We know that the world of wine is a very big place, so there’s plenty of room for filmmakers to interpret and depict it in all kinds of ways.

And, since we all could use some fascinating entertainment, I hope you’ll log in to your Netflix or Amazon Prime accounts and share a few favorites. Don’t forget to enhance your movie watching with a nice glass of something special.

**A Good Year (2006)** – Russell Crowe stars in this delightful film about the transformational power of the wine life. He plays a British bond trader who’s something of a jerk. One day, he



■ Jerry Greenfield

gets a call that he’s inherited a winery in the fabulous French wine region of Provence. He goes there with every intention of dumping the place, but the charm of the wine life (and the woman he meets) turn him into a fairly decent chap.

**Bottle Shock (2008)** – In this true story, the late Alan Rickman plays the owner of a wine store in Paris who staged the most important event in the history of American wine. The Paris tasting of 1976 came to be known as the Judgment of Paris and elevated the reputation of American wine to world-class status. Rickman decides to bring some California wines back to Paris and have the greatest critics in the country taste them blind against the finest Bordeaux and Burgundies. Of course, everyone thought he was nuts, but to their total astonishment — and the complete embarrassment of the French — two American wines win the competition. A good, if somewhat romanticized, interpretation of an historic event.

**Sideways (2004)** – Most of my wine friends think this is the best wine movie

ever made. Paul Giamatti plays Miles, a depressed eight-grade English teacher from San Diego, and a complete wine snob. He takes his old college roommate (Thomas Hayden Church) up to wine country for a week of golf and tastings in advance of Church’s wedding. Hilarity, romance and confusion ensue in this surprise sleeper hit, and there are several charming insights into the attraction and delight of good wine.

When you have your watch party, consider opening some of our new favorites.

**Fort Ross Pinot Noir “FRV” Sonoma Coast 2020 (\$52)** – On the nose, you’ll enjoy alluring scents of raspberry and cherry, along with some distinctive meaty notes and a touch of violets. The flavors are robust, including characteristic raspberry, red cherry and gentle hints of warm earth and spice. WW 92

**B.R. Cohn Cabernet Sauvignon Sonoma County 2019 (\$35)** – Bruce Cohn, the founder, is the former manager of the Doobie Brothers, and they do a concert at the winery every year. At least they used to. This rich cabernet has touches of merlot, petit verdot and malbec. Hugely complex, offering spice notes on a frame of rich black fruit. Hints of cinnamon, vanilla and coffee

and a finish that just won’t quit. WW 94

**Garofoli “Macrina” Verdicchio Marche 2020 (\$15)** – Great value in a light, easy-to-drink white. Mostly flavors of lemon and maybe even a hint of smoke. The wine is also vegan. WW 86

**Selvapiana Chianti Rufina 2021 (\$19)** – The profile of this wine is right down the middle — an archetype of Chianti offering sensations of rich blackberry and herbs in a medium-bodied frame. WW 92

**Gilgal Cabernet-Merlot Golan Heights 2019 (\$16)** – This 50-50 blend is nicely aromatic, delivering mixed red and black fruit flavors with a slight hint of orange and spice. The 12 months of aging help to round it out and make it nicely approachable. The Israelis have come a long way. WW 89

## Ask the Wine Whisperer

What was the most expensive bottle of wine ever sold? — Jena W., Fort Myers

In 2018, a bottle of 1945 Domain de la Romanee Conti Burgundy was sold at auction for \$558,000.

*Jerry Greenfield is the Wine Whisperer, a wine author, educator and consultant. Read his blog and order his wine books at [www.winewhisperer.com](http://www.winewhisperer.com).*

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# Coming to terms with a new reality – “I’ll never be a bubby!”

*Aging Jewishly — What our traditions teach us about growing old*

By Rabbi Barbara Aiello

“Listen to this!” Julie looked up from her tablet screen and motioned for her husband, Sandy, to join her at the kitchen table. “Look here. At least we’re not alone. We won’t be the only ones without grandkids. It says right here that lots of young couples don’t want to have children.”

Sandy frowned and shook his head. “It’s so strange,” he said. “We have two grown children, both married and successful. I never thought in a million years that they’d decide not to have children. I’ll never be a zayde,” Sandy said as tears welled up in his eyes. Julie rubbed his shoulders. “I know. No zayde for you and no bubby for me.”

Julie and Sandy are struggling to come to terms with a phenomenon that has affected grandparenting nationwide and the numbers don’t lie.

In her article “Solace for ‘Never To Be’ Grannies,” (*Family*, Nov. 7, 2023), journalist Renee Langmuir unearthed what many would term troubling statistics. Langmuir found that in the U.S., 60.4% of women ages 25-29 and 38.5% of women ages 30-34 are childless — facts that personally hit home for Ms. Langmuir, a wannabe granny herself. She writes, “Grandparents have had an outsized role in my life. No, I was not blessed with four doting

“Grans.” I only had three: one disinterested grandparent ... and two who primarily spoke Yiddish and whose hearts were scarred by the Holocaust.”

Renee Langmuir recalls that the grandparents she valued most were the four who stepped in to help raise her daughter after Langmuir’s husband’s untimely death. As she recalls her own experiences with loving grandparents, Ms. Langmuir says “I never imagined that I would not be a grandmother.”

But like so many others, Ms. Langmuir learned to accept that she is now part of a club she never wanted to join. “A relative calls us the “infertile grandmothers,” — women who long for grandchildren but are learning to come to terms with the harsh reality that becoming a bubby or zayde was not to be.

Julie and Sandy can relate. “After our kids got married, in those early years we’d hint around about how ‘baby makes three!’” Finally, our daughter sat us down and asked that we cut out the innuendo. She explained that she and her husband had made their careers their priority and that children just weren’t in the picture.”



■ Rabbi  
Barbara Aiello

Many adult children feel the same way. The Jewish website Simpleto-Remember.com reminds us that “Statistically we know that Jews marry later than other Americans and for Jewish women, late marriage means lower rates of fertility compared with other Caucasian women.” And a lower fertility rate translates into fewer births, resulting in many potential grandparents never realizing their dreams.

What follows is a pervasive sense of loss when parents of adult children realize that loving and caring for one’s own grandchildren is a joy that many potential bubbys and zaydes will never experience.

For Jewish families, the sense of loss is compounded by tradition. Jews are profoundly connected to “l’dor v’dor” — “from generation to generation,” which emphasizes “Grandparents are much more than older relatives. Grandparents are links in the endless chain of generations, both stretching back in history and reaching forward to future generations. They are conduits of wisdom, love and support. Experts confirm what history already proves: loving grandparents are among the major positive shapers of Jewish identity.” (Doorways.org)

“Where do we go from here?” asks Sandy, Julie and so many other disappointed grandparents-in-waiting. Psychologists warn against pressuring adult children to explain their childless choice. Confrontations, judgmental comments, thinly veiled criticisms and even inappropriate jokes risk shattering family relationships and can lead to estrangement. Instead, experts advise a more positive approach.

If grandchildren are not in the picture, consider how you can create your own legacy by making a lasting contribution to society. If carrying on the family name is important, consider choosing one particular charity and regularly contribute in your own name.

If you long for a baby to cuddle, volunteer in a neonatal unit or become a foster grandparent. Use your nurturing skills to visit isolated seniors or, with your friends who are grandparents, organize an outing so that you can share in the joy of engaging with lively and curious little ones. Finally, if passing on Jewish traditions is important to you, volunteer in a Jewish day school, at Sunday school events or spend time with the children in a synagogue’s after school program.

For so many would-be grandparents not to have the joy of grandchildren has brought profound sadness, a sense of loss and confusion as to how to cope. For them, Ms. Langmuir advises acceptance when she emphasizes, “Ultimately, the decision about whether I will become a grandmother is 100% out of my control. It is up to my children.”

How to cope? Rabbi Nachman of Breslau said it best when he declared, “It is a great mitzvah to be happy” and “It is forbidden to be sad.” Rabbi Nachman’s teaching acknowledges that struggle and sadness are inevitable but even negative emotions can motivate us to accept life on life’s terms and carry on.

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



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## A comedy education

I grew up watching “Saturday Night Live.” I’m old enough (barely) to remember the first cast. My dad liked the show, and I thought my dad was funny; therefore, I had to learn about this funny show. I should interject some logistical information here. I grew up in the Central Time Zone, which meant “Saturday Night Live” came on at 10:30 p.m. And I was a young child in the 1970s, which meant kids were not allowed to stay up past 10 p.m. without someone calling Child Protective Services.

I read recently that dopamine — the chemical that our brains are craving when we scroll social media, try to solve Wordle or listen to a joke — is strongly associated with learning. That means shows like “Saturday Night Live” literally taught me what was funny.

Fair warning, classic sketches from that show are canon to me. I’m as



■ Brian Simon

obnoxious as that guy who memorized all the lines in Caddyshack, so that if you quote one, he will either correct you or continue with more lines. We’re like *gabbais* with this stuff, making sure the Holy Words are pronounced correctly.

Even seemingly insignificant details somehow become important. Example: there’s a dream sequence in the comedy “Fletch” where Chevy Chase’s character imagines playing pro basketball for the Lakers. The announcer says Fletch “is actually 6-5, with the Afro 6-9...” I actually looked it up on YouTube to confirm but I know those numbers (6-5 and 6-9) specifically, just like 5,280 feet in a mile.

I’ve fallen out somewhat from SNL. I’m well out of the target demographic, and we live in the Eastern Time Zone (it’s so late!) I’ll watch for special occasions or maybe catch a couple

of skits on YouTube. But recently, I became obsessed with “Washington’s Dream,” featuring host Nate Bargatze as George Washington, describing his plans for our new nation to use a system of weights and measures that will confound our European colleagues. It is perfect comedy. Brilliantly written. Brilliantly played.

SNL was not the first television show to do sketch comedy, although it is by far the longest-running. Rolling Stone Magazine rated SNL No. 2 on its Top 40 list of sketch-comedy shows, behind Monty Python’s Flying Circus. I’m partial to Key and Peele, though (No. 5 on the Rolling Stone list). The comedy team of Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele produced 53 episodes in less than four years. “Substitute Teacher,” “East/West College Bowl” and “Obama Meet & Greet” are among their classics.

When I was in high school, one of my friends was in a talent competition

and chose to do a bit from Bill Cosby’s “Himself” (again, this was in the 1980s when it was still OK to like Bill Cosby). My friend was great, and the audience loved him, but I remember being surprised that performing someone else’s comedy bit was considered kosher for a talent show. I thought comedy had to be original. At the same time, I thought nothing of it when another talent show contestant sang a popular song. I didn’t realize you could “cover” a comedian’s routine.

In his recent autobiography, rockstar Geddy Lee says if an artist borrows from another artist, he’s copying. If he borrows from 100 other artists, he’s creating original art. If a young person grows up watching comedy and he borrows from 100 comedians, he doesn’t necessarily become an original artist, but he does develop a sense of humor. 🌐

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of Southwest Florida



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### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1 -

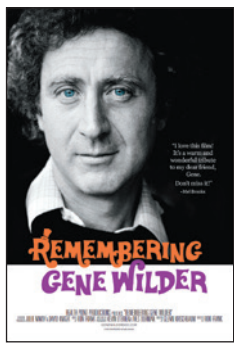


#### DEAD SEA GUARDIAN

Thursday February 1st at 7:15pm

The Dead Sea - the lowest place on earth and one of the wonders of the world - is dying. Three historic enemies join forces on a heroic journey to stop this catastrophe and save the Dead Sea from disappearing.

75 MINUTES • ENGLISH AND HEBREW • ISRAEL • DOCUMENTARY



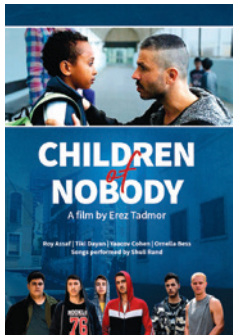
#### REMEMBERING GENE WILDER

Sunday February 4th at 3:00pm

"In this captivating biographical drama, follow the remarkable life of the legendary actor and comedian, Gene Wilder. From his early struggles to his iconic collaborations with Mel Brooks and his unforgettable portrayal of Willy Wonka, the film takes viewers on a heartfelt journey through the man behind the laughter, revealing the complexities and brilliance of a true Hollywood icon."

92 MINUTES • ENGLISH • UNITED STATES • DOCUMENTARY

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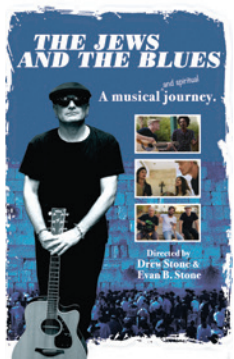


#### CHILDREN OF NOBODY

Tuesday February 6th at 7:15pm

In a heartfelt drama based on a true story, troubled boys living on the outskirts of Israeli society unite to protect a shelter for at-risk youth, led by the compassionate surrogate mother Margalit. When tragedy hits, Jackie, her right-hand man, must defend the home from corrupt developers and navigate social worker scrutiny. With Jackie's guidance, the young men learn to take responsibility for their lives and preserve their refuge, shedding light on the often overlooked and neglected voices at society's periphery.

108 MINUTES • HEBREW WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES • ISRAEL • DRAMA



#### THE JEWS AND THE BLUES

Thursday February 8th at 7:15pm

This new documentary by filmmaker, musician, and talk show host Drew Stone takes us on a musical adventure to understand how the blues can be found in a number of Israeli cultures, including Ethiopian, Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, and others. Learn how the blues ties Jews together all over the world.

67 MINUTES • ENGLISH • UNITED STATES • DOCUMENTARY



#### LOST TRANSPORT

Tuesday February 13th at 7:15pm

In the spring of 1945 a train deporting hundreds of Jewish prisoners gets stranded near a small German village occupied by the Red Army. Condemned to each other and in a context of deep mistrust, desperation and revenge, an unexpected friendship emerges between Russian sniper Vera, village girl Winnie and Jewish-Dutch woman Simone.

100 MINUTES • DUTCH, GERMAN, AND RUSSIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES  
NETHERLANDS, GERMANY, AND LUXEMBOURG • DRAMA, HISTORY, WAR



#### ISRAEL SWINGS FOR GOLD

Thursday February 15th at 7:15pm

In 2021, Israel's baseball team competed in the Olympics for the first time. With no media allowed in Tokyo's Olympic Village, the players record their own experiences. Mostly newly minted Israelis, they log unexpected battles against anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Victory for Israel comes on the playing field, even if not on the podium.

78 MINUTES • ENGLISH AND HEBREW • UNITED STATES • SPORT DOCUMENTARY

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#### MATCHMAKING

Tuesday February 20th at 7:15pm

An entertaining and good-hearted romantic comedy that gives a light Orthodox twist to "Romeo and Juliet".

96 MINUTES • HEBREW • ISRAEL • COMEDY

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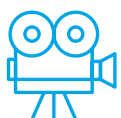
#### FAREWELL, MISTER HAFFMANN

Thursday February 22nd at 7:15pm

"Mr. Haffmann" is a gripping World War II drama set in Nazi-occupied France, centered on a Jewish tailor who risks everything to forge identities and documents, helping others escape the horrors of the Holocaust. The film explores moral choices, sacrifice, and the enduring spirit of hope in the face of unimaginable adversity.

115 MINUTES • FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES • FRANCE, BELGIUM • DRAMA

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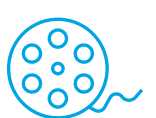
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## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29



### IMORDECAI

Sunday February 25th at 3:00pm

A Holocaust survivor, born and raised in a different time, must face the realities of modern world. When confronted with an unfamiliar object, an iPhone, will Mordecai be able to fit into a world that has changed so much around him?

102 MINUTES • ENGLISH • UNITED STATES • COMEDY AND DRAMA



### THE SHADOW OF THE DAY

Tuesday February 27th at 7:15pm

Italy, after the promulgation of the racial laws (1938). Luciano, a Fascist-abiding restaurateur, nonetheless believes he can still live by his own rules inside his business. However, everything changes when Anna, a girl with a dangerous secret, starts to work at his restaurant.

125 MINUTES • ITALIAN AND FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES ITALY • ROMANCE, DRAMA



### THE CATSKILLS

Thursday February 29th at 7:15pm

With a trove of lost-and-found archival footage and a cast of characters endowed with the gift of gab, "The Catskills" journeys into the storied mountain getaway north of New York City that served as refuge for Jewish immigrants fleeing poverty as well as a lavish playground for affluent Jewish families. As bungalow colony proprietors, guests, waiters, comedians, hoteliers, and beauticians share colorful tales of Catskill farms, boarding houses, and luxury resorts, they paint a picture of vibrant American Jewish life and culture in the 20th century.

85 MINUTES • ENGLISH • UNITED STATES • DOCUMENTARY

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Festival Pass: \$130, On Sale 11/1

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Regal Belltower, Fort Myers

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FILMS	DATES
Dead Sea Guardians	Thursday, Feb. 1st • 7:15PM
Remembering Gene Wilder	Sunday, (Matinee) Feb. 4th • 3:00PM
Children of Nobody	Tuesday, Feb. 6th • 7:15PM
The Jews and the Blues	Thursday, Feb. 8th • 7:15PM
Lost Transport	Tuesday, Feb. 13th • 7:15PM
Israel Swings for Gold	Thursday, Feb. 15th • 7:15PM
Matchmaking	Tuesday, Feb. 20th • 7:15PM
Farewell Mister Haffmann	Thursday, Feb. 22nd • 7:15PM
Imordecai	Sunday, (Matinee) Feb. 25th • 3:00PM
The Shadow of the Day	Tuesday, Feb. 27th • 7:15PM
The Catskills	Thursday Feb. 29th • 7:15PM

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## Tu B'Shevat new year for trees

By Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz

Jan. 25 is the 15th of Shevat, the new year for trees. Just as Rosh Hashana, the First of Tishrei, is the Day of Judgment for all mankind, so too is Tu B'Shevat the Day of Judgment for everything that grows.

From the verse "For man is like a tree of the field," we learn that there are many similarities between a person and a tree. One way in which a person should try to emulate the tree is the manner in which it grows.

A tree is categorized as tzomei'ach (literally "growing") because its growth is constant. It starts off as a tiny seed, develops into a small sapling, and eventually turns into a mighty tree that bears fruit.

A human being must also strive for perpetual growth. It isn't enough that today we have learned Torah and performed mitzvot; tomorrow we must strive even higher, learning more Torah and observing mitzvot in an even more perfect manner. A person must never content himself with what he has already achieved. Whenever a Jew strives to elevate himself, he can rest assured that G-d will assist him.



■ Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz

It is no coincidence that Tu B'Shevat occurs in the winter, when most of the trees outside have been stripped of their foliage. Bereft of their summer beauty and seemingly frozen, they must contend with harsh winds and winter storms which threaten to uproot them. To the naked eye, it seems as if they will never come to life.

Yet it is precisely now, in the dead of winter, that we celebrate Tu B'Shevat. For we have complete faith that the trees will be rejuvenated by summer, leafy and green and covered with fruit.

**A human being must also strive for perpetual growth.**

So, too, is it with the Jewish people. Even though the darkness of exile is all around us, we have complete faith that the light of the Final Redemption is on its way, just around the corner...

*Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz serves at Chabd Lubavitch of Southwest Florida.*

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# Am Yisrael Chai!

By Rabbi Lawrence Dermer

Around 1100 CE, the great Hebrew poet Judah Halevi said, “Libi b’ Mizrah va-ani b’Sof Ma’arav, My heart is in the east, but I am in the furthest most point of the west.” Many years later in 1887, Naphtali Imber said, “the hope of 2000 years is not lost: To be a free people in our land, the Land of Zion, Jerusalem.” These words would eventually become Israel’s national anthem, Hatikvah.

These powerful statements, among many others, link the place of the land of Israel within the collective Jewish consciousness. All with a common message — you can’t separate the Jewish people from their land.

These days, we hear a loud chorus of voices worldwide exclaiming that the Jewish people don’t have a legitimate claim to Jerusalem or Israel at all, that Zionism is a colonialist movement, a racist apartheid state and that Jews are not indigenous to the region.



■ Rabbi Lawrence Dermer

Voices that claim the Holocaust was a Jewish lie or at least an exaggeration designed to illicit sympathy from the world to convince them to give the land of Israel to European Jews after WW2 and that Jews should just return to Europe where they belong.

For some historical context, we may be reminded that our sacred Torah mentions Jerusalem 660 times. In Parsha, Lech Lecha Hashem said to Avram, “Raise your eyes and look out from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west, for I give all the land that you see to you and your offspring forever ... Up, walk about the land, through its length and its breadth, for I give it to you.”

From the very beginning of our history, there has never been a time when the land of Israel had no Jewish community. During the Babylonian exile, there was still a Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael. After the exile by the Romans, there was still a Jewish

community in Israel. In the Middle Ages, there were Jewish communities in the land of Israel. And for the majority of Jews who were not able to live in the land during our 2000-year exile, Israel was deeply rooted in their soul as they faced Jerusalem in prayer with numerous references to restoration and return to Israel.


**Our people’s connection to our Jewish homeland is ancient, deep and profound.**

Just a few days ago, the House of Representatives passed a resolution ruling that anti-Zionism is antisemitism and we are finally holding campus leaders accountable as they are forced to answer for their complete mishandling of antisemitic violent protests. This is a step forward in acknowledging what we all know to be true.

Our people’s connection to our Jewish homeland is ancient, deep and profound. It is a connection that did not begin in 1948 with a Declaration of Independence, not in 1945 after the extermination of six million of our people, not with Herzl near the turn of the century, not with the Kabbalists in the Middle Ages and not with the Maccabees or Solomon or David. Our connection goes way back to G-d’s promise to us in the Torah that says in no uncertain terms:

“I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be G-d to you and to your offspring to come, and to assign the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan as an everlasting holding.”

Eretz Yisrael and Am Yisrael — You can’t have one without the other. Am Yisrael Chai!

Rabbi Lawrence Dermer serves Shalom Life Center in Fort Myers. 



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# Relationships come first

By Rabbi Marc Sack

**D**ay 62 of the War in Gaza

On Dec. 5, the *New York Times* ran the story of a Jewish family in which there was strong disagreement about Israel and its prosecution of this war in Gaza. The baby boomer parents and one of their children had made aliyah and were strong supporters of Israel. The adult daughter, who received a graduate degree from a university long known for its progressive bias, questioned the need for a Jewish state altogether. "I don't think the state of Israel should ever have been established," she said. The *Times* column reported that the adult daughter visited her family in Israel, a visit that ended with a hug at the airport but a lot of heated discussion along the way.



■ Rabbi Marc Sack

The article suggested that strong disagreement about Israel was becoming increasingly common in American Jewish families; that baby boomers who remembered the Six Day and Yom Kippur wars had a much stronger connection to Israel than their children and grandchildren, who only knew an Israel that appeared to be militarily and economically strong.

The story struck close to home. In the days before Thanksgiving, I learned that this disagreement is in my family — not my immediate family, but close enough. As one of my relatives said, "Our Thanksgiving will be very quiet. It won't be discussed."

In his book, "Love Your Enemies," Arthur Brooks, the former head of the American Enterprise Institute, reported that because of the 2016 presidential election, one in six Americans had

stopped talking to a close relative or friend. I did not want that in my family.

The rabbis of the Talmud taught the principle of *shalom bayit*, "peace of the home." The concept originally applied to the relationship between husbands and wives but was expanded to the entire family. Rabbi Joseph Telushkin wrote, "The principle of *shalom*

*bayit* requires in particular that members restrain their tempers, as in family settings, it is common to hear raised, angry voices." In other words, to maintain peace of the home, one must speak in measured tones. Or sometimes, not broach the subject at all.

I enjoy good discussion about American and Israeli politics and policies. My family and friends agree on much, though we always manage to find things to disagree about passionately. But relationships come first. And sometimes that means we change the subject.

In our time, there's a lot of screaming on a lot of subjects. It's no surprise that there is also a lot of loneliness. For too many, political beliefs have become more important than family and friendships. That priority is misplaced. *Shalom bayit*, peace of the home, is the peace we can all create, even if that means biting one's tongue or changing the subject.

The most important *mitzvot* of the Torah are about love: Love the Lord your God; and Love your neighbor as yourself. We are all more than our politics. To give and receive love, we must put relationships above politics.

Rabbi Marc Sack serves at Temple Judea in Fort Myers. 🕊️

**To give and receive love, we must put relationships above politics.**

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# Inspiration in the midst of challenge

By Rabbi Nicole Luna

It's difficult and worrisome to imagine what the situation in Israel will be by the time this *L'Chayim* edition arrives in your mailbox. Will more hostages have been released or still remain in captivity? Will the war be ongoing? Will Israeli refugees from the north and south be able to return to their homes? However, two things do feel certain. Antisemitism will still be a scourge across the world and Judaism will still be a source of meaning and hope to many, including those who choose to be Jewish, even now.

This past month, Temple Beth El welcomed Elaine Cornwall as a new adult member of the covenant between God and the people Israel. Unsurprisingly, one of the first questions during the *beit din* was "Why would you want to be a member of the Jewish people right now?" Elaine spoke eloquently and with humor (a good Jewish trait!) about finding meaning in the rest of Shabbat, the support of her Temple community and the presence of God. Every person who witnessed this conversion to Judaism in the midst of a war and immense antisemitism was uplifted.



■ Rabbi Nicole Luna

It was important and inspiring for everyone to hear exactly why someone was choosing to be Jewish, right here and right now. We are so much more than a people perpetually victimized, the object of hatred, struggling to simply survive. We are a people with a tradition full of joy, wisdom and strength that offers people a guide for a meaningful life.

There is a famous story of Judge Louis D. Brandeis, the first Jewish Supreme Court justice, speaking before

the Harvard Law School honor society. He began his talk by saying, "I'm sorry I was born a Jew." The room erupted with applause but when the cheering died down, he continued "I'm sorry I was born a Jew but only because I wish I had the privilege of choosing Judaism on my own."

Even in the midst of unbelievable challenges, grief and pain, let us find inspiration in those who faithfully choose to live a Jewish life and identify as a Jew. May it lead us to strength in our own Jewish life and Jewish pride.

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

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# It takes courage

By Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer

Two deceased souls meet at the entrance to *Olam Habah*, the World to Come. While waiting to enter, one asks the other, “What is the bravest thing you have ever done?” The first soul says that when he was a young boy he jumped off a cliff and landed without injury in a tree. Unimpressed, the other soul responds, “I walked into the king’s palace, right past his bodyguards, right up to his throne, looked him in the eye and spat in his beard!” The other soul waiting at the Gate of Heaven asks him; “When did that happen?”



■ Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer

He responds, “About 3 or 4 minutes ago!”

**We live in an era when each of us is called upon to confront situations we previously could not imagine.**

Most of us know the Yiddish word for this kind of outrageous behavior — Chutzpah!

Chutzpah is a level of confidence so high that we can do things that others would find impossible.

Self-confidence is a very important part of being Jewish, but as we see in *Sefer Sh'mot*, the Book of Exodus, that the Jewish people begin to read as we enter the secular new year of 2024, our teacher Moses displays repeatedly that chutzpah is not a requirement for success.

When God calls Moses at the Burning Bush to lead the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt, he repeatedly claims that he is not worthy nor does he have the ability to carry out such a difficult task.

Much of the conversation with God at the Burning Bush consists of Moses whining, “but I can’t do that, I am not charismatic, I’m not articulate, no one would listen to me.”

But God convinces Moses otherwise.

Moses walks away believing that he can do this great thing and lead the Israelites to freedom, but to do it, he has to become more than he ever believed possible.

Moses had the quality we must strive to emulate. Courage!

A simple shepherd likely would have screamed and run away in panic had he seen such a sight as a burning bush that was not consumed. But Moses saw in this event, that defied the natural order of things, something new. He realized that, no matter how uncomfortable it made him, this phenomenon was something that must be investigated. Something that must be experienced. Reluctantly he stops what he is doing, turns aside to see the wondrous sight before him, and becomes a person he previously could not imagine.

We live in an era when each of us is called upon to confront situations we previously could not imagine. Antisemitism in our country on a heretofore unknown scale. War, terrorism, civil and political unrest, and more.

The Torah teaches us that we cannot and must not fear the challenges before us.

Like our teacher Moses, each of us must summon the courage and answer the call to action. We must not fear the journey even when we are unsure where we will land.

The burning bush will not be consumed, so nothing is lost. But everything changes.

Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer serves Bat Yam Temple of the Islands. 🇮🇱





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## BBYO Naples/Fort Myers Cayla Schreier, BBYO Southwest Coordinator



## Updates from BBYO Naples and Fort Myers

By Cayla Schreier, BBYO Southwest Coordinator

On Saturday, Nov. 18, our teens held a meaningful Havdalah ceremony focusing on the Israel-Hamas war. The six teens shared their thoughts on the current conflict in Israel with the support of their BBYO friends.

Two of our teens attended the All-Florida Fall Convention, which was held Nov. 17-19 in Fort Lauderdale. This weekend-long Shabbaton hosted members from the North Florida Region, Florida's Gold Coast Region and the Miami-Dade Region. The teens had a nice time reuniting with their NFR friends and meeting new BBYO friends from the Gold Coast and Miami-Dade regions. They also participated in fun and educational programs, such as spiritual meditation through beatboxing, culinary presentation and social media, responding to antisemitism and creating make-up and body scrubs.

We held our first Naples BBYO fundraiser on Tuesday, Nov. 28 at California Pizza Kitchen's Waterside Shops location. We also participated in BBYO's international fundraising campaign, called GivingBBYO Day, on Nov. 28. Thank you to all the donors for their generosity by contributing to our fundraisers.

We are excited to celebrate BBYO's Global Shabbat on Friday, Dec. 8 at Lowdermilk Beach in Naples. Please keep an eye out for more details.

### What is BBYO?

BBYO is a diverse and inclusive Jewish youth group to encourage Jewish teens to become more immersed and interested in meaningful Jewish activities and programs. This organization accepts Jewish teens attending 8th through 12th grades of all backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender, race, denominational affiliation or

socioeconomic status. BBYO currently reaches over 70,000 teens worldwide, with participants in over 60 countries and hundreds of chapters across the United States.

### Supporting our teenage Jewish community

It is crucial to engage teens post-B'nai Mitzvah age in Jewish activities. Having teens get involved in BBYO and be eager to create and confidently continue their own Jewish community within their greater Jewish communities is critical to our future.

The BBYO chapter of Naples has entered its 11th year of partnership with the Jewish Federation of Greater Naples, Temple Shalom, Chabad of Naples and Beth Tikvah. Each organization provides financial support, volunteers and community involvement opportunities for the BBYO teens. We thank each and every one of our BBYO alum, friends and other supporters for making this a safe and positive environment for the teens of BBYO Naples and Fort Myers.

If you know of someone who has a teen who might like to join BBYO Naples or Fort Myers or know of someone who may want to be an advisor to our chapters, please email the Southwest Coordinator, Cayla Schreier, at [cschreier@bbyo.org](mailto:cschreier@bbyo.org). You can also follow us on Instagram at [Mishpacha\\_BBG](https://www.instagram.com/Mishpacha_BBG) and [Negevaza](https://www.instagram.com/Negevaza).

Scholarships to attend BBYO conventions and summer programs are available through both the Jewish Federation of Greater Naples and the Temple Shalom Men's Club. Please contact Cayla for more information on scholarships. If you are a BBYO alum and would like to be included in our Friends and Alumni of BBYO mailing list, please email us at [mjs0821@aol.com](mailto:mjs0821@aol.com). 🌍

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**TEMPLE BETH EL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**

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**Allison Fego, Religious School Coordinator**

December is always tons of fun when it comes to the Jewish holidays. So much joy to celebrate with friends and family despite the constant struggle going on in Israel. As we are always praying and hoping for safety and the return of the hostages, we at Temple Beth El were in full-blown Hanukkah mode. After being off for Thanksgiving break, it was so nice seeing all our students back in the building. During our morning tefilah service, all the kids shared wonderful things that they did with their families over break. Rabbi Luna and the kids practiced their Hanukkah songs that they all sang at our Religious School Shabbat service.

In our 1st-2nd grade class, our kids worked on the Hebrew letter Chet, the prayers that we say during Hanukkah and giving money to help others. One of the topics about helping others was about how we can help people who don't have enough money to get food. Some of the answers were things like making sandwiches for the homeless, bringing cans of food to donate at shelters and collecting money. It's amazing how even little kids that don't truly understand the meaning of what food costs can have such good hearts and ideas of how to help out. During their class time, they all got to go to the gift shop and buy

gifts for themselves or family members for Hanukkah. It was adorable seeing them all have their little shopping bags full of goodies. Since it was close to Hanukkah, they even played Scattergories with the dreidel letters. They would spin the dreidel and then have to produce words that would correlate to the English letter.

The 3rd-5th graders finished up their lesson on Gevurah. They got to watch a small movie about how the Ethiopian Jews had Gevurah (strength) coming to Israel. At the start of class, they also got to do their Hanukkah shopping for their family and friends.

Morah Brianna's class learned the rules of playing dreidel and got to play with their fellow classmates. They are constantly working on learning the prayers when we say the motzi and kiddush. Our students got to shop for the Hanukkah gifts they wanted to buy for their loved ones, also. During class, they get to watch videos and clips of things based on shabbat, upcoming holidays, learning and reciting the Aleph-Bet and tons of other stuff, also. Morah Brianna loves working with the little ones on making creative crafts that they get to bring home and share with their families.

The religious school families and TBE community all gathered together for the second night of Hanukkah with

a shabbat service and group menorah lighting. The families brought their menorahs from home, and it was so cute seeing the kids light their candles with so many different types of menorahs. It was a beautiful sight seeing all the candles lit in front of the Bima. Our students led the congregation in Hanukkah songs, like Maoz Tzur, S'vivon, I have a little dreidel and Oh Chanukah Oh Chanukah.

To end the holiday, we gathered for our Religious School/Community BBQ. So much fun to have our school families, congregation and community together. We had crafts like Hanukkah wreath decorating, making friendship bracelets and painting Hanukkah ornaments. The kids played ladder ball, cornhole and dreidel and we also had our Chanukiah contest where the kids made their own chanukiahs out of whatever they wanted. So much creativity with all these kiddos. It is so nice to have parents and community members gather together to help and support our religious school and it never goes unnoticed.

Temple Beth El Religious School is excited to announce the start of our new Mazel Tots program. It will be starting in January and will have two sessions that will go through May. It is open to TBE members and non-members. Ages babies through preschool with an adult figure. The program will include crafts, stories, games and music that will be led by Jennifer Lisowski on Sundays from 10-11 a.m. in our Dubin Center. If you are interested in participating, please check our website at templebethel.com or contact Allison Fego at religiouschool@templebethel.com or Rabbi Luna at rabbiluna@templebethel.com.

If you are interested in our upcoming events or in joining our religious school, please feel free to contact Allison Fego at religiouschool@templebethel.com or call the office. Our school is growing and if you or someone you know would be interested in joining as an educator, please let us know. 🌍

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# Career development program for aspiring sports media professionals ”

*Maccabi Media Program (MMP) — London, summer 2024*

**M**accabi USA and Maccabi Media are proud to present a career-development program offering a unique international experience for aspiring sports media professionals who are Jewish. Following a comprehensive application process, a team of students will be selected to cover the European Maccabi Youth Games (EMYG) in London from July 28 to Aug. 6, 2024. The application process is now open and will close on **Jan. 14, 2024**.

### Eligibility

- College undergraduates who are Jewish and 18+ years old on July 28, 2024
- College graduates who are Jewish and no older than 25 years old on July 28, 2024

- Applicants must be enrolled in, intend to enroll in or already graduated from a university-level communications-related program, such as sports media, communications, TV/radio/film production, journalism, digital media, etc.

### Duties/experience required

Participants will perform several of the following sports media roles while covering the European Maccabi Youth Games and **must** show previous experience in as many of these areas as possible:

- Shooting and editing video for daily packages
- Sports reporting (interviewing & writing articles)
- Social media content creation

• Play-by-play, color analysis, sideline reporting and live event production/streaming will not be included in this program but are valuable skills participants are encouraged to demonstrate on their submission materials.

• Sports photography, graphic design (Canva, Photoshop) and website management skills are also highly valued.

### Submission materials

All applicants must write a short essay plus submit a resume, demo reel, examples of written/social media work and media/school references. Specific submission requirements will be provided after you apply.

### Training, costs and other considerations

Those selected for MMP will be notified no later than Feb. 1, 2024 and must commit to attend all virtual training and the Games. Monthly Zoom training will begin in February and include assigned written and video projects.

Selected team members (as well as all USA athletes) will have a financial responsibility of \$6,650 plus a \$36 application fee. This fee will cover expenses for registration, international airfare, accommodations, transportation, meals, equipment, medical insurance, Maccabi apparel and workshop events. For candidates selected, all efforts will be made to provide financial assistance for those in need to help offset some of the program costs so that should not be a barrier to apply.



You will be given all equipment necessary for our media coverage, but you must bring your own phone and laptop computer (with editing software). All provided equipment must be returned to Maccabi USA following the Games.

Maccabi Media team members must have a valid passport good through Feb. 7, 2025.

Maccabi USA will provide any documentation if students are able to receive college credit for this program.

Students selected for London will receive special consideration for our 2025 Maccabiah media team in Israel.

For more information about Maccabi Media or to apply to the program, scan the QR codes or contact Neal Slotkin at [nslotkin@maccabiusa.com](mailto:nslotkin@maccabiusa.com).



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**Tuesday, January 9th  
12 pm- 1pm  
Lunch will be served.**

**Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties  
9701 Commerce Center Court  
Fort Myers, FL 33908**



**The Community Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties**

**Ellen Weiss  
Executive Director  
813.769.4785  
[ellen@topjewishfoundation.org](mailto:ellen@topjewishfoundation.org)**

**Elyse Hyman  
Director of Philanthropy  
813.769.4769  
[elyse@topjewishfoundation.org](mailto:elyse@topjewishfoundation.org)**

*Together, we are ensuring a Jewish future.*

## Candle lighting times:

**January 5: 5:31 p.m.**

**January 12: 5:36 p.m.**

**January 19: 5:42 p.m.**

**January 26: 5:47 p.m.**





**TEMPLE BETH EL**  
Fort Myers

(239) 433-0018 • [www.templebethel.com](http://www.templebethel.com)

**H**appy Secular New Year! January highlights begin with a celebration of our 2024 Board of Trustees at our Jan. 5 Installation Shabbat. Thank you to those volunteers who lead us forward. January celebrations continue Jan. 6 when Sasha Hirshberg is called to the Bima for her bat mitzvah. Congratulations to Sasha's proud parents — and to Sasha! On Sunday, the 7th, we celebrate our new members of the Temple with a brunch shared with our Rabbi, members of our board and each other. Then, on Jan. 8, Gerald Ziedenberg is back with not one, but two captivating history series: "Genius, Anxiety, Nobel Prize" runs three sessions on Jan. 8, 15 and 22. "Modern Jewish History" runs seven sessions, beginning January 29. All are on Zoom, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. Thank you, Gerry!

The Annual Sheila Deurden Memorial Mahjong Tournament commences at 8.30 a.m. on Jan. 16. Players get a light breakfast and buffet lunch and can win great prizes. Please register on our website.

Ladies who Lunch will meet Jan. 18 at 12:30 p.m. Join in the fun and food. Sisterhood or Temple membership is not required. However, a reservation is

needed. Thank you to our King David Society members who have made a legacy donation commitment to Temple Beth El. They will be honored with a dinner Thursday evening, Jan. 18. To find out more, and how you can join, please call the office or email: [tbeboard@templebethel.com](mailto:tbeboard@templebethel.com).

Our second of three music history lectures is Sunday, Jan. 21 at noon. This event, "Music, the Holocaust, and the Will to Survive" is sponsored by our Sisterhood and Men's Club. Dr. Tom Cimarusti returns to describe how music helped prisoners cope with and escape reality, and how the Nazis used music as propaganda. Open to all, a light lunch will precede the talk. The cost is \$20. Please register on our website. Questions? Contact Doug K: 615-482-0763.

An annual highlight, Mitzvah Day is Sunday morning, Jan. 28, with many community-focused projects for all ages and abilities. Beneficiaries include the Children's Network of SWFL, Community Cooperative Food Bank, nursing homes, Gladiolus Food Pantry, the IDF, Homeless Coalition of SWFL, Jewish Federation, first responders that protect TBE, and more. Last year was

**SHALOM LIFE CENTER**  
Fort Myers


(239) 218-3433 • [www.shalomlifecenter.org](http://www.shalomlifecenter.org)

**S**halom Life Center is Southwest Florida's premier warm and welcoming Chavurah with a passionate commitment to community and spiritual growth where everyone is always welcome to be a part of a spiritual community, a warm and welcoming Shalom Life Center family!

Everyone is welcome to join us for pop-up Shabbats and other special events. Additionally, SLC offers Individualized Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation,

Kabbalah study, Book club, and more, which are all held in our SLC Zoom Room. 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 Chavurah.

For more information, visit [www.shalomlifecenter.org](http://www.shalomlifecenter.org). 

a huge success and we hope to surpass ourselves on Mitzvah Day 2024. Our Mitzvah Committee is so much more. Check it out on our website.

Have a nice voice? Love to sing? Our Choir has openings. Please email your interest and contact information to [info@templebethel.com](mailto:info@templebethel.com).

Please don't forget our recurring Temple Beth El programs:

- Drop off nonperishable items in the lobby shopping cart whenever the temple is open.

- Come to Torah Study led by Rabbi Luna! No prior study experience is required. Saturday mornings at 9 a.m. on Zoom.

- Our ISRAEL COMMITTEE works to ensure that Israel-related issues remain a central and vital part of synagogue life, and a vital component of our identity as American Jews. Meeting: first Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. on Zoom.

- Book club selections: Jan. 3 – "Mother India: by Tova Reich. February 7 – "Flowers in the Blood" by Gay Courter.

- Tot Shabbat, a kid-friendly service, is Jan. 5 and February 2 at 6 p.m. Bring your kids, bring your grandkids... Come for the fellowship, the


fun, and the pizza. Please RSVP to 239-433-0018.

- History & Heritage of Our People is the third Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. on Zoom.

- Shabbat services: Fridays at 7:30 p.m. live in the sanctuary, on Zoom and on Facebook.

- New year, new opportunity for recovery. Our 12-Step Recovery Group meets at 10 a.m. every Saturday on Zoom. We are a fellowship of people seeking a path to recovery via Judaic spiritual principles and the Twelve Steps, using the book Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery, by Olitzky and Copans, second edition.

There's always something happening here at TBE, and our members make it happen: Current Events, Coffee & Chat, Theology & Life, Francophone & Hispanophone, Environmental Group, Solo Travelers, Caring and Visitations... Follow us on Facebook and/or Instagram: @TempleBethElFortMyers. You can always contact the office at 239-433-0018. Let's pray for peace in the world in this brand new 2024.

Temple Beth El ... *where everyone matters.* 

*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 Debbie Sanford at (239) 481-4449 ext. 6 or [debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org](mailto:debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org)

**High School Students: Earn CAS Credits!**

The Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties is interested in hearing from teenagers in high school who might like to earn CAS credits through various work in the Jewish community.

If you are interested, please send the following information to [debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org](mailto:debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org):

- Name
- Address
- Phone #
- Age/Grade/School
- Preferred volunteer hours (e.g. 2 - 5PM. Sundays)



**Stay in touch throughout the month. Sign up for the Federation's e-blasts.**



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

**Send an email to [debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org](mailto:debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org)**



## COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE Fort Myers

(239) 247-4556 • [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com)

Once again, we are deeply indebted to Dr. David Schwartz, who designed and erected our "Metro Menorah 2.0," which even made it onto WINK TV news! A grant from the "Shine A Light on Antisemitism" and our Federation helped underwrite its cost.

Thanks once more to our soloist Traci Pavel, accompanied by Tim Torres on guitar and Carlos Garcia

on keyboard, for leading the Hanukah sing-along before our annual Community Free First Night Dinner prepared by our friends at Cohen & Cohen Catering.

The traditional Sephardic honey orange glazed buñuelos and sufganiyot filled dulce-de-leche, lemon custard, apricot and raspberry preserves were prepared by the Rabbi and Mrs. Diamond. Seating was limited to 100 reservations, but we put out an extra table, anyway, for the "walk-ins."

Our heartfelt condolences are extended to Evelyn Clark and her children at the passing her beloved husband of 62 years, Herbert Clark, a most remarkable man.

Thanks to the continued generosity of Joan Cristea, C.F.S. was able to make a sizable donation to the Magen David Adom, which is now operating all of its 1400 1st response ambulances, medicycles and medivac helicopters as well as Israel's blood bank. The Magen David Adom is Israel's equivalent to the American Red Cross. Donations can be made via the American Friends of the Magen David Adom at [afmda.org](http://afmda.org).

Our sister congregation, Ahavat Yisrael in Itonko, Uganda, is creating beautiful Am Yisrael Hai hand-knitted kipotv (see the accompanying photo) to help raise the funds to put a roof on their rustic synagogue. If you'd like to order



Dr. David Schwartz and his new C.F.S. "Metro Menorah"



The first night Hanukah dinner

one or more, email [synfree@comcast.net](mailto:synfree@comcast.net). A donation of \$23 is suggested.

Our Community Free Sabbath eve meals begin at 6:30 p.m. every Friday. They are open to all at no cost. You are welcome to bring a nondairy dish to share, dessert or a bottle of wine. Worship follows at 7:30 p.m. followed by a social hour.

Sabbath morning Torah Study with the Rabbi is from 9:30-11 a.m. each week on Zoom only. The C.F.S. Zoom Room is easily accessed through the synagogue's website, [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com).

Now in its 19th year, C.F.S. remains free and open to all under the leadership of Rabbi Diamond. Our purpose is prayer, study, mutual support and benevolence in a harmonious setting. We meet on the Unity Campus, 11120 Ranchette Road about a mile south of Colonial and Metro Avenues. For more information visit [fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://fortmyerssynagogue.com).



## CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA Fort Myers

(239) 433-7708 • [www.Chabadswf.org](http://www.Chabadswf.org)

Please feel free to join Chabad Lubavitch of Southwest Florida for these January 2024 programs:

### Prayer services

- Friday Night 5:30 p.m.
- Saturday Morning 10 a.m.
- Saturday Evening 5:30 p.m.

### Educational classes

- Saturday Morning Kabbalah Class 9 a.m.
- Saturday Kiddush & Farbrengen 12:15 p.m.
- Online Classes

For more information, go to <https://www.youtube.com/@Rabbiminkowicz>.

## TEMPLE BETH SHALOM Cape Coral

(239) 772-4555 • [www.templebethshalomcc.org](http://www.templebethshalomcc.org)

Happy New Year from everyone at Temple Beth Shalom! We wish the entire Jewish community a happy, healthy and peaceful new year.

2023 was a year of great highs and lows. We celebrated our 50th anniversary with a beautiful gala, had a wonderfully successful year with our new cantor, welcomed new members, had some great, new and fun activities and made great strides in repairing and remodeling our building after Hurricane Ian. On the other hand, we suffered the loss of several long-time members. Most of all, we were shocked by the Oct. 7 massacre by Hamas.

Despite the terrible events in Israel, Temple Beth Shalom doesn't stand still. One of our members, George Laufer, volunteered to do a fundraising dinner for Israel. With only a week's notice, he cooked the entire meal and set it up beautifully and opened his house to the congregation and proceeded to raise over \$3,000 for Israel.

It is always heartwarming to see how the community comes together after such tragic events. We are very grateful to the Lee County Sheriff's Department for reaching out to us and offering their services to ensure our security. They have gone above and beyond anything we could have

expected. We are also thankful for the community for their calls expressing support, donations for Israel and for sharing our special service with us.

In December, we were thrilled to host a PJ Library event for the Jewish Federation. It was a wonderful event with a moon bounce, donut decoration, Lego dreidels and, of course, books. It filled our hearts with joy to see so many children and adults having a great time in our parking lot. We hope it will be the first of many such events.

December was so busy, we ran out of days for all of our events. The Chanukah party was exceptional. Our Cantor, together with several members, made the best latkes you will ever eat in your life. The gift exchange on Dec. 20 was a lot of fun and our Saturday morning Torah service, including a new conversion, was inspirational and moving. We are also in the process of forming a new partnership with Coral Ridge Funeral Home to have our own Jewish Section of the cemetery.

To see everything going on at TBS, please visit our website at [www.templebethshalomcc.org](http://www.templebethshalomcc.org) and sign up for our newsletter. We would love to have you come join us for a Shabbat service or any one of our special events. You will be welcomed with open arms.

Cynthia and her team were helpful, professional and caring. She was a great resource for learning about different options, levels of care, and communities. Now that my mother has moved, she has remained high touch and showed concern about how my family settles into its new situation. I highly recommend Senior Care Authority.

--F.C., FORMER CLIENT

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**TEMPLE JUDEA  
Fort Myers**

**(239) 433-0201 • www.tjswfl.org**

January is a joyous and busy month at Temple Judea.

Rabbi Marc Sack's introduction to Judaism class continues. This class is a must for anyone interested in conversion to Judaism but is open to all who have an interest in learning. Please call the office with questions.

Temple Judea Religious School continues Sundays 9:30-12 and Tuesdays 4:30-6:00. Tot Shabbat will be Friday, Jan. 12 at 5 p.m., with music and Shabbat stories with Morah Abbie, including challah and juice.

Rabbi Marc Sack will teach the book "Morality" by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Monday nights, Jan. 8, 15, 22 and 29. Class will meet from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. over Zoom. Please let Rabbi Sack know if you will attend to be included on the Zoom.

Hazak continues their meet and lunch at Lakes Park on Thursday, Jan. 18. Contact Fran Chernow at francesca10@gmail.com or 607-423-1078 for details and other events.

Chaverot book club will meet for a book exchange on Wednesday, Jan. 10 at 6 p.m. in the social hall. Please bring one or two books you wish to trade.

On Wednesday, Jan. 24, Rivka Katz will lead a class on making our own terrariums. Please RSVP to Leni Sack at mssack@aol.com.

Chaverot continues to look for ideas for events of all kinds. Please email Rivkah Katz at rsk5041@comcast.net with suggestions.

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

Temple Judea is conducting in-person services with an online Zoom option. Synagogue members can use the Zoom ID and password as published in our weekly megillah. Non-local




residents may contact the synagogue for information.

Regularly scheduled events: Friday evening Shabbat services preceded by wine and cheese at 6:15 p.m., services at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday morning Shabbat services at 9:30 a.m. Kiddush luncheons served every Shabbat. To sponsor, contact JoAnn Lewin.

Morning minyan every Monday at 9 a.m., followed by breakfast and Jewish current events with Rabbi Sack at First Watch, 13211 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers.

Every Monday, Jan Klein, our Temple President, will be at Temple Judea from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. to meet, listen and discuss ideas, suggestions or concerns.

We would love to see you in person or on Zoom. 

**BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS  
Sanibel**

**(773) 251-8862 • www.batyam.org**

Israeli rugby players and officials joined the Maccabi USA Rugby in a recent ZOOM call. Maccabiah Rugby is more than a representative sports team which meets every four years to play the game they love. It is not a temple, but it is a Jewish family and, as such, they are well aware of their obligation as Jews, at this particular time in Israel's history — to make a difference, to speak up and to get others in positions of power to speak up.

The call lasted over an hour and included a number of interesting items. An Israeli participant told us he had spent the previous day with a friend saying Kaddish for the friend's son, a young man killed on Oct. 7, Black Sabbath. He emphasized how "Never Again" is now. He is resilient, not angry, because, he says, anger is stupid. He told us "Israel is at its best right now," and he went on to say war makes people flee, but when war broke out in Israel, 300,000 Israelis living abroad rushed home to fight.

There is a need to keep the morale of the mothers, children and soldiers high because there is a hole in every one of their hearts. Another Israeli said these are challenging times, but this is when we are at our best.


A long discussion ensued that one of the fronts in this war is social media, and how important it is to become a warrior to counter untruths, false information and sheer conjecture. Much of this amplified ignorance has a hard impact, especially on young people. Social media has the power to be as harmful as the enemies' rockets. As Israel has united in this war, so the USA and much of the western world has become polarized, and it is mainly due to misinformation being spread by celebrities and others without

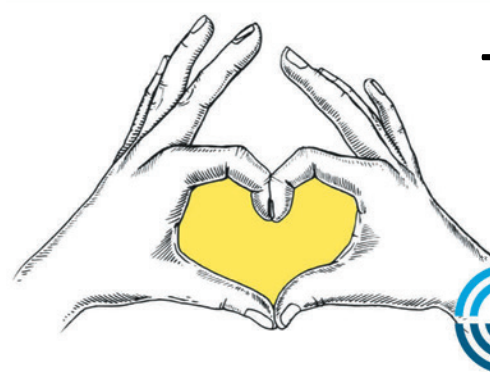
any knowledge. On social media, rumors becomes fact. An effective way to counter this is to use social media to post the truth, historically correct facts and not to engage with individuals who do not know the facts.

Israel is held to a standard no other country is held to; they provide fuel, water and food to those living in Gaza, even during war time. Many Gazans supported the 1967 Khartoum Resolution known as "The Three No's," No peace with Israel, No recognition of Israel, No negotiations with Israel.

Anti-Zionism and antisemitism have blurred. As wonderful as it was to see how Jews around the world came together, so awful was it to see antisemitism spiral upwards. We have all heard negative criticism about Israel from people we thought were friends. An Israeli participant on ZOOM told his older children not to respond to everyone. He said this conflict has shown how much antisemitism is in the world, but we will all return to living a normal life again and antisemitism will go away again but in the future, it will come back. For many of us shaken by the horror of Hamas and the outpouring of support for them by elite universities and others, how can we believe antisemitism will go away?

We are now in the same boat as the young Israeli woman on ZOOM who was asked, "Do you think about how the other side feels?" She, whose husband fights at the front while she brings up three young boys, replied "I don't have the luxury to think about the other side."

We who do have the luxury should fight against misinformation and bring the truth and awareness to whomever we talk to. 



**TOGETHER**  
We can make a  
**Difference**



**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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**The Jewish Federation loves our  
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|                               | Sandi Sauls               |
|                               | Ellen Epstein             |

**FOOD PANTRY**

- |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Temple Judea              | Shalom Life Center |
| Temple Beth El Food Drive | Shalom Dancers     |
| Temple Bat Yam            | Temple Beth Shalom |
| Temple Beth Shalom        | Victor Gold        |

**LINDA F. IDELSON CULINARY DESIGN FUND**

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**HADASSAH Collier/Lee Chapter**  
(732) 539-4011

## Healthy Hanukkah and New Year greetings to Hadassah members and associates!

By Nancy G. Wiadro, President's Council for Collier/Lee Chapter

Our Collier/Lee chapter is thriving with many new members and lots of activities planned for the coming year. At last November's "Keeping the Faith" luncheon, a new leadership was elected to serve in 2024. Our new President's Council includes Janett Edelberg, Diane Schwartz and me. If you are interested in sharing your talent, contact us to join a committee or attend a Board meeting at 10:30 a.m. on the first Monday of most months at the JFGN.

To receive the chapter's "Hadassah Happenings" e-bulletin and e-blasts, kindly contact [collierleehadassah@gmail.com](mailto:collierleehadassah@gmail.com).

### Save the date

Monday, Jan. 8 will be the Installation of Officers at "Brunch and Broadway" at the Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center, 4630 Pine Ridge Rd., Naples. Registration information appears in "Hadassah Happenings."

On Sunday, March 3 at 11 a.m., Collier/Lee Hadassah will honor our Inspiring Women of 2024: Gayle Dorio, Ellaine Rosen and Sunny Lubner at the Audubon Country Club,

Naples. These women epitomize leadership skills, experience and generosity of time in our community. This fundraiser benefits the life-affirming work of Hadassah Medical Organization.

Globally, Hadassah maintains two tertiary care hospitals in Jerusalem, enrichment programs for youth at risk and local efforts such as donating feminine hygiene products for women who cannot afford these basic items. Our chapter also collects ongoing essentials and donates them to The Friendship Project in support of The Shelter for Abused Women & Children in Naples.

If you are new to our community and wish to join or transfer your membership, join a book group or form an interest group in Fort Myers, Estero or Bonita Springs, kindly contact: [collierleehadassah@gmail.com](mailto:collierleehadassah@gmail.com). Contact [membership@hadassah.org](mailto:membership@hadassah.org) for *Hadassah Magazine* to follow you here.

Finally, deepest gratitude to the many who rushed extra donations to Hadassah during the crisis campaign. Both our Ein Kerem and Mt. Scopus campuses received the most severely injured since Oct. 7, 2023. In addition to the 1 million patients Hadassah treats annually,

costly post-surgical treatment, pediatric patients with special needs, PTSD and physical rehabilitation will continue to require the generous resources you provide. If you are in a position to donate through a trust, donor advised fund or

IRA distribution, be sure to include your Member ID# (on Hadassah Magazine label), your full name, address and project this donation supports (i.e., Keeper of the Gate, Chai Society, HMO or greatest Need). 🌐

## Collier/Lee Hadassah Inspiring Women brunch showcases entertainment

By Diane Schwartz, Collier/Lee Hadassah past president

Hadassah's Third Annual Inspiring Women Brunch will showcase an artistic interlude by the world-traveling noted jazz, classical and pop pianist Arthur Topilow, M.D. ret. The Inspiring Women luncheon event will be held on Sunday, March 3 at a local Naples country club.

The musical interlude joins the festivities as Hadassah honors outstanding women who make a difference. The Collier/Lee Chapter of Hadassah has created the Inspiring Women event to recognize the importance, value and impact empowered women make in our communities.

Hadassah is proud to honor these Inspiring Women. The honorees are Gayle Dorio, professional designer and community leader; Sonya (Sunny) Lubner, philanthropist and community leader; and Ellaine Rosen, educator extraordinaire and community leader.

Arthur Topilow, M.D., FACP, now retired from clinical practice, was the director of Hematology/Medical Oncology at the Jersey Shore University Medical Center (JSUMC) in Neptune, New Jersey, and an ardent pianist at night.

He began studying the piano in his hometown of Bayonne, New Jersey, and was soon playing professionally in his high school years. Topilow studied jazz piano with noted jazz musician Morris Nanton. During Topilow's college and medical school years, he honed his skills in summer while playing in Catskill Mountain hotel bands. In his internship year, he performed "Rhapsody in Blue"

with the Manhattan Doctors' Orchestra. His chamber music performances have included many famous classical works. Topilow has performed with the Garden State Orchestra and the Count Basie centennial jazz concerts in the Jazz in the Park series and his own jazz group continues to play locally in New Jersey.

Topilow has participated in the 92nd Street Y's jazz piano Master Class, as part of the "Jazz in July" series and he performed in their "Jazz in July" concert series. He played for Bernadette Peters in a concert and for Joe Piscopo, who sings the Sinatra Song Book. He has made several CDs with his talented brother Carl, who plays the clarinet, as well as a solo CD featuring his virtuoso piano skills. The brothers were sent by the U.S. Department of State to Italy where they performed five concerts in four days.

Setting the mood for Inspiring Women will be Frannie Faith. Faith is a singer/songwriter, actor and meditation teacher. She has been organizing and performing in concerts, many to benefit various charities, most of her life. Faith has sung on numerous television and radio commercials including background vocals for Whitney Houston. In the early '80s, she worked as an actor/singer on the "As the World Turns" soap opera where she performed over 40 original songs.

You are invited to mark your calendar for March 3 at 11 a.m. to help honor Hadassah's Inspiring Women. To receive an invitation, contact [collierleehadassah@gmail.com](mailto:collierleehadassah@gmail.com). 🌐




Frannie Faith



Dr. Arthur Topilow

Jewish Nurse




**Jewish Family Services**  
A division of the Jewish Federation  
of Lee & Charlotte Counties

## Advocacy Program

### Faith Community Nursing Offers:

- Health Counselors
- Educators
- Advocates
- Liaisons
- Trainers
- Healers



Are you a nurse? Are you interested in volunteering? Help us serve the Jewish community by discussing health needs, medications, disease prevention & wellness.

As part of the Lee Health Faith Community Nurse Program, our nurses focus on promoting holistic health & preventing or minimizing illness. For information on what services we offer, at no cost, contact the Friendly Visitor Program.

239.481.4449 x2 or [Nancyklein@jfedlcc.org](mailto:Nancyklein@jfedlcc.org)

**Stay connected all month long at**  
[www.JewishFederationLCC.org](http://www.JewishFederationLCC.org)



**CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**  
chavuratshalom@gmail.com

# January Update

By Cheryl Fulmer, Ellen Feingold and Marcia Rudin

In December, Chavurat Shalom's programs were in full swing, all conducted via Zoom. Our Friday night Shabbat Services continue every week throughout the year at 7:30 p.m. Services are led by Chavurat Shalom members, with readings, singing, and Torah reading and commentary. The weekly services are coordinated by Drs. Ellen Feingold and Kathy Zoss and include volunteer participants.

On Saturday, Dec. 2, we enjoyed our monthly Torah Talk led by Ellen Feingold on "Vayishlach" from Genesis chapter 32. On the morning of Tuesday, Dec. 5, Felicia Haleli, direct from Israel, spoke about "An In-Country Perspective: Firsthand Observation from Israel on the Ongoing Israeli/Palestinian Crisis." That night, we enjoyed our informal "Schmooze" session hosted by Marcia Rudin.

During our Dec. 8 Shabbat service, we lit our Chanukah menorahs together via Zoom. On Saturday, Dec. 9, Barry Fulmer led our Len Minsky Jewish Current Events discussion. On Tuesday, Dec. 12, guest speaker Donna Berger spoke about "Condo Associations and Hate Incidents." On Saturday, Dec. 16, our Len Minsky Jewish Current Events discussion was led by guest

Menashe Ben David. All Chavurat Shalom members were invited to our Board Meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 19.

Thursday, Jan. 25 is Tu Bi'Shvat, New Year of the Trees (based on the Israeli Agricultural cycle). "Tu Bi'Shvat" means the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shvat. This is the holiday when saplings are planted. These days, this holiday is celebrated with an environmental twist. We are reminded of the fragility of our precious planet Earth and we seek ways how we might repair our world from the destruction humans have wrought. And so we plant trees.

Chavurat Shalom's Jan. 2024 schedule:

- Tuesday, Jan. 2, 7:30 p.m. - Informal "Schmooze" session hosted by Marcia Rudin
- Friday, Jan. 5, 7:30 p.m. - Shabbat service conducted by volunteers
- Saturday, Jan. 6, 10 a.m. - Torah Talk with Ellen Feingold
- Friday, Jan. 12, 7:30 p.m. - Shabbat service conducted by volunteers
- Saturday, Jan. 13, 10 a.m. - Len Minsky Current Events
- Tuesday, Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m. - Chavurat Shalom Annual Meeting, all members invited

• Friday, Jan. 19, 7:30 p.m. - Shabbat service conducted by volunteers

• Saturday, Jan. 20, 10 a.m. - Len Minsky Current Events

• Tuesday, Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m. - Lecture by Don Arbell - "The Israel-Hamas War: Global and Regional Implications"

• Friday, Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m. - Shabbat service conducted by volunteers

• Saturday, Jan. 27, 10 a.m. - Len Minsky Current Events

• Tuesday, Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m. - Lecture by Rabbi James Rudin - "The Life and Times of Commodore Uriah P. Levy, First American Jewish Naval Hero and Savior of Monticello"

All Chavurat Shalom activities will be held over Zoom until further notice. All times are Eastern Standard Time. Everyone is welcome to attend. To join these events, send an email request to chavuratshalom@gmail.com to receive the Zoom link. For more information, visit our website [www.chavuratshalomsofswflorida.org](http://www.chavuratshalomsofswflorida.org) or email [chavuratshalom@gmail.com](mailto:chavuratshalom@gmail.com).

Responding to the continuing Israel/Hamas war, Chavurat Shalom's Tzedakah committee distributed additional funds to help Israelis. The committee granted \$1,500 to AID Coalition

and \$1,500 to Brothers and Sisters for Israel, both organizations dedicated to helping displaced Israelis. At the start of the war, funds were donated to American Friends of Magen David Adom, American Friends of Soroka Medical Center and Friends of Israel Defense Forces (IDF). As the war continues, the committee will direct available Tzedakah funds where needed. We thank Tzedakah Fund Committee Chair Ellen Feingold and her committee members Evelyn Clark, Ying Przybyszewski, Sharon Berry, Shirley Frank, Cheryl Fulmer, Myra Klahr, Peggy Siegel and Becky Kon.

Most important is to thank those of you who have answered our request for funds to be allocated by the Tzedakah committee to help Israelis harmed by the invasion of Israel by Hamas on Oct. 7. If you wish to donate to the Tzedakah Fund, send your check made out to Chavurat Shalom with "Tzedakah Fund" in the memo line to 20031 Sanibel View Circle, Unit 202, Ft. Myers, FL 33908. (Temporary address due to Hurricane Ian.)

Our wishes for the worldwide Jewish community in 2024 are for a peaceful and healthy secular new year. Am Yisroel Chai!! 🌍



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## Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties Holocaust Education and Programs Department

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



## GENERATIONS OF THE SHOAH SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

[genshoah@hmcec.org](mailto:genshoah@hmcec.org)

# Every day, we wake up on Oct. 7

By Shelley Lieb and Ida Margolis

The dates of certain historic events create a lasting memory. The assassination of JFK, Nov. 22, 1963. The US Capitol riot, Jan. 6, 2021. Now, for many Jews, especially those living in Israel, Oct. 7, 2023 will be an event etched in memory. How many photos of this day have you seen? How many newscasts? How many emails relating to Oct. 7 have you read?

Amir Peleg, historian for the Claims Conference who lives in a moshav near Gaza, said “Every day we wake up on Oct. 7.” If you are a 2g, did you think “What if my parents were alive to have seen the massacre on Oct. 7?”

I was contacted by a number of 2gs with that question and, of course, I have no answer. But on Nov. 20, I received the email report from Gideon Taylor, the president of the Claims Conference ([claimscon.org](http://claimscon.org)). In that report, he told about Holocaust survivors in a nursing home in Ashkelon. These frail survivors and others then lived in a reinforced room that was funded from a grant from the Claims Conference. Taylor, who went to see these survivors, said he heard “stories of immeasurable pain.”

In the nursing home, Taylor met Holocaust survivor Yosef Winner, who told of the loss of two of his grandchildren. Later, Taylor saw the heartbreaking words Winner had written:

*“I survived the Nazi Animal fire in the concentration camps; my entire family perished in the terrible Holocaust. I detached myself from my deep roots and erected a monument in their memory, made of basalt stones. From the depths of despair, with determination and resilience, I clung to the earth and planted seeds in Zion. ...*

*But suddenly, on Oct. 7, 2023, from between the evil barbed wires, emerged the horrifying scenes of fire, dust, murder, and the terrible massacre of innocent lives, reaching me once again. My dearest grandson, Yahav, may his memory be blessed, was murdered while protecting his wife, Shaylee, and their one-month-old daughter, Shaya. And my dearest granddaughter Hadar, may her memory be blessed, and her husband,*

*Itay, may his memory be blessed, were slaughtered while defending their 10-month-old twins, Roe and Guy. Once again, I find myself exhausted, in despair, sinking. And I have no more land to hold onto.”*

Taylor continued to relate stories of other survivors who live in Ashkelon. He said that he saw pain and anguish as well as their incredible strength. “There was sympathy from survivors for the suffering of people in Gaza during the critical campaign to defeat Hamas and bring the hostages home. The country is traumatized. How much more for Holocaust survivors living in a country once again grappling with uncountable loss, questioning how it happened and wondering what the future may hold.” Other Claims Conference staff began visiting survivors, many who had been displaced. They and partner organizations delivered food and supplies.

Taylor heard stories of the Shoah intertwined with stories of the terrible attacks of Oct. 7. At a meeting, he and others were joined by the heads of some of the major Holocaust education institutions such as Yad Vashem and Yad Mordechai.

“Many are engaged with helping displaced people from the north and south. While grappling with the personal losses of friends, family, children in the army and hostages, they are also thinking about what this will mean for the future of Holocaust education. Just as so much has been done to document the Shoah, plans are under way to capture testimonies of what happened on that terrible Shabbat so that future generations will know,” said Taylor.

The Claims Conference and other organizations came to Israel to listen and learn and help. What can members of GenShoah do to help? Many of you have better answers than I do. All I can think of is write — write a check to the organizations that are really helping (do your research — don’t be misled by rhetoric), write letters to lawmakers, thanking when appropriate, asking when needed. And in the meantime, to quote what Robert Frost said he learned about life: “It goes on.”

## What do you think?

### L'CHAYIM wants to know!

Send your letters and comments to Sharon Hood, L'CHAYIM Editor, at [sharon@marketcrank.com](mailto:sharon@marketcrank.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.



**JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**  
(239) 566-1771

# Don't repeat the lessons of history – heed them

By Marina Berkovich, JHSSWF President

David Ulee, Judah P. Benjamin, Abraham C. Myers, Ezekiel and Isaac Levy, Octavus S. Cohen, Julius Ochs ... do you know who they were? Southerners! During the time when the United States were not so united. The inevitability of impending war pressed them and hundreds of other Jewish families of the South to choose between the Union, where many of them studied, made friends and made business and trade contacts, or the South, the land to which they were born or immigrated; established homes, professions and businesses; raised children; and envisioned generations of heirs multiplying their efforts of prosperity rooted in the principles, religion and honor.

But nothing goes as planned during wars — a truth we are witnessing over and over in our lifetimes. The Southern Jews are often blamed for owning slaves. They, indeed, did during the era of worldwide open-markets slavery, as did all peoples who participated in it for thousands of years. There is nothing embarrassing about Southern

Jewish slaveowners and patriots, who were frequently the same. Yet, for frequently antisemitic reasons, their stories are hidden or extracted out of the context of their time as if to prove some politicized points.

The world always gangs up on Jews in times of difficulty. Nothing new. But history does not lie. It always teaches. Revisionists lie and invert the truth.

Keren Berman, a Naples mother to three, knows it too well. She was in Israel on Oct. 7 and, after reuniting with her family in the U.S., she found herself amid the rise of anti-Israel demonstrations and such. Keren expressed the barrage of thoughts bombarding her wounded heart and mind in an impassioned statement. Here is a small excerpt: “(We are being told to) (sic) **Wait! They can't see evil**, the funders, professors, administrators and college students, on campus on U.S. soil... Wait! Wait! We said never again, is that not now? **Wait! No soldier left behind enemy lines! Wait! Kidnap victims! 240 taken! Why?**”

Did not the Jewish Confederate mothers cry out in 1861 like all Jewish mothers? Do not all mothers cry and weep for lost husbands, children, parents and peace?

American Civil War was fought over slavery. Somehow, one false claim continues: Jews controlled slave trade. Nearly 160 years after the last Civil War battle, slavery is still an issue to be debated, contested and misused by parties interested more in prolonging the impact of slavery for modern gains than in the equality of application of all citizens' rights already existing under the U.S. Constitution.

Every year, Jewish groups in the U.S. march in support of the Black community in Martin Luther King's Day parades. Jews, a significantly smaller minority, always rise in defense of American Blacks. Whether the entire **United** States of America rise to defend its Jewry remains to be seen. We will be here observing, recording, imparting the Jewish history as it happens. And bring it to you.

Come celebrate the annual Florida Jewish History Month with us on Wednesday, Jan. 24 from 2 to 4 p.m. at Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center.

Your generosity helps us to continue our research and make the next films and presentations. Donate online, by mail or contact us at office@jhsswf.org. Become a member to receive announcements, reminders and news.

If mailing a check, please send to The Jewish Historical Society of Southwest Florida, 8805 Tamiami Trail North, Suite #255, Naples, FL 34108.

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

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



**To donate to the Federation's Annual Campaign, call 239.481.4449 x6 or visit JewishFederationLCC.org**





**JEWISH WAR VETERANS — Victor Paul Tuchman Post 400**  
(239) 246-3151

**JWV Post 400 news**

By Michael Hirsh

More than 30 veterans and guests attending the November meeting of Jewish War Veterans Post 400 participated in a phone call with IDF Master Sergeant Matt “Motti” Charter in Northern Israel. The 46-year-old son of Fort Myers Post Commander, Harvey Charter, is part



IDF Master Sergeant Matt “Motti” Charter

**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.

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Send your response to Jodi Cohen at 239.481.4449 x1 or [jodicohen@jfedlcc.org](mailto:jodicohen@jfedlcc.org). She will contact you as needed. Thank you.

of a communication unit attached to a reserve commando division.

Motti told the group at Federation HQ that his unit has been training for deployment wherever they may be needed, adding that their primary concern is the northern border with Lebanon. “Hezbollah is bigger and better equipped than Hamas,” he said, adding that the IDF’s leadership is prepared to cope with whatever comes.

During the phone call, Matt thanked his father and members of the JWV for raising money so his unit could buy equipment like bullet-proof ceramic plates for their vests, knee pads and gloves on the civilian market. Apparently, these items are in short supply in the IDF.

In civilian life, Matt has his doctorate in ornithology, which is why the photo of him armed with an assault rifle is more than a bit disconcerting to his parents. “Who would have thought our 46-year-old-son would be going into combat — or that Israel would be attacked this way?” asked Commander Charter. If that weren’t enough to concern a parent, consider that his granddaughter, Matt’s oldest daughter,

19-year-old Eliya, will start active duty in the IDF next month.

Less than two weeks after the phone call to the JWV, Matt’s unit was deployed. Instead of heading north as he’d expected, they’re now in Gaza.

In other Post 400 news, the fundraising project to restore and preserve the Nordhausen Flag is an unqualified success. The unique flag made by inmates of the Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp — its stars are six-pointed Magen Davids — was presented to liberating American soldiers in the waning days of the war. It is now being preserved by conservators in Miami.

When the painstaking process is complete, the flag will be housed in a specially built case and displayed at the Naples Holocaust Museum, where it will be on permanent loan from the Fort Myers American Legion Post. A dedication event will be scheduled when the flag is returned to Fort Myers.

If you know any Jewish veterans of our recent wars, please put them in touch with JWV Post 400 Commander Harvey Charter at 239-246-3151. We welcome younger vets. Consider doing so a mitzvah. Veterans need other veterans. 🌍



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- AJC (American Jewish Committee): Brian Lipton - 941-365-4955
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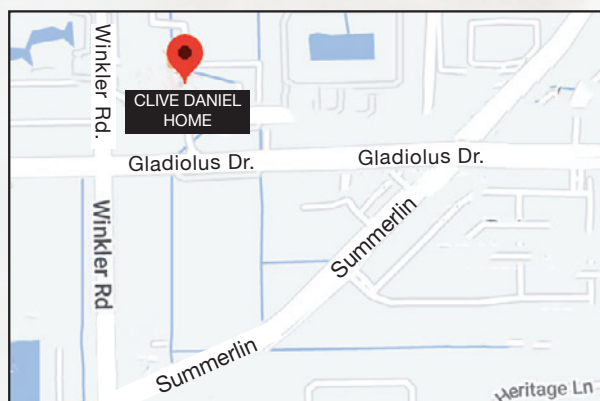
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