

## Happy birthday Israel – thousands of years old, 70 years young!

By Leni Sack, Federation Program Director

Over 400 people came together on Sunday, April 15 at the Heights Center to celebrate this milestone in Israel's history. Hashem was surely watching out for us as the predicted rain held off until the fest was over. Despite the strong wind, the "shuk" vendors were able to display their wares, and attendees were able to enjoy the entertainment, delicious food and shuk shopping.

Thank you to our entertainers: The Shalom Band from Miami, The Big Yarmulkes (a band from right here in Lee County) and the Federation's Israeli dancers led by Marsha Kistler. Also thanks to Sandra Falk for leading everyone in the singing of the National Anthem and to Lawrence Dermer for leading Hatikvah.

Thank you to Nir Cohen and Ilan Dahan and their families, who cooked

and served the food. They worked very hard and we owe them a lot of thanks.

Thank you to the local synagogues and organizations and all their volunteers who supported this event along with the Jewish Federation: Temple Beth Shalom, Congregation Bat Yam, The Community Free Synagogue, Shalom Life Center, Temple Beth El, Temple Judea and BBYO. Also, thank you

to Miromar Outlets, one of our community arts & culture sponsors.

Israeli music and dancing, Israeli wine tasting, Israeli food and Israeli art and jewelry for sale, along with a variety of other items and activities, added to the fun of the afternoon.

Thank you to the vendors and to everyone who attended and showed their support for the State of Israel. ▲



The Shalom Band's music added a lot of spirit to the afternoon



T-shirts celebrating Israel's 70th birthday were for sale



Face painting is always a hit with the kids  
Photos courtesy Michael Shapiro



A few of the BBYO teens who volunteered at the BBYO booth, which supported Israel's Lone Soldier project



The Shalom Israeli dancers always put on a good show



Shuk vendors displayed a variety of items for sale

## Rozzi Osterman's speech at Federation's Annual meeting

I grew up in Washington State and Northern California in a very traditional Jewish home, but there were only three Jewish families in our school. So we were always the ones asked to explain Hanukkah, bring in the menorah and latkes, explain Passover and matzah, the bread that we didn't have time to wait for because we were rushing out of Egypt.



When I got to Israel at 19 (why Israel, why 19? a story for another evening), everybody already knew the Hanukkah story, matzah was in the supermarkets, Friday night was Shabbat...my job was done.

In Israel, living on Kibbutz Gvar Am, I met John Osterman, a very cute Jewish boy from Toledo, Ohio. We milked cows together never thinking that we would find ourselves in the

U.S. and in Fort Myers.

Fast forward 20-plus years.

When we visited Fort Myers for the first time, we immediately called the Jewish Federation to get a sense of the Jewish community. It so happened that the week we were in town was the week of Major Gifts. Helene Kramer, the Executive Director, invited us to come.

So, we were under the impression that every month or so, Federation donors dressed up and met speakers like Ed Koch and Elie Wiesel.

We moved to Fort Myers and we found the community to be warm and inviting.

I joined the Federation board and even agreed to take a few solicitation cards.

For a few years, my only cards were the Siegels – Barb and Alan – and the Zuckers – Sherri and Ira.

I would call them for their gifts and they would thank me!

Again, like our first Major Gifts

event, I thought that all people would always thank me for taking the time to ask for money.

So why such a long commitment to the Federation? And why am I somewhat awkward at being honored?

Because, my relationship with the Federation has always been a natural fit. Because the mission of the Federation, promoting the Jewish values of benevolence, repairing the world and taking responsibility for one another, is the same mission that John and I share with our children, It is a natural fit.

The people involved are like-minded. Many of my dearest friends are on the board. They are thoughtful and generous of their time and talents. When I attend an event, it feels like family. And when I speak with you, I feel the love.

Being chosen as a leader is a gift. I have traveled to Ukraine to visit with elderly Holocaust survivors, witnessed Aliyah made by young families from Ethiopia firsthand, and met many

Israelis in absorption centers, hospitals and afterschool programs for kids-at-risk, as well as artists and teachers, all while representing you. I have learned about special needs in our community and been inspired by so many of our members who are leaders in the symphony, theater, Habitat for Humanity, art and universities.

I love collaborating with our talented staff. Lori and I are like kids in a candy store when we start creating invitations. Leni is the most diplomatic and thoughtful lady. And Alan is the brother I never had, whom I admire and annoy at the same time!

I especially treasure the experience of sharing the importance of leadership and Jewish values with my children.

Thank you for honoring me. When you honor me, you honor John and our belief in benevolence, repairing the world and taking responsibility for one another. ▲



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The mission of the Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties is to provide and support philanthropic, educational and social service programs that promote such Jewish values as *Tzedakah benevolence, Tikun Olam repairing the world and K'lal Yisrael taking responsibility for one another*, in order to strengthen and enrich the Jewish community locally, in Israel and throughout the world.

## Program notes

I want to thank Temple Beth El, The Community Free Synagogue, Shalom Life Center and Temple Judea for hosting the four PJ Library holiday programs held this past year. And a special thank you to Temple Judea's shlichah, Zohar ben Hamu, for leading all the programs and introducing young families to the celebration of holidays, Israeli style. Fun was definitely had by all.



■ Leni Sack

**Food pantry**  
A special thank you and shout out also go to the Fort Myers High School National Honor Society students, who conducted a food drive that benefited the Jewish Federation's food pantry. Their high school faculty advisor, Elisa Grossman, was thrilled that the students not only committed to collecting the food, they also committed to loading their cars and bringing the food directly to the food pantry. In fact, the project was originally scheduled to end in December, but students asked if they could continue through the end of the school year. The students showed the commitment and character of the members of the National Honor Society while supporting families in need. I hope they inspired all of you to keep the food pantry in mind throughout the year!

### Author events

By the time you read this, Carolyn Gora and I will have just returned from our annual trip to the Jewish Book Council Conference in New York City, where we get to hear over 200 authors "pitch" their books to those of us who arrange for authors to speak in our

communities each year. The criteria for presenting is that the content of the book has a Jewish theme and/or the author is Jewish. It is an intensive three days of workshops and author presentations for us, but Carolyn and I love bringing interesting and engaging authors here. I hope you can't wait to hear who will be coming for the 2018-2019 calendar year!

### Jewish Film Festival

Not only are we starting to plan for author events, the film festival committee has also started to preview films for the 2019 Jewish Film Festival of Southwest Florida. For all you snowbirds who may want to make your reservations to come down in time for it, the festival will begin January 10, 2019. We expect to again show ten films on Tuesday and Thursday evenings through February 12.

### Israel Scouts

Another annual favorite for our community is the Israel Scouts Friendship Caravan. The group of ten Israeli teens bring their lively singing and dancing performance to Temple Judea on Monday, June 18 at 7:00 p.m. The free family concert is open to all and is sponsored by Temple Judea, Temple Beth El and the Jewish Federation. This talented and inspirational group of teenagers represents the best of Israel. What a great way to start the summer!

And as I think about the summer, I have to take a moment to "kvell." In just a couple of weeks, I will be going to Los Angeles for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade graduation of our oldest grandson from his Jewish Day School. I will definitely be a proud Savta as I watch him walk across the stage.

I wish everyone a good and safe summer. ▲

## Holocaust Memorial Service

By Leni Sack, Federation Program Director

The annual Holocaust Memorial Service was held on Sunday, April 8 at Temple Beth Shalom in Cape Coral. Over 150 people attended the moving service, highlighted by a video sharing the story of the survivors who were at the service. Rozzi Osterman, past president of the Jewish Federation and an experienced documentary filmmaker, inspired by a project of the Temple Judea Religious School and using footage from the Holocaust Museum & Education Center of Southwest Florida, edited the video.

Thank you to Temple Beth Shalom for hosting the event this year and to the Temple Beth Shalom choir for their beautiful music.

Special thanks to all the clergy and lay leaders who participated: Rabbi Devora Buchen, Temple



Holocaust survivor Françoise Onufer aided by Temple Beth Shalom President Harvey Wolfson

Beth Shalom; Rabbi Michael Schorin, Gulf Coast Hospital Chaplain; Rabbi Nicole Luna and Cantor Richard Bessman, Temple Beth El; Rabbi Marc Sack, Temple Judea; Rabbi Stephen Fuchs, Congregation Bat Yam; Rabbi Bruce Diamond, The Community Free Synagogue.

Also thanks to Lawrence Dermer, Shalom Life Center; Cheryl and Barry Fulmer, Congregation Bat Yam; Joyce and George Rosinger, Temple Judea; Harvey Wolfson, President of Temple Beth Shalom. ▲

Photos courtesy Michael Shapiro



Holocaust survivor Carla Beninga



Temple Beth Shalom choir directed by Rabbi Devora Buchen



Holocaust survivor Peter Simenauer



Holocaust survivor Paul Simko



Holocaust survivor Lore Rosenstrauch

# L'CHAYIM

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



#### Overseas

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



#### Local Seniors Services

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



#### Local Case Management Services

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

#### Local Emergency Services

- ✧ Food Pantry.
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- ✧ Education and aid associated with natural disasters.



#### Local Community Services

- ✧ Support families of children with special needs.
- ✧ SAT preparatory classes for high school students.
- ✧ Volunteerism.
- ✧ Organizational Collaboration.
- ✧ Assessment and Planning.



#### Jewish Community Foundation

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



## Joseph Horowitz Israel Travel Grants Available

The Joseph Horowitz Israel Travel Grant is available through the Community Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties. The grant may be used for travel to Israel to participate in programs that are volunteer or educational in nature. Our hope is that these programs will enhance Jewish knowledge and identity in preparation for participation in American Jewish life. This grant is for Jewish residents of either county who are 25 years old or younger and can demonstrate a financial need. Academic standing and community involvement may also be considered. For more information or an application, please visit our website at [www.JewishFederationLCC.org](http://www.JewishFederationLCC.org) or contact the Federation at 239-481-4449, ext. 4 or email [loriramos@jfedlcc.org](mailto:loriramos@jfedlcc.org).

# Meet Caravan Dekel: Tzofim Friendship Caravan 2018

By Rabbi Marc Sack

The Fort Myers Jewish community will once again host a troupe of Israeli scouts for an evening of singing and dancing. Sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties, Temple Beth El and Temple Judea, Caravan Dekel will perform at Temple Judea on Monday, June 18 at 7:00 p.m. The program is free and open to the entire community.

This year's troupe features Scouts from a wide range of backgrounds. What they have in common is that each of them has taken on leadership roles within the Tzofim, overseeing groups of younger Scouts and counselors. They are multitalented teenagers who proudly represent the spirit of Israel.

**Gali Goldberg**, 16, has studied ballet and modern dance since 4<sup>th</sup> grade. In the Tzofim, she oversees ten younger counselors.

**Adi Mesika**, 17, is athletic and loves scuba diving, recently passing the Open Water Diver course. He is responsible for 40 children and four counselors in Tzofim.

**Roni Lamdan**, 17, leads a troupe of Scouts her own age for which she creates materials to teach her peers. Roni has been playing piano since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

**Amir Ron**, 16, lived in California for three years with his family. In Tzofim, he is currently a counselor for a troupe of 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

**Shai Birnbaum**, 17, was born in

Cincinnati. Her father is currently the CEO of SodaStream International. In addition to working toward her black belt in karate, she created a Facebook group called "Peace Intifada," which now has more than 2,500 members.

**Avi Rata**, 17, was born in Gonder, Ethiopia. He is a 7<sup>th</sup> grade counselor in Tzofim. An avid surfer, Avi also practices Krav Maga.

**Sharon Gabriel**, 17, who studies acting, leads a group of 15 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls. Last summer, she joined NFTY and accompanied American teenagers visiting Israel.

**Amit Zaga**, 17, who leads a group of 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys, loves camping and the outdoors. He also participated in a Space Olympics competition, leading a team of junior scientists that came in third place in the national Israeli competition.

**Shira Yehidi**, 17, also studies acting. In addition to her work in Tzofim, Shira volunteers in a kindergarten for refugee children in south Tel Aviv.

**Amit Inbar**, 17, was a counselor for a 12-year-old boy with autism, meeting with him every week. Now he leads a group of eight 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys. In his spare time, Amit plays piano.

**Yuval Ettinger**, 23, one of the *madrikhim*, group leaders, established the first troupe for special needs children in her community. For her military service, Yuval was an air traffic controller for the IAF. Yuval was, herself, a member of the caravan in 2012.

**Amir Shoval**, 24, the other group leader, was in Scouts for nine years. After high school, together with seven friends, he postponed military service for one year to work in a small town building new scouting troupes. Amir

loves the field of education and sees that in his future.

We look forward to welcoming and celebrating with Caravan Dekel, 2018's troupe of Israel Scouts in Southwest Florida.▲

## SENIOR OUTREACH PROGRAM

# LUNCH BUNCH

Come out for lunch, see familiar faces and meet new friends at our free monthly senior lunches.

**Thursday, June 14th**  
**12:30 PM**  
The Palms—2674 Winkler Ave.  
Fort Myers  
(RSVP by June 8th - Space for only 35 people)

**Thursday, July 19th**  
**12:00 PM**  
Community Free Synagogue  
10868 Metro Pkwy., Fort Myers  
(RSVP by July 16th)

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# “The Heart Remembers” project update

By Jodi Cohen, Senior Outreach Coordinator

Ceramics schools, artists and teachers were invited to take part in “The Heart Remembers” project, an international artistic exhibition meant to commemorate fallen IDF soldiers.

The project saw the creation of 23,545 ceramic red hearts (one for each fallen soldier) that were placed along the road leading up to and inside Tel Aviv's Yitzhak Rabin Center. The hearts were placed just prior to Yom HaZikaron, Memorial Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers.

“The Heart Remembers” is a project of Partnership2gether (P2G), a successful Jewish Agency model for generating ongoing, direct and meaningful partnerships between Jewish world communities and Israeli communities

on an individual, organizational and whole-community level.

Six Fort Myers artists met in Janice Heligman's garage/studio to decorate the hearts that Janice generously created in preparation for our working session. The photos show the process of creating the hearts and also the hearts in the Yitzhak Rabin Center, including a special photo noting the work of the Fort Myers' artists: Carolyn Gora, Janice Heligman, Celeste Borah, Jodi Cohen, Juli Bobman and Elise Sewall. ▲



# Senior Lunch Bunch update

By Jodi Cohen, Senior Outreach Coordinator

The Federation's April luncheon was hosted by Temple Beth Shalom, with food provided by our community partner, Jason's Deli. As seems to be the trend, we welcomed new faces into the mix and everyone's

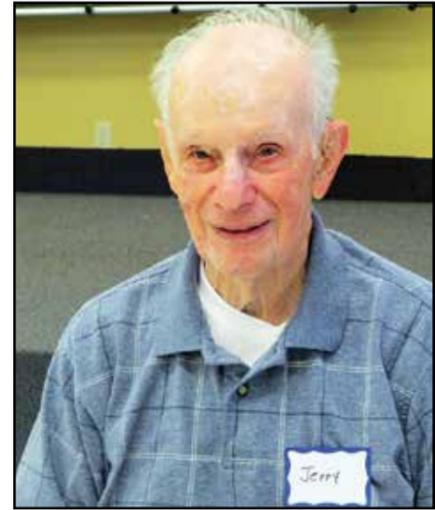
voices blended to create boisterous sounds throughout the lunch. The octave in the room was in the key of joy. The volunteers swooped in and did a fabulous job greeting people, setting things up, keeping everything moving and helping with the cleanup work. It takes a village to walk into a place and set up a village!

Volunteer and photographer extraordinaire Helene Glocer facilitated a wonderful storytelling program after lunch, inviting people to talk about meaningful experiences. Stories ranged from a couple getting married on a bus to someone finding support for her kids at a trade show in Italy, to how the community gathered around a family during tragedy and loss. We laughed, we cried and, of course, we ate.



■ Jodi Cohen

The free monthly senior luncheon is a chance for Jewish seniors to get together to meet new people, deepen friendships, learn a little something and enjoy a meal together. People attending for the first time are assigned lunch 'buddies' and everyone is warm and welcoming. People who don't drive are given rides by the fabulous volunteers. The Senior Lunch Bunch feels like a big celebration every month, and there is always a place at the table for anyone interested in joining. ▲



## NEXT SENIOR LUNCH:

Thursday, June 14 at 12:30 p.m.

The Palms, 2674 Winkler Avenue, Fort Myers

Space for 35 people

RSVP by Friday, June 8 to

Jodi Cohen at 239.481.4449 x6 or [jodicohen@jfedlcc.org](mailto:jodicohen@jfedlcc.org)

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# Holocaust Museum update

By Susan Suarez, Executive Director

A large crowd of invited guests and dignitaries, including Collier County Commissioner Penny Taylor, celebrated the symbolic groundbreaking for the future home of the Holocaust Museum & Education Center of Southwest Florida in North Naples.



■ Susan Suarez

Wearing hard hats and wielding mini-sledgehammers, Museum board members and Capital Campaign Lead Gift Donor Janet Guttman Cohen broke through a wall joining two large spaces which will house the Museum's main exhibit space. Following the ceremony, renovations began on the 6,000 sf space at 975 Imperial Golf Drive, North Naples. The Museum will remain open at its current location, 4760 Tamiami Trail North in Naples, until the end of 2018, when it will relocate to its new home.

Rabbi Adam Miller of Temple Shalom gave the introductory blessing, saying, "May all who enter this space in the years to come be partners in creating a world of shalom, peace and wholeness." This community impact is the goal of the Museum's mission and Education programs – teach the lessons of the Holocaust to inspire action against bigotry, hatred and violence.

Board Chair Herb Berkeley noted this day was a long dreamt-of goal for the community leaders who founded the Museum in 2001. They hoped someday to own a permanent space with adequate room to present exhibits, hold community events and, most importantly, educate students and the public about the history and lessons of the Holocaust. Many of those involved in the

Museum's early years were among the guests. They carried with them the spirits of those who were instrumental in the Museum's creation and development. People like the late Holocaust survivors Ann Jacobson and Abe Price, who were instrumental with Golden Gate Middle School teachers David Bell and Michelle Lee in transitioning the "Out of the Ashes" classroom project on the Holocaust into the Museum. Liberators like the late Peter Thomas who, because of his wartime experiences, understood the importance of teaching future generations the importance of respect for others and the consequences



Executive Director Susan Suarez, Board Chair Herb Berkeley, Donor Janet Guttman Cohen

of hate. Community members like Diana and the late Homer Helter and the survivors, liberators and other dedicated people who helped build the Museum's permanent collection of unique artifacts and original photographs. Also in attendance were Holocaust survivors Renee Beddouk, Rosette Gerbosi, Rob Nossen and Michael Eisenstadt. Mrs. Gerbosi addressed the guests, relating how she became involved with the Museum. The audience also included children of

survivors, dedicated volunteers, former board members, community supporters and generous benefactors.

The Museum was also honored to have Janet Guttman Cohen attend the event. Mrs. Cohen noted in her remarks that she was pleased to be in a position to support an organization that is close to her heart and has an important impact



Rabbi Adam Miller gives a blessing

in the community. In recognition of her generous gift, the Museum will be named the Holocaust Museum & Janet G. and Harvey D. Cohen Education Center in honor of Mrs. Cohen and her late husband, Harvey.

In addition to being a Finalist (for the second year in a row!) in the 2018 "Best of the Gulfshore" readers poll in *Gulfshore Life* magazine, the Museum recently was ranked by TripAdvisor as #6 of 132 "Things to Do in Naples," a jump up from our previous position of #11 of 122 "Things to Do in Naples." Thanks to all who have submitted a TripAdvisor review or spoken about a Museum visit to family and friends. You helped us crack the "Top 10" list!

This year's annual Teacher Education Summer Workshop will be offered on three different dates to accommodate teacher schedules: June 11, July 23 or August 3. The one-day, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. workshop is open to currently active SWFL teachers, grades 5 through college/university, from public, private, charter and home school settings.

Each teacher will receive Continuing Education Points, breakfast, lunch and light refreshments, plus a selection of classroom-ready materials to use with their students. For more information and to register, contact Education Specialist Sam Parish at Sam@HolocaustMuseumSWFL.org or 239.263.9200.

We hope you will save the following dates on your calendars for two important Museum events:

- ◆ Thursday, December 13 – The Luncheon at the Ritz-Carlton Beach Resort in Naples
- ◆ Monday, March 4, 2019 – Triumph 2019 Annual Fundraising Event at Grey Oaks Country Club in Naples ▲



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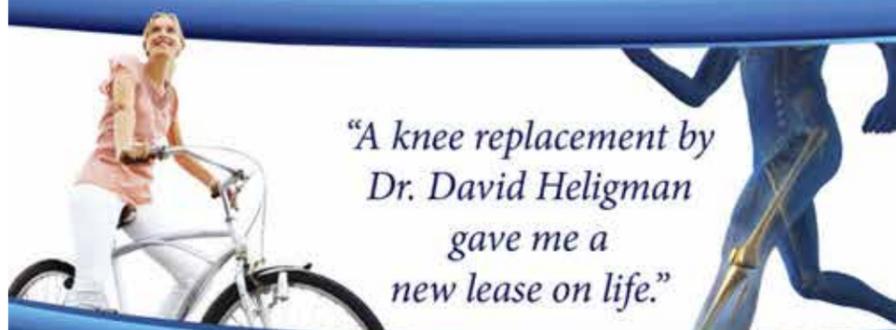
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## BAR MITZVAH



Asher Emil Pincus, son of Suzanna and David Pincus, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Sabbath morning, June 23 at The Community Free Synagogue. Asher excels in language arts, science and physical education in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Lexington Middle School. He is a forward on the Swiffles, a leading team in the Southwest Florida Junior Basketball League. Asher is following in the footsteps of his sisters, Ariel and Talia, who also studied with Rabbi Bruce Diamond and were also called to the Torah as B'not Mitzvah at The Community Free Synagogue.

## WEDDING



Nicole Lynn Fuller and Jonathan Lawrence Cohen of The Community Free Synagogue will be married on Saturday, June 2 at the Plantation Country Club, with Rabbi Bruce Diamond officiating.

## BIRTHDAY



Edna Josephson celebrated her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday in April. Edna, an award-winning performance artist, accomplished musician and Solitaire maven, is a Community Free Synagogue pioneer and was part of its musical group. She shares a home with daughter Dr. Judy Piesco. (Edna is pictured with Rabbi Bruce Diamond.)

Each month, *L'CHAYIM* will list your Life Cycle events – births, B'nai Mitzvah, engagements, weddings, anniversaries and obituaries. For B'nai Mitzvah, please include up to 150 words about your child. Submit your events to [LChayim36@gmail.com](mailto:LChayim36@gmail.com). Photos are appreciated; please e-mail as JPGs at 300dpi.

For a continuously updated calendar of events, visit [www.JewishFederationLCC.org](http://www.JewishFederationLCC.org).

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## Community Free Synagogue events and programs

### Brown Bag Movie Night

The next Community Free Synagogue Brown Bag Movie Night begins at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 14. *Norman: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer* stars Richard Gere in the title role with a special appearance by Steve Buscemi as Rabbi Blumenthal.

"Persistent wheeler-dealer Norman falls in with an Israeli politician on the rise. When the politician is elected prime minister, Norman rises in esteem with the New York Jewish community, even though his social connections might only be a sham." (Rotten Tomatoes, 89% "Certified Fresh")

"Norman Oppenheimer is the President of New York-based Oppenheimer Strategies. His word-of-mouth business is consulting work largely in American-Israeli business and politics, that focus due to being Jewish. Most of that work is as a fixer: doing work that others don't want to do and with which they don't want to be officially associated. In reality, Norman is a shyster, and not a very good one at that. His office is comprised of his cell phone and what-

ever is stuffed in his satchel, which is usually slung over his shoulder as he wanders the streets..." (IMDb)

Pack your dinner and join us in the Community Hall, 10868 Metro Parkway, Fort Myers. Admission and soft drinks are complimentary.

### Sabbath Eve dinners

The Community Free Synagogue Sabbath Eve dinners continue throughout the summer and are open all at no charge every Friday at 6:30 p.m. These kosher-style meals begin with kindling the Sabbath lights, proclaiming its sanctity (*Qiddush*) with a cup of wine, and the traditional blessing by parents of their children and by spouses of each other, sharing homemade artisan hallah. They end with the thanksgiving prayers, the *Birqat Hamazohn*.

Participants may bring a salad or a dish of their choosing as long as it is non-dairy and conforms to the Torah meat regulations. Wine is also always welcome!

Reservations are never required. Please join us in the Community Hall, 10868 Metro Parkway, Fort Myers. ▲



Studying family history brings more than just historical knowledge, it builds relationships. Learning the stories behind names and dates teaches a personal history that explains more than just how each person came to be. **EVERYONE WELCOME.**

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Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties

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# Stars of David

By Nate Bloom, Contributing Columnist

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

## The Second Jewish Solo and More

*Solo: A Star Wars Story*, which opens on Friday, May 25, is described as a "space Western." The film covers Han Solo's early days as a smuggler and his friendship with Chewbacca, a wookiee. We also find out how he met Lando Clarissian. **ALDEN EHRENREICH**, 28, plays Solo, with Donald Glover playing Clarissian.

Ehrenreich, who was discovered at a bar mitzvah reception by **STEVEN SPIELBERG**, told Collider.com that the young Solo "was more of an idealist" than the one in the original films. He also added that he consulted with the "original Solo," **HARRISON FORD**, now 75, about how to play the role. (Ford's late mother was Jewish).

The script is by **LAWRENCE KASDAN**, 68, and his son, **JONATHAN KASDAN**, 38. The elder Kasdan previously co-wrote two of the best "Star Wars" films: *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *The Return of the Jedi* (1983). The younger Kasdan has a small role in *Solo* as Tag Greenly, and **JON FAVREAU**, 51, provides the voice of Rio Durant (described as a very cool and important alien character in film publicity).

*Tag*, opening on Friday, June 15, is based on a true story. It's about a group of old friends who meet up once a year for a rousing game of tag. Of course, mental games also go on. Co-stars include **RASHIDA JONES** and **ISLA FISHER**, both 42.

**Cable and Streaming**  
Remember **PAIGE DAVIS**? This musi-

cal actress was the perky host and star of the TLC series *Trading Spaces* for most of its original run (2000-2009). Early in April, the show was "rebooted" on TLC (new episodes air Saturdays at 8:00 p.m.). Davis, 48, is again the host, and the premise is the same: couples swap homes and have a limited budget to redo each other's homes with the help of a designer.

Now streaming on Hulu is the first season of *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle*, the classic '60s animated series. The show functioned on two levels. It worked as a children's show, but frequently made references and jokes that were directed at adults (often hip, well-read adults). Two Jewish actors voiced a lot of the series' iconic characters. **PAUL FREES** (1920-1966), born Solomon Hersh Frees, was the voice of baddie Boris Badenov and Captain "Wrongway" Peachfuzz. **JUNE FORAY** (1917-2017) was the voice of Rocky, baddie Natasha Fatale and every other female character in the show (including distinct cartoons within the show, like Dudley Do-Right).

Foray (born Forer) was the daughter of a Lithuanian Jewish immigrant and a French Canadian mother who converted to Judaism. Look up the amazing list of voice roles she created during a career that lasted 70 years. Foray was the greatest female voice actor of all time. Her only competition for the greatest, male or female, is **MEL BLANC** (1908-1989). Look him up, too.

Reasonable people can differ on whether they like the usually dirty

# Interested in Your Family's History?

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

## So here's the deal:

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

stand-up humor of **GILBERT GOTTFRIED**, 63. Sometimes I like Gottfried's humor – dirty or not – and sometimes he doesn't amuse me at all. However, I was charmed and touched by the documentary film about his life, *Gilbert*, which was released in 2017 and is now streaming on Hulu. He wed his girlfriend of ten years, **DARA KRAVITZ**, now 48, in 2007, and they now have two lovable young children. Kravitz is a film producer and a former top record promotion executive.

She is the perfect wife for Gilbert – a miracle really. She's smart, funny, nurturing and tolerant of his huge quirks and neuroses. She laughs at stuff that would turn off many other women. Gilbert's wife and kids clearly adore him and just seem to accept his quirks and his absences due to frequent road trips. The unexpected continues as we see how kind Gilbert is to his sisters (lots of home movie stuff) and how they, too, adore him. Forget whether you like his comedy. This is a great

and oddly heartwarming Jewish family story.

## Michelle Wolf

The now-famous comedian Michelle Wolf is not Jewish. *The Times of Israel*, while mentioning her tour of Israel a few years back, stated she is not Jewish. Also, **LARISA KLEBE**, the Deputy Director of the Jewish Women's Archive, a quite good website, says she asked Wolf if she was Jewish by messaging her via Instagram last year and Wolf replied that she isn't Jewish. Google Larisa Klebe and Michelle Wolf and you'll find two articles Klebe wrote about Wolf. The most recent one is a smart exploration of how the criticism of Wolf often veers into anti-Semitic tropes. ▲

**What do you think? Need to reach the editor of L'CHAYIM? Send an email to LChayim36@gmail.com.**

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# Highly original novel explores the damage that false spiritual gurus can inflict

Book review by Philip K. Jason, Special to L'CHAYIM

*The Kabbalah Master*,  
by Perle Besserman. Monkfish.  
202 pages. Trade paperback \$15.95.

Besserman has penned a fascinating portrait of an insecure Jewish woman, Sharon Berg, who in her mid-thirties becomes infatuated with a somewhat charismatic spiritual leader. Rabbi Albert Joachim is the head of The Center for Mystical Judaism. Sharon studies there and becomes a slave to her “Kabbalah Master.” She works long hours for little pay and scant attention.

Sharon’s life had run aground. Divorced, with two children, and with few prospects, she is easy prey to her own imagination.

Her needs are projected on an imagined version of a caring Rabbi Joachim who seems to be simply using her. Sharon fantasizes that he will return her love. Perhaps divorce his wife and marry her.

Unable to properly parent her children, she had invited her mother to move in and help out. This situation has an upside and a downside.

Set in Brooklyn’s Coney Island and other sections of New York, *The Kabbalah Master* offers a rich ethnic taste. Its temporal setting is 1972, a time of social change and continuing experimentation initiated in the 1960s.

Perle Besserman knows the territory and handles it with authority.

Sharon, a somewhat time-worn, nice Jewish girl, is desperate for validation. Enter Junior Cantana. Junior is seven years younger than Sharon and gives the first impression of being much younger than that. Their meeting is fortuitous. To Sharon’s eyes, he has movie-star looks. He is polite, caring, and alternates between seeming vulnerable and sure of himself. There is a genuine attraction between this couple.

However, they have backgrounds that put pressure on a possible relationship. What is Sharon doing, she imagines others saying, flirting with this younger man. She wonders herself. The image of Rabbi Joachim flits through her mind, his gravitas, learning and remarkable allure so much in contrast to Junior’s aura. Lots of little things define him. “He smelled pleasantly of trees in the rain.” Sharon has always believed her destiny is to marry a Jewish man, to raise Jewish children, and to deepen her Jewish knowledge and identity. She already attempted that life, and though the Jewish children are still there, the husband is gone.

Can she really flourish in a relationship with this Italian-American Vietnam War veteran? Is her attraction to him a counterbalance to her adoration of

Rabbi Joachim? Won’t she always seem an old lady in his circle of friends?

Rabbi Joachim is not present for a substantial part of the novel. He is off visiting his wife and children in Israel. Jewish mysticism, however, continues to be represented by a neighborhood occult book store owned and run by Seymour Priceman. He is also Rabbi Joachim’s publisher. An astute businessman, he admits to having absolutely no personal interest in the concerns of the books he sells and publishes.

Ms. Besserman, through Priceman’s stance, suggests that most who dabble in mysticism, Jewish or otherwise, are charlatans. Clearly enough, in the author’s view, many are. And in that group, perhaps, is Rabbi Joachim, whose writings on the curative powers of herbs are under attack. The “clover cure” has caught the attention of the FDA.

And yet Priceman, who is as publisher is likely to be sued, is willing to believe that Rabbi Joachim is sincere, although misguided in his enthusiasms.

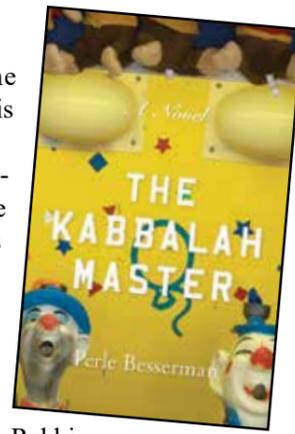
There is a lot to like about this book. Many chapters read like detachable vignettes of New York life, the main characters peripheral to others who populate these scenes. These sections are not at all distracting; rather, they set Sharon into a larger, richer and more complex cultural environment.

Moreover, though the story’s main thrust aligns with serious current concerns about false, manipulating gurus taking advantage of women, readers will find a smile on the author’s face. The book is rich with a wise and unexpected humor.

Will Sharon be able to build a new life for herself? Read the book and make your own decision.

#### About the author

Recipient of the Theodore Hoepfner Fiction Award and past writer-in-residence at the Mishkenot Sha’ananim Artists’ Colony in Jerusalem, Pushcart Prize-nominee Perle Besserman was praised by Isaac Bashevis Singer for the “clarity and feeling for mystic lore” of her writing, and by *Publisher’s Weekly* for its “wisdom [that] points to a universal practice of the heart.” Houghton Mifflin published her autobiographical novel *Pilgrimage*, and her short fiction has appeared in *The Southern Humanities Review*, *AGNI*, *Transatlantic Review*, *Nebraska Review*, *Southerly*, *North American Review* and *Bamboo Ridge*, among others. Her books have been recorded and released in both audio and e-book versions and translated into over ten languages. Her most recent books of creative non-fiction are *A New Zen for Women* (Palgrave Macmillan) and *Zen Radicals, Rebels, and Reformers*, coauthored with Manfred Steger (Wisdom Books). Two novels, *Kabuki Boy* and *Widow Zion*, and *Yeshiva Girl*, a story collection, are available from Aqueous Books, Pinyon Publishing and Homebound Publishing, respectively.



A Q&A with Perle Besserman, author of *The Kabbalah Master: A Novel*

**When did you start writing?**

I published my first story when I was 9.

**What inspired you?**

I was trained as an actor, singer and dancer from an early age, so my life

as a performer influenced my vision of life as a narrative filled with multiple characters and situations calling for expression.

**Where do those characters and stories come from?**

They are enacted on the stage of my imagination, my dreams and my memories, similarly to what William Butler Yeats described as a sort of mediumistic trance.

**What was your childhood like?**

My parents were both storytellers. Books, movies and the arts in general were the basis for the life drama enacted at home – a perfect maelstrom of love and conflict between creativity and Jewish orthodoxy.

**Why write about Kabbalah?**

It was part of my spiritual search. I also made trips around the world and wrote books about “Oriental Mysticism” and women’s spirituality (*The Way of Witches*). I sat with Tibetan and Sufi teachers and found my home, finally, in Zen.

**How do you feel about writing in the digital age?**

I start out with a problem, so I can’t answer that question objectively. Years ago, when first working on a computer, I discovered that my electromagnetic field was antithetical to computers and most digital devices. Things got so crazy, when I was teaching at Illinois State University, that my department chair had to bring in the IT staff to see why I was killing the list serve, and why my syllabi couldn’t get downloaded. Anyway, the IT people tested me (a couple of Bell Labs physicists had studied the problem years before) and found that I was among 4% of the population with that electromagnetic field problem. So, all I can say is that my creative urge, the characters and situations demanding to be written, are still alive and well despite my fraught relationship with the digital age.

**Who are among your favorite authors?**

James Joyce, Flaubert, Dickens, the Brontes, Alice Munro, W.B. Yeats, Homer... In spite of his solipsism and sexism, I kind of like Karl Ove Knausgaard, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, to name a few.

**Where do you get your material?**

The stage of my imagination is filled with characters and stories needing to be told. I tune in and listen. Sometimes that stage is bare, so I have to stay quiet and respectfully wait for the characters and their stories to enter. ▲

Philip K. Jason is Professor Emeritus of English from the United States Naval Academy. He reviews regularly for Florida Weekly, Jewish Book World, Southern Literary Review, and other publications. Please visit Phil’s website at [www.philjason.wordpress.com](http://www.philjason.wordpress.com).



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Perle Besserman

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# The boxer who cared

By Paul R. Bartrop, PhD

Exactly eighty years ago, on June 22, 1938, arguably the most famous boxing match in history took place at Yankee Stadium, New York, when the German heavyweight champion, Max Schmeling, confronted American hero Joe Louis. The fight was to have implications beyond a simple sporting contest.

Of modest background, Schmeling was born on September 28, 1905. He became a professional boxer at the age of 19 and won the German light heavyweight title two years later. On June 19, 1927, he won the European light heavyweight title, and then the German heavyweight crown. Moving quickly to the number-two ranking and a shot at the heavyweight title, on June 12, 1930, he met Jack Sharkey to settle the title. Schmeling won when Sharkey was disqualified after delivering a low blow – the only occasion in boxing history when the heavyweight championship was won by disqualification.

In April 1933, not long after Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany, he summoned Schmeling for a private dinner meeting with himself and several leading Nazi officials. He told Schmeling that while in the United States he should inform the American public that reports about Jewish persecution in Germany were untrue. When Schmeling arrived in New York he complied, saying that there was no anti-Semitism in

Germany and emphasizing the point that his manager, Joe Jacobs, was Jewish.

Later that year, Schmeling suffered defeat at the hands of Max Baer before a crowd of 60,000 at Yankee Stadium. The loss was deemed a “racial and cultural disgrace” in Germany, where it was considered outrageous that Schmeling would even have had to fight a “non-Aryan.” Baer’s father was Jewish, and Baer himself fought wearing shorts emblazoned with a Star of David.

By this stage Schmeling was viewed as a something of a Nazi puppet. On March 10, 1935, he fought and knocked out American Steve Hamas in Hamburg, and the 25,000 spectators spontaneously stood and sang the *Horst Wessel* (the Nazi anthem), with arms raised in the Hitler salute. This caused outrage in the United States, with Schmeling now being publicized in Germany as the very model of Aryan supremacy and Nazi racial superiority, something he would detest all his life.

The American public was desperate for Schmeling to return to the United States for another fight, this time against the young American hero, the “Brown Bomber,” Joe Louis. On June 19, 1936, the fight took place at Yankee Stadium. As Schmeling’s record of late had not been strong, he was a 10-1 underdog, and many people thought that at 30 years of age he was past his prime.

Yet Schmeling had studied Louis’s technique closely and found a weakness in his defense. In the 12<sup>th</sup> round, he scored what some consider the upset of the century, when he sensationally knocked Louis out. In Germany, the

Nazi press – to Schmeling’s dismay – boasted that the victory represented white Aryan supremacy. When he returned to Berlin, he was invited by Hitler to join him for lunch.

The rematch, at Yankee Stadium on June 22, 1938, became a cultural and political event. It was billed as a battle of the “Aryan versus the Negro,” a struggle of evil against good. Held before a crowd of over 70,000, the match saw a determined and highly-motivated Joe Louis knock Schmeling out within two minutes and four seconds of the first round.

Schmeling said later he was relieved to have lost, as the defeat removed Nazi expectations of his abilities. It made it easier for him to refuse to act as a Nazi, and he was shunned by Hitler and the Nazi hierarchy for having “shamed” the Aryan Superman ideal. Hitler never forgave Schmeling for losing to Louis.

On the night of November 9, 1938, as anti-Semitic mobs were sacking Jewish property throughout the Reich during the *Kristallnacht*, Schmeling’s opposition to Nazism was tested as never before. One of his Jewish friends, David Lewin, begged in desperation for Schmeling to shelter his two sons, Heinz (14) and Werner (15). Without hesitation, Schmeling took them to his room in the downtown Excelsior Hotel and kept them there for three days, telling the desk clerk that he was ill and must not be disturbed. Risking his life to save the two brothers, he then helped them escape Berlin. After things settled down, he drove them to his house for further hiding. Waiting another two

days, he then delivered them safely to their father.

In 1939, Schmeling helped the family to flee the country altogether. They went to the United States where Heinz (now Henri) became a prominent hotel owner in Las Vegas.

During World War II a still enraged Adolf Hitler saw to it that at the age of 35, Schmeling would be drafted into the Luftwaffe as an elite paratrooper, where he served during the Battle of Crete in May 1941. It was said that the Führer took a personal interest in seeing to it that the former champion would be sent on suicide missions.

After the war and in retirement, Schmeling became one of Germany’s most revered and respected sports figures. He remained popular not only in Germany, but also in America. He became friends with many of his former foes, particularly his old opponent, Joe Louis. Schmeling would often help him financially, and their friendship lasted until Louis’s death in 1981, when Schmeling, in a final tribute, paid for the funeral.

Max Schmeling was a man in conflict with both the Hitler regime and the racial policies of Nazism. The degree of resistance he showed was built around a sense of what it was to be a decent human being. On February 2, 2005, he died at age 99, at his home in Hollenstedt, near Hamburg.▲

*Dr. Paul Bartrop is Professor of History and the Director of the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies at Florida Gulf Coast University. He can be reached at pbartrop@fgcu.edu.*

# The YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus

By Arlene Stolnitz

Browsing through music websites on the Internet is one of my favorite preoccupations. That’s what becomes of a “wannabe” writer with a focus on the Judaic music world! Recently, I happened upon a unique group that caught my attention.

The incredible power of music is evident in this wonderful group of young singers who are destined to become the leaders of peace in their communities. They are known as the YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus. Learning about them makes me think it will be the younger generation who will be on the forefront of “repairing the world.”

For starters, their home page is written in three languages: English, Hebrew and Arabic! That says a lot in itself, since the goal of the program is to encourage understanding through song and dialogue among Israeli and Palestinian youth in Jerusalem. Their mission states, “Through the co-creation of music and the sharing of stories, the chorus seeks to empower youth in Jerusalem to become leaders in their communities and inspire singers and listeners around the world to work for peace.”

The singers are young people, high school students, ages 14-19, from East and West Jerusalem, who come together in a common experience and, in the process, experience understanding, community and a shared identity. Their music can be described as somewhere between Pop, Arabic Classical, Hip-Hop and Chant. In the words of a description in their album *Home*, *בתיב חיב*, braving violence and fear, the singers, both Israeli and Palestinian alike, support each other in creating a space that is a home for all, and in doing so show what Jerusalem can be.

The group was established in 2012 by Founder and Director Micah Hendler, an award-winning singer and music

director from Yale University who has studied the intersection between music and conflict transformation. Hendler has spent years developing this model based on his paper, “I Am a Seed of Peace: Music and Israeli-Arab Peacemaking.” Much of this writing and other papers he has authored are the basis for the YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus model. It is an official program of the Jerusalem International YMCA and the Jerusalem Foundation, an independent community foundation that supports an equitable and open place where people from all walks of life can feel comfortable.

The chorus’ current director is Nizar Alkhatir, an Israeli classical pianist and composer who brings a wealth of musical experience to the group, both from his work in Israel and throughout Europe. He has specialized in organizing projects for youth music education and youth orchestra. In addition to the YMCA Youth Chorus, he directs a choir for people with physical limitations and special needs.

The chorus has about 30 singers with an equal balance between Arab and Jewish membership. The Arab members are roughly one-third Christian and two-thirds Muslim with a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds among them. The repertoire is diverse, sung in several languages, including English, Arabic, Hebrew and others. The music is a type of East-West musical fusion with a mix of creative and innovative arrangements. One number is an arrangement of a Sufi chant. Rehearsals are held weekly and run for three and a half hours, mostly in English except for necessary translations for speakers of Arabic and Hebrew.

Here are some of the comments from the singers themselves:

“You get to know the other side... you get to be together, you get to see what it’s like being with kids different than you.” – Avital, Israeli singer

“The choir is beautiful and we enjoy it because we are Arabs and Jews together at the same time.” – Ameer, Palestinian singer

“I only knew Israelis. I had never met any Arabs before I came here. I wasn’t sure what I expected, but what I realized was we are all the same.” – Shifra, Israeli singer

“I live in Israel, I’m an Arab, there’s Jewish people... but I never talked to them... I never knew their opinion. After joining this choir it changed my life. It made me know what they think. It made them know what I think.” – Samia, East Jerusalem

I urge you to visit the YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus website at [www.ymca.jerusalemouthchorus.org](http://www.ymca.jerusalemouthchorus.org). As with me, you will be blown away. I promise. You may even buy their CD.▲

*Arlene Stolnitz, founder of the Sarasota Jewish Chorale, is a member of the Jewish Congregation of Venice. A retired educator from Rochester, New York, she has sung in choral groups for over 25 years and also sings in Venice’s Chorale (formerly Exsultate!). Her interest in choral music has led to this series of articles on Jewish folk music in the Diaspora.*



Arlene Stolnitz

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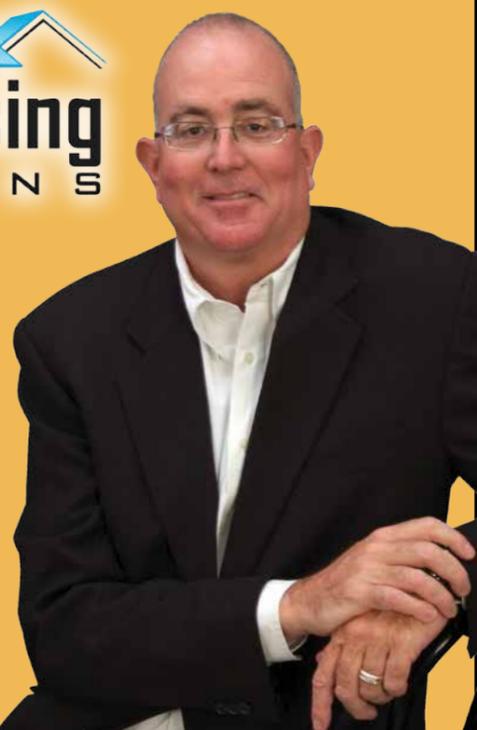
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# The French pronounce it "Terr-WAH"

By The Wine Whisperer

**T**erroir. It's a word from the wine world, and like most of them, it's French. And like most French words, it means more than just the limited definition of "earth" or "land" or "dirt."

In winespeak, terroir refers to the specific place where the grapes are grown. But, as mentioned above, it's much more than that. In the widest sense, it means everything about that specific place: the soil, elevation, drainage, the direction the vineyard faces, how the fog from the ocean keeps the grapes cool in the morning, and what time it burns off. And in a way, even the winemaking traditions of the particular area.

In many regions, the soil is very site-specific. My vineyard may have a vein of limestone running beneath it, which imparts certain qualities to the grapes grown there. My neighbor's vineyard, just a few feet on the other side of the cart path, doesn't have any limestone. That's why I get \$5,000 a ton for my grapes, and he has to sell

his for only \$2,000.

The concept of terroir varies in importance and significance depending on the country and region. In the Old World (France, Spain, Italy, Germany) it's critical. Grapes grown in a certain region, vineyard, and even a particular part of a vineyard are carefully – and precisely – classified. In fact, wine is the very first product in history to establish and promote geographic indications. We don't do it with broccoli or asparagus. In Florida, we do it with oranges.

But there's some indication that the idea of giving winegrowing regions specific geographical indications is more of a marketing ploy than a designation of quality. According to a recent article in *Forbes* magazine, this whole idea of a link between location and quality is a big sticking point in international trade disputes. The question is, should we, as wine lovers, care about this? Well...yes.

As far back as 1756, in Portugal, wealthy vineyard owners lobbied for special designations of quality...for their own properties, of course. From this, regulations were established about which grapes could be grown where, and other laws about how the wine must be made. Today, it's much

more complex than that.

In Europe, and especially in France, there are government ministries, like wine police, that decree which vineyards are in the "St. Julien" appellation, for example, and why the vineyards 100 feet away across the cart path aren't. And these decrees are strictly enforced. In the U.S., the delineation of American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) is controlled by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives. This gives me the giggles every time I think about it.

Nevertheless, knowing where your wine comes from can be important. Certain grapes grow best in certain areas, and it makes a difference (especially in the price) whether your Cabernet Sauvignon comes from Napa or Noplace. It's the climate, the fog off the river or ocean, the kind of yeast that grows on the grapes...it's everything.

Now for this week's new favorites...

**Guigal Côtes du Rhône Blanc 2015 (\$10)** The Guigal family doesn't make every single wine in the northern Rhone. It just seems like it. This value-priced white is the traditional blend of Viognier, Roussanne and Marsanne. Hugely aromatic, with flavors of pear, flowers and a pronounced note of

minerality. The floral notes are a bit on the sweet side, but quite pleasant. Great value. WW 88.

**Guigal Côtes du Rhône Red 2013 (\$9)** Very true to type, this traditional blend of Grenache and Syrah (and perhaps a few others) gives you a light-bodied treat of black cherry, blueberry and leather with a medium finish. A good selection for weekday enjoyment. WW 89

**Ask the Wine Whisperer**

*I've heard that a coffee filter can remove sulfites from wine. Is that true?*  
– Steve N., New York

Sorry, no. Sulfites occur naturally as a by-product of fermentation, so you'll find them in all wines. Winemakers often add more sulfites as a preservative, and in fact only about 1% of the population is actually allergic to them. More people experience headaches or other discomfort from histamines in wine and, of course, from the alcohol. **▲** Jerry Greenfield is *The Wine Whisperer*. He is Creative Director of Greenfield Advertising Group, and Wine Director of the international Direct Cellars wine club. His book, *Secrets of the Wine Whisperer*, is available through his website. Read his other writings at [www.winewhisperer.com](http://www.winewhisperer.com).

# Israel: 70 years of history through food – recipe by Dalia Hemed

**J**oin me on a journey through the last 70 years to honor how Israel has become one of the most creative and innovative countries as well as a rising food capital.

Israel's story is a phenomenal one. It's the story of a country that was founded 70 years ago in the middle of a desert, with few natural resources, and a backdrop of relentless war and terror. And yet, against all odds, Israel managed to build a nation that is not only strong and democratic, but also one of the most innovative and creative nations of the world today. And over the past few years, Israel has become somewhat of a culinary capital, boasting several high-class boutique restaurants in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and other cities, which serve a fusion of typical Israeli street food and much more than just falafel.

Most people start tasting and even smelling falafel the very second they land in Israel. Most people arrive in the beautiful White City of Tel Aviv, or the workaholic and beautiful green-landscaped Haifa, and the first forced stop after dropping their bags is the nearest and tastiest falafel spot.

But there's much more to Israeli food than just these spectacular fried balls of chickpea dough.

Oh yes, Israel is one heck of a place to come to if you're into eating good food! There is such a variety of amazingly delicious foods available in Israel, largely due to the huge melting pot of culture and immigrants from 120 different countries! You'll be spoiled by the choices.

I'd like to take this opportunity to share with you today and for the next few months some Israeli recipes that you don't want to miss on your next visit to the land of milk and honey.

So put that drooling tongue away and wash those hands – there's no need for knives and forks with these delights!

Since we are all familiar with the falafel, Israel's National Food, I am more than happy to start our journey by introducing the recipe of the Israeli national dessert, malabi (Israeli milk pudding). If you like creamy, sweet things, slide a spoon into the softly yielding white mass and put it in your mouth. You'll taste rose-flavored sweetness and a light, creamy texture that keeps you dipping your spoon back in until the pudding is all gone.

Malabi is made in 10 minutes. It



sounds like a dessert for children, and children naturally do love it, but malabi has been served in restaurants and at dinner parties.

As a little girl in Israel, one of the first desserts I ever made for my family was malabi. It is served in one big dish and everybody scoops the malabi from this one big dish. You will find it in every little kiosk or restaurant you pass as you wander the streets of Old Jaffa where I grew up. It's presented

very simply, usually in a plastic container with some desiccated coconut, chopped walnuts and red syrup on top. But don't let the modest exterior fool you. It's one of my most treasured, favorite sweet dishes.

As a chef, I wanted to create a modern interpretation of the classic malabi, so every element has received an upgrade. You can either go for the modern-style version and serve it in individual ramekins with all the fancy toppings, or do it my family's way – one big bowl and everyone digs in with their spoon. In either case, you can revert to the traditional simple toppings. My heart belongs to both.

**Ingredients:**

**Malabi**

- 3/4 cups milk
- 1 cups whipping cream
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 4 tbsp cornstarch, diluted in 1/4 cup water
- 1 tsp rosewater
- Walnut brittle
- Red sweet syrup

**Walnut brittle**

- 1/2 cup walnuts
- 1/4 cup sugar

**Red syrup**

- 1 tsp red food coloring
- 1 tsp rose water
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup sugar

**Directions:**

- ▶ To make the malabi, set aside 1/2 cup of the milk. Pour the rest into a heavy-bottomed saucepan with the cream and sugar, and simmer, stirring gently until the sugar has dissolved. Add the cornstarch to the milk you have set aside along with the rose water, and stir until thoroughly blended and there are no lumps of cornstarch left. The best tool to use here is your fingers, as it's the only way to ensure that the malabi has a smooth texture. When the creamy milk boils, give the cornstarch one final stir before adding it to the saucepan of creamy milk. Simmer over a low heat until the mixture begins to thicken, stirring constantly to make sure there are no lumps. This should take no longer than 2 minutes.
- ▶ Once thickened, pour the mixture either into 4 individual ramekins,



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

- or a large bowl if you're going family-style. Cover with plastic wrap and leave to cool to room temperature, and then chill in the fridge for a couple of hours. The malabi can be kept in the fridge for up to three days. Now make the toppings.
- ▶ To make red syrup, bring sugar and water to a boil in a 1-qt. saucepan. Stir in the rose water and food coloring to make syrup.
- ▶ To make the walnut brittle, preheat your oven to 350° F. Spread the walnuts out on a baking sheet and toast in the oven for 7 minutes.
- ▶ To make the caramel for the walnut brittle, heat a heavy-bottomed nonstick pan over a low heat and add the sugar in one even layer. The most important thing here is not to stir. If you're worried about burning, add a couple of drops of water, but otherwise let it be. Once all the sugar has melted and you have a golden caramel, take the pan off the heat, stir in the toasted walnuts and then transfer to a tray lined with parchment paper. Leave to cool completely, and then chop finely.
- ▶ To serve malabi, top each pudding with the rose water syrup, walnut brittle and coconut, and enjoy the explosion of flavors and textures. **▲**

**Look for Chef Dalia Hemed's recipes each month in the pages of L'CHAYIM.**

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# An unforgettable three hours with a veteran named Joe

As remembered by Robert Peller

I'm Bob and I am Jewish. As such, I have always been driven to try to understand Hitler's incorrigible hatred of the Jews and his passion to exterminate them.

In 1995 I was 47 years old and still hadn't learned the answer. We were living in Northern New Jersey, in a small borough named Wanaque. One Sunday while reading the local *Wayne Today* newspaper, I spotted an article about a group of WWII American war veterans who had just returned from a reunion in Europe to mark their liberation of a Nazi Concentration Camp in southern Germany 50 years earlier.

One veteran, Joe, lived in our town. I phoned him, and he eagerly accepted my dinner invitation. He said he would share his military experiences (and unknown to me at the time, his personal horror story). A week later, Joe arrived at my house and he wasn't an "average Joe." He was a lot taller and bigger than I first thought. Joe was not Jewish; he was Catholic. He did not have much of a history with Jewish people before his military service or throughout most of the war. After dinner, Joe told us the story of his WWII experiences, starting as a Military Policeman in France. He found this boring and kept requesting a transfer for more "action." He regretted this because he was sent into action at the front lines. After fighting the Nazis for several years, peace was at hand. In the spring of 1945, his Army Company was assigned the mission of liberating a Concentration Camp in southern Germany. He and his fellow soldiers asked their captain what exactly a Concentration Camp was. The officer wasn't sure, but thought it was a prison camp for political prisoners.

Joe and the other soldiers followed railroad tracks which they were told led

directly to the camp. Along the way, they encountered small arms fire from the remaining Nazi troops defending the area around the camp. They pushed the Nazis back and continued unscathed up the tracks. Upon reaching the "Camp," they were surprised by well-manicured lawns with shrub beds. They knew this could not be a prison facility and thought they were lost. The captain reviewed the map and determined they were indeed at the correct location. The soldiers proceeded through the barbed wire gates into the camp. They found the camp deserted. Not one prisoner or German soldier was in sight. The only things they saw were many long buildings. Everything appeared to be dirty and in disrepair.

The captain divided the platoon into several groups of six men. Each had the task of entering the buildings and report what they had seen. They were advised to use caution because enemy soldiers could be hiding inside. Joe was the first one from his group to enter the building. He opened the door and saw a sight which he told me that he still sees when he shuts his eyes at night (50 years later). He hadn't slept a peaceful night in 50 years, ever since he and his Army buddies had liberated that Concentration Camp in 1945. They saw the skin and bones of men, some dead, some barely alive, laying on long racks. It was dead quiet inside as the prisoners did not understand who these soldiers were. They had never seen an American soldier before and were not able to understand their language. Each side was frozen in fear. The soldiers' blood drained from their exposed skin. They became pale as white snow. Most grew faint. Joe and the five other battled-hardened soldiers ran from the building and rejoined the captain and

other men, sobbing uncontrollably and hysterically as they ran.

After Joe attempted to tell the captain what was inside the building, the captain ordered his men to regroup. The captain went inside the building, saw what his men had seen and tried unsuccessfully to communicate with the prisoners, who were still cowering in fear. He left the barracks and tried to restore order with his men who were visibly in shock, many shaking and crying. When some semblance of calm was restored, Joe and the other groups reentered the buildings and attempted to assure the prisoners they meant them no harm, and were there to set them free.

The captain determined that the prisoners were primarily Jewish because of their language. Coincidentally, two of the soldiers spoke some Yiddish and could communicate with these poor souls. They were told the story of their incarceration; their being starved and worked to death; the losses of their entire families; the constant fear and dread; the hopelessness; the rampant diseases and afflictions; their brutal treatment by the guards; and the daily executions.

They hadn't seen their Nazi guards in days, but were afraid to leave their barracks because they didn't know where to go. Each survivor had bones protrude from their skin. Their eyes bulged from their sockets. Their clothes worn and ragged. Sores on their faces and bodies. Caved-in faces. Joe said these were the living dead, stripped of their humanity. Joe and others tried to offer these malnourished creatures, some barely alive, food, but the army medic advised not to feed them, lest they perish from eating something their frail bodies could not process.

While other soldiers outside

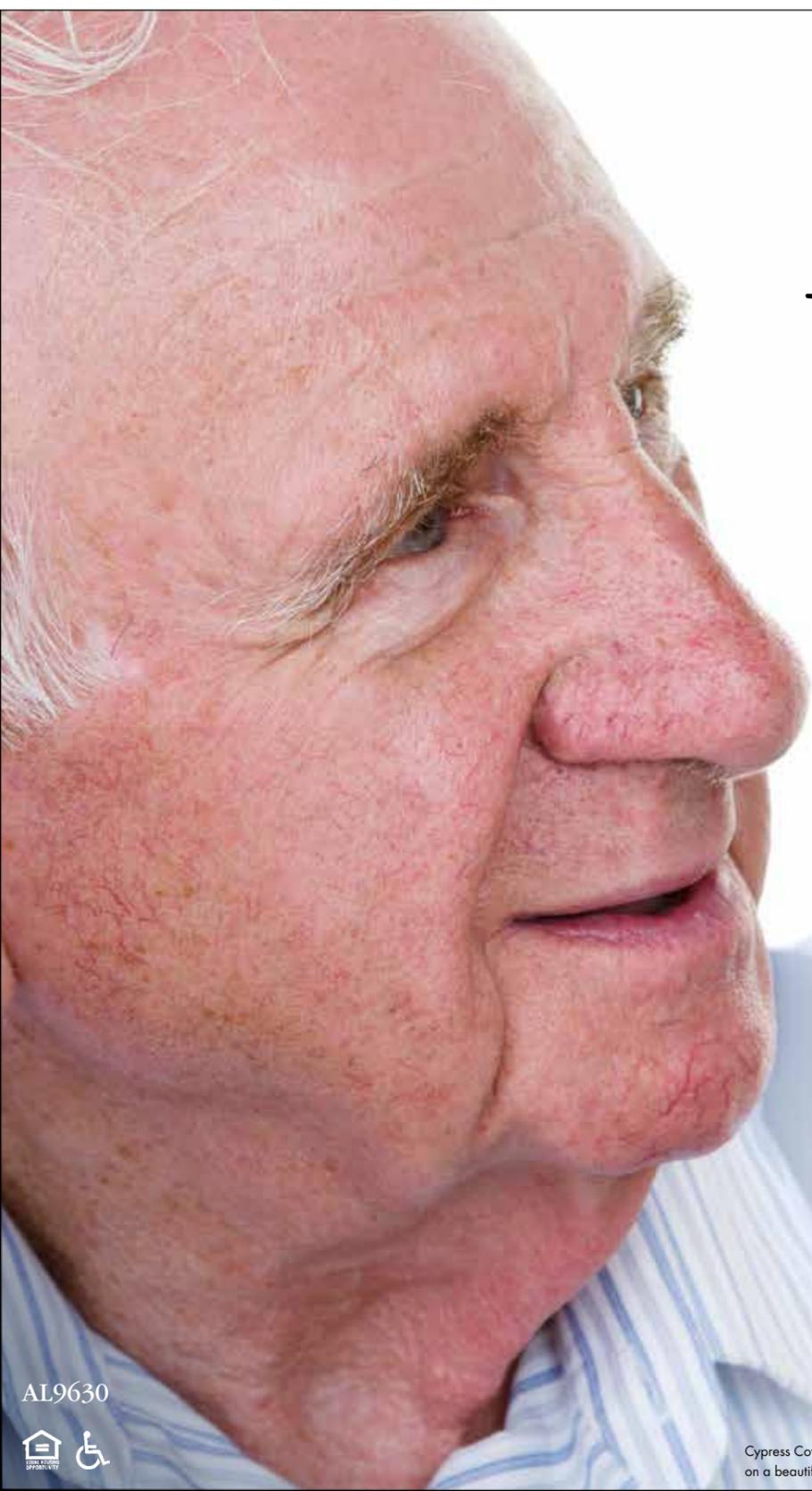
searched the camp area for escaping German guards, Joe and the other men slowly evacuated the buildings with the survivors. The captain had to deal with another problem which required immediate resolution. The soldiers who witnessed these horrific sights were hell-bent on wreaking unbridled, medieval revenge on any of the German guards they captured. The captain admonished his men, stating that killing a captive German soldier would be treated as murder. The offending U.S. soldier would face a court martial. Joe said several of the soldiers did not obey the captain's orders and took matters into their own hands.

The soldiers were not prepared to treat and support the massive number of survivors. The captain radioed for additional troops, medical personnel and supplies, which arrived in short order. The survivors were treated for their problems, mostly malnutrition, as best as possible, and then transported to a medivac holding area. Joe bonded with one of the survivors and they became lifelong friends. This survivor eventually immigrated to the U.S. and became a prominent industrialist in Cleveland. Joe and this survivor kept in touch regularly through the years. It was this survivor who paid for Joe and his wife's trip to Europe for the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion of the Concentration Camp's liberation.

Joe said it took years after his army discharge to achieve some sense of normalcy after being an eyewitness to the unforgettable horrors he encountered.

My story ends here, but the memories of that night with a veteran named "Joe" will never be forgotten. We all should never forget the story he told and remain vigilant that it will never happen again.

*Robert Peller lives in Estero.*



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# Israel's population nears 9 million

**Israel's population stands at 8.84 million on the eve of its 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, and there are 8,000 active high-tech companies.**

By ISRAEL21c Staff, [www.israel21c.org](http://www.israel21c.org), April 16, 2018

Israel's population on the eve of the country's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday stands at 8.84 million according to the Central Bureau of Statistics, 10 times more than it was in May 1948, when the population was just 806,000.

The Jewish population now stands at 6.59 million (74.5% of the total), the Arab population is 1.85 million (20.9%), and others (Christians or members of other religions) make up 404,000 (4.6%) of the population.

Over the last year, Israel's population grew by 163,000 people, some 28,000 of them new immigrants to the country.

Since Israel was founded, more than 3.2 million people have immigrated to the country – most arriving in the 1950s, when the population doubled within four years, and then again in the 1990s, as nearly one million immigrants from the former Soviet Union made their way to Israel.

Over the last 70 years, Israel has undergone massive societal changes. In 1948, the average life expectancy in Israel was 64 years for men and 67 for women. Today that figure has risen to 80.7 years for men and 84.2 years for women. In the UN World Happiness Report earlier this year, Israel was ranked

fifth on the longevity scale, after Japan, Korea, Switzerland and Italy.

In the same report, Israel came in at 11<sup>th</sup> place in overall happiness.

In 1948, 43% of the population owned their own homes, and just 3% owned a car. Today, 68% of Israelis own their own homes, and 70% own at least one vehicle.

Tourism has also seen tenfold growth, rising from 33,100 tourists in 1948 to Israel's highest-ever figure of 3,863,400 tourists in 2017. Israelis also love to travel out of the country. In 1948, the population made some 30,000 trips abroad. In 2017, they made a staggering

7,597,400 trips overseas.

Today, 44% of Israelis live in the country's 15 largest cities, and Jerusalem is the largest of them all with some 882,000 residents.

By 2048, Israel's population is predicted to reach 15.2 million.

In the high-tech industry, there are now 8,000 active high-tech companies operating in Israel, according to Israel Venture Capital Research Center. The center also reported there are 1,487 life science companies, 505 cyber security companies, 356 Israel accelerators and incubators, and 365 active foreign R&D centers.▲

## BRIEFS

### TOURISM TO ISRAEL KEEPS SMASHING RECORDS

February was a record month for tourism in Israel and 2017 was a record year, with more than 3.6 million visitors, says Dana Shemesh, the Southeast U.S. director of public relations for the Israel Ministry of Tourism.

Israel welcomed 949,000 tourists in the first three months of 2018, up 29% from the same quarter in 2017.

The biggest increases in March came from Poland, Sweden, Spain, Germany and France. (Sarah Moosazadeh, *Atlanta Jewish Times*)

### ISRAEL EARMARKS \$5.6 MILLION FOR TECHNOLOGY PARKS IN ARAB TOWNS

The Knesset committee for Arab affairs recently approved \$5.6 million for the creation of technology parks within Arab towns in Israel.

"The plan is expected to create conditions for the creation of thousands of new jobs" for Arabs in the high-tech sphere, the Prime Minister's Office said.

In 2015, the government earmarked

NIS 15 billion for the economic development of the Israeli Arab sector.

"Within just two years we have already witnessed a significant increase of many growth indicators in Arab society," said Social Equality Minister Gila Gamliel.

These include more Arab students taking high school matriculation exams, more Arab students enrolled in higher education programs, and higher employment rates. (Shoshanna Solomon, *Times of Israel*)

### EXPOSING IRAN'S NUCLEAR ARCHIVE: A FANTASTIC INTELLIGENCE FEAT

The Israeli intelligence community has once again proved it has extraordinary capabilities.

Reaching the secret Iranian nuclear archives, stored in an ordinary building so as not to attract attention, entering the facility and transferring the contents to Israel are all abilities that will remain important in future efforts to identify any Iranian attempt to deviate from the framework of the nuclear accord.

The Iranians should internalize

that they have been penetrated, that Israel has the ability to reach the most sensitive places in Tehran, and that they should think twice before they act. (Maj.-Gen. (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, former National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of Israel and former Head of Israel's National Security Council, *Israel Hayom*)

### SOME OF THE 70 REASONS I LOVE ISRAEL

Israel helped 30 countries foil terrorist attacks in 2017. Israeli technology helped identify the terrorists on the overwhelming output of the surveillance cameras at the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013.

*continued on next page*

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## BRIEFS

*continued from previous page*

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Over 500 million birds migrate through the skies of Israel twice a year, but a researcher, using radar, a motorized glider, drones and a network of birdwatchers, planned alternate commercial air routes, reducing bird-plane collisions by 76%.

Israelis have more children than any other Western democracy. Of Israeli moms with four or more children, 62.5% work full-time. Actually, double time.

According to Startup Genome, Tel Aviv has more start-ups per capita than anywhere else, and it has 61 companies on NASDAQ. That's more than Europe, Japan, Korea and China combined. Israel has the highest percentage of start-ups in the world and is second only to the U.S. in absolute terms. (Barbara Sofer, *Jerusalem Post*)

### JEWISH-ARAB DEMOGRAPHY DEFIES CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

In 2016, there were 3.16 births per Jewish woman in Israel compared with 3.11 per Arab woman. Almost all Arab girls in Israel and the West Bank now complete high school, and increasingly enroll in colleges and universities, a process that has delayed the wedding age. According to the Population Reference Bureau, women in the Palestinian Authority rank second (72%) – following Morocco (78%) and together with Jordan (70%) – among Muslim users of contraceptives and general avoidance of pregnancy.

Furthermore, an intense urbanization process has transformed Arabs in the West Bank from a 70% rural society in 1967 to a 75% urban society – from a society which provided a convenient environment for a multitude of children who were considered an essential labor force, to a society which does not require many children. Indeed, a dramatic decline in Islamic fertility rate has taken place throughout the Muslim world. Moreover, there has

been an Arab net-emigration from the West Bank of around 20,000 annually in recent years.

In 2017, the share of Jewish births in Israel was 76.5%. The rise of Israel's Jewish fertility rate is due to the secular Jewish sector, including the yuppies of Tel Aviv – a derivative of the high level of optimism and patriotism, the attachment to national roots, and a sense of collective-communal responsibility.

In 2018, notwithstanding official Palestinian numbers which are regurgitated without due diligence, there are 6.6 million Jews in Israel, next to 1.85 million Israeli Arabs and 1.85 million Arabs in the West Bank. (Yoram Ettinger, a member of the American-Israel Demographic Research Group, Jewish Policy Center)

### ISRAEL'S DEMOGRAPHIC MIRACLE: MAINSTREAM, EDUCATED, MIDDLE- CLASS ISRAELIS ARE HAVING CHILDREN

Today, the Jewish birthrate in Israel outpaces that of Arabs both in Israel and in the West Bank, and even in most Arab and Muslim countries. Modern society is indeed characterized by a trend of declining fertility rates that is particularly marked in developed countries. In 2015, the average fertility rate of women in the 35-member OECD was at 1.68 children per woman over the length of her childbearing years – below the average "replacement rate" of 2.1.

However, in the last generation, higher educational and income levels among Israeli Jews have correlated with a marked rise in fertility. In 2015, Israel's fertility rate in both Jewish and Arab sectors was 3.13. In 2000, Israeli Arab fertility was 4.5, while the Jewish rate was 2.6. Meanwhile, the Jewish rate continues to rise, with an estimate for 2017 of 3.16.

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, fertility has risen by 15-20% among most sectors of Israeli Jewish society. It is attributable to the combined decisions by millions of Jewish women and men of all Israeli social groups, variously described as traditionalist, non-religious or even secular, who have chosen to have many more children. (Ofir Haivry, an Israeli historian and political theorist, and vice president of the Herzl Institute in Jerusalem, *Mosaic*)▲

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# Israel versus Hamas: The case for moral clarity

By David Harris, AJC CEO, April 10, 2018

Two centuries ago, the great German poet Goethe said, “The hardest thing to see is what is in front of your eyes.”

It’s as true today as it was then. The difference between Hamas and Israel couldn’t be greater, yet you wouldn’t know it when listening to some observers.

For them, whether it’s Turkish President Erdogan or Swedish Foreign Minister Wallström, it’s basically all about Gaza’s innocence and Israel’s guilt. With nothing else to do but consider how to provoke peaceful, serene, Hamas-ruled Gaza, the big, bad Israelis have decided to make life difficult for local residents.

For a fair share of the media, it’s above all a story of Palestinian suffering at the hands of Israel’s military machine.

This is a perfect illustration of reverse causality. Hamas threatens and harasses Israel, but it is only Israel’s response that warrants close attention and scrutiny.

Indeed, Goethe was right. There are those who can’t, or won’t, see what’s right in front of them.

Ideological blinders get in the way. Or a failure of imagination about the true nature of Hamas. Or a gullibility that allows people to believe whatever the Hamas propaganda machine churns out. Or, in some cases, downright hostility to anything that Israel, the Jewish state, does.

It’s high time for moral clarity, not moral fog.

Hamas is a terrorist organization. That’s its official designation by the United States, the European Union, Australia, Canada and others.

Israel is a democratic country with an independent judiciary, the rule of law, free and fair elections, and a robust civil society.

Hamas is anti-Western, anti-Semitic, anti-gay, misogynist and anti-intellectual.

Israel is the exact opposite.

Hamas has territorial ambitions on Israel. In fact, that’s putting it too mildly: it would like to replace Israel in its entirety with a Muslim Brotherhood-ruled state.

Israel has no territorial ambitions

on Hamas-ruled Gaza. To the contrary, Israel left it totally 13 years ago, with the hope of never having to return.

Hamas has a vested interest in using its Gaza base for permanent confrontation with Israel.

Israel, which, alas, can’t change its geography, has a vested interest in a peaceful, moderate and developing state on its border.

Hamas, the sole ruler of Gaza since 2007, has used the last 11 years to smuggle in weaponry and develop military punch, rather than building the foundation of a responsible state.

Knowing this arsenal has been stockpiled for the sole purpose of being used against it, Israel seeks, as any nation would, to prevent Hamas from attaining its lethal goal.

Hamas has no compunction about deploying terrorist cells and weapons in the midst of civilian population centers in Gaza, or, most recently, deploying people along the border and encouraging breaches, fully aware that Israel would have no choice but to appear to be targeting “innocent” people.

Israel goes to unprecedented lengths to avoid falling into the Hamas trap, even phoning and dropping leaflets in advance to warn civilians to leave target areas.

Hamas cynically tells the civilian population to stay put, not to react to Israeli warnings about imminent strikes. The more Palestinian casualties, the better, as far as Hamas is concerned, including women and children.

Israel makes every effort to alert its entire population, Jewish, Christian and Muslim, to Hamas missile strikes and move people into shelters as quickly as possible.

Hamas uses mosques for storing arms.

Israel uses houses of worship, including mosques, solely for prayer.

Hamas uses schools as weapons depots.

Israel uses schools solely to educate its children, Jewish, Christian and Muslim.

Hamas uses hospitals as terrorist redoubts.

Israel uses its hospitals solely to

cure the ill and injured, including residents of Gaza who can’t find adequate care there.

Hamas aspires to kill as many Israelis as possible, firing rockets indiscriminately in all directions.

Israel seeks out only the Hamas terrorist infrastructure, and has aborted many operations when the risks of civilian casualties were too great.

Hamas, as the record amply shows, has no qualms about falsifying information, doctoring photos, staging scenes and inflating numbers to make its case to the outside world.

Israel, by contrast, goes to great lengths, even to the point of sometimes losing the edge in the “media race,” to verify information that it presents about its operations.

Hamas supporters explode in paroxysms of glee when Israeli targets are hit.

Israelis don’t honk horns, shoot in the air and pass out candy for doing what they wished they didn’t have to do in the first place, and voice regret when

the inevitable mistakes in warfare occur.

Hamas wouldn’t know how to spell the words “international humanitarian law,” much less adhere to it.

Israel’s defense forces have specialists in international humanitarian law assigned to every unit in an effort to ensure maximum compliance.

Hamas shouts from the rooftops that Israel is a brutal enemy.

Israel, unlike any other targeted nation in history, is actually providing – right now – most of Gaza’s electricity and much of its fuel and foodstuffs, even as Hamas leaders call for Israel’s annihilation and refer to Jews as targets to be exterminated.

Hamas celebrates death, something few people of good will can understand.

Israel celebrates life, something all people of good will should understand.▲

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

## COMMENTARY BRIEFS

### THE SILENCING OF PRO-ISRAEL STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

Campus anti-Israelism does not operate like a genuinely academic movement governed by ordinary intellectual norms (such as objectivity, rigor, and the pursuit of truth) and moral or social norms (such as civility and respect).

A movement governed by those norms would favor freedom of speech and welcome the diversity of views.

But campus anti-Israelists refuse even to consider the possibility that Israel is not entirely evil and that Israeli Jews, being not entirely demonic, have their own legitimate claim to self-determination.

No, anti-Israelism – particularly in its invasions, disruptions and personal attacks – is about something much darker.

Not dialogue, debate and free exchange of ideas; not openness, pluralism and diversity, and the pursuit of knowledge that (ought to) characterize the Western university, as well as the civilization of which the university is the heart – but rather: Silencing. (Andrew Pessin and Doron Ben-Atar, *Tablet*)

### HAMAS ATTACKS ISRAEL – AND THE WORLD CONDEMNS ISRAEL

With hundreds of Palestinians chanting, “We are going to Jerusalem, millions of martyrs,” Hamas leaders made clear that their “March of Return” is only the latest tactic in their efforts to destroy Israel. However, that hasn’t convinced much of the global community to abandon its comfortable narrative of a peace-loving Palestinian people in Gaza driven to violence by an iron-fisted Israel. However carefully it responds to violent efforts to breach its borders and attack its people, Israel finds itself falsely portrayed, second-guessed and ultimately condemned.

“Palestine and Jerusalem belong to us,” top Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh declared recently. Maybe Israel’s critics don’t realize that with their one-sided condemnations, they’re emboldening Hamas. Or maybe they do. (Larry Haas, senior fellow at the American Foreign Policy Council, served as senior communications director for Vice President Al Gore, *The Hill*)▲

## Anti-Semitism in Europe

By Jerrold L. Sobel, ZOA of SWFL President

There was an interesting, very telling poll published in the April 6, 2018 edition of the *New York Jewish Press*. According to a Pew Research Center survey: “20 percent of Central, Eastern Europeans do not accept Jews as fellow citizens.” Within this grouping, 32 percent of Armenians, 23 percent of Lithuanians, 22 percent of Romanians, 19 percent of Czechs, 18 percent of Poles, 16 percent of Greeks and 14 percent of Russians do not accept Jews as fellow citizens.

To some, such statistics are unfathomable given the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a backdrop, but in reality they’re not. Anti-Semitism in Europe has existed for the better part of two millennia. It has waxed and waned dependent upon the largess of a given ruler during a particular point in time. However, never has enmity toward Jews by a significant proportion of the European body politic been far below the surface.

From Jewish hatred espoused by the Patristic Fathers in the 5<sup>th</sup> century to the massacres of thousands of Jews at the hands of Polish Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Europe has never been a true homeland with equal rights for the Jewish people. From the blood libel claiming Jews kidnapped and murdered Christian children for their blood to the Spanish Inquisition,

to mass expulsions and ghettoization throughout the Middle Ages, the list of cruelty and deprivation is unending.

Rational thinking would surmise that enlightenment and industrialization from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries would have reversed such primitive thinking, but three waves of pogroms in Eastern Europe and Russia (1882-1922) culminating in the Holocaust proved otherwise. Taken in context to all this and an influx of recent Muslim refugees, the veracity of the aforementioned Pew poll can become axiomatic.

Melanie Phillips, famed British journalist, author and commentator, likewise agrees. In an article written for the April 12, 2018 edition of the *Jerusalem Post* entitled “The Toxic Reality of anti-Semitism,” she states, “Anti-Semitism in Europe has become mainstream and normalized at a level not seen since the Second World War.”

Agreeing with this premise, the president of the European Jewish Congress, Dr. Moshe Kantor, stated, “There has been an increase in open, unashamed and explicit hatred directed against Jews.”

Fortunately, Jews in Europe have an option never afforded to their ancestors – the State of Israel. No doubt the time may be prudent, as the saying goes, to get out while the getting is good.▲

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## We are all in this together

Some religious traditions refer to this verse as the "Golden Rule." Rabbi Akiva called it "the great principle of the Torah." And Mr. Rogers, of television fame, made it the central principle of his show, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. So, what makes this rule so special?

First, let's take a look at the verse itself. We read it in the Book of Leviticus, Chapter 19:18: "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your kinsfolk. Love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." The verse seems to be pretty clear. Whether we get disappointed, or angered, by our neigh-

bors or by our relatives, we are not allowed to "get back" at them, physically or emotionally. From a logical point of view, this hardly makes sense. If my neighbor cuts down a tree on my side of the property line or never reimburses me for the sugar and eggs she is always borrowing, why do I have to be the more mature one?

There is obviously a reason why we need this mitzvah, this commandment. We can all want to behave, from time to time, like the Hatfields and the McCoys. But Judaism calls us to a higher belief and practice. When we left Egypt behind, there was a religious revolution. We gave up the power politics of Egypt and we also gave up the idea of being totally separate from our neighbors. We are all in this together. Part of the idea of the covenant is that

we are all directly linked to one power source, which is God. Each member of the covenant then is as protected, and as special, as we are. To retaliate against a member of the Tribe, so to speak, would be to fight back against Hashem.

As we come to the last words of the verse, "as yourself," we have another lesson to learn. The text says that my neighbor is like me. Is that possible? She cut down my tree, he didn't repay my eggs, sugar and whatever else he borrowed. How can my neighbor be like me? My neighbor, whether I like it or not, has the same spark of the Divine, as I do. Sometimes I behave from my lower self and sometimes from my higher self. And that is exactly what my neighbor does as well.

The lesson is not about who can be

the more mature person, but about how much our ego predominates. When Yom Kippur rolls around, I will pray for my neighbor's sins to be forgiven, along with mine. So how can I add to that list of sins for both of us? The sages had a wonderful saying: "*Kol Yisrael aravim zeh b'zeh*." Each Israelite is responsible for every other Israelite. As one of my friends says, "We are all in this together." Maybe that is why this verse is called the Golden Rule. Now all we have to do is learn to live by it.▲

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

## Fort Myers Prayer Breakfast

I would never have known that Rick Rigsby was an ordained minister had I not read the bio on the back of his book, *Lessons from a Third Grade Dropout*, where it says that he

was the chaplain for the Texas A & M football team, and the founder of "Rick Rigsby Ministries." Dr. Rigsby was introduced at the Fort Myers Prayer Breakfast as the president of "Rick Rigsby Communications."

His ministry was never mentioned. Not once in his 30-minute presentation did he refer to his Christian faith.

Instead he spoke of unity. He said that love of God must translate into love of other people. Using what we Jews know as "the Sh'ma" as his text, Rigsby spoke of having God's words on "the doorposts of our homes and on our gates." To him (and to us) that means remembering to act in a godly way every time we leave our homes and every time we enter them. Tying the themes of unity and love together, Dr. Rigsby made the point that we must love all of God's children, not just the ones like us. As an African-American man, he was emphatic in saying that all lives matter. His message was intended for everyone in the room, people of all races, political affiliations and beliefs.

The real hero of the morning was Reverend Thom Shafer of Cypress Lake Methodist Church. Pastor Shafer

has chaired the Prayer Breakfast for two years and has changed the tone of the program from being predominantly Christian to being truly ecumenical. The goal of this year's Breakfast was to bring together all people of faith for a time of prayer and affirmation. Reverend Shafer, working with Mayor Randy Henderson and the members of his congregation, made that happen. This year's Prayer Breakfast was a service for everyone.

We must acknowledge the work of Rabbis Sol Agin and Yitzchok Minkowicz, who, for many years, sat on the Prayer Breakfast committee, making sure there was a Jewish voice at the event. Their efforts opened the door to this year's greater Jewish participation in the program.

A door has been opened wide and I think the Jewish community should run through it. We should publicize the program and encourage our members to attend. We should encourage our members to be part of the volunteer corps. With our attendance and support, we should say, "As committed Jews, we will join with you in building community in Fort Myers. Count us in!"

Reverend Shafer has a vision of a strong interfaith community in Fort Myers, and he made that vision real in this year's Prayer Breakfast. This a vision I share. Our participation will be good for our community and, just as importantly, good for Fort Myers.▲

Rabbi Marc Sack serves at Temple Judea in Fort Myers.



■ Rabbi Michael J. Schorin

■ Rabbi Marc Sack

## So, who created God?

My fifth book, *Who Created God? And Other Essays*, compiled and edited by Susan Marie Shuman, is just off the press and available at amazon.com at <https://tinyurl.com/y9tawrln>.



■ Rabbi Stephen Fuchs

The subject is one I have pondered my entire life.

The title emanates from an incident that occurred back in 1968 at the very beginning of my rabbinical studies. As the years have gone by, I have questioned what God is and what God is not with increasing intensity.

As a first-year student at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles campus, I conducted Friday night worship at the Flora Terrace Convalescent Home on Pico Boulevard. I led Shabbat Eve worship and then visited patients in their rooms. I earned \$10 for each visit.

Considering my preparation and the time I spent at Flora Terrace each week, I might have earned \$2 an hour. I did not care. I would have paid them for the experience.

One Friday night, not long after I began leading worship there, the attendant greeted me with, "Rabbi, you have a new congregant. Rabbi Rosenfeld, an 85-year-old Orthodox rabbi is with us, and he will be at your service."

"What?!" I thought to myself. "An Orthodox rabbi is coming to MY service! Many Orthodox rabbis hold Reform Judaism in disdain. Omigosh! What will he think? How will he react?"

These thoughts played on my mind during the service. Rabbi Rosenfeld sat there, alert but impassive. There was a large black kippah on his head and the *Union Prayer Book* from which we prayed sat tightly shut in his hands the whole time.

After the service I made my rounds and approached his room with trepidation.

He was most gracious. He said the service was nice (I breathed a deep sigh of relief), and he suggested that when I make a blessing like the *Kiddush* over the wine or the *motzi* over the challah, I should have everyone join me.

The he told me a story. "I am 85 years old," he said, "and I have been studying Torah my whole life. And yet I still feel like I am at the beginning of my studies."

"How is that?" I asked. "When I was six years old, my teacher handed me a *Chumash* (text of the Five books of the Torah in book form) and said, 'Read!' So I read (in Hebrew) the first words of the Torah, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' Then, I looked up and asked, 'If in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, so, who created God?'"

And WHAM! I got such a slap across the face that I still feel it, so I always feel I am at the beginning of my studies."

In studying Torah, "Who created God?" is as appropriate a question as, "What was the (unnamed, and nowhere does it say 'apple') fruit that led to Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden?"

In traditional Jewish life, one who has strayed from religious observance but returns to the fold is considered one who, *hozer b'tshuvah*, returns in repentance. Literally translated, the phrase means, "one who returns with answers."

The late renowned Rabbi Harold Schulweis taught he felt greater admiration for one *sheh hozer b'she'elah*, one who returns with questions.

Questions are the lifeblood of learning.

In the study of Torah, no questions should be out of bounds.

So, "Who created God?" I pray I never stop asking the question.▲

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



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## An interesting thought

The late Justice Felix Frankfurter once addressed an audience of doctors at the Harvard Medical School. He began his address with this striking question: "Have you broken out of jail lately?"



■ Rabbi Solomon Agin

He went on to explain that people allow themselves to be imprisoned in mental and spiritual cells with very stout walls, and there is no communication with the outside world. The truth is that people with closed minds are living in a kind of jail. One of the ways we confine ourselves is called "habit." We do the same things, we live the same way day after day, and thereby deny ourselves the freedom of new experiences, and the excitement of doing things differently.

Some workers take the same route to work every day. They would not think of changing their route for anything short of a street detour. They deprive themselves of new and varied sights.

Some men and women wear the same style of shoe year after year. They fear that if they change the design they may appear different to their friends.

Some people choose the same color every time they purchase a new car, thus denying themselves the opportunity of a change of pace.

Some of us retain the same circle of friends. We deeply fear to break out and make new friends. In this way we deny ourselves the pleasures and excitements of experiencing new human beings. So the question still remains, "Have you broken out of jail lately?" ▲

*Rabbi Solomon Agin serves at Temple Shalom in Port Charlotte.*

## When telling the story of our life, what truly matters?

When looking back on our lives we tend to focus on dates and places: where we grew up, when we graduated from college, where we got our first job, when we moved to Lee County. But the rabbis of the Talmud are not so concerned with the details of history. Over and over they shift the focus away from a historical narrative toward a more spiritual story.



■ Rabbi Nicole Luna

Think of Hanukkah and the Maccabees. While Hanukkah celebrates the successful Maccabean revolt, the Talmudic rabbis do not mention the war, but instead tell the story of the miracle of oil lasting for eight days. They also attribute the Great Revolt against the Romans, which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE, to *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred, telling a story about two men named Kamza and Bar Kamza, whose invitations to a party got mixed up and ultimately led to betrayal. The death of thousands from the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132 CE is reimagined as a plague of disease

due to Rabbi Akiva's students not acting respectfully.

On one hand, this shift from war to moral lessons could be because the Talmudic rabbis are fearful and cautious about glorifying or even mentioning rebellion, while still living under Roman rule. Yet there is a greater message at play here as well. The rabbis understand that what matters and what lasts is not historical context. The lessons they want to share are eternal and transcend what happened in 167 BCE or 132 CE. The triumph of lasting light and the dangers of baseless hatred and disrespect are the lessons of the Talmud. The details of the history – the time and place – are not as central as how human beings relate to each other.

The Talmud encourages us to think deeper about our lives: what lessons did we learn from our hometown, who are we still friends with from college, what skills did we learn from our first job, how did we create a life here in Lee County. When telling the story of our life, what truly matters? As we reflect upon our life history, may we tell a story of light, kindness and respect. Amen. ▲

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

## Unexpected request for liberal Jews

There is an unhappy feeling of rage building up. Don't feed it. There is a growing sense of injustice. Don't go along.

A new civil rights museum just opened in Alabama. It documents lynchings of blacks. Don't invoke an eye for an eye.

There is a terrible loss of being protected. Don't add to the insecurity.

There is a new shame about being American. Don't quickly surrender our history.

But what are we to do? All your recommendations are negative actions, all we should not do, what we were told again and again as children, *mir tur nicht*.

Not so. What we are being asked to do is two tasks. First, not to make

matters worse by adding to the general hysteria.

Second and more important, the role we are asked to play is for divine intervention. It is doubly critical – it is not only preparatory but also collaborative.

Why do we have God in the first place? To demonstrate what He can do and what we cannot and should not – revenge, despair and death.

God has to be given the chance to be God no matter how long it takes or what unexpected forms it may take.

Our task is to help that happen by not presuming to know God's view on revenge or losing our faith in His ultimate divine justice.

What finally emerges clearly, finally and dramatically from all the chaos, is God – simple, serene, benign and one.

And you helped make it possible. ▲

*Rabbi Devora Buchen serves at Temple Beth Shalom in Cape Coral.*

## The Yeshivah of Flatbush

My mother, may she live long and be well, who turns 90 next month, is the oldest of three, with two younger brothers. Mom sailed through Lincoln High School during the war and entered Brooklyn College at the age of 17. But it wasn't quite that smooth for her middle brother Gerald, a.k.a. "Jijee."



■ Rabbi Bruce Diamond

As Eastern European Jews go, Jijee, may he rest in peace, was relatively big at a hair over six feet, with a robust frame to match. He also was pretty aggressive and sometimes on a short fuse. But when he hit Lincoln High School, he more than met his match with the Italian boys in the schoolyard and one day came home with a broken arm.

So fearing for her youngest son, Grandma Celia, may she also rest in peace, sent the more frail Herbert (*alav hashalom*) to the Yeshivah of Flatbush to keep him safe from the "*shtarker Talaynas*" at Lincoln. As a child she had been through pogroms in Russia and was taking no chances. Thus the die was cast, so when our times came, mom sent me and then my brothers to the same yeshivah for 12 years.

Now back then, the Yeshivah of Flatbush was probably the most elite, preeminent primary and secondary Jewish school in America and perhaps the world. It was also relatively progressive since the classes were taught in Hebrew and not Yiddish, it was co-ed and arch-Zionist. (For those of you who care about these sorts of things, Joseph Telushkin and I spent the 12 years in the same class, and then Den-

nis Prager joined us in high school.)

But it was, nevertheless, strictly Orthodox, and we were not. We were more on the traditional side, keeping a reasonably kosher home but going out for Chinese, driving and shopping on Shabbes, etc. We belonged to a Conservative shul, often davened at Young Israel, and we were sent to Ramah and Massad Jewish summer camps.

So while by most standards we were fairly immersed in Jewish living, the level of our Jewish observance was nowhere near what we were being taught in yeshivah. You might say I was a "Reverse Marrano," having to act a certain way five days a week in public, with a measurably different religious life in private.

Uncle Herbie, z"l, was in the same boat 10 years before me, so maybe you can see why he chose to become a Reform Rabbi in order to resolve the contradictions. And since he was like a big brother to me and my personal hero at the time, you wouldn't be too surprised to learn that I followed in his footsteps into the Reform Rabbinate (even though I never stepped foot into a Reform "temple" until I was 23 and had to lead one!).

But here's the point: my future turned on a "simple twist of fate," or better said, a twist of Uncle Jijee's arm before I was even born! If it wasn't for that tough Italian kid who showed him who's boss, who knows what my life would have been like. On the balance, I suppose I owe that "*bulvan*" a debt of gratitude.

But in this way, is my life any different than yours in this respect? ▲  
*Rabbi Bruce Diamond serves at The Community Free Synagogue in Fort Myers.*

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## Language development in children

By Joann Goldman, Director, Temple Judea Preschool

Language employs symbols – words, gestures or spoken words – to represent objects and ideas. It is important that we, as teachers, know the developmental milestones in language development. If we have the knowledge of appropriate language development, we can provide children with many different activities to aide in their development.

**Toddler: from one to two years of age:** Children this age experience the world through the physical senses. Language development for toddlers includes using two-word combinations, taking turns speaking and listening, using the word “no” often, and using gestures to express needs and desires.

**Preschooler: from age three to five:** Children this age expand their word combinations and are able to speak in sentences, use correct grammatical patterns, use pronouns, articulate sounds clearly, and rapidly increase their working vocabulary. Preschool children may also understand words they do not use themselves.

It is important to know that language development in children depends on

how we present it. When communicating with children we need to remember that they are little people with feelings. Some basic guidelines to remember are:

- ◆ Use words that the children understand
- ◆ Always state what you want from the children (make it clear)
- ◆ Create opportunities for the children to interact (speak)
- ◆ Give a warning before any transition

A fun way to accomplish some of the guidelines listed would be to communicate through stories, games, songs and discussion.

Show pictures to children and asking questions about the picture: What type of bird is this? What color is the bird? Even if children do not know the answers, you will provide the answers and they will either take it in or repeat what you have said. With older children you can expand upon the topic by asking challenging questions depending on the development of the child.

Always keep communication open and encourage conversation.▲

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**SHALOM LIFE CENTER**

**Fort Myers**

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**Family first**

*Lawrence & Robin Dermer*

Families are complicated. Not only our modern families, but ancient ones depicted in our Torah certainly had their share of dysfunctional challenges. There was plenty of sibling rivalry between Joseph and his brothers, couples connected and broke up, there was love, loyalty and happiness as well as deceit and jealousy. Through these familial bonds and challenges the Jewish people were born.

Our Torah rests on the strong foundation of family, our ability to see that we're all connected, part of one big *Eitz Chayim*, the tree of life. Family, for better or worse is the core of who we are as a Jewish people. The power of love and togetherness begot the first families of Judaism and birthed the twelve tribes of Israel. The Jewish

people as a whole are described as "*B'nei Yisrael* -The Children of Israel," not descendants of the land, but of our patriarch

Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. All the children of Israel, all of us, are part of one connected extended family.

Our family relationships teach us how to better understand each other and ourselves. Family is where we first experience loss and sadness while learning about joy and happiness. In Hebrew we say "*mishpacha*," which means a Jewish family or social unit that includes both close and distant relatives. Simply put, we're all *mishpacha*, we're all family and family is the foundation upon which Shalom Life Center was built. Like a family, a traditional spiritual community or *kehilla* is one where everyone is made to feel welcome. It's an environment where our leadership continuously stresses the values of love, compassion, inclusion and acceptance, constantly encouraging a culture of positivity where

we lift each other up and rely on one another through good times and difficult ones.

The future of our Jewish extended family depends on unity, stability and strong leadership. The Talmud tells us "all Jews are responsible for each other." Hillel said, "If I am not for myself who will be for me? If I am only for myself what am I?" As a family, we're all one link in a chain that stretches back a hundred generations. We're a bridge between the past and the future over which the survival of our people will pass. Family is what will anchor us on either shore. The actions we take today will allow our children to decide whether they care enough to build their own bridge. From Breishit in the beginning, to present day, a family, with all its ups and downs, is forever. Families don't need written commitments or term contracts; they're connected to each other for the long haul. They are bound by something much deeper, an often unexplainable relationship, unfathomable feeling – love. In a world

of chaos and distraction, calm and concentration, our beautiful and deeply rooted ancient traditions and family values offer an oasis of peaceful and sweet spirituality for us to share with our Jewish community, our extended family.

Join us for summertime Shabbat evening services every Friday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday mornings for Torah study at 10:00 a.m. Our clubs run throughout summer while we are preparing to ensure the Southwest Florida Jewish Community 5779 High Holiday Experience at Shalom Life Center is incomparable. Our choir will be back along with our incredible symphonic ensemble and world-renowned concert accompanist Bella Gutshtein. Let your spirit soar at Shalom Life Center where prayer is inspirational, meaningful and musical.

For more information on our many clubs, programs and special events, please visit [www.shalomlifecenter.org](http://www.shalomlifecenter.org), call 239.218.3433 or email [info@shalomlifecenter.org](mailto:info@shalomlifecenter.org).

**HADASSAH**

**Collier/Lee Chapter**

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**Hadassah update: Volunteerism**

*Shelley Skelton*

We are volunteers. We are fundraisers. We are winners! As our "season" in Southwest Florida winds down and many of our friends and colleagues begin traveling elsewhere, those of us who live here year-round are hard at work preparing for next season, when all return and the cycle begins again. Thanks to computers, technology, cell phones, webinars, etc., we are all in constant touch with one another, a phenomenon that some take for granted but continues to amaze me on a daily basis. By the time the so-called lazy, hazy days of summer have passed, we will have signed contracts with guest speakers, planned programs and, at the very least, a good "guesstimate" on just how much of the monetary goal, set forth for us by National Ha-

dassah, we can expect to reach. In past years, we have exceeded our goals thanks to the hard work, diligence and ongoing support of you, our members.

As volunteers, our greatest rewards are in seeing the results of our labors, the truly wonderful things that happen on a daily basis at Hadassah Hospital – the wonder of research, the magic of education, the inspiration of discovery, the value of volunteering your time so that goals can be met. Yes, we are a fundraising organization. Without the funds we could not exist. Without the support of so many we could not continue to provide the programs, education and services so vital to the extraordinary work of Hadassah. In addition, we enjoy well-planned social events, we have formed lifetime friendships and we share in our commitment to create a more productive and rewarding life.

In keeping with the successful outcome of so many Hadassah projects, in

March of this year, a medical outreach was done by Hadassah to Ethiopia entitled Hadassah's Scoliosis Surgery and Education Campaign to undertake complex spine surgery. For the Ethiopian staff, who took part in and observed this surgery, the bar was raised high to show the level of surgery that could be accomplished right in their own operating rooms. For the Hadassah team, it was an achievement to demonstrate that the high level of surgery they are famous for can be exported to the most needy patients.

The medical research we do today can change the world tomorrow. Diseases that once decimated entire populations no longer exist. Will we be able to say that, one day soon, about cancer, heart disease and diabetes? Hadassah Medical Organization (HMO) is internationally recognized for decades of leadership in stem cell research, and for immunotherapies that use the body's own resources to fight disease.

The Henrietta Szold Hadassah-Hebrew University School of Nursing

was established in 1918. This year we celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nursing School and the women and men who study, teach and do research in the broad areas of nursing. In honor of this celebration, on December 8, 2018, the evening prior to our Major Gifts/Keepers Brunch, The Collier/Lee Chapter of Hadassah will present a special program devoted to the nurses in our community. Our distinguished guest, Dianne Gottlieb, a nurse-midwife and Hadassah vice president, will speak about the specifics of nursing at HMO.

If you are a nurse, know an interested nurse or potential nursing student, please save the date and email Karen Ezrine at [kezrine@hadassah.org](mailto:kezrine@hadassah.org) to be placed on our special invitation list or to receive additional information.

It is our extreme privilege to be a part of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc. We are Hadassah, the power of women who DO.

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*Paula Creed*

Humanistic Judaism was founded in 1963 by Rabbi Sherwin Wine, a rabbi trained in Reform Judaism, and a group of Detroit Jews wanting to create a new community where their Jewish identity and heritage could be maintained and celebrated in conformity with their secular beliefs.

In 1969, emerging Humanistic Jewish communities, springing up throughout North America, created the Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ) as its national organization. Currently there are 30 communities in North America, the most northerly in Toronto, Canada, the most southerly here in Southwest Florida, and from coast to coast across the United States. We have become the fifth branch of Judaism.

Foreseeing the necessity to train leaders for this modern philosophy, in 1985 Rabbi Wine and other scholars formed the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism at a meeting in Jerusalem. The Institute maintains a campus in Israel and in North America. Since its inception, the North American Section has ordained over 40 leaders/*madrikhim/vegvazers* and rabbis.

Many years later, Rabbi Dan Friedman, a colleague of Rabbi Wine, spoke to the Naples-Marco Section of the National Council of Jewish Women. Attending this event and perceiving the

positive audience reaction to Rabbi Friedman's description of how he came to be a Humanistic Rabbi, I stood up during

the Q&A and offered to take the names of those who would like to explore the idea of having such a community here.

Starting with those names, support from Miriam Jerris, SHJ's rabbi, and members of the Sarasota Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, we organized in 2008 and became a 501(c)(3) organization. Soon we affiliated with SHJ. Also crucial to our strong beginning was the encouragement we received from David Willens, then Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Collier County, his assistant, Melissa Keel, and Ted Epstein, editor of the *Federation Star*.

It's been 10 years since the Humanistic Jewish Havurah of Southwest Florida was formed. We attract unaffiliated secular Jews who now find kinship with like-minded people. We represent a growing segment of Jews who are Jews either by birth or by choice, who believe that:

- ◆ Judaism is the historic culture of the Jewish people and religion is only one part of that culture
- ◆ Jewish identity is best preserved in a free, pluralistic environment
- ◆ People possess the power and responsibility to shape their own lives independent of supernatural authority
- ◆ Ethics and morality should serve human needs, and choices should be based upon consideration of the consequences of actions rather than pre-ordained commandments

- ◆ Jewish history, like all history, is a human saga, a testament to the significance of human power and human responsibility. Biblical and other traditional texts are products of human activity and are best understood through archaeology and other scientific analysis.
  - ◆ The freedom and dignity of the Jewish people must go hand in hand with the freedom and dignity of every human being
- On the first Friday of each month we gather to celebrate Shabbat. We celebrate Jewish holidays for the lessons of humanism they each represent. Yom Kippur climaxes the self-examination

begun on Rosh Hashanah and is a time of self-forgiveness and forgiveness of others. As this holiday ends, we conduct a *Nizkor* ("Let us remember") ceremony to affirm that human beings preserve the memory of those who have died. Chanukah extols courage. Passover is a time to celebrate the modern, as well as the ancient quest for freedom alongside a celebration of spring renewal and rebirth.

We offer a program with Humanistic Jewish values to the community on the third Sunday during the winter months. If you are attracted to our philosophy, a membership form is available at [www.hjshwfl.org](http://www.hjshwfl.org).

**Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies**

**Dedicated to educating all sectors of society about Jewish civilization, the Holocaust, and genocide through:**

- scholarship
- outreach
- inquiry
- sharing knowledge
- preserving the record
- helping teachers
- encouraging students



**Visit [www.fgcu.edu/hc/](http://www.fgcu.edu/hc/)  
Dr. Paul Bartrop, Director**

**GENERATIONS OF THE SHOAH  
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA****(239) 963-9347****The Museum of Jewish Heritage  
and our area's Holocaust Museum**

Ida Margolis

I was in New York City recently visiting the Museum of Jewish Heritage. Our daughter told us there were three exhibits featured that we would not want to miss and she was correct. They were amazing. Before we left I told the person at the desk how fascinated we were with the exhibits. I then told her that I would share the information with our readers of the GenShoah SWFL newsletter and article in our Federation newspaper. She was very interested to learn about this group but even more interested to learn that we have a Holocaust Museum in Naples.

I know that many people are surprised when they learn about the Holocaust Museum & Education Center of Southwest Florida and all it does. I have heard from so many people how impressed they are with "our little gem." No wonder it won *Gulfshore Life's* Best Museum designation and gets such high ratings on TripAdvisor. But more importantly, its programs reach over 15,000 students annually. How wonderful that through the generosity of Janice Cohen and others, our area will have a new and even larger Holocaust Museum and, hopefully, GenShoah SWFL can have even more programs to fulfill our mission.

The GenShoah steering committee is busy at work planning many outstanding programs for next season. As

a child of survivors, I am so grateful that we have this Museum in our community and I am grateful that we have GenShoah

SWFL for the Second Generation as an affinity group of the Museum.

Whenever I see a Holocaust Memorial or visit a Holocaust Museum in the U.S., I am always so sad thinking about all of the innocents who were slaughtered, but at the same time I am grateful to live in a country where we can have these museums and a Constitution to protect our freedoms. As a big fan of museums, I like to visit many different types of museums, and even watch *Mysteries at the Museum* each week. So, when our daughter told us about the current exhibits at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, my husband and I decided it merited a trip to New York City.

As I stated in the beginning of this article, the special exhibits were amazing, not to say that the core exhibits are not. The core exhibition always on display includes a multimedia introduction, "Jewish Life a Century Ago:1880-1930," "The War Against the Jews:1930-1945" and Jewish Renewal:1945-Present." This alone is worth the trip. However, imagine being able to have "virtual conversations" with Holocaust survivors. "Made possible by specialized recording and display technologies, as well as next-generation natural language processing," "New Dimensions in Testimony" allows visitors to ask questions and the life-like projections answer in real time, offering personal reflections and accounts of their experiences. The sur-



The hologram of Holocaust survivor Pinchas Gutter answers questions posed by Jeff Margolis at the Museum of Jewish Heritage

vivors in this installation present the world premiere of the testimony of the stepdaughter of Otto Frank and survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, Eva Schloss, as well as Pinchas Gutter, a survivor of six German

Nazi concentration camps.

More than 200 photographs taken in the 1940s are on display in "Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross." As an act of resistance, Ross created a photographic record of the horrors of the Lodz Ghetto in Poland. The short but powerful film, *The Number on Great-Grandpa's Arm*, and art by artist Jeff Scher, whose animation is in the film, are the next special exhibit. The conversation between a 10-year-old and his 90-year-old great grandfather, an Auschwitz survivor, is an outstanding introduction to Holocaust history and the power of story.

If you cannot get to the Museum of Jewish Heritage at 36 Battery Place, New York, you can go online and learn about the Museum at [mjnhyc.org](http://mjnhyc.org). You can watch *The Number on Great-Grandpa's Arm* at [www.HBO.com](http://www.HBO.com).

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

Jan Klein

Are you 55 or over and looking for a fun and friendly group to join? If you answered yes, then HAZAK of Southwest Florida is for you. HAZAK has monthly programs with movies, guest speakers and outings. If you would like more information, please email HAZAK at [tjhazak@gmail.com](mailto:tjhazak@gmail.com). Someone will get in touch with you.

Join HAZAK on Sunday, June 10 at 4:00 p.m. at Temple Judea in Fort Myers. Enjoy the movie *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* starring Nicolas Cage, Penel-

ope Cruz and John Hurt. This movie takes place during WWII. Corelli is the leader of the invasion force that controls

the Greek island of Cephalonia. He is assigned to live in the home of a local doctor where he falls in love with the physician's daughter, even though she is engaged to a resistance fighter.

There is a fee of \$5 for nonmembers and \$3 for members. This cost covers the movie, snacks and soft drinks. After the movie join the group for dinner at Sweet Tomatoes. Other movies are being planned for the summer. If you have a request, please email [tjhazak@gmail.com](mailto:tjhazak@gmail.com).

**Send updates and changes to the Directory below  
to [loriramos@jfedlcc.org](mailto:loriramos@jfedlcc.org).**

**TEMPLE BETH EL****REFORM**

16225 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33908  
Rabbi Nicole Luna  
E-mail: [rabbiluna@templebethel.com](mailto:rabbiluna@templebethel.com)  
Temple educator: Dale Cohen, Ma.Ed., R.J.E  
Preschool director: Jesyca Virnig  
President: Ellis Rabinowitz  
Phone: 433-0018 • Fax: 433-3235  
Web site: [www.templebethel.com](http://www.templebethel.com)  
Shabbat services: 7:30 p.m. Friday; Torah study 9:00 a.m. Saturday; B'nai Mitzvah 10:30 a.m. Saturday  
Religious School: 9:30 a.m.-noon Sunday  
Hebrew School: 5:00-6:30 p.m. Wednesday  
Judaica Gift Gallery  
Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

**TEMPLE BETH SHALOM****REFORM**

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

**BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS****REFORM**

Meets at Sanibel Congregational Church  
2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel Island  
Rabbi Stephen L. Fuchs  
President: Alan Lessack  
Phone: 239-579-0296 (Oct-Apr)  
773-251-8862 (May-Sept)  
Email: [batyamsanibel@gmail.com](mailto:batyamsanibel@gmail.com)  
Cantor: Murray Simon  
Web site: [www.batyam.org](http://www.batyam.org)  
Services: 7:30 p.m. Friday (Nov-Apr)  
7:00 p.m. Friday (May-Oct)  
Adult Education:  
Saturday, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. (Nov-Apr)  
Jewish Current Events: Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. (Nov-Apr)  
Write: P.O. Box 84, Sanibel, FL 33957  
Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

**TEMPLE SHALOM CHARLOTTE  
HARBOR AND THE GULF ISLANDS****REFORM**

23190 Utica Ave., P.O. Box 494675  
Port Charlotte, FL 33949-4675  
Rabbi Solomon Agin  
President: Gary Wein  
Phone: (941) 625-2116  
E-mail: [shalom06@netzero.com](mailto:shalom06@netzero.com)  
Web site: [templeshalomfl.com](http://templeshalomfl.com)  
Services: 7:30 p.m. Friday  
Religious school: Sunday 10 a.m.  
Beginning Hebrew: Tuesday 4:15 - 5:15 p.m.  
Advanced Hebrew: Thursday 4:15 - 5:15 p.m.  
Organizations: Sisterhood  
Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

**SYNAGOGUES &  
ORGANIZATIONS**

IN LEE &amp; CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

**COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE****REFORM**

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

**TEMPLE JUDEA****CONSERVATIVE**

14486 A&W Bulb Road, Fort Myers, FL 33908  
Rabbi Marc Sack  
E-mail: [rabbim@tjswfl.org](mailto:rabbim@tjswfl.org)  
President: Jennifer Manekin  
Director of Congregational Learning:  
Elizabeth Singer  
Preschool Director: Joann Goldman  
[templejudeapreschool@gmail.com](mailto:templejudeapreschool@gmail.com)  
Phone: 433-0201 • Fax: 433-3371  
E-mail: [tjswfl@gmail.com](mailto:tjswfl@gmail.com)  
Web site: [www.tjswfl.org](http://www.tjswfl.org)  
Services: 6:15 p.m. Friday and 9:30 a.m. Saturday Minyan: 9:00 a.m. Monday  
Religious School: Sun. 9:30 a.m.-noon;  
Wed. 4:30-6 p.m.  
Early childhood education:  
Preschool, M-F, ages 18 months-5 years;  
"Mommy & Me," 12 months-2 years  
Affiliated: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

**CHABAD OF BONITA SPRINGS/  
ESTERO****ORTHODOX**

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

**CHABAD OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY****ORTHODOX**

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

**CHABAD LUBAVITCH  
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA****ORTHODOX**

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

**CHABAD JEWISH CENTER****OF CAPE CORAL****ORTHODOX**

1716 Cape Coral Pkwy. W., Cape Coral, FL 33914  
Rabbi Yossi Labkowski  
Phone: 963-4770  
E-mail: [info@chabadcape.com](mailto:info@chabadcape.com)  
Web site: [www.chabadcape.com](http://www.chabadcape.com)  
Services: Friday Evening 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday morning 9:30 a.m. followed by Kiddush luncheon  
Sunday morning 8:00 a.m.  
Monday-Friday morning 7:00 a.m.  
JLI Courses: Monday evening at 7:00 p.m.  
Weekly Torah Study: Tuesday evening 7:30 p.m.  
Hebrew School: Sunday 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Jgirls: Tuesday 6:00-7:00 p.m.

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

- Shalom Life Center
- Lawrence Dermer, Spiritual Leader - 218-3433
- AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee): Jacki Waksman - (954) 653-9053
- AJC (American Jewish Committee): Brian Lipton - (941) 365-4955
- Anti-Defamation League: (561) 988-2900
- B'Nai B'rith International: (941) 302-4500
- Chevra Kadisha: Gene Sipe - 841-4615
- Generations of the Shoah SWFL: 963-9347
- Hadassah - Collier/Lee Chapter: Lynn Weiner - 598-1009
- Hadassah - Sharon Chapter (Charlotte County): Odette Port - (941) 505-1409
- Hazak 55+ Chapter: Joyce Rosinger - 437-1566
- Humanistic Jewish Havurah: Paula Creed - 495-8484
- Israel Bonds: Regional Headquarters: (800) 622-8017
- Jewish Community Services: 481-4449
- Jewish National Fund: (727) 536-5263
- Memorial Tree Planting in Israel - 1-800-542-8733
- Jewish War Veterans: Post 400: Commander Harvey Charter - 246-3151
- Mikvah Bashka of Southwest Florida: Nechamie Minkowicz - 822-2784

**TEMPLE JUDEA  
Fort Myers**

**(239) 433-0201  
www.tjswfl.org**

Temple Judea is hosting the Israel Scouts Tzofim Friendship Caravan on Monday, June 18 at 7:00 p.m. Every summer, groups of Israeli teens tour the United States bringing an energetic and entertaining show of singing and dancing, sharing their love of their homeland and their appreciation for our support. To see who is in the group coming to Fort Myers this year, check out the ad and article elsewhere in this issue. This event is co-sponsored each year by Temple Judea, Temple Beth El and the Jewish Federation. Admission is free! This is a show for all ages.

Join old friends and new from Temple Judea and beyond for a new look at Israel's culture, terrain, innovations and traditions. Temple Judea's Israel Revisited Trip, scheduled for May 2019, is a travel experience for those who have been to Israel before and want to participate in its lively music, art and theater, eat in the best restaurants of the country, see the best archaeology, and meet Israelis who make the country the vibrant place it is.

Some of the highlights of the trip include: meeting with artists and craftsmen from Tel Aviv, attending a theater performance in Tel Aviv, exploring Mahane Yehuda alongside an Israeli chef, visiting a gourmet spice farm in the Galilee, touring SodaStream's

high-tech production facility in the Negev, and so much more!

Rabbi Marc Sack will be taking the group to out-of-the-way places and exploring parts of Israel that aren't usually on the itinerary for first-time sightseers. Information about the trip is now available. Call Rabbi Sack for more information about this new adventure.

Our monthly volunteering at the Salvation Army's Meals with Compassion (formerly Sally's Café) continues. Volunteers are needed for Sundays, June 3 and 24. If you would like to volunteer, please email Linda Idelson at [lindaaidelson8@gmail.com](mailto:lindaaidelson8@gmail.com).

Rabbi Sack's Torah study will meet on Thursday, June 7 at the offices of Myers and Brettholtz and Company. It is an hour of open discussion of Torah and Judaism where all levels of background and all questions are encour-

aged. Everyone is welcome and there is no cost to attend.

A wine and cheese reception is held every Friday evening from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. right before Shabbat services. It's a great time for members to enjoy socializing and to greet prospective new members and those visiting the synagogue.

For more information about Temple Judea or upcoming programs, call or email the synagogue office.

**Regular scheduled events:**

- Friday evening Shabbat services at 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday morning Shabbat services at 9:30 a.m.
- Lunchtime Torah study with Rabbi Sack the first Thursday of each month.
- Morning minyan every Monday at 9:00 a.m.

**TEMPLE BETH EL  
Fort Myers**

**(239) 433-0018  
www.templebethel.com**

Temple Beth El's Cemetery Committee invites everyone to our annual Jewish War Veterans Post 400 Memorial Day Service on Sunday, May 27 at 9:30 a.m., to be held at TBE's Garden of Memories cemetery, 3200 Michigan Avenue, Fort Myers (within the Fort Myers Cemetery). Please call Pam Arkin at 239.772.0024 for further information or directions.

TBE's Francophone group, consisting of Jewish people who speak French fluently, will continue its monthly meetings throughout the sum-

mer. All Francophones are invited. For more information, call Rachele at 757.440.1734.

TBE's Confirmation class of 2018 includes Jalen Goodman, Jared Olitzky, Jeremy Summers and Jensen Weisinger. As part of their education, these busy ninth-graders volunteered at the LARC group home for developmentally disabled adults in Cape Coral, Shy Wolf Sanctuary in Naples, and Eva's Closet & Foundation ([evasfoundation.org](http://evasfoundation.org)) in Fort Myers.

Our first wine & cheese "preneg" was a fantastic event. Congregants, guests and newcomers mingled while enjoying a glass of their favorite varietal and an array of cheeses. If you missed out on this "preneg," watch for

more in the coming months.

In its second training session with Rabbi Luna, our Mitzvah Committee's ongoing caring visitors program trained folks to visit congregants who are unable to get to temple for whatever reason: surgery, inability to drive at night or inability to drive at all, for example. Caring visits by trained volunteers will continue.

Small but mighty, TBE's Mitzvah Day was a day of service and fellowship. Among the organizations served were Hearts & Homes for Vets, Dress for Success, the Guadalupe Center, Community Cooperative and Lee Health. We cleaned the temple, beautified the cemetery, packed lunches for Community Cooperative, made arts & crafts for various organizations, and donated blood. By the numbers: six

pints of blood donated to Lee Health (impacting between twelve and eighteen people in need); 60 greeting cards created for the Israel Defense Forces; 53 origami cranes created for Health-Park patients; 43 paper flowers created for the Jewish Federation's Senior Lunch Bunch; a whopping 328 lunches assembled, bagged and delivered to Community Cooperative in Fort Myers; carloads of clothing delivered to the Guadalupe Center and to Dress for Success; donations of all kinds delivered to Hearts & Homes for Vets; Rabbi Luna accompanied six teens and nine adults to engage in *Kavod HaMet* (honoring the dead) by beautifying the cemetery.

**BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS  
Sanibel**

**(773) 251-8862  
www.batyam.org**

Thanks to volunteer congregants, Friday evening Shabbat services take place every week at 7:00 p.m. (not 7:30 p.m.) in Fellowship Hall from May 4 until Rabbi Stephen Fuchs returns in early September for Rosh Hashanah. It is a devoted and congenial group of area Jews who gather together for dinner at a local restaurant and then religious observance each Friday. Whoever leads the Shabbat service determines the order and content, including the mix of Hebrew and English and the melodies. The result is that each service is different due to the choices of the leader and worthy of attendance.

As has become customary, the final session of Saturday morning Adult Education is the opportunity to consider topics and speakers for next November when classes begin again. On April

28, about 25 regular attendees gathered to enjoy a potluck brunch and discussion. It was also an opportunity to thank Esther Pokedoff for her many years as the coordinator and creative spark of the congregant hour, and to welcome Vickie Fuchs who graciously agreed to take the challenge.

A review of the other activities and events at Bat Yam this past season, since the arrival of Rabbi Fuchs and Cantor Murray Simon, leaves one almost breathless but happy. An improvised sukkah was the scene of a Sukkot service with members of our hosts, the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC). Rabbi Fuchs managed to unroll our Torah for all to see on Simchat Torah. Rabbi Paul Citrin journeyed from New Mexico to conduct the formal installation of the Rabbi and Cantor. Chanukah was again observed together with the Sanibel Congregational UCC members. Rabbi Fuchs and Reverend Dr. John

Danner of the UCC co-taught a series of classes on a Bible topic. Rabbi Ronald Kronish was a special guest speaker about the necessity for interreligious understanding. The Purim service included congregants acting and singing the Megillah in rhyme. A Bat Yam group attended a Boston Red Sox game. Cantor Simon presented a wonderful program with original film footage about the great cantors including singing. Journalist Marvin Kalb came to Bat Yam and spoke about his new book on the Soviet Union and offered his comments about the current state of American foreign affairs. The community Seder exceeded all expectations. Rabbi Fuchs and other Bat Yam members participated in the Federation's Holocaust Remembrance Day and Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. It was a busy season.

On May 13, Rabbi and Vickie Fuchs left for Germany where they will spend five weeks teaching together about the Shoah in high schools. In addition, Rabbi Fuchs will speak in synagogues and churches, and offer a

seminar for rabbinical students at the Abraham Geiger College in Berlin. One of the highlights will be to celebrate Shavuot in Friedrichsstadt, the city where, in 2015, Rabbi Fuchs conducted the first Jewish service in that city since Kristallnacht in 1938.

Since time goes by quickly in Southwest Florida, it is important to note that the High Holy Days are early this year. Selichot is September 1 and Erev Rosh Hashanah is September 9. Kol Nidre is September 18 and Yom Kippur is September 19. Mark your calendars accordingly.

The snowbirds have scattered around the country and around the world. Driving on Sanibel is much easier. Come to Bat Yam on Friday evenings at 7:00 p.m. for a Shabbat service held in Fellowship Hall on the campus of the Sanibel Congregational UCC at 2050 Periwinkle Way on Sanibel. Members of the community, guests and visitors are always welcome to join with congregants.

**COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE  
Fort Myers**

**(239) 466-6671  
www.fortmyerssynagogue.com**

Heartfelt condolences to Miriam Berger and her family at the passing of her beloved husband of 60 years, Marvin Berger. Marvin and Miriam, often accompanied by their visiting son, Hazzan Brian, have been longtime committed participants in the Rabbi's weekly Sabbath morning Torah classes.

Mazal Tov to Jonathan Cohen and Nicole Fuller on their June 2 wedding conducted by the Rabbi in Fort Myers. Nicole and Jon worship with us most every Sabbath eve.

We are thrilled that Asher Pincus will be called to the Torah for the first time as a Bar Mitzvah on Sabbath morning, June 23. Asher, who has grown up

in our congregation and has been studying with the Rabbi for five years, follows his older sisters, Ariel and Talia, who also celebrated becoming B'not Mitsvah at The

Community Free Synagogue.

*Yash'er Ko'ah* (more power to you) to Joel Aron, who was called to the Torah with his wife, Eve, in celebration of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Joel and Eve were C.F.S. pioneers. "*Bis hundert und tsvantsik!*"



Eve & Joel Aron were called to the Torah, with Rabbi Bruce Diamond, in celebration of Joel's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday

We are indebted to Laurie McConville for her invaluable help editing the Rabbi's 5<sup>th</sup> revision of The Community Free Synagogue prayerbook. The new *siddur* more closely follows the traditional *Qabalat Shabbat*, the Friday evening liturgy, while expanding the range of older and newer Sabbath songs enjoyed by the worshippers. A downloadable public domain copy of this new Sabbath Eve *siddur* can be found on the C.F.S. website at [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com), along with a broad range of Jewish worship texts and a *ketuba* created for C.F.S. that are free for the taking!

Our next Brown Bag Movie Night starts at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 14 in the Community Hall, featuring *Norman: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer* starring Richard Gere. For more information, see the article elsewhere in this issue.

Each Friday evening at 6:30 p.m.,

The Community Free Synagogue serves a traditional Sabbath dinner. It is free and reservations are never required. At 7:30 p.m. the Sabbath is welcomed with prayer and song. A coffee hour follows worship.

Every Saturday at 9:30 a.m., C.F.S. offers a light breakfast followed by a lively discussion of the week's Torah portion until 11:30 a.m., when the Mourner's Qaddish is recited.

Now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, The Community Free Synagogue is an independent synagogue and valued community religious resource. All of its events and programs, including youth and adult Jewish education, are open to all and always free.

The purpose of The Community Free Synagogue, led by Rabbi Diamond, is "Study, Worship and Benevolent Acts" (Pirguy Avot 1:2), following progressive Jewish values while observing essential Jewish traditions.

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Jonathan S. Daitch, MD

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