L'CHAYIM

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www.JewishFederationLCC.org

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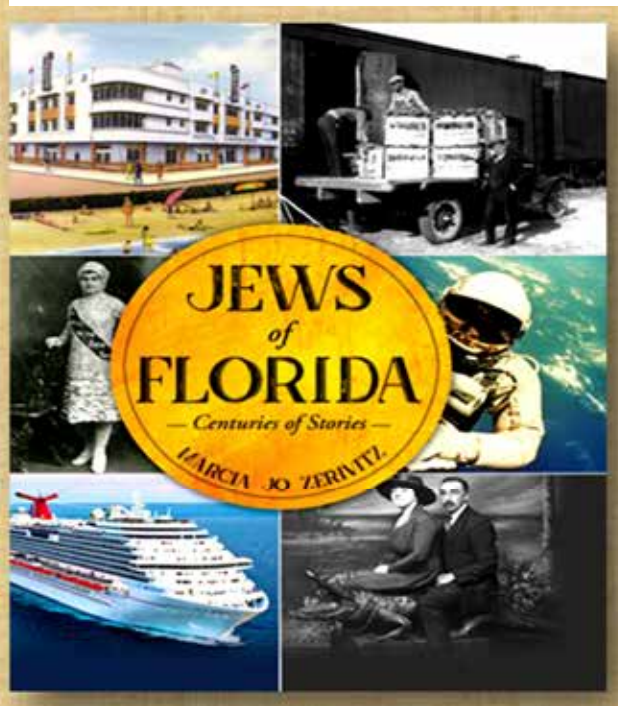

Guest Speaker: Marcia Jo Zerivitz

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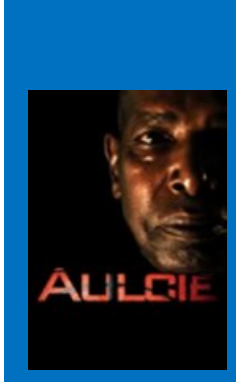

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Debbie Sanford to take the helm in May 2022

By Barbara Siegel and Sherri Zucker, Federation Co-Presidents

We are pleased to announce, together with the Search Committee and the Board of Directors, that Debbie Sanford will be the Federation's next executive director starting in May 2022. We are thrilled to welcome Debbie into this new role.

A Search Committee was assembled to help us conduct a nationwide search for the best executive director for our community. We would like to thank those who worked on the Search committee with us: Marsha Kistler, Bill Reynolds and Karin Fine. We are grateful for the time, care and wisdom they invested in this endeavor. The search for a new executive is a serious matter and was treated as such.

We began the process in July, and over several months developed a rubric of important characteristics needed for the executive director, advertised the position, evaluated the resumes and conducted interviews with four individuals. We all agreed that Debbie Sanford was the best person for the job. The Search Committee presented our recommendation of Debbie Sanford to the Board of Directors at our December board meeting. Her appointment was approved unanimously by the board.

Let us tell you a few things about Debbie that you might not know and why she is the best person to be our new executive director.

Debbie Sanford moved from New York to Florida in 2016 and took the position of program director at our Federation in July 2018. Debbie has a BA in Communications from the State University of New York in Plattsburgh.

Prior to her move to Florida, she was employed in significant roles in executive leadership and social services at Jewish nonprofits. Debbie was the executive director of the Newburgh JCC for six years and also worked for five years at Jewish Family Services, Middletown, New York.

When searching for a new executive, we felt the ideal candidate should be an effective hands-on leader and a team player with a commitment to, and passion for, the Federation mission, Jewish values and community building. Debbie has these qualities.

In her interview, Debbie told us that she sees the executive director as an ambassador for the Federation and the Jewish community. She expressed her belief in the importance of community outreach and networking. During the past three years, Debbie has shown us that she approaches her work with enthusiasm and passion. She has the tenacity and creativity to find solutions to difficult problems. She is a results-oriented person with a big heart. She will be working with Alan Isaacs over the next few months to ensure a smooth transition.

We are looking forward to a bright future with Debbie as our professional leader. May we go from strength to strength.

Program notes

By Debbie Sanford, Program Director

Happy New Year! The secular New Year for most people has always been associated with the arrival of a fresh lease on life with aspirations for a new beginning. Around this time, most of us follow the old tradition of making New Year resolutions to bring significant changes to our life. Although different people make different resolutions, the most popular seem to be: eating healthy, exercising regularly, nurturing relationships, working on self-growth and giving charity.

■ **Debbie Sanford**

For me, it is all of the above (especially the eating healthy and exercising regularly, thank you Covid lockdown), but this New Year has a special new meaning. For me, it is a time to celebrate and a time to reflect. It is my opportunity for change and personal growth. I am thrilled with this new opportunity to join the leadership of the Jewish Federation as its new executive director. I look forward to working together to strengthen the Jewish Federation's culture of philanthropy, engaging Jewish families in new and exciting ways, and empowering the Jewish people in our community to make a great impact locally and globally.

A personal goal of mine is to work on fostering established relationships and to create new connections in the community with Jewish families and organizations that care deeply about Judaism, and share my passion of Jewish values like *Tikkun Olam* and *Tzedakah*.

Although I do not take the helm until late May, I am here and my door is always open. I am open to ideas and welcome them. For now, I am working hard on an amazing season of programming, starting with the Community Breakfast on Sunday, January 9, and then on to our Jewish Film Festival which begins on Sunday, February 6. We start with a comedy, *Howie Mandel: But Enough About Me*, a perfect way to kick off the festival season. Thank you to Karin Fine, the sponsor of this film, and thank you to all of our corporate and individual sponsors. We could not do this without you! Tickets are on sale for in-person and virtual screenings. Visit www.JewishFederationlcc.org/JFF2022.

I would be remiss to not mention and thank the amazing Film Festival Committee members whom I have had the pleasure of working with the past three years: Co-Chairs Sara Krivisky & Carolyn Gora, Event Chair Andi Horowitz, Karin Fine, Helene Glocer, Claire Goldhagen, Elisa Grossman, Jan Klein, Carol Lovitch and Lynn Talone.

Want to join me for a show? I am planning an outing to the Florida Rep on Thursday, January 27 at 2:00 p.m. to see *Driving Miss Daisy*. Seats are very limited, so reserve early! Tickets are $49. To reserve your seat, please contact me at 239.481.4449 x4 or debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org

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

TRIBUTES

In memory of Linda Idelson
from Debbie & Andy Shuping

In celebration of Marsha Kistler
from Lynn Jaffe

In celebration of Terri Goldberg's birthday
from Jessica Erler

In celebration of Jodi Cohen
from Doreen Kostel

In honor of Elizabeth Shevach
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Jewish Federation
Lee and Charlotte Counties

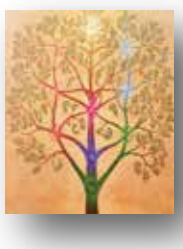
How the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties Serves

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

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

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

Local Case Management Services
- Non-sectarian, individual and family outreach, information and referral services.
- Individual life coaching and support services.



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

Local Community Engagement
- Addressing pressing community needs related to volunteerism, institutional collaborations and community assessment and planning.

Jewish Community Foundation
- An endowment that ensures the long-term financial base of charitable, social and educational programs in our community.
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Jewish Family Services update

By Jodi Cohen, Senior Outreach & Food Pantry Coordinator

It is hard to find words to describe the heroic efforts of Stuart Berman, as well as all of the people who contributed to his big mitzvah project, but allow me to try. For the second time in 2021, Stuart wrote and received a Community Grant through Foresters Financial Group, of which he is a member. He had The Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry in mind when writing a Community Grant, which "enables those who are members to become involved in their local communities by collaborating through meaningful activities and helping people in need."

■ Jodi Cohen

If Stuart had only applied for a $2,000 grant to fill 100 bags of groceries, *dayenu*, it would have been enough. If he had received the grant and then shopped for every single item necessary to fill 100 bags, *dayenu*. But then Stuart and his lovely wife Belle showed up to help pack the bags, along with several other volunteers.

So many verbs are required to describe what Stuart and everyone did to bring this mitzvah to life: writing, ordering, shopping, schlepping, lifting, more schlepping, organizing, packing, more lifting. And let us not forget the shvitzing!

You know the saying "it takes a village," well it was a true honor to witness the village of people in action who helped fulfill the goal of packing 100 bags of food and 25 bags of toiletries. The Federation is grateful beyond measure.

My heartfelt thanks to the Jewish Family Services volunteers who work wonders in our small but mighty food pantry and keep rolling with all of the changes, as well as the people who continue to reach out to the seniors in our community who appreciate the contact. Thank you to Arnie Obstein, Barbara Gribin, Barbara Henry, Corina Kaufman, Debbie Feinberg, Doreen Kostel, Ellen and Richard Bickelman, Harriet Lipschutz, Janet Stradley, Jodi Engelman, Joyce Rosinger, Judy Litman, Katie Keen, Marilyn Ortiz, Rachelle Luna, Roberta Parillo, Ruth Lefberg, Samantha Guterman, Suzanne Orkin, Tracey Seigel, Trudy Barch and Valerie Franklin.

I get lost in the logistics of managing the pantry and am perpetually preoccupied with scheduling, training, signage, inventory and shopping that I forget what a privilege it is to have food to offer people in our community who are facing food insecurity. A deep bow of gratitude to you, our Federation members and family for your generosity and your willingness to consistently practice the Jewish values of *Tzedakah* (benevolence), *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) and *K'lal Yisrael* (taking responsibility for one another).

Everything that you contribute makes a difference. Truly.

Stuart Berman, Robin Razowsky and Peter Simenauer in front of the food they shopped for and carried in

(front row:) Jerry Razowsky, Peri Pantazes, Belle Berman, Tracey Seigel,
(middle row:) Stuart Berman, Ozzi Osi, Margaret Knight, Arnie Obstein, (back:) Bob Vinikoor

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I didn't party like it was 1999

By Keith Grossman

I don't know about you, but after 2020's lackluster holiday party experience, this year it was time to get my holiday groove back. Most people I know pulled the plug on holiday parties last year. Those who didn't, moved forward with virtual events. Covid was the ultimate Scrooge and Grinch rolled into one, stealing not only Christmas, but also Chanukah.

■ **Keith Grossman**

Anybody who knows me knows it was killing me not to be out on the party circuit and sharing good cheer face-to-face, the way parties were intended. Just like they were in 1999. ("Party over, oops – out of time.")

Somehow 2021's parties felt so much more optimistic than 2020. We were all craving a frivolous celebration, and I was happy to discover a holiday party is not impossible in the pandemic era. We had our first glance at the "Ghost of Covid's Future."

Of course, every party was outside or in places perceived as having good ventilation. I was jammed into every garden, patio, warehouse, farmhouse, henhouse, outhouse and doghouse in a six-mile radius of my home. If fresh air was available, I was in it.

Some hosts offered a series of smaller parties. They sent surveys to gauge our level of comfort and then rotated us through their homes by appointment, like tourists visiting Graceland.

As if I was on Southwest Airlines, I RSVPed for these small gatherings immediately, so I could get entrance with Group B. I wanted to avoid the last party with Group C, and we all know Group A is reserved for the elite, those partying with children, and active military.

I compliment the brave and courageous folks who planned parties. Their budgets certainly increased with the many precautions needed to ensure safe environments and ease concerns of contracting Covid. I know I didn't want my food breathed on or being passed around on a tray.

Some hosts used a cloche. A cloche is a bell- or dome-shaped cover. They hearken back to a time in history when everyone was concerned about health because of lack of medicine and science. Interestingly, we have improved medicine and science, and we still have health concerns in large gatherings. I got through 55 years of life without knowing what a cloche was; now, I'm intimately familiar.

Cloches are also from a time when white-glove service was used because people didn't want somebody's bare hands all over their food. Cloches and white gloves – they all provide such a dramatic presentation.

At these parties, I would lift the cover to reveal the goodies underneath. They were already plated and individually presented. Like a running back, I'd choose my plate and find a seam in the surrounding crowd, rushing to a remote corner, engulfing my food without fear of Covid droplets.

Some party hosts found other ways to serve food in fun and innovative vessels so that each piece of food was individually presented and not shared on the same plate. It was all pre-packaged. I ate out of mason jars, personal picnic baskets, cardboard boxes, plastic bags and paper cups.

Desserts and drinks were also presented with safety in mind. Buffets got the boot. There was not a punch bowl or champagne tower within breathing distance of the party.

Party themes, however, managed to survive. It seemed like every host was going with the traditional "Winter Wonderland" or "The Roaring '20s" for obvious reasons.

This is partying in the age of Covid. Just like we partied in 1799. And parties weren't meant to last.▲

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Acknowledgments will continue in subsequent issues for those contributions that arrive after this issue's deadline.

A letter to myself 40 years ago

By Brian Simon, Federation Past-President

Dear Brian in 1982,

I know this is a big year for you. You just started junior high. You've got the bar mitzvah coming up. Your family will get cable TV this year! I'm sending this letter back in time to let you know how the next 40 years will turn out.

■ Brian Simon

You'll be glad to know that you will meet a nice Jewish girl named Mindi and have two wonderful children together. Both your son and your daughter will be better athletes than you. Your younger brother already is a better athlete than you, but you'll never admit that.

Speaking of which, your dreams of becoming a professional baseball player will fall short. And by short, I mean 5-foot-7 and not particularly strong or fast. The good news is your back-up plan of becoming a TV sportscaster will work out. That's how we get to Fort Myers, Florida. Did I mention we live in Fort Myers? Yeah, you know it as the spring training home of your beloved Kansas City Royals, but the Royals will leave a few years before you arrive. We've got the Twins and the Red Sox instead. We left sportscasting in 2005, to spend more time with the family. It's worked out well.

You know the Chiefs coach, Marv Levy? We're so proud of a Jewish coach in the NFL. Well, they're going to fire him this year. But, don't worry. Marv will take the Buffalo Bills to four straight Super Bowls. Unfortunately, he's going to lose all four. And the Chiefs won't make the Super Bowl until you're 50 years old. So, enjoy the Royals while they're still good.

Here's a stock tip for you. Buy Apple. No, not the fruit. It's a computer company. Tell your parents to open an account and put all your birthday money and all your bar mitzvah money into it. You'll thank me later. Or, I will thank myself.

Here's the deal: Apple is going to invent a device that fits in your pocket and replaces all of the following items in your home:

- Your phone
- Your address book
- Your stereo, and all of your record albums, 8-track tapes, cassettes or whatever you're using to listen to recorded music
- Your camera, and all of your photo albums
- Your video camera
- Your TV (we still have TVs but all the shows and movies are available on the little device)
- Your clock radio
- Your home computer (Oh, you don't have a home computer? That'll come later.)
- Your Atari video game AND all the video games at the bowling alley arcade
- The encyclopedia – all recorded information in the universe will be available on this little device

I know this sounds like a Ginsu knife commercial (but wait, there's more!), but this is probably the most astounding technological development of the last 40 years. You can call anyone, anywhere in the world and not only talk to them, but see them on a little TV screen with a picture that's sharper than any TV you have in 1982. And this isn't something just for the super wealthy. Almost everyone has one of these. Even kids.

The rest of the future might be technologically advanced, but I think you would recognize it. The Rolling Stones are still touring. A couple of original band members have died, but amazingly Keith Richards is alive. *Saturday Night Live* is still on. No, Eddie Murphy is not in the cast anymore.

We don't have any flying cars like the Jetsons promised us. Regular cars are starting to change from gas engines to electric, but Mom and Dad could drive our cars today without much problem. And if they turned on the radio, they'd hear familiar songs. There are entire stations dedicated to '80s music.

Tell your math teacher, Mrs. Asner, that her brother-in-law Ed will keep living and working for another 40 years. We lost him in 2021. I just watched him in a Christmas movie playing a Cajun Santa Claus. For the generations that aren't old enough to remember Lou Grant, they'll know him as the voice of Carl Fredrickson in an animated movie called *Up*. Yes, "animated movie" is a fancy term for "cartoon," but I'll put the first 10 minutes of *Up* against anything Hollywood has ever produced.

Your favorite movie, *Star Wars*, is still a thing. George Lucas made four really bad sequels then sold the franchise to Disney, which is now churning out *Star Wars* TV shows and movies all the time, and a lot of it is really good. Twelve-year-old Brian would be very happy.

Hey, there's another Jewish boy growing up in KC. Same age as you. His name is Paul Rudd. Go meet him. He's really funny. Probably would make a good actor. Tell him to start reading Marvel Comics.

Oh, and the real-life Captain Kirk, William Shatner, will actually go into space. At Age 90! Some super wealthy guy from Miami (who is only five years older than you) will build a rocket and let civilians buy a ticket for travel into the heavens. Lord only knows what tickets cost the other passengers, but Shatner got to go for free because the super wealthy guy was a *Star Trek* fan. Weirdly, one of those other passengers will die in a small plane crash just a few weeks after the space flight.

Enjoy being a teenager in the 1980s. I know parts of it are hard, but that's nothing compared to what teenagers today have to deal with. Every dumb thing they do or say can be recorded, broadcast and judged by people all over their country. It's terrible for their self-esteem and development. It's probably the worst part of that device I told you about.

Not to make you self-conscious but do us a favor and lay off all the chips and cookies. Eventually, we have to pay for that.

One thing about the future that you won't recognize is how crazy eating is now. Everyone's on a different diet. Some people don't eat meat. Some people don't eat carbs. Choosing a place to eat out has become like going to the video store in your day. It's almost impossible to find something that everyone agrees on, and after 45 minutes of negotiating you eventually make a choice that at least one of you secretly resents.

Enjoy the little things. Hug your grandparents. They won't be around forever (although Grandma Simon will almost make it to 100!). Ask them about their lives and write down what they say! Mom and Dad don't throw anything away, so I'm sure I'll find your notes. Enjoy being able to sleep through the night and read without wearing glasses. Enjoy brushing your hair while you still have it.

If I remember right, you've got a bunch of friends coming over for a New Year's Eve party. Snap a few pictures, would you? Have a happy 1982. And don't forget about Apple!

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

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Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center update

By Susan Suarez, President & CEO

Happy New Year to you and your families! We hope your holidays were safe and memorable.

Since our last column, the Museum family lost one of the founding members of the Museum – Godfrey Levy. Godfrey was an incredible advocate for the Museum and its mission. He led the Museum administration for many years and, along with his fellow board members, positioned it on its path to grow to where we are today. He will be greatly missed.

■ **Susan Suarez**

Many thanks to all who supported our Education programming on Giving Tuesday and through Amazon Smile for their holiday shopping. We had a very memorable Luncheon event, with the premiere of the new classroom play, *Remember – The Story of Abe Price*. The play was created in conjunction with Gulfshore Playhouse (GSP), Founding and Producing Artistic Director Kristen Coury and Managing Director Joel Markus. *Remember* was written by Jeffrey Binder and directed by Steven Calakos. We were honored to have Abe's sons – Herb, Sid and Harry – and their families join us at Arthrex One for the event for the premiere. Many thanks to GSP actors Victor Caroli, Jim Corsica, Sue Schaffel and Luke Lachle for bringing Abe's extraordinary story to life. We know that the students who will see this play will carry his memory with them.

The organizer of the long-delayed Teacher Holocaust Education Trip to Europe has just confirmed the trip will take place this summer! The two Collier County teachers selected in March 2019 for the trip have confirmed they plan to attend. We will provide an update on this in the coming months.

We have a lot of great programming planned for you in 2022 – exhibits, events, Zoom and in-person speaker programs. The "VEDEM UNDERGROUND" traveling exhibit by the VEDEM Foundation continues in the Estelle and Stuart Price Gallery. It will be on display through February 28. More information is available on our website at www.HMCEC.org. The next exhibit in the Gallery will be "Letters from Westerbork," which will look at examples of correspondence from those held in the Westerbork Transit Camp to family and friends. This will run from March until September.

Godfrey Levy, Mary McCarthy, Lorie Mayer

Hank Bitterman will give a presentation on Genealogy in the Museum Annex on Sunday, January 23 at 1:00 p.m. Bring your own laptop and learn how to research your family history.

On Thursday, January 27, we are offering complimentary Museum admission for International Holocaust Remembrance Day. You must sign up for your complimentary admission ticket on our website. A special film about Abe Price, Holocaust Survivor and Museum co-founder, will be shown throughout the afternoon.

We invite you to sign up for Museum Docent Ellaine Rosen's five-part lecture series, "Nazi Looted Art – Unfinished Business." With Ellaine's background in Art History and Holocaust History, you will be given an in-depth look at this subject. The series will be held in person at the Museum from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, January 12, 19, 26 and February 2 and 9. The cost is $100 for the complete series or $20 per session.

Museum Docent Stuart Mest, M.D. is presenting a two-part series on "Eugenics, Experiments, Ethics: Nazi Germany, Japan and the U.S." This series will be held in person at the Museum at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, February 23 and March 2. The cost is $40 for the presentations and an RSVP is required. Visit www.HMCEC.org to register. Dr. Mest will offer repeat sessions of Parts One and Two at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, March 9 and 16 at the Museum.

Our annual fundraising event, Triumph 2022, will take place on Thursday, March 3 at Arthrex One in North Naples. The location will be familiar to those who joined us for the Luncheon. Our special guest will be General Romeo Dallaire, who led the UN Special Forces during the Rwandan Genocide. General Dallaire and his troops tried their best against insurmountable odds to stop the genocide, and when their efforts failed, rendered aid to the victims. Information on tickets and Sponsorship Packages is available on our website.

On behalf of the Museum board, volunteers and staff, I wish you and your families a healthy, safe and very happy New Year! We hope to see you at the Museum or on Zoom in 2022!

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Estero Fine Art Show

The HotWorks.org 27th Estero Fine Art Show takes place January 29-30 outdoors at JetBlue Park in Fort Myers (head east 1.9 miles off I-75 on Daniels Parkway) – a very popular and easy-to-find venue with plenty of close, convenient parking. It is the winter home of the Boston Red Sox. The show features quality fine art and crafts created by award-winning artists and juried by art professionals. All artwork is original and personally handmade by the artist who is present at the show. There is $1,500 in Professional Artist Awards with criteria based on originality, technique/execution and booth appearance. You will find something for everyone, in all price ranges.

Covid safety precautions are in place with the show held outdoors with plenty of room for social distancing.

While at the art show, be sure to visit Jewish artist Barbara Goldberg. Born in Toledo, Ohio, and raised in Chicago and New York City, Barbara has traveled the world collecting semi-precious stones, antique ivory and bone, ethical horn, glass, pottery, resin and faience beads. Her education at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, heightened her "appreciation of the beautiful," her belief in her potential as a woman, and fostered her passions for gemology and jewelry.

Barbara Goldberg and two of her creations

Barbara's sophisticated pieces are a reflection of her commitment to bringing the latest trends in American jewelry design to a broader audience by making them affordable without compromising quality. Each piece is one-of-a-kind and balances color, texture and shape to reflect the individuality and confidence of the woman who wears it.

Prior to moving to her current home in Naples, Barbara spent 40 years raising her family in Toledo.

Hot Works associated 501(c)(3) nonprofit arm, Institute for the Arts & Education (IA&E), focuses on visual arts, cultural diversity, community enrichment and fostering art education among youth. IA&E integrates a Youth Art Competition within the show, a unique program that encourages students ages 9-19 or grades 6-12 to enter his/her original art that is publicly displayed the entire weekend. On Sunday at 3:00 p.m., $250 Youth Art Awards are presented as young artists are exposed to the rules and entrepreneurship of doing art shows for a living.

Join us for the HotWorks.org Estero Fine Art Show from 10:00 to 5:00 p.m. on January 29-30. Admission is free. A $5 parking fee supports IA&E and helps to pay the costs of producing the show.

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In Israel, it's Knafeh that takes the dish of 2021 – recipe by Chef Dalia

In honor of the end of 2021, as I do every year, I conclude with the most popular recipe in the past year.

Knafeh is at the top of the list of Israelis' favorite sweets cake in recent years. Knafeh seems to have occupied a place of honor in Israeli cuisine, in the dessert sector. While Knafeh was not originally an Israeli dish, like other recipes, I have given it an Israeli twist.

While Knafeh is not a new recipe (I've written about Knafeh previously), the Knafeh craze has gained great momentum in the past year. A simple pan cake, with cheese, shredded phyllo dough and sweet syrup became an instant hit. People leave the house just to eat Knafeh. There are places that offer only Knafeh on the menu, with people waiting in long lines, sometimes a couple of hours just to get their Knafeh fix. The concept of "Knafeh Bar" sounds a little more familiar and less weird every day.

If you go to Israel, you're not going to leave without having a slice of Knafeh. Otherwise, your trip is not complete.

As a little Israeli girl, a lot of my amazing memories revolve around Knafeh. It's a dessert that unites people no matter what their background or religious affiliation may be.

Growing up in Israel, I was lucky to have the opportunity to eat quite a few good Knafeh throughout my lifetime. While living in Jaffa in the '70s, I had an Arab neighbor named Jamal. He was an international expert in Knafeh. I mean, he knew all the Knafeh masters in Jaffa by name.

One day, Jamal saw me depressed more than usual. Without asking my permission, he decided that there was no more appropriate solution for my case than Knafeh. I told him that I knew Knafeh, but I didn't feel like eating it. But he wasn't listening. He took me to his uncle, the King of Knafeh. When we went to his place in the Old City of Jaffa, we were lucky because it was one of his uncle's brother's wedding, so the Knafeh that day was made with joy, happiness and pride.

The Knafeh on that day was fallen from heaven (delivery) and its smell was capable of finishing any conversation or any war negotiations. It was a holy smell. It gave you no chance but to respect it. You'd close your eyes for two seconds before eating like a child. And as my friend was there, he had a big piece of heaven. And so did I.

Then my apprenticeship of the science and secret laws of Knafeh with my friend started. Jamal and I put what, with time, became a common classification, based on the precise determinants, a formal catalog, which means, the basic knowledge of modern Knafeh. Information like where to go, which day of the week and what time, what to order, what to say, who you should trust, who you should keep an eye on while preparing, this one put more sugar, that one put more cheese, and less knafeh, and like that. Who can you recommend for other sweets, and who is only recommended for Knafeh. Who makes it with hands, who has a machine, and who buys it frozen and just heats it for you. And like that, we created our bible of Knafeh. We stayed like that till my family moved to Petach Tikvah.

I brought my new passion with me to the U.S. Wherever I went, my first question was, "Where can I find a restaurant that sells Knafeh?"

When you eat Knafeh, you're not just tasting a sweet, gooey, cheesy and buttery phyllo dough dessert. It is one of the main things that remind me of my homeland, a real homeland; different from the one we see on television and in newspapers. The smell of Knafeh is the smell of home for me!

I've been eating Knafeh since I can remember, and I don't plan on stopping anytime soon. In whatever form, variation or influence, as an afternoon snack or honorable gift or dessert to mark a special occasion, Knafeh is beloved by most people who taste it. Modern Israel and countries all over the Levant have found a way to call it their own. My simplified version, using a combination of fresh farmer cheese as well as rosewater-scented sugar syrup, turns the traditional item into a dessert that can be made any time at home.

Ingredients:

- ½ cup ground pistachios
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ¼ tsp rose water
- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp butter
- 8 oz farmer cheese
- ½ cup plus 2 tbsp shredded mozzarella
- 11 oz frozen shredded phyllo dough (kataifi)

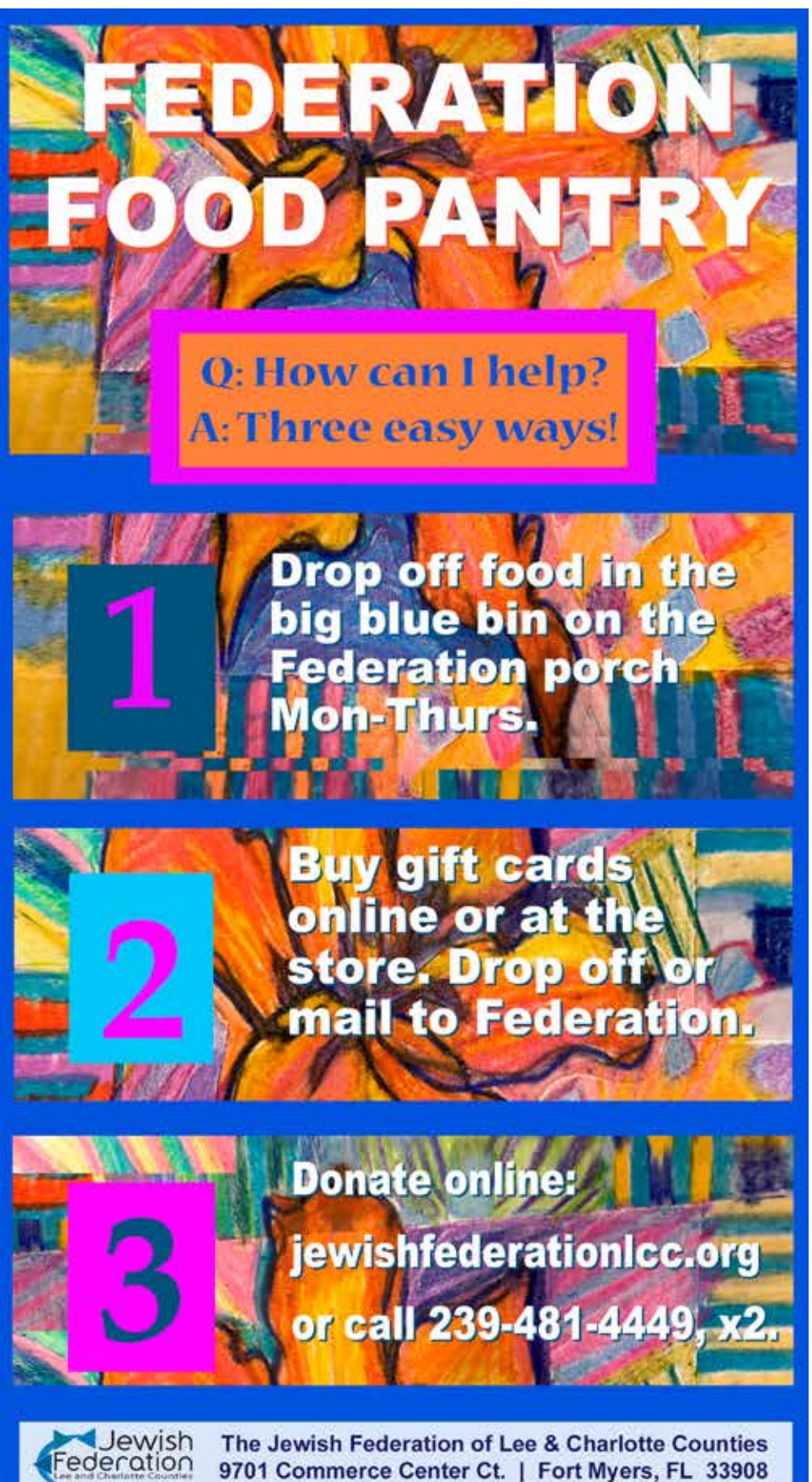
Make the sugar syrup:

- In a small pot, combine sugar, water and lemon juice, and bring to a boil. Take off the heat, add the rose water and set aside to cool.

Make the knafeh:

- In a medium-sized bowl, mix together the farmer cheese and shredded mozzarella. Set aside.
- Break up the kataifi noodles with your hands and transfer them to a large bowl.
- In the microwave, melt 1 cup of butter in a medium-sized microwave-safe bowl.
- Add the butter to the shredded kataifi and mix with your hands to coat evenly.
- Grease the cooled, wiped-down frying pan by smearing it with 1 tablespoon of softened butter. Press half of the buttered noodles into a firm layer, leaving a 1/2-inch border between the kataifi and the edges of the pan.
- Using an offset spatula, spread the cheese layer evenly on top, then press down the second half of the buttered noodles on top to create a kind of sandwich.
- Turn the heat on the lowest setting possible, on a burner meant for smaller pots if possible, and cook until the bottom layer of noodles is golden and set, about 5-7 minutes.
- Flip the knafeh: Take the pan off the heat and place an inverted 12-inch plate over the top. Using baking mitts, pick up the pan together with the plate and flip it upside down.
- Place the pan back on the stove and melt the second tablespoon of butter in the bottom of the pan, then carefully slide the knafeh back into it with the uncooked side facing down.
- Cook an additional 5-7 minutes, until set on the bottom, then invert back onto the same 12-inch plate. Pour 1 to 2 ladles of the cooled syrup on top. Top immediately with ground pistachios. Serve warm.

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



Stars of David

By Nate Bloom, Contributing Columnist

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

New Movies and Series: Catch-Up and Look Ahead

Red Rocket opened in a limited number of theaters last month. But look for a major streaming service (like HBO) to pick it up this month or next. It stars **SIMON REX**, now 49. This very handsome fellow was an MTV VJ (1995-1997). From 1999-2005, he had a number of TV/movie gigs, including co-starring in a couple of short-lived TV series. After 2005, his acting career faded, and he scratched out a living in rap music. Here's the miracle: In 2020, director/writer Sean Baker called Rex, whom he didn't know, and asked him to star in his indie film, *Red Rocket*, as a washed-up porn star who returns to his Texas hometown. Well, the film has received great reviews. There's real Oscar talk about the film and Rex's performance.

The Tragedy of Macbeth, based on Shakespeare's famous play, opened in a few theaters last month (so as to be eligible for Oscar nominations) and will begin streaming on Apple TV+ on Friday, January 14. It was written and directed by **JOEL COEN**, 67. This is the first film that Joel Coen directed and wrote without his brother, **ETHAN COEN**, 64 (they've always shared writing/directing credits). Denzel Washington plays Macbeth and Frances McDormand (Joel's real-life wife) plays Lady Macbeth. Reviews have been very good.

Cyrano, a musical based on the famous play *Cyrano De Bergerac*, played one theater in Los Angeles last month to be "Oscar-eligible." It will open in a limited number of theaters on Friday, January 21 and may "expand" in the following weeks. The musical *Cyrano* was first an off-Broadway show (2018). It got good, if not stellar reviews. Peter Dinklage (Tyrion in G*ame of Thrones*) stars as Cyrano. The music for the stage and film versions was composed by twin brothers **AARON** and **BRYCE DESSNER**, 45. They are members of The National, a well-known arty rock band.

The 355, an action spy thriller, opens on Friday, January 7. Jessica Chastain stars as a CIA secret agent who teams up with other international agents to recover a secret weapon. **SIMON KINBERG**, 49, co-wrote and directed the film. He has co-written a number of *X-Men* films and he's also a top film producer.

Premiering on Thursday, January 20 is *Single Drunk Female*, a comedy/drama series (Freeform channel/app, 10:00 p.m.). **SOPHIA BLACK-D'ELIA**, 29, stars as Samantha Fink, an irreverent alcoholic who gets into trouble and can only avoid jail by moving in with her smothering mother (played by '80s "brat pack" star **ALLY SHEEDY**, 59). Both actresses have non-Jewish fathers and Jewish mothers. Black-D'Elia has described herself as Jewish, and Sheedy has always been secular. By the way, Freeform has really "upped" its quality lately.

As We See It is an American series based on *On the Spectrum*, an internationally acclaimed Israeli series. All eight, first season *As We See It* episodes will begin streaming on Amazon Prime on Friday, January 21. The Amazon series, like the Israeli series, centers on three young-ish, autistic persons who live in a hostel for adults with autism. The hostel staff tries to transition these young-ish folks into independent living. **RICK GLASSMAN**, 37, an American comedian, who has Asperger syndrome (a form of autism), plays one of the three main characters in the Amazon series. *As We See It* was created by **JASON KATIMS**, 61, a veteran show-writer/producer who has an autistic child.

The Gilded Age premieres on HBO on Monday, January 24. This "prestige" series was created and written by Julian Fellowes, the Brit who created and wrote *Downton Abbey*. It follows the clash, in the 1880s, between the "old money" New York City elite and rich newcomers. There are no Jewish characters in the first season. However, **MORGAN SPECTOR**, 41, whose father is Jewish, has a juicy part as George Russell, a classic "new money" robber baron. I suspect that in future seasons, wealthy Jewish characters will "brush up" against the "old guard." This was the case in later seasons of *Downton Abbey*.

The Afterparty, an Apple TV+ series that premieres on Friday, January 28, centers on a murder mystery at a high school reunion. Each of the eight episodes features a retelling of the same night from a different character's perspective. Each episode has its own unique visual style and film genre to match the teller's personality. The "eight" includes **TIFFANY HADDISH**, 42, **IKE BARINHOLTZ**, 44, **ILANA GLAZER**, 34, and **BEN SCHWARTZ**, 40. This series has very good advance "buzz."

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The heroes of Vilna

By Paul R. Bartrop, PhD

While much remembrance this month will settle on the 80th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin, which systematized the Final Solution, another event – just one day after the conference – is worthy of note as an expression of resistance to the Nazis' ambitions.

Dr. Paul Bartrop

The United Partisan Organization (*Fareynegte Partizaner Organizatye* or FPO) was a Jewish underground organization established in the ghetto of Vilna (Vilnius) on January 21, 1942.

Throughout December 1941, members of various Jewish youth groups in Vilna discussed options for resistance to the Nazis. Over time, a nascent resistance movement began to form, and it was decided to remain in the ghetto and fight rather than trying to escape. On December 31, 1941, before a gathering of 150 members of the *He-Halutz* (Pioneer) youth movement at Straszuna 2, Abba Kovner made a speech in which he proclaimed that "Hitler plans to destroy all the Jews of Europe, and the Jews of Lithuania have been chosen as the first in line. We will not be led like sheep to the slaughter!" Kovner declared that up to now all Jews taken from Vilna had been murdered. In response, he called upon young Jews to organize for armed struggle against the Germans.

Three weeks later, on January 21, 1942, the *Faraynigte Partizaner Organizatzye* was established. Representatives from Vilna's major Jewish youth groups met: Abba Kovner from *Hashomer Hatzair*, Josef Glazman from *Betar*, Yitzhak Wittenberg and Chyena Borowska representing the communists, and Nissan Reznik of *Hanoar Hazioni*. Other groups joined soon after.

In establishing themselves as a resistance movement, the group had multiple aims: to prepare for mass armed resistance in the ghetto; to perform acts of sabotage; to join the partisans where possible; and to convey the message to other ghettos that they, too, should revolt. Wittenberg was appointed commander, with Glazman and Kovner his staff officers. The FPO was one of the first ghetto resistance organizations to be established.

The FPO then sent emissaries to Grodno, Białystok and Warsaw, spreading the resistance message and informing them of the murders that had been taking place in Vilna. An attempt was also made to send several female emissaries (*kashariyot*) into the Soviet Union, but they were arrested by the Germans before they reached safety. Most managed to escape, however, and made their way back to Vilna.

At its height, the FPO had some 300 organized members. They carried out acts of sabotage beyond the ghetto confines, such as the mining of railway lines used by trains going to the front lines; they sabotaged weapons and equipment in German factories where underground members worked; and forged documents for fellow Jews. Where possible, they also attempted to obtain weapons and prepared Molotov cocktails for use whenever an uprising might take place. Before they had the opportunity to do so, however, fate intervened.

In early 1943, a Polish communist by the name of Kozlovsky was captured by the Gestapo. Under extreme torture, he was forced to divulge the names of any other resisters, and one, a Lithuanian partisan named Vitas, was revealed. Vitas was also captured. When in due course he also was tortured, he surrendered the name of Yitzhak Wittenberg, the FPO commander.

Jacob Gens, the chairman of the Vilna Jewish Council (*Judenrat*), knew about the FPO existence and maintained contact with Wittenberg and other leaders. On July 8, 1943, the Germans ordered Gens to find Wittenberg and surrender him. Thus, on the night of July 15, 1943, Gens, together with Salek Desler, chief of the Jewish police, called Wittenberg and others to his office for a "meeting." It was a trap. After a few moments, armed SS men appeared with machine guns drawn. Desler identified Wittenberg, who was immediately arrested.

Although he was rescued by members of the FPO, the Nazis told Gens that if he did not return Wittenberg immediately, they would liquidate the entire ghetto and everyone in it. The terrified inhabitants demanded from Gens that Wittenberg be handed over.

During the day, Wittenberg met with members of the leadership group. He contemplated taking his life, but word arrived from Gens that the Germans had demanded him alive. Fearful of the consequences for the ghetto population, he then handed command to Kovner and went out into the street with the words "*Ich gehe*" ("I go"). Gens accepted the surrender in person.

Wittenberg was taken out of the ghetto and handed over to the Germans. When they came to his cell the next day to begin their interrogation, they found him dead. He had taken poison to avoid the torture that was awaiting him.

In July 1943, Abba Kovner became the leader of the FPO, but by then a rift had opened within the organization. Some members argued that the ghetto could not be defended because most Jews were not prepared to fight. The best way to resist the Nazis, they felt, was through escaping to the forest where they would join the partisans. The first group left on July 24, 1943, calling themselves the "Leon" unit in honor of Wittenberg's resistance codename.

September 1, 1943, saw the liquidation of the ghetto. Led by Kovner, the remaining FPO commanders issued a call for the Jews not to go "like sheep to slaughter," and rose in revolt. When the battle seemed lost, they escaped through the sewers to the forests, where they established themselves as Jewish battalions within the Soviet partisan movement.

Meanwhile, back in the ghetto, most of those who did not join the revolt – the majority – were captured and sent to labor camps in Estonia, where they were murdered by the SS. FPO members, on the other hand, now that they had been transformed into Soviet partisans, lived to participate in the liberation of Vilna by the Red Army on July 13, 1944.▲

Paul R. Bartrop is Professor Emeritus of History and the former Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Research at Florida Gulf Coast University.

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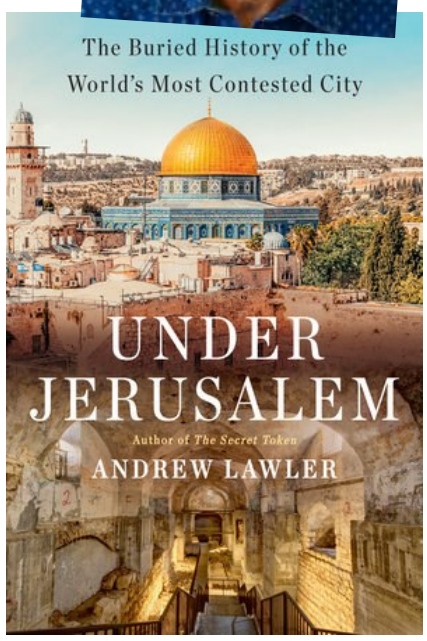

Andrew Lawler is author of three books including, *Under Jerusalem: The Buried History of the World's Most Contested City*. As a journalist, he has written more than a thousand newspaper and magazine articles from more than two dozen countries. His byline has appeared in *The New York Times, The Washington Post, National Geographic, Smithsonian*, and many others.

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Aging Jewishly – What our traditions teach us about growing old

When a loved one dies by suicide

By Rabbi Barbara Aiello

As her cell phone slid from her grasp, it occurred to Dorothy that she was in shock. The room was spinning, so much so that Dorothy grabbed the back of her kitchen chair and stumbled forward in an awkward attempt to sit down. Now with her head on the table, Dorothy felt the cool of the Formica, which was enough to snap her back into reality.

Rabbi Barbara Aiello

"Why do they say? No news is good news?" Dorothy said aloud. It has been months since Dorothy had heard from her cousin Nina. Yet, no matter. Regardless of how often they spoke, Dorothy and Nina were close. They had a special bond. That's why Dorothy assumed, although it had been several months, that everything was okay. But it wasn't. Cousin Nina broke the news and Dorothy again addressed the empty room. "I can't believe it. Nina's husband committed suicide."

Sadly, Dorothy's story is not unique. In fact, in a recent article that appeared on the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy website, sociologists report that although "older adults make up 12% of the U.S. population, they account for 18% of all suicide deaths." The statistic is an alarming one especially since elderly persons make up the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population. The article cautions that given these statistics, "the issue of later-life suicide (has become) a major public health priority."

If your life has been touched by the suicide of a loved one, you are not alone. As with so many, I, too, have experienced this mind-bending loss, most recently when I learned of the suicide death of Dr. Rob Ashton.

Rob and his wife, Dr. Jennifer Ashton, ABC News' Chief Medical Correspondent, and their children Alex and Chloe, all traveled to our mountain synagogue in south Italy to celebrate as Alex became a Bar Mitzvah. The family was joyful, loving and caring. Little sister Chloe was so proud of her big brother and eagerly awaited her turn at the Torah, which came in Jamaica when I had the honor to meet this beautiful family once again and officiate as Chloe became a Bat Mitzvah.

Unlike Dorothy's cousin, Dr. Jennifer Ashton is a public figure, known to millions of television viewers. Her story and her family's grief were public knowledge, so much so that Dr. Ashton shared her experience in her recent book, *Life After Suicide: Finding Courage, Comfort & Community After Unthinkable Loss*. Dr. Ashton highlights her emotional journey, the impact of her ex-husband's violent death, and how she found the strength to support her children and heal after their tragic loss.

Teen and young adult suicide is on the rise – a national tragedy that must not be ignored – but it is important to note that Rob Ashton was a husband, father and well-established professional when he took his own life. Dorothy's cousin Nina's spouse also fit the same profile. Health professionals find that suicide among older adults, in general, and specifically among the elderly, is increasing. When considering elder suicide, many of these deaths can be under-reported by 40% or more. In addition, recent statistics do not include what psychologists term "silent suicides," such as death from drug overdoses, alcoholism, self-starvation or dehydration. And many among the elderly population, some of whom suffer from suicidal thoughts brought on by depression, are reluctant to seek professional help.

What can be done? Health professionals emphasize that friends and family members need to be aware of the warning signs of impending suicide, which include loss of interest in activities and friends, deterioration in hygiene and grooming, feeling hopeless, expressing an urgent need to change a will or give away prized possessions, stockpiling medication, canceling medical appointments or sharing ominous remarks such as, "This is the last time you'll see me."

Yet many suicide victims do not exhibit obvious signs and signals. An underlying, all-encompassing depression may lead to suicide, with the grieving family left behind to cope.

Dr. Jennifer Ashton's book offers a roadmap to managing this unthinkable tragedy while Diana Raab offers help in a 2021 article, "How to Cope with the Suicide of a Loved One." Ms. Raab's interest in the subject is the result of her own personal tragedy, when at only 10 years of age, her beloved grandmother took her own life.

Ms. Raab recalls that back in 1964, families were reluctant to speak about suicide and, few, if any, suicide survivor programs existed to help family members cope. Today help is available both in person and virtually, as surviving family members learn to live in the present, express their thoughts and feelings – among them anger and grief – find appropriate distractions, and when emotion overwhelms, cry.

For us Jews, traditional Jewish law regarding suicide has seemed to add insult to injury. Taking one's life is officially a violation of Jewish law and, in years past, the suicide victim could not be buried in a Jewish cemetery but would be interred outside the cemetery gate. Mourning customs would not be observed and the family of the suicide victim would often be ostracized by their Jewish community.

Gratefully, contemporary rabbis have followed the guidance of the great Jewish legalist, Rabbi Moshe Isserles, who wrote that "new knowledge" should always inform the application of Jewish tradition. Regarding suicide, modern rabbis apply the "new knowledge" concept and explain that suicide is not a rational act deserving of punishment but the result of a terminal mental illness – a tragic condition suffered by Dr. Rob Ashton, Cousin Nina's husband and countless others who deserve our compassion, and whose families need and appreciate our kindness and support.

Rabbi Barbara Aiello served Aviva Senior Living in Sarasota as resident rabbi for 10 years. She now lives and works in Italy where she is rabbi of Italy's first Reconstructionist synagogue. You may reach her at Rabbi@RabbiBarbara.com.

Rabbi Barbara Aiello's most popular columns are now published in her new book, *Aging Jewishly*, available on Amazon. It makes a great gift!

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"Mughaniyat: The Songs of the Mothers"

By Arlene Stolnitz

Tom Fogel is a folklorist and ethnographer at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His interest in Yemeni Jewish Culture has led him to explore the poetry of Yemenite Jewish women from a bygone era. His collaboration with Israeli musician Ofer Kalaf has resulted in "Mughaniyat: The Songs of the Mothers," music from the Khugarya region of Yemen.

Arlene Stolnitz

Mugahniyat were Yemenite poetesses who also sang. The poetry comes from the Cairo Geniza, a repository of Jewish manuscript fragments from countries of North Africa bordering the Mediterranean. While researching the work of the late Shelomo Dov Goitein, a scholar of Yemenite Jewish culture, Fogel became interested in the culture of that period, which stems from the 9th to 13th centuries. It turns out that his family came from southwestern Yemen, as did Kalaf's family! Together with Kalaf, an accomplished musician and thespian, the musical composition "Mughaniyat" was born.

To understand this music, one must know something about the history of the region. Jews of that time in Yemen numbered nearly 50,000 among millions of Yemenite Muslims. Theirs was an amicable arrangement, even though the Jews were considered subjects rather than equal in status. The tradition was that for nearly half a year, the workers in local villages would leave to work and sell their products in distant Muslim towns. Yemeni women and children were left on their own, under the "protection" of the town leaders. Left to take care of their own affairs, women did all of the customary work for themselves. Harvesting wheat, bread baking, bringing water to the village and doing needlework were all accomplished by women as they sang to each other. The women were illiterate, never having learned to read or write Hebrew. Therefore, the songs were all in Yemenite-Arabic, rather than Hebrew. The songs of the women were passed down in the oral tradition, generation after generation. None had ever been written down until now.

The songs reflect the girls' hardship and longings. Often, they were married off as young as age six to older men. Their matrimony songs, unlike the joyful Israeli celebrations we are familiar with, are sad and tearful. The practice has continued even in more recent time, and Kalaf (sometimes spelled Callaf), never knew that his mother, orphaned at an early age, was married to his father through such an arrangement.

I found Yemenite songs performed by Kalaf with English titles while searching on YouTube. "I Think," "Personal Problems," " Breaking My Eyes" and "Untangled Child" are worth listening to, although I do not know if they are specifically from the "Mothers" composition. However, the music gives us an interesting insight into Yemenite music and makes for enjoyable listening.

The musical arrangement "The Songs of the Mothers" was presented recently by Fogel and Kalaf at Confederation House, a longstanding center for ethnic music and poetry in Jerusalem. The center, founded in 1984, emphasizes innovative activities based on cultural identification, social issues and questions of identity.

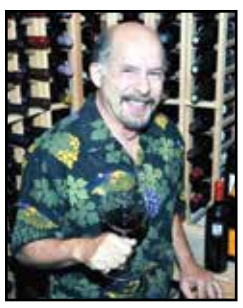
In the words of the composers, "Non-Yemenite people know we have a culture and they respect that. They may know very little about it, but at least we are on the radar.… On another level, it is not so great, because we lost a lot of our heritage. This performance honors that legacy as well as our mothers."▲

Arlene Stolnitz, founder of the Sarasota Jewish Chorale, is a member of the Jewish Congregation of Venice. A retired educator from Rochester, New York, she has sung in choral groups for over 25 years and also sings in The Venice Chorale. Her interest in the preservation of Jewish music of all kinds has led to this series of articles on Jewish Folk Music in the Diaspora.

Wine trends – it's what's happening

By The Wine Whisperer

Like most pursuits and professions, the wine world is ever-changing. Wines go in and out of style (consider the recent craze for rosés and the popularity of Prosecco), and new winegrowing regions catch the attention (and the dollars) of wine buyers. A few years back, most California Chardonnays were subjected to heavy oak treatment. Then the fashion tilted back the other way and people developed a taste for purer, more fruit-forward flavor profiles. Now, we're back to the more buttery styles.


■ Jerry Greenfield

So it might be a good idea to look ahead a bit, especially considering the recent global situation, and try to divine what might be in store for wine lovers in the coming months.

First, industry professionals have noted a trend toward wines from Oregon and Washington State. Of course, Oregon is best known for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, and maybe consumers have become a bit tired of the "typical" California style of these varietals. Example: A few years ago at the New York Wine Experience, *Wine Spectator* Senior Editor Bruce Sanderson and I sampled down a whole row of California Pinot Noirs. There must have been 10 or 12 tables and all the wines tasted remarkably similar, with upfront aromas and flavors of strawberry…one after the other.

In Oregon, they tend to make their wines in a more Old World style, perhaps because several winery owners from Burgundy have bought vineyards there. There's a bit more complexity, more layers of flavor, more earth, spice, cedar, smoke and leather.

There has been a swing toward wines from Washington State as well. The winegrowing region is in the dry land east of the Cascade Mountains, and quite a hike from the cities on the west coast. But since it's colder and drier there, the big reds, like Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, are more reserved and austere than those same varietals grown in California. A distance of around a thousand miles makes for a completely different climate down south, where the grapes ripen more fully, resulting in wines that are more dense, more plush and a lot more fruity. Maybe the trend is going toward a more reserved, classic flavor profile. Plus, the prices of Washington State

continued on next page

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Wine trends...continued from previous page

wines tend to be a bit more consumer friendly. That's a biggie.

Another trend that will certainly have long-term effects on the wine we drink is climate change. Many experts maintain that vineyards will be affected not so much by increasing warmth, but by volatility in the weather patterns. While it's true that French grape growers are thinking about moving their vineyards farther north because of increasing temperatures, events like heat spikes or unexpected frost, drought, hail and flooding are really keeping vineyard managers up at night.

And then there are wine prices. While we haven't yet seen the full effect of projected tariffs, the industry predicts that volume of production will slightly decrease (because of weather patterns?) and prices could rise just a bit. Might be a good idea to stock up now and fill all those empty slots in your collection. Hope you enjoy some new recommendations.

Lions Head Panthera Chardonnay Russian River 2017 ($35) – The extended aging in new French oak gives this sumptuous Chardonnay deep notes of candied lemon, smoke and crème brulée. A distinctive style. WW 89

Lions Head Lion Tamer Cabernet Sauvignon Napa 2017 ($60) – Mostly Cabernet, with touches of Petite Sirah and Malbec, this mouth-filling red hits all the right notes. There are black fruits, cherries, coffee, oak and chocolate all over the place, and it's all nicely integrated on the palate. A winner. WW 97

Gva'ot Dances in White Blend Israel 2016 ($27) – A blend of 75% Chardonnay and 25% Gewürztraminer, this wine clearly demonstrates that the Israeli wine industry is making its mark on the international scene. The palate is a mélange of spice and tropical fruit that will go nicely with Thai or other Asian cuisines. WW 88

Ask the Wine Whisperer

Why is French oak so widely preferred for making wine barrels? – David L., Port St. Lucie

Winemakers use French oak because the grain of the wood is very tight and the barrels impart more subtle flavors and characteristics to the wine. The average age of a French oak tree used for wine barrels is 170 years.▲

Jerry Greenfield is The Wine Whisperer, a wine author, educator and consultant. He is an adjunct professor in the wine program at Florida Gulf Coast University. Read his blog at www.wine whisperer.com. Jerry's new book, He Lost it in the Catskills*, is available on Amazon, or purchase your personally signed copy at catskillmemories.com.*

2022 Jewish Film Festival Ticket Information

Regal Belltower Stadium 20 Theaters

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SERIES OF 10 FILMS: $118 (discounted rate)

INDIVIDUAL FILM TICKETS: $13 each

Passes & tickets are available online

FILMS	DATES
Howie Mandel: But Enough About Me	Sunday (Matinee), February 6 3:00 P.M.
Persian Lessons	Tuesday, February 8 7:15 P.M.
Aulcie	Thursday, February 10 7:15 P.M.
Tiger Within	Monday (Matinee), February 14 3:00 P.M.
Latter Day Jew	Tuesday, February 15 7:15 P.M.
A Starry Sky Above The Roman Ghetto	Thursday, February 17 7:15 P.M.
Asia	Tuesday, February 22 7:15 P.M.
My Name is Sara	Thursday, February 24 7:15 P.M.
They Ain't Ready For Me	Friday (Matinee), February 25 3:00 P.M.
Abe	Sunday (Matinee), February 27 3:00 P.M.

Only 1 VIRTUAL PASS is required per household! Virtual Pass is for VIRTUAL SCREENINGS ONLY!

To purchase your festival pass, virtual pass and individual tickets visit:

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See the following 2-page spread for information on all 10 films in the 2022 Jewish Film Festival of Southwest Florida.

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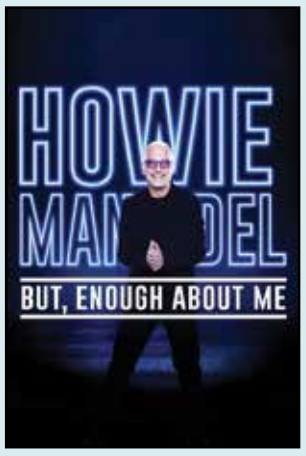
Sunday, February 6 at 3:00 p.m.



Howie Mandel: But Enough About Me

This revealing documentary follows the life and career of Howie Mandel, a veteran comedian, actor and producer arguably most known for his battle with OCD and being a judge on *America's Got Talent* rather than for his comedic genius. The film explores his early years in the comedy industry and how he became a star on one of the most beloved television series ever, *St. Elsewhere*. We follow Howie on the road while he performs over 200 stand-up performances each year to behind the scenes at *AGT*, and personal time with his family. The film also explores his personal struggles with OCD. Through powerful on-stage moments, intimate interviews and archival footage of his early performances, we discover how Howie emerged from being a carpet salesman to become one of the most famous and paradoxically approachable performers in the world. Raw, funny and touching, the provocative story is told from the intriguing and wild early days to his unprecedented success.

Comedy Documentary, English, 88 Minutes

Sponsored by Karin Fine

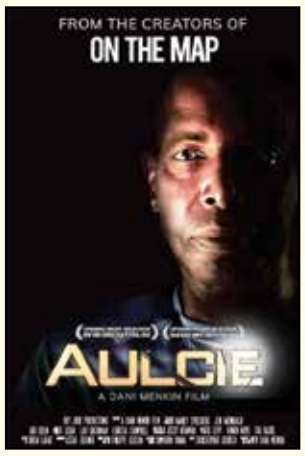
Tuesday, February 8 at 7:15 p.m.

Persian Lessons

1942: Gilles, a young Belgian man, is arrested by the SS and sent to a concentration camp, where he avoids execution by convincing the guards he's Persian – not Jewish. But then, he's tasked with teaching Persian to the officer in charge of the camp's kitchen, who dreams of opening a restaurant in Iran once the war is over. To survive, Gilles invents a language to teach the eager German. When the two men's unusual relationship begins to incite jealousy and suspicion, Gilles becomes acutely aware that one false move could expose him.

Drama, German/French/Persian with Subtitles, 127 minutes

Thursday, February 10 at 7:15 p.m.



Aulcie

In 1976, Aulcie Perry was playing basketball in Harlem when scouts from Maccabi Tel Aviv spotted and signed him. A year later, he led the team to its first European Championship, converted to Judaism and become an Israeli citizen. His rise to fame was precipitous, and his relationship with supermodel Tami Ben Ami became the subject of relentless media attention, solidifying his status as one of Israel's biggest stars. But behind the scenes, he had a growing drug addiction that culminated in his arrest and imprisonment. Since his release he has committed himself to uplifting those suffering from drug abuse and addiction.

Documentary, English/Hebrew with Subtitles, 72 minutes

Monday, February 14 at 3:00 p.m.

Tiger Within

An unlikely friendship between a troubled, homeless teen and a Holocaust survivor sparks larger questions of ignorance, fear, lies, family, love, forgiveness and our divided world in this moving story.

Drama, English, 98 Minutes (Explicit Language)

Virtual Passes are per household and are for virtual screenings only.

To purchase your Festival Pass, Virtual Pass and individual tickets, visit JewishFederationlcc.org/JFF2022

Tuesday, February 15 at 7:15 p.m.

Latter Day Jew

This documentary follows H. Alan Scott, a gay former Mormon/converted Jew/cancer survivor/writer-comedian, as he finds his spiritual path and prepares for his Bar Mitzvah.

Documentary, English, 85 Minutes

Thursday, February 17 at 7:15 p.m.

A Starry Sky Above the Roman Ghetto

When Sofia finds an old snapshot in a neglected suitcase, she's mesmerized by the child's picture. As details emerge – the child's name, separation from her parents during a Gestapo raid and rescue by a nun – Sofia commits to honoring the girl's memory by staging an original play with classmates and friends from a nearby Jewish high school. A talented ensemble injects youthful energy into this inspiring story about the importance of memory, coexistence and reconciling generational frictions.

Drama, Italian with English Subtitles, 100 Minutes

Tuesday, February 22 at 7:15 p.m.

Asia

Asia concentrates on her job as a nurse while Vika hangs out at the skate park with her friends. Their routine is shaken when Vika's health rapidly deteriorates. Asia must step in and become the mother Vika so desperately needs. Vika's illness turns out to be an opportunity to reveal the great love within this small family unit.

Drama, Hebrew, 85 Minutes

Sponsored by William & Andi Horowitz

Thursday, February 24 at 7:15 p.m.

My Name is Sara

This film is based on the true-life story of a 13-year-old Polish Jew. After a grueling escape to the Ukrainian countryside, Sara steals her best friend's Catholic identity and finds refuge in a small village, where she is taken in by a farmer and his young wife. She soon discovers the dark secrets of her employers' marriage, compounding the greatest secret she must strive to protect, her true identity.

Drama, English & Polish, 111 Minutes

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Friday, February 25 at 3:00 p.m.

They Ain't Ready for Me

Tamar Manasseh is an African American rabbinical student who is leading the fight against senseless killings on the south side of Chicago. Every day, Tamar, the vivacious, self-assured and magnetic mother of two, sits on the corner of 75th Street and South Stewart Avenue in the Englewood section of Chicago. This is the ghetto, where poverty, unemployment, addiction and violence are rampant. Tired of waiting for politicians to do something, Tamar took the situation into her own hands.

Documentary, English, 95 Minutes

Sunday, February 27 at 3:00 p.m.

Abe

The Israeli-Jewish side of his family calls him Avram. The Palestinian-Muslim side, Ibrahim. His first-generation American agnostic lawyer parents call him Abraham. But the 12-year-old kid from Brooklyn who loves food and cooking prefers Abe, and tries to unite his family through his culinary skills.

Comedy Drama, English, 89 Minutes

Sponsored by Norman Love Confections

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BRIEFS

ISRAEL IS AT THE CENTER OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ORDER

The recent five-day drill in the Red Sea was the first time in history that forces from Bahrain, Israel, the UAE and the U.S. Navy trained together. There is now a large, organized bloc of countries opposed to Iran's ambitions of regional hegemony. After the Abraham Accords altered the geopolitical landscape, Israel was moved from the U.S. European Command's area of responsibility to Central Command, making it easier for the U.S. to organize joint military drills in Israel. Another recent joint training exercise involved 500 U.S. Marines who trained with Israeli commandos.

In October, air force units from France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, the UK and the U.S. flew in the biennial Blue Flag drill over Israel, the largest number of countries in the exercise since it began in 2013. In July, Israel hosted American, British and German drone operators. In June, Israel, the UK and the U.S. flew F-35s together as part of the Tri-Lightning exercise. In March, Cyprus and France joined the Israel-led Noble Dina naval drill for the first time.

These exercises are building a new alliance system, with Israel as its linchpin. Military units that practice with Israeli forces gain real combat expertise and signal that Jerusalem has allies increasingly working to confront potential threats in the region. Where belligerent actors once faced a series of isolated countries, they'll now have to tangle with an organized alliance. (Seth J. Frantzman, *Wall Street Journal*)

ISRAELI DRONE DEFENSE SAVES POPE FRANCIS FROM ROGUE THREAT

When a rogue drone appeared over a large public Mass led by Pope Francis in Slovakia on September 15, the threat was neutralized – without any disruption to the worshipers – by the EnforceAir anti-drone ground-level tactical solution from Israel's D-Fend.

According to newly available information reported by *The Jerusalem Post*, the suspicious drone flew over the religious ceremony attended by 90 bishops, 500 priests and 60,000 Catholics in Šaštín, site of the National Marian Shrine.

"EnforceAir fended off the rogue drone, sending it back to its original takeoff position, far away from the large crowd," a D-Fend spokesman told *The Jerusalem Post*.

Working in coordination with the Slovakian Interior Ministry, D-Fend deployed its technology at several outdoor appearances by the pope in Slovakia from September 12 to 15.

"Our system, in either autonomous or manual mode, detects, locates and identifies rogue drones in your airspace and then neutralizes the threat by allowing you to take full control over the drone and land it safely in a predefined zone," the company explains.

"Since the system does not rely upon jammers or kinetic technology, EnforceAir avoids collateral damage, interference, disruption and disturbance. Continuity prevails as communications, commerce, transportation and everyday life smoothly proceed."

A representative of the pope's security team said that the EnforceAir solution "took control of the rogue drone that threatened the potential safety of the pope, the crowd and the VIPs in attendance, quickly and easily."

One day before that incident, the Ra'anana-based D-Fend Solutions announced that its Multi-Sensor Command & Control (MSC2) system won *Security Today*'s "New Product of the Year" award in the unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) category.

Organizers of the G7 Summit held last June in Cornwall, England, also chose D-Fend's technology to protect the visiting world leaders. (Abigail Klein Leichman, ISRAEL21c.org)

MOSSAD RECRUITED TOP IRANIAN SCIENTISTS TO BLOW UP KEY NUCLEAR FACILITY

Israel's Mossad intelligence agency recruited a team of Iranian nuclear scientists to carry out a covert operation which blew up the underground A1000 centrifuge hall at Natanz in April 2021, though they believed that they were working for international dissident groups. After the explosion, the scientists responsible were spirited away to a safe location.

Some of the explosives used were dropped into the compound by a drone, while others were smuggled into the facility hidden in boxes of food on a catering truck. The explosion demolished 90% of the centrifuges, putting the complex out of action for up to nine months.

In an earlier Mossad operation targeting the Iran Center for Advanced Centrifuges warehouse at Natanz, explosives were hidden in 2019 in building materials to be used in the

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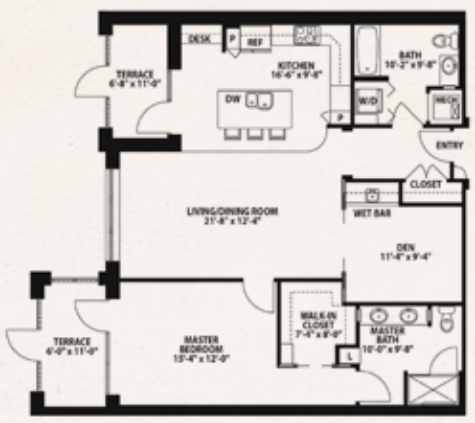
THE TUSCAN



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2021 BEST OF THE BEST BONITA SPRINGS WINNER

BRIEFS

continued from previous page

centrifuge hall, then triggered on July 2, 2020. The warehouse had been used to precisely calibrate centrifuges and the blast destroyed a significant quantity of hardware.

On June 23, 2021, an armed quadcopter, smuggled into Iran piece by piece, was used by a joint Iranian and Israeli team to launch missiles at the Iran Centrifuge Technology Company in Karaj where advanced centrifuges were built. The drone was then piloted back to the team on the ground, who spirited it away to be used again.

The three operations involved scores of agents on the ground. The revelations underline Israel's capacity for striking at the Iranian regime's most secret and strongly fortified sites. (Jake Wallis Simons, *Jewish Chronicle* - UK)

QATAR, ISRAEL REACH AGREEMENT ON DIAMOND TRADE

Qatar and Israel do not have diplomatic ties. Trade relations were established in 1996, following the Oslo Accords, but were severed in 2009.

Yet according to Israeli and Qatari sources, Qatar will allow Israeli merchants to enter the country without obstruction to trade in diamonds.

The agreement is a possible opening to future commercial agreements with Qatar. (Danny Zaken, *Al-Monitor*)

ISRAELI NGOS SEND AID TO KENTUCKY IN WAKE OF TORNADOES

Following four tornadoes that killed dozens and destroyed homes and businesses in western Kentucky, volunteers for Israeli humanitarian aid organization SmartAID worked with local partners to install a coordination center for emergency workers in hard-hit Mayfield and Benton.

"The coordination center included solar energy, smartphone connectivity, Wi-Fi and other technologies to help responders efficiently plan operations," said SmartAID founder and director Shachar Zahavi.

"Kentucky was the worst-hit state by far in an unusual mid-December swarm of twisters across the Midwest and the South that leveled entire communities, leaving tens of thousands homeless," said Zahavi. "Most communities have been left without access to power, clean water, telecommunication, medical treatment and basic survival items."

Another Israeli humanitarian aid organization, IsraAID, mobilized an emergency response team to support recovery and cleanup efforts in affected Kentucky communities.

CEO Yotam Polizer said they will join with colleagues from Team Rubicon, a disaster response organization founded by U.S. military veterans, and "work closely with local authorities to assess the situation and identify communities and households in need of support."

Israeli Ambassador to the United States Michael Herzog tweeted Israel's condolences to those who lost

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BRIEFS

continued from previous page

loved ones. He and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said that Israel "stands together with the American people and is ready to offer any assistance needed." (Abigail Klein Leichman, ISRAEL21c.org)

ISRAELI SERIES *TEHRAN* WINS INTERNATIONAL EMMY FOR DRAMA

The Israeli TV series *Tehran* won the Best Drama award at the 49th annual International Emmy Awards held in New York recently.

Tehran airs internationally on Apple TV+ and stars Niv Sultan as a young Israeli Mossad agent working undercover in Iran to sabotage the country's nuclear weapons buildup.

The Emmy was accepted by Dana Eden, one of the executive producers. She drew applause for stating that the series is about "understanding the human behind your enemy and we're doing it every day on our set."

She said the producers "work with Iranian actors from all over the world, Iranian refugees that just fled the current regime in Iran … and actually we found out that we have a lot in common. So I think it gives a hope for the future … that we can walk together, the Iranians and the Israelis, in Jerusalem and in Tehran, as friends and not as enemies."

A 2021 International Emmy Award nomination also went to Israeli actor Roy Nik for his performance in *Normal*.

The last time an Israeli show won an International Emmy was in 2018 for the comedy *Nevsu* about an interracial family. (ISRAEL21c.org)

ISRAEL COMPLETES UPGRADED BARRIER WITH GAZA

After three years of construction, Israel has completed the 65-km. upgraded barrier comprised of an iron wall, sensors and concrete along its border with Gaza in order to remove the threat of cross-border attack tunnels. In addition to an underground barrier, there is a six-meter (20-foot) high above-ground fence.

More than 1,200 people worked on the project. The iron and steel used were "equivalent to the length of a steel wall from Israel to Australia," and the concrete used was "enough to pave a road from Israel to Bulgaria," said Fence Administration Director Brig.-Gen. Eran Ofir. The barrier "does not allow for the construction of additional tunnels to infiltrate into the State of Israel." (Anna Ahronheim, *Jerusalem Post*)

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Why Germany's Iran policy is dangerous

By David Harris, CEO of American Jewish Committee (AJC), November 16, 2021

Editor's note: In his latest interview with Germany's *Bild*, the most-read newspaper in Europe, David Harris discusses Germany-Iran ties, Germany-Israel relations, Covid-19 conspiracy theories, Holocaust relativization and other current issues. The English translation of the interview is below.

What are your expectations for the new German federal government as it relates to the security of Israel?

Since the days of Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, Germany has laudably understood its special obligation to the State of Israel, the only Jewish-majority nation on earth. During the Merkel era, to her credit, that became a matter of Germany's *Staatsräson*. Clearly, it is our hope and expectation that the new German government will reaffirm this unique relationship – and Germany's ironclad commitment to Israel's security and equal place in the community of nations.

On November 9, Germany commemorated the victims of the November pogroms, and the next day, the Federal Foreign Office received Iran's deputy foreign minister in Berlin. What is your assessment of this visit?

Some things are, or at least should be, abundantly clear by now. Iran is an aggressor nation, with its destabilizing tentacles spread across the Middle East – and beyond, including in Europe. It is a serial human rights violator, especially targeting political dissidents, women, religious minorities and the LGBT community. And it's an untrustworthy nation, whose pledges and promises, whether in the nuclear realm or elsewhere, are meaningless. German officials should never succumb to wishful thinking, naïveté or the primacy of trade relations at any cost. And what is especially striking is that just a day after we commemorated the Pogrom of November 1938 and heard the declarations about "Never again," the German Foreign Ministry welcomed the representative of a state that calls for a world without Israel, and has been actively working on this goal for decades now.

There have also been astonishing decisions coming out of Brussels: European Parliament just resolved to transfer additional millions to the Palestinian aid organization, UNRWA, although it works with antisemitic schoolbooks.

The issue of UNRWA is even larger and still more concerning. For the past 70 years, this bloated bureaucracy has treated Palestinians differently than every other population in the world. It has no mandate whatsoever to resettle Palestinians, in stark contrast to the UN High Commission for Refugees. And it has the most expansive definition of the word "refugee" anywhere, allowing descendants of Palestinian refugees, without limit, to take on the status of refugees themselves. Add to

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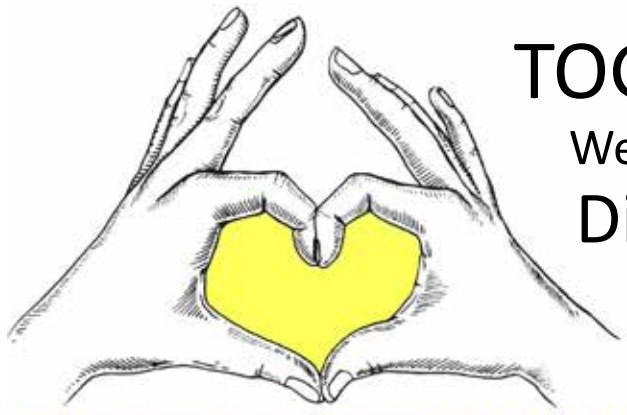

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Connecting the dots

■ **Rabbi Michael J. Schorin**

So, there you are. Along with your leader, Judah the Maccabee, you have just re-conquered the Temple. In the midst of your rejoicing, one of the priests comes forward and declares this small container of kosher oil is the only sacred one remaining. All the rest of the oil had been squandered in one way or another. Worst of all, it will take eight days to make another batch of kosher oil.

So, what would you do? Some members of your guerilla army argue that we should wait to light this oil until there is enough kosher oil to keep it lit. Other comrades in your band of brothers vote to light the oil remaining right now. After all, we've been fighting three years to re-dedicate our Holy Temple, so why should we wait another minute?

Obviously, we know that the Maccabees chose the second argument, and it turned out, well, miraculously. But what if the Maccabees weren't just talking about a specific cruse of oil, but, more metaphorically, how do we relate to energy? Whatever age you, dear reader, may be, we all have the same question in front of us: How will you spend your daily dose of energy? For those of us who are younger, the vial of energy may be large. And for those of us in the latter half of life, the vial may be smaller, but some energy is still there. Do we wait until we feel more energy before doing something or do we just jump in and hope for a miracle?

And there is also a spiritual truth here. Hanukkah is the holiday of re-dedication. Originally, this referred to the Bet ha-Mikdash, the Holy Temple. But since the Temple has been gone for about two millennia, what do we need to re-dedicate now? For some of us, we might want to dedicate ourselves to serving our shul in one capacity or another. Simply showing up for services is a great way to participate and serve. We might want to assist the Federation by volunteering, helping with a committee or donating.

Beyond money and time, there is our spiritual life. Is our energy flagging? Do we still believe or has that left us some time ago? In his work, *The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion*, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan explains that the victory of Hanukkah wasn't just political or military, but a spiritual victory. He continues, "It was G-d's victory and those who experienced it were convinced that it was the spiritual influences in Jewish life that proved decisive."

So, how do you vote? Will you re-dedicate yourself to developing your spirituality? Will you participate with the passion of a Maccabee? Will you demonstrate for others the depth of your commitment? The prophet Zechariah reminds us it is not easy: "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," saith the Lord. May the glow of the candles continue to inspire you and may your dreidel keep on spinning!▲

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.

Letter to the Editor

Howard Parker, Fort Myers, November 17, 2021

This letter comes as a result of my attempts to purchase an Empire turkey these past few days.

Living here since 1992, I have seen many wonderful changes and the growth of our Jewish community. I have seen many young businesses of every kind grow amazingly and happily into household staples in this community. We, the Jewish community, played a great role in helping these businesses to reach these heights and all are happy for it.

One business that has found a home in Southwest Florida is Costco. This company does not recognize the needs of the Jewish community in our area. This fact I find upsetting. If you doubt the veracity of this, visit a Costco or speak with any Jew who lives in Boynton Beach or Miami about the Jewish product line at their Costco.

In part, I fault our community for this reality. Not speaking up and making one's needs known can and does lead to less-than-ideal treatment. This applies to all of life.

I will end my letter to the community with this. Not speaking up when we see that something is not correct or right, or the way we think it should be, makes us part of the problem. Reason and common sense will continue to vanish if we choose not to say or do anything about it. I will go to Miami to visit with my sister this weekend and bring home to Fort Myers the Empire turkey I am seeking.▲

Marcia Can Help

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

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

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

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Confession

"Any man or woman who wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the LORD is guilty and must confess the sin they have committed." (Numbers 5:6)

■ **Rabbi Bruce Diamond**

Why is confession important? It doesn't fix anything. A penalty still has to be paid and restitution made.

Confession must be made because it can lead to a deeper understanding of self. That is the meaning of "confession is good for the soul." The soul is our true selves.

On the lintel above the Greek Shrine of Apollo in Delphi was inscribed "gnōthi seauton" – "know thyself." This was a wry quip aimed at the pilgrims coming to be advised of their future, as if to say, "You don't need to look here to learn about which choice you should make. Look within yourself!"

When I stop trying to rationalize and excusing my wrongdoings and concealing them from others, an honest unvarnished confession verbalized to another in private or to a group will lead me deeper into the labyrinth within myself where my true self lurks in hiding.

We finally stop kidding ourselves and others about ourselves.

And why is it important to have a deeper understanding of ourselves? Because without that we find ourselves trapped where and with whom we don't belong, doing things that aren't really us. The source of our behaviors that are destructive to ourselves and others is us banging against the bars of the cages we've foolishly put ourselves in through a lack of deeper self-understanding.

All that banging can lead to one of three outcomes:

- Those around learn to ignore you as much as possible or try to drive you away
- They kill you or you kill yourself
- You give up and slink into a corner of your cage and cower there the rest of life, subsisting on the scraps they throw you

Now I must confess: It took me way too long to learn enough about myself to stop my destructive behaviors. I stopped banging on the bars of my cage when I finally tried the door and realized that it always had been unlocked. It was I who lacked the courage to open it and walk out into the unfamiliar.

It's only in the last dozen or so years that I've stopped testing limits imposed on me when I put myself in the wrong work and personal surroundings. Before that it wasn't so good for me and others, and it marred all my positive achievements.

All this took so very long because I could not or would not confess.

What brought on the change? Just like the hero Theseus in the ancient Greek labyrinth story who with the love of a woman and her help had the courage to go all the way down into it and slay the monster, I too have my Ariadne, except her name in Melinda.

The old Shaker hymn put it this way:

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gain'd,
To bow and to bend we will not be asham'd,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come round right.▲

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

What do you think?

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

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Lee and Charlotte Counties

Women's Giving Circle

What is a Women's Giving Circle?

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

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

To join and for more information call Debbie Sanford

239.481.4449 x4 or debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org

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Six women heroes of Exodus

My column last month dealt with the feminist leaning of the Hebrew Bible. My contention is that women often play crucial roles in biblical stories, but they do not receive the attention they deserve.

In that column I briefly mentioned the six women heroes of the Exodus. As the calendar turns into a new secular year, we have just begun to read the Book of Exodus and the story of our enslavement in, and liberation from, Egypt. It is a fitting time to give these women their due.

■ Rabbi Stephen Fuchs

From a religious perspective, the Exodus from Egypt enabled all subsequent Jewish history to unfold, and the Book of Exodus makes it clear that the role these six women played in that event was crucial. Without them the Exodus could not have taken place, and we would have no Passover to celebrate each spring. Let us give them their due:

Shiphrah and Puah

Shiphrah and Puah were humble midwives. Pharaoh ordered them to kill every baby boy that emerged from his mother's womb. The most powerful man on earth – one worshipped as a god – gave them a direct order! The midwives, though, answered to a higher authority than Pharaoh. Their bravery rings across the millennia as an answer to those Nazis who claimed they had no choice but to kill Jews. They were only following orders. Shiphrah and Puah teach us we always have a choice. (Exodus 1:15-21)

Biblical interpreters divide over whether Shiphrah and Puah were Hebrew midwives or whether they were Egyptian women who were midwives to the Hebrews. But does it really matter? They were heroes who risked their lives to save Jewish children, and we should honor them.

Yocheved

Yocheved, Moses' mother, hid her baby in defiance of Pharaoh's decree that all Hebrew baby boys be thrown in the Nile. When she could hide him no longer, she placed him in a wicker basket and floated him among the reeds of the Nile. What courage that took, but her gamble paid off! (Exodus 2:1-3) In a memorable Midrashic passage (*Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:3) Rabbi Judah Ha-Nasi hails her as the "Mother of 600,000." He meant that by saving Moses she saved the 600,000 men who left Egypt. (Exodus 12:37)

Miriam

Miriam, Moses' sister, watched the basket from afar. When Pharaoh's daughter drew it out of the water, Miriam runs to her and suggests the baby's own mother as its nurse. In so doing she saved her brother's life. (Exodus 2:4-9)

Pharaoh's Daughter

The heroic role of Pharaoh's daughter also should not escape our attention. She defied her father's decree and saved Moses. For this she received the privilege of giving Moses his name, and she herself received the name *Bit-yah*, which means "daughter of the Lord." (*Va-yikra Rabbah* 1:3; B, Megillah 13A) (Exodus 2:5-10)

Zipporah

The final female hero of Exodus is Zipporah, Moses' wife. She circumcised their son Eleazar when apparently Moses had neglected to do so. The passage really does not fit into the flow of the story, so the rabbis could have interpreted it any way they wished. They could have deemed it crucial or inconsequential. They chose to teach us that God would have killed Moses had Zipporah not intervened and circumcised their son! (Exodus 4:24-26)

The heroism of the women who made future Jewish existence possible is a strong and accurate answer to those who claim that women always play a secondary or subordinate role in Jewish thinking. These heroic women provide wonderful role models for women and men alike to admire and emulate.▲

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

Being sustained by *daf yomi*, a page a day

"Jewish continuity has always hinged on uttered and written words, on an expanding maze of interpretations, debates and disagreements, and on a unique human rapport. In synagogue, at school, and most of all at home, it has always involved two or three generations deep in conversation." (*Jews and Words* by Amos Oz and Fania Oz-Salzberger, page 1)

■ Rabbi Marc Sack

I was taken aback at first by the resolution of Dara Horn's incisive and painful new book, *People Love Dead Jews.* (I recommend it highly.) In chapter after chapter, she describes how people have rationalized the murder or expulsion of Jews as somehow less evil than the murder or expulsion of others. After writing about the shooting at a kosher store in New Jersey in December 2019, and the marches that followed that massacre, Horn turned to another Jewish gathering, this one at MetLife Stadium, where more than 90,000 Jews gathered to celebrate completing the seven-plus-year process of studying one page of Talmud per day, known in Hebrew as *daf yomi*, "a page a day." While the 90,000 who gathered in New Jersey were all men, there was a similar gathering of women in Jerusalem, all of whom had also completed the *daf yomi* cycle. *Daf yomi* was begun by a Polish rabbi in 1923 as a way of democratizing the study of Talmud. That rabbi was true to Jewish tradition in this effort. Rashi's line-by-line commentary (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, 1040-1105) was intended to make the Talmud and its language more understandable to the average student.

Jewish literacy has always been a hallmark of our people. "We have no historical evidence of illiterate Jewish communities in ancient or medieval times. It stands to reason that for more than two and a half millennia, Jewish scholars have maintained a genuine chain of learning.… A lineage of literacy." (*Jews and Words,* page 15).

In my adult education teaching, I have focused mostly on Jewish thought and history. I teach Torah study once a month. One time, I taught the opening pages of a chapter of Talmud. It was not easy. But there are new tools available, mostly Adin Steinsaltz's translation of the entire Talmud into modern Hebrew, together with explanations, illustrations and biographical notes on the rabbis. Steinsaltz's Talmud is now available in English. While the Hebrew Bible is the first book of our people, Talmud is the foundation upon which Judaism has been based 2,000 years.

It reflects the true nature of our people and our tradition, for Judaism is a discussion, a debate across the generations. The sages who argue with each other on the pages of the Talmud often did not live in the same generation, even the same century. But the discussion went back and forth, and it did so with a respect for opposing opinions. Implicitly, it taught how to disagree with "humility and empathy; a constant awareness that no one is better than anyone else." (Horn, page 228) Talmud is the pointed but respectful debate about what God wants of us, down to the smallest detail.

Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav taught, "Two men who live in different places, or even in different generations, may still converse. For one may raise a question, and the other who is far away in time or in space may make a comment or ask a question that answers it. So they converse, but no one knows it save the Lord, who hears and records and brings together all the words of men, as it is written: *They who serve the Lord speak to one another, and the Lord hears them and records their words in His book*." (Malachi 3:16)

Why did Dara Horn conclude her book with a discussion about *daf yomi*? Perhaps in her own turning to traditional Jewish study, she realized that she was part of a long Jewish discussion – one that does not end – and was reassured of the survival of our people.

A few weeks ago, a salesman from the Israeli publishing house, Koren, visited me. He brought many of their Torah study resources including volumes of the Steinsaltz Talmud. I have studied Talmud off-and-on since graduating rabbinical school, and the text calls to me again. In the spring, I will begin a program of Talmud study at Temple Judea. (I'll start with the easy stuff, for your sake and mine.) This is the essential discussion of our people. My job is to help keep it alive and strong.▲

Rabbi Marc Sack serves at Temple Judea in Fort Myers.

David Harris...continued from page 23

the mix what's too often taught in UNRWA schools about the "evil nature" of Israel and Jews, and the problem only grows bigger and still more pressing.

The "Querdenker" (Anti-vax) demonstrations have repeatedly been the scene of antisemitic occurrences. Do you feel that the German authorities are sufficiently sensitized to this issue?

Since the onset of the Covid pandemic, two particularly worrisome developments have occurred from my perspective as a Jew. First, it ushered in a new era of conspiracy theories seeking to link Jews to this global health crisis. Aided by social media, and filling a "need" for easy targets, these outlandish claims spread around the world. And second, for those opposing the vaccines and government mandates, many drew on World War II imagery, seeking to portray themselves as bearers of a "yellow star" and accusing authorities of behaving like the Gestapo. These wild actions distorted and trivialized the meaning of the war and the Holocaust, phenomena we are witnessing, more broadly, with increasing frequency.

This relativizing and instrumentalizing of the Holocaust is increasingly occurring in German universities as well, especially coming from the BDS milieu. Are you concerned about this development?

Yes. The Holocaust was a unique event in human history. A nation, Germany, together with its willing collaborators, set out to exterminate an entire people, and developed an industrialized capacity to do so, including a new alphabet of genocide – from "A" for Auschwitz to "Z" for Zyklon-B. The Nazi regime almost succeeded, destroying two-thirds of European Jewry and most of the foundations of Jewish civilization. Trying to relativize the Holocaust – or appropriate its language and symbols – is a transparent way of seeking to diminish its magnitude and deflect attention away from the specificity of these horrific crimes against the Jewish people, including many members of my own family.▲

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

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Trees and fruit

"He's a real fruitcake." "You're the apple of my eye." "Such a nut case!" "It's like comparing apples and oranges."

Fruit comes up a lot in our conversations. And why not? It's healthy, natural, delicious and a mitzva!

■ Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz

Actually, eating fruit isn't a mitzva, but it is likened to a mitzva.

To clarify, the Torah likens a person to a tree. And just as all trees bear fruit of some sort (even if the "fruit" is nothing more than seed pods), so too are we expected to produce "fruit." The fruit we produce are the mitzvot we perform, the good deeds we do, the Torah we study.

The fruit that a tree bears is part of its self-perpetuation. New trees grow from the seeds in the fruit, and themselves produce fruit with seeds, ad infinitum. That's how trees regenerate. It's like "Tree Continuity."

Similarly, when we "produce fruit" – perform mitzvot, do good deeds or study Torah – our fruit should be able to sow the seeds for more new fruit. And in Jewish tree-terminology, new fruit means more Jewish living – in our own lives and in the lives of others. Our mitzvot and good deeds should be done in a way that inspires others to grow as Jews, digging for their roots in Judaism and planting themselves in the warm, rich soil of Torah study. This is how Jews regenerate. It's our way of assuring Jewish Continuity.

Tu B'Shevat (the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat, corresponding to January 17 this year) is the New Year for Trees. On this day it is customary to eat one or more of the fruits for which the Land of Israel is praised. These fruits are grapes, dates, pomegranates, olives and figs. (Wheat and barley are the two special grains which, together with the five fruits, comprise the "Seven Species.")

Prior to eating food or partaking of a drink, Jewish teachings explain that we should acknowledge G-d's part in sustaining us by reciting a blessing beforehand. After eating the fruit, we thank G-d once again with a blessing. A special "after blessing" is said following the eating of the five fruits mentioned above.

In this blessing, we appeal to G-d to have pity on His people and to rebuild the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Then, when we are all united in the Land of Israel, we will rejoice together as one.

Thus, eating the special fruit of the Land of Israel, especially on Tu B'Shevat, reminds us that every time we learn Torah or do mitzvot, we bring closer the climax of creation – mankind's future – the ideal world in which there is no jealousy nor animosity among individuals and nations, but only peace, justice and benevolence under One G-d.

Celebrate Tu B'Shevat: eat fruit, "make fruit," plant seeds.▲

Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz serves at Chabad Lubavitch of Southwest Florida.

Another new year

On Rosh Hashanah we ushered in the New Year 5782. Many of us reviewed our lives, took inventory and made resolutions to improve ourselves and our relationships in the upcoming year. Now that we have welcomed 2022, it's yet another opportunity to make positive resolutions.

■ Rabbi Lawrence Dermer

Did you know the holiday of Tu B'Shevat provides us a third opportunity for self-reflection and personal growth? Tu B'Shevat marks the beginning of a "New Year" for trees because it is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in Eretz Yisrael reemerge from winter and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle. This is especially significant as we learn in Deuteronomy 20:19: "Man is compared to the tree of the field."

By nurturing strong and deep roots like our faith and commitment to G-d and Torah, our own lives can also yield the fruits of a bountiful harvest.

On Tu B'Shevat, we are reminded to revitalize our connection to G-d and rejuvenate the commitment to our sacred Jewish traditions and our Torah. We can learn a great deal about ourselves by just looking out our windows. Although trees cannot communicate through the power of verbal speech, their actions may speak louder than many of our words. By simply using our imagination we can gain insight by relating to the behavior of trees that continue to grow stronger and wiser through the years.

Trees are always reaching upward, growing toward the sun. When we look up in the direction of the light, we are staying positive. The more we stay focused on the positive, on the good within ourselves and each other, the happier and more fulfilled we'll be.

Even the biggest trees start small with tiny roots that barely reach below the surface of the soil. As they grow and reach for the light as a source of nourishment, their roots grow deeper and stronger. As we strive to look up and stay connected to G-d's light we need also to ensure we are always connected, always firmly rooted in Torah and in Jewish tradition.

Big trees may be strong, and their roots run deep, yet they also give shade and shelter for new seeds to encourage them to one day grow sturdy and tall as well. Do we nurture and protect our young people, always guiding them on a path to success? Like the trees, it should come very natural to us to do all we can to ensure future generations continue to pass on Jewish tradition, wisdom and values to their children, L'dor Vador – from generation to generation.

Living in Florida, most of us have had firsthand experience with the damage caused by severe storms and hurricanes. Why do many of our tallest and strongest trees break and yet others survive the storm? Stiff and rigid trees will likely break when facing a strong wind, however, trees that remain flexible bend but never break.

When life's storms blow our way, if we remain flexible and bend with the wind, we will not break. With a strong faith and willingness to be flexible, life's challenges may be more manageable. In these uncertain and turbulent times in which we live, the lessons of Tu B'Shevat are even more relevant than ever before. All of G-d's creations are purposeful, and through our observation, respect and reverence for nature, we know that every storm will come to an end and the sun will shine again.▲

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

How we benefit from light

While here in Florida we don't have to worry about snow or ice in January, there's one aspect of "winter" we experience every single day. Despite the beautiful sunshine during the day, the sun still sets early and by 7:00 p.m. it is dark. These shorter days with the early nightfall call our attention to light, how we take advantage of the sun-filled hours and how we benefit from light.

■ Rabbi Nicole Luna

In a Talmudic discussion about communal prayer, Rabbi Yehuda argues that a blind person may not recite the blessings over the sun, moon and stars, having never benefited from their light. But Rabbi Yose chimes in. He questions whether it is really true that a blind person derives no benefit from light. Once, he was walking around in the darkness of night when he saw a blind man passing by with a lit torch. Rabbi Yose asked the blind man why he was carrying a torch given that he is blind and cannot see its light. The blind man responded, "As long as I have a torch in my hand, people see me and save me from the pits and thorns and thistles."

The blind man benefited from light because the purpose of the light was to enable others around to offer aid. So the rabbis conclude, a blind person may recite the blessings over the sun, moon and stars because they are a heavenly torch that God has provided at all times so that we have light by which to help others.

This is a radically counter-cultural and different understanding of the purpose of light in the world. Light exists for us to see and help the hungry, the vulnerable, the struggling. When the sun rises in the morning, when the moon glows at night, it is not to illuminate our homes so we can go about our everyday tasks, it is not so we can enjoy the beautiful sunshine, the light is not for our own personal use. If all we see in the sun or moonlight are our own possessions, our own needs, then the light is wasted.

The sun and moon are torches provided by God so we can see others in need and come to their aid. Even when the sun sets early during these winter days, through our actions we can still bring light to others.▲

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

Chabad at FGCU update

By Rabbi Mendel Gordon

Things don't stop at Chabad at FGCU. We have had an incredible trip to New York City for a weekend hosted by the Crown Heights Jewish community. We experienced firsthand an incredible vibrant Jewish community.

Every minute was amazing – from a lively Friday night Shabbat service with so many Jews, to learning about Hatzalah, the Jewish volunteer ambulance service. We had a chance to meet Jewish students from other colleges, an inspirational visit to the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Ohel, and a chance to join a new Torah dedication, at which they blocked off the streets to dance and parade the new Torah through.

Back in Fort Myers we have had an incredible Shabbaton and Jewish learning field trip with our Sinai Scholars, a group of students who have taken a course to get their Jewish learning up to college level. We thank Rivky Labkowski of Chabad of Cape Coral for giving our group a tour of a mikvah.

And, of course, there are the regular awesome Shabbat dinners, classes and Lunch n Learns.

Chanukah was a hive of activity with a grand Chanukah party outdoors on campus, mini parties almost every night, and a menorah lighting station outside the FGCU dining hall.

We look forward to next semester with continued growth, fun and Jewish pride. Our favorite line is "I love being Jewish."

Chabad at FGCU serves all Jewish students at FGCU and other nearby colleges. For more information or to connect a student, please contact me at 347.452.0489 or mendelgordon@gmail.com, or visit our website at ChabadFGCU.com.

Chabad at FGCU students with Rabbi Mendel and Shternie Gordon in New York City

Chabad at FGCU students with Rabbi Mendel and Shternie Gordon at the Chanukah party on campus

Read the current and recent issues of *L'CHAYIM* online at www.JewishFederationLCC.org

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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.

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Jewish Federation Lee and Charlotte Counties

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A short essay is required.

For more information, and to access the application, visit the TOP Jewish Foundation website at topjewishfoundation.org

Friendly Visitor Program

(virtual for now)

The Federation decided to postpone the Senior Lunch Program due to the Covid resurgence. However, we still want to stay in touch with our Jewish seniors!

We're inviting volunteers to **call or Zoom with one or two people on a regular basis.** Stories and connection are what make the world go 'round. Make a new friend and perform a mitzvah at the same time!

Jewish Federation Lee and Charlotte Counties

Interested in the Friendly Visitor Program?
Call or email Jodi Cohen: 239.481.4449, x2
jodicohen@jfedlcc.org

TEMPLE JUDEA SCHOOLS
Fort Myers

Temple Judea Religious School
Tab Scribner,
Director of Congregational Learning

While we ring in a new year, it has occurred to me that we are halfway through with the school year. Can someone please tell me where the time went? It seems that no sooner did we get into a great routine that Thanksgiving, Chanukah and the New Year came upon us.

On December 3 we celebrated Chanukah together as a community in our outdoor social hall, aka the parking lot. Careful planning went into children's games and activities, but most of the fun was had by our younger children climbing all over and chasing our older children. It is not often that we can get both age groups together in such a way as this, so it was heartening to see the age groups come together for good holiday fun.

On December 5 we celebrated some more inside the religious school with dreidels, latkes, donuts and dancing! It was our monthly visit with the community's Israeli dancers sharing in our fun. Many thanks to our local Israeli dancers who suspended their normal dancing activities to stop and teach our children the footwork to dance with the adults.

On Sunday, January 16 we will celebrate Tu B'Shevat with a special JNF program. Please call me in our office to order your trees.

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

Results of a recent national survey of 25,000 families conducted by PJ Library

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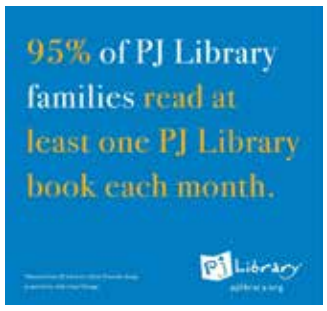

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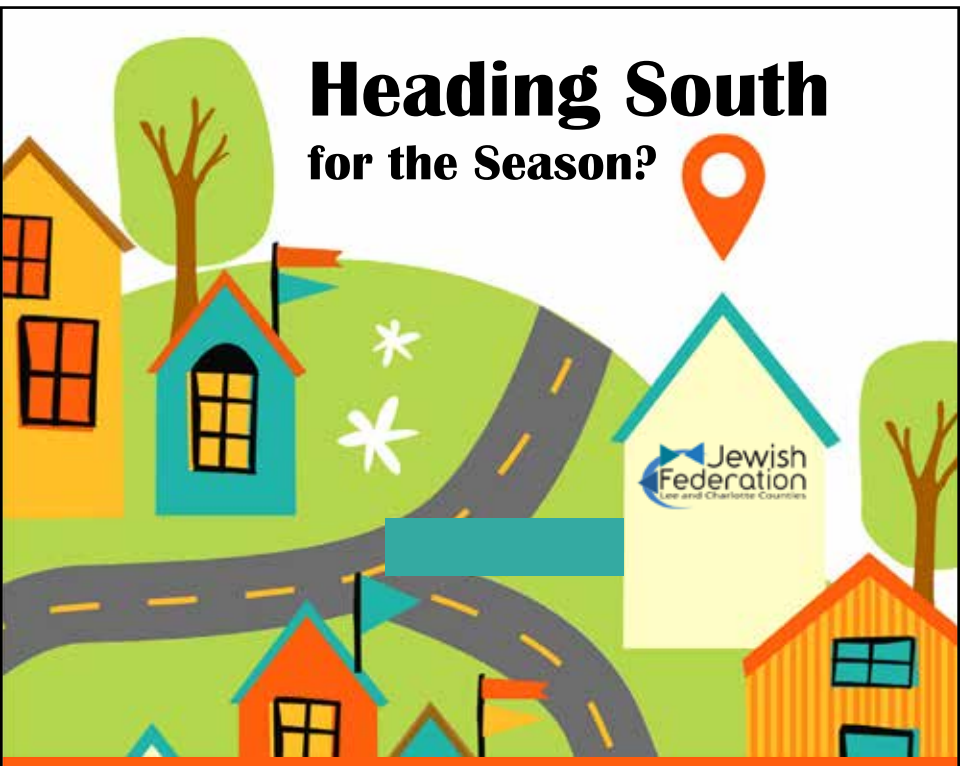

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Safe Travels

TEMPLE BETH EL SCHOOLS
Fort Myers

Temple Beth El Religious School
Alyssa Raab

On the evening of December 3, the sanctuary came alive with the singing of families and children attending our monthly Tot Shabbat (first Friday of every month at 6:00 p.m.). After the joyful service, families socialized and noshed on pizza and donuts in the Dubin Center. Immediately after all of that excitement, young and old came together to the front of the sanctuary to light their menorahs with warm and bright lights.

At this service, we had the blessing of welcoming 22 new students into the official beginning of their study of Torah! While originally planned for Simchat Torah, consecration had been postponed until Hanukkah due to the Covid Delta variant. While we may have had to wait for a while, it was worth the wait!

On December 5, our religious school students learned about tzedakah, and how it is not just giving to those in need but it's also a concept of justice. They created their own tzedakah boxes and we read Hanukkah stories with help from confirmation class students.

The oldest class continued studying the Shema and the V'Ahavta while also learning about where the name "Israel" came from. After class many students stayed to attend Temple Beth El's Hanukkah Cookout. I stayed near the table set up for the religious school's menorah contest to help explain voting to the event's attendees. The students' entries were each creative and amazing, and included two beautiful edible entries! Students were so excited to count their beans to see the winner (a giant menorah crafted from golden challah bread), and attendees enjoyed seeing all of the creative entries and getting to cast beans as their votes!

Religious school will resume Sunday, January 9 after winter break. We will also meet on January 23 and 30 (9:30 to 11:30 a.m.). Our next Tot Shabbat will be Friday, January 7 at 6:00 p.m. We are looking forward to Tu B'Shevat (New Year of the Trees) and seeing everyone!

Photos courtesy of Michelle Schiff and Berny Aronson; used with permission

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Candle lighting times:

January 7: 5:33
January 14: 5:38
January 21: 5:44
January 28: 5:49

High School Students: Earn CAS Credits!

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

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Jewish Federation Lee and Charlotte Counties

Michael Shapiro PHOTOGRAPHY

Bar / Bat Mitzvah Specialist

Choosing the right photographer is an important decision. Michael Shapiro has more than 30 years experience in media and journalism. He is able to capture images that are unique, unexpected and spontaneous.

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239.770.6860
mike@shapiro-photography.com
www.shapiro-photography.com

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Families can sign up for PJ Library at pjlibrary.org

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

Eryka Aptaker

As the pandemic still presents us with challenges, Jewish War Veterans - Victor Paul Tuchman Post 400 stays dedicated to serving and honoring our veterans. This year, during Veterans Day weekend, members of our Post visited a number of local cemeteries. While there, members of the Post's Honor Guard placed flags on the graves of our Post's departed members and other Jewish veterans. While Honor Guard stood in formation, saluting, Commander Harvey Charter played "Taps." Honor Guard members present were Harvey Charter, Bob Ruberto, Herb Lutsky, Ed Drucker and Mike Kashi. (See photos below.) Members of our Post additionally participated in Veterans Day remembrance during Shabbos services at Temple Beth El.

On Veterans Day, the Post had three vehicles participating in the Fort Myers Veterans Day Parade. This year, the parade route had been changed to the area around the Edison Mall. We were honored with the participation of Sgt. Bogie (See photo below.)

As I write this article, it brings to mind that today is Pearl Harbor Day. We must never forget this day! It was the beginning of so many changes to this world. God bless the men and women who selflessly sacrificed to keep us a free nation.

The picture below was taken two years ago. Our Post had five WWII veterans when I joined back in 2012. Three years ago, we had four remaining WWII veterans after the loss of our member, WWII veteran Harry Shapiro. We now have one remaining WWII veteran in our Post, Hy Tuchman. We've lost three in the last two years: Bert Kurland, Sid Harris and Herb Marks. When this wonderful generation ceases to exist, I pray they are not forgotten.

I hope all of you had a happy and healthy Chanukah! As always in these articles, we ask that you consider joining this amazing and dedicated group. Come join us as we engage in bagels and cream cheese and great conversation. Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 30 at 9:30 a.m. at the Jewish Federation office.

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

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

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

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

Florida Jewish History Month 2022

Marina Berkovich

Happy 2022 and Happy Florida Jewish History Month to my dear readers! May this year bring us all serendipitous wonderment and joy, as well as health, prosperity and all the customary blessings. In a world as unpredictable as ours has become in the past two years, there are many blessings we forget to remember. Celebrating Florida Jewish History Month has become a very essential event to our Southwest Florida Jewish community and especially to our organization. It is within our virtual walls that many builders and pioneers have first found recognition, acknowledgement and appreciation for the input they have had in the establishment and development of this now populous community.

Welcoming Jewish residents has not always been among the goals of this region, but since the end of WWII, and more so since after Hurricane Donna decimated the region in 1960, the gradual Jewish migration has brought thousands to these shores. In the month of January, as established in 2003 by then Governor Jeb Bush, Jewish Floridians celebrate the relatively new, and in places not so easy to digest, Jewish history of Florida. We are joined in these celebrations by our non-Jewish neighbors and members, who are very devoted to helping us to jointly fulfill our mission of historic preservation.

Our Society usually holds a celebratory event and an annual major fundraiser, but due to circumstances beyond control of this year's honoree, Our Own Steel Magnolia, Ms. Rosalee Bogo, we are postponing the January fundraiser event to a later date.

We will kick off the Annual Florida Jewish History Month by bringing to you the much-in-demand presentation that we recorded just before the Covid era, "Jews of Florida" by Marcia Jo Zerivitz, a renowned expert on this subject and Founding Director of the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU in Miami. Whether you were there in person two years ago or not, do not miss this phenomenally educational presentation which we will air on January 1 at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Zerivitz's presentation is loaded with fascinating facts, Jewish statistics, extraordinary surprises and memorable stories you may have missed last time or would love to learn. We will bring this event to you via the internet. A nominal donation will be collected. Please join our email list, if you have not yet done so, to be included in that email distribution and more.

We are partnering with the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center to honor Jack Nortman during a very special fundraiser, featuring the premiere of the Society's original production, the next documentary in the SWFL Jewish Pioneers series, *Boxcar Education Giant*, on Sunday, February 6 at 11:30 a.m. Purchase tickets at hmcec.org/calendar/category/event/list/.

For sponsorship, donor and volunteer opportunities, call 833.547.7935 or email office@jhsswf.org.

Throughout 2022 we will bring you many more programs and events. Please join, follow and like us on YouTube and Facebook. We are working very hard to preserve this very important history for the future Jews of SWFL, whomever they will be and wherever they will come from.

We need your help in carrying out the mission of historical preservation and education. You can start helping by joining or renewing: Family Membership $54, Individual Membership $36, Student Membership $18, Corporate Sponsor $300. Please join us online by entering the appropriate amount or mail your check to:

The Jewish Historical Society
of Southwest Florida
8805 Tamiami Trail North,
Suite # 255, Naples FL 34108
833.547.7935 (833.JHS.SWFL)
www.jhsswf.org ~ office@jhsswf.org
Virtual Museum of SWFL
Jewish History http://
jewishhistorysouthwestflorida.org/

CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

chavuratshalom@gmail.com

Cheryl Fulmer, Ellen Feingold and Marcia Rudin

The New Year is upon us, which means that we mark yet another year's passing while at the same time there is the opportunity to fill the coming year of 2022 with blessings and joy. One should take full advantage of the Hebrew and Gregorian calendars to offer encouraging wishes to friends and neighbors for the New Year. The members of Chavurat Shalom of SWFL wish everyone a wonderful New Year filled with good health and shared fellowship.

After 18 months of reliance on Zoom for services and programs in order to keep everyone safe from Covid, a perfect weather day on December 5 became the first in-person gathering of the chavurah. A Chanukah potluck brunch allowed 40 members to be together in person without the rectangle surround of Zoom. The setting allowed for the buffet to be set up indoors while seating was outdoors. There was a bounty of salads, cheeses, and potato latkes with apple sauce and sour cream. Dessert awaited the blessings for the lighting of the menorah and the communal singing of Chanukah songs in Hebrew and English. It was amazing to celebrate the holiday together in person with our chavurah friends. There was also a brief history lesson about the story of Judith, the events leading to the Chanukah observance as well as the origin of latkes originally made with cheese before potato became in vogue.

There was discussion about having a monthly in-person informal schmooze gathering again in an outdoor setting. It's definitely something to look forward to.

Shabbat services take place every Friday evening and everyone from all religious traditions is welcome to participate. Services are a blend of English readings and poems, Hebrew prayers and comforting songs led by volunteers. That means that interested participants may take whatever part is comfortable for them. Come to one of the Friday Shabbat services via Zoom starting at 7:30 p.m. (lasting about one hour) by sending an email to chavuratshalom@gmail.com to secure the link.

Saturday morning Jewish Current Events starts at 11:00 a.m. and is moderated by Leonard Minsky, President of Chavurat Shalom. Join us and share your opinion about any number of vital current events concerning the U.S., Israel and Jews anywhere in the world. Request the Zoom link from the email address above.

The ongoing 11:00 a.m. Thursday Talk Series schedule in January focuses on the Holocaust, also known as the Shoah. The international remembrance takes place in January and is the impetus for the monthlong scheduling. The first program, on January 6, features guest speaker Margot Lobree, who will describe her personal experience, "A German Jewish Teenager's Survival Thanks to Kindertransport to England." The next guest speaker, on January 13, is Louis Schmidt whose presentation will be about "The Untold Story of How the Stories Were Told." Mr. Schmidt was an official witness and interviewer for Steven Spielberg's Shoah Project. On January 27, guest speaker Robert Hilliard, a hero of World War II and Sanibel resident, will recall about "Surviving the Americans."

In between the Holocaust-related programming is our esteemed contributor, Rabbi Myra Soifer, on Thursday, January 20, speaking from Reno, Nevada. She will lead a discussion on a pre-selected "text of the month." Request the Zoom link.

Chavurat Shalom is a welcoming community committed to the study and celebration of our Jewish cultural heritage and religious traditions. Come and join us and be with friends. Visit the up-to-date website at www.chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org for the current schedule, or send an email to the address noted above for information and Zoom links to programs.

HADASSAH

Collier/Lee Chapter

(732) 539-4011

Joyce Toub

Collier/Lee Hadassah recently offered two outstanding programs I would like to tell you about, if you were unable to attend our recent Zoom and webinar.

In the Zoom presentation, Patricia Levinson of Hadassah International gave us an overview of Hadassah's interventions globally. She showed us how Hadassah has always been a pioneering organization that confronts problems in innovative ways.

Covid-19 has been no exception, as Hadassah became a world leader in fighting this pandemic. It created a model for treating this global crisis and informed the world on how best to proceed. It had a dedicated emergency room only for patients with Covid. Hadassah tested every single staff member and vaccinated them. It had recovered Covid patients visit those in the hospital to stop isolation.

Mexican communities reached out to Hadassah for instructions on best practices. Guidelines and protocols were distributed, and "pooled testing" techniques were created. Then Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, Uruguay, Spain, Portugal, Austria and Romania sought counseling.

Before any other research was undertaken, Hadassah's medical team found that the Covid vaccine did not affect female fertility, nor does the vaccine damage the quality or number of a man's sperm.

Our other major recent event was a webinar on Women's Health & Wellness. "Body, Mind & Spirit" featured expert panelists encouraging us, as we grow, to learn different ways we can continue to improve. Emphasizing the importance of self-care, it's vital that we move our bodies, think positively, understand the power of laughter, and love ourselves so we can reach out to others.

Topics ranging from care for caregivers to women's nutrition to women's heart health were explored. Our keynote speaker, a physician who is an expert on aging and leading a more purposeful life, discussed the positive aspects of aging: we become more resilient and we're able to make better decisions because we can draw from a wealth of experiences. Neurocognitive disorders, Alzheimer's disease, and associated mood and behavior disturbances were discussed.

Admission to this webinar was $36. If you are interested in receiving a video recording of this session, please contact me and we will be very happy to share it with you. Of course, the donation will be $36 and you can be assured it will go to an excellent cause.

I wish every one of you a wonderful 2022! May it be a year of health and happiness as we continue to fight Covid.

COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE

Fort Myers

(239) 466-6671

www.fortmyerssynagogue.com

Thanks again to David Schwartz and Brian Fainguersch for installing our Metro Menorah. Brian, a neurology nurse, came every evening to add a new Hanukah light.

To avoid crowding, reservations were limited to 100 for our Sunday, November 28 Community Free Hanukah 1st Night Dinner prepared by Cohen and Cohen catering. Before dining, we gathered outdoors at sunset to light the Metro Menorah, and then moved to the Community Hall to enjoy a traditional sing-along led by Traci Pavel. Then we feasted on latkes, vegetable quiche, and the Rabbi's dulce de leche, apricot and strawberry sufganiyot.

The Hanukah dinner marked the resumption of our weekly Friday evening dinners before worship. Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m. followed by prayer at 7:00 p.m. It is free and open to all, but please consider bringing a dish, salad, dessert or bottle of wine. No dairy dishes please! (Those who have chosen to remain unvaccinated are warmly encouraged to enjoy their Sabbath Eve meal elsewhere.)

Each Sabbath at 9:30 a.m., Rabbi Diamond serves a breakfast just before Torah Study at his home in Forest Country Club. The study is also on Zoom and is easily accessed at www.fortmyerssynagogue.com. All are welcome. The guard at the gate will give you directions.

Tuesday evening Adult Education continues at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom only. To get your weekly reading assignments, email synfree@comcast.net.

Starting its 17th year and with the continued guidance of Rabbi Diamond, the Community Free Synagogue meets at the S.W. Masonic Center, 10868 Metro Parkway, Fort Myers. It is a Jewish community open resource without formal membership requirements. Its activities are open to all for free and without fundraising or other financial solicitations.

Its mission – Torah, Avodah, Gmiloot Hasadim (TA"G), Sacred Study, Worship and Altruism – is taken from the Pirqe Avot.

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

As we welcome 2022, we extend our warmest wishes to everyone for a happy, healthy and peaceful new year. We continue to be inspired by returning Cantor Beth Schlossberg and Cantorial Soloist Karen Pincus, who will join us on January 7 and 14, and January 21 respectively. And don't miss Cantor Marshall Portnoy, who will honor us on January 28 as he joins Rabbi Nicole Luna for Shabbat services. All services are available both in person and virtually.

Celebrate an opportunity to gather together with Bids and Bites, an evening designed to bring together old and new friends, a unique celebration of food, and live and silent auction items. The event is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 20. Our talented member chefs will prepare dishes appealing to all tastes and preferences. The silent auction items will include something for everyone – sports memorabilia, jewelry, gift cards, artwork, home goods and much more. The exciting live auction, hosted by a professional auctioneer, features specialty jewelry, vacation getaways and extraordinary surprises. The event is open to the public. The cost is $36 per person. Reservations can be made by calling the office at 239.433.0018 or online at templebethel.com.

Temple Beth El is excited about the arrival of our winter residents. Among these are Gerald and Sheila Ziedenberg from Toronto, Canada. Gerald completed a Master's in History program in Modern European History and is the author of several successful books. Gerald has been presenting a lecture series on Jewish topics for 12 years and it has been wildly successful. This year, we welcome the newest installment of his Winter Lecture Series through Temple Beth El on Zoom.

Monday, January 10 is the first of Gerald's three-week program on the History of Antisemitism. It is the story of the longest hatred and troubled history of the Jewish people – pogroms, massacres, inquisitions – finally culminating in the Holocaust. Gerald will also examine the current situation of the Jewish people worldwide.

Monday, January 31 is the first of the four-week program on famous and fascinating Jewish characters. Our first "character" is Albert Einstein, *TIME* magazine Man of the 20th Century, a physicist, cosmologist, mathematician and notorious philanderer. Lectures are open to the community and are free of charge. Visit templebethel.com for Zoom information.

Plan to attend the next Book Club virtual gathering on Wednesday, February 2 at 2:45 p.m. to discuss Lauren Fox's *New York Times* bestseller *Send for Me*, a novel based on the author's own family letters. As Annelise falls in love, marries and gives birth to a daughter, the dangers of the pre-war German period grow. Her letters are found years later by her great-granddaughter Clare, who sees her family's sacrifices in a new light.

The competition continues as the Men's Club offers Virtual Bingo on Sunday, January 30 at 7:00 p.m. Register to join in the fun at templebethel.com. The morning of the game you will receive cards to download and other details. This is a great opportunity to test your luck.

Get your popcorn ready as Sisterhood, Men's Club and the Israel Committee offer movie night on Thursday, January 27 at 7:00 p.m. The movie to be screened, *Resistance*, is about famous mime Marcel Marceau who worked for the French resistance rescuing orphaned Jewish children from the Nazis. This is a true story with an all-star cast.

To learn more about Temple Beth El and our special events, Shabbat services and recurring programs, visit templebethel.com. Follow us on Facebook @TempleBethElofFortMyers and on Instagram @templebethelfortmyers for updates, information and more details about our community experiences.

SHALOM LIFE CENTER
Fort Myers
(239) 218-3433
www.shalomlifecenter.org

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

We are excited for a fabulous season in 2022 at SLC filled with joyful, meaningful and inspiring services, special events, new activities and clubs, dinners, concerts and more.

Every Saturday at 10:00 a.m., SLC offers an interactive and participatory Torah and Kabbalah study led by Rabbi Lawrence Dermer with a focus on the relevance of our timeless traditions and bringing the ancient wisdom of Torah into our daily lives.

SLC offers Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation, Torah and Kabbalah study, Women's Circle, Men's Club, Book Club, Yiddish Culture Club, The Shalom Shmoozers Social Club, special events, concerts, dinners and so much more. If you'd like to learn more, please send us an email or give us a call.

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

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

CHABAD LUBAVITCH
Fort Myers
(239) 433-7708
www.chabadswf.org

Chabad Lubavitch of Southwest Florida under the leadership of Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz held its Grand Chanukah Community Celebration at the prestigious Castle Golf with delicious Chanukah doughnuts, hot potato latkes and plenty of drinks. The highlight of the event was the lighting the grand Chanukah menorah by members of the community.

TEMPLE JUDEA
Fort Myers
(239) 433-0201
www.tjswfl.org

Now is the time to reserve your place at the exciting Temple Judea Virtual Fundraiser on Sunday, January 30 at 7:00 p.m. Distant Deception, an interactive virtual mind-reading and illusions show headlines the event, and all will be done over Zoom.

Multi-award-winning performer Wayne Hoffman is recognized as one of the top mentalists in the world. His show is a high-energy presentation that includes audience participation. In addition, that evening, Temple Judea's Director of Congregational Learning, Tab Scribner, will be recognized and honored for her hard work in helping to keep the congregation connected electronically and spiritually throughout the pandemic. The technology will be a permanent addition to Temple Judea, even when regular in-person services and events return. There are opportunities for sponsorships for the evening and for testimonials to Tab in a Tribute book. The community is welcome to Zoom in for this special event. Call the synagogue office for more information.

Temple Judea will hold an outdoor Shabbat morning service on Saturday, January 1. It's a great way to start the new year. The service begins at 9:30 a.m. and will be followed by a Kiddush luncheon sponsored by Rabbi Marc and Leni Sack.

Tot Shabbat is on the 2nd Friday night of each month. Tot Shabbat is an interactive service with music, crafts and stories for families with young children. Join with Morah Tab on January 14 at 5:00 p.m. for this monthly, fun, in-person service.

Rabbi Sack's monthly lunchtime Torah study is on Thursday, January 6. The class is held the first Thursday of each month, at noon, at the offices of Myers & Brettholz. There is no cost to attend and all levels of Jewish background are welcome. Call Rabbi Sack for more information.

The next Chaverot book club discussion is on Tuesday, January 18. The book is *Rebel Daughter* by Lori Banov Kaufmann. We hope to have the book club meeting in person at the synagogue at noon. Bring a dairy lunch. If it still feels unsafe to meet in person, we'll go back to a Zoom meeting in the evening. Check with the synagogue office for more information.

Chaverot will hold a member/new member event in January and participate in Sisterhood Shabbat in February. In addition, lunch and learn events are being planned, as well as a field trip and other activities. If you have not yet joined Chaverot, there's still time to do so. Don't miss out on upcoming events.

Temple Judea continues to accept food donations for The Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry and menstrual products for CYCLE FORWARD, a program that distributes menstrual products to women in need. There is a barrel near the front door of the shul for cans and boxes of food, and a basket in the lobby for the donations to CYCLE FORWARD.

There are also collection envelopes on the front door for contactless monetary or gift card contributions. Please call the synagogue office if you make such a contribution. Contributions can also be mailed.

Regularly scheduled events:

- Friday evening Shabbat services at 6:30 p.m. Friday evening services are preceded with a wine and cheese reception at 6:15 p.m.
- Saturday morning Shabbat services at 9:30 a.m. (no Kiddush lunches at this time unless the service is outside)
- Morning minyan every Monday at 9:00 a.m.
- Tot Shabbat the second Friday evening of each month at 5:00 p.m.
- Rabbi Sack's monthly lunchtime Torah study sessions the first Thursday of each month at noon at the offices of Myers & Brettholz

BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS
Sanibel
(773) 251-8862
www.batyam.org

Welcome back to our snowbirds, many of whom attended services last month. Also, we are delighted to meet new members who have joined. Temple Bat Yam is flourishing in many ways. The technical issues with our audio/video system have been resolved. We have a beautiful new tech console, and the quality of services has been outstanding. Many thanks to Dave Waks, Sandy Teger, and Michael and Elissa Samet for their help. Going forward, we have engaged two techs to manage all Zoomed services.

Saturday morning sessions have begun. This year, we are studying the prophets. In his inimitable fashion, Rabbi Stephen Fuchs makes every session a valuable learning experience.

Special Moments

On the Shabbat during Hanukkah, many congregants and guests brought their menorahs, recited the blessings and lit them. Rabbi Fuchs has done this since he started with us and, as always, the effect was magical.

Shared Scholar

Temple Bat Yam, the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ and other area congregations will host Rabbi Rami Shapiro for their Shared Scholar program on Sunday, January 30 at 4:00 p.m. and Monday, January 31 from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Both events will be held at the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ. Rabbi Shapiro is an award-winning author of over 35 books on religion and spirituality. He was ordained at Hebrew Union College and holds a Ph.D. in religion from Union Graduate School. He has been a rabbinic chaplain, a congregational rabbi and a professor of religious studies. Currently, he co-directs the One River Foundation. A profoundly spiritual person, we believe you will find him most interesting and provocative.

The Shared Scholar Program is supported by the Rosner Foundation and the coalition of congregations on Sanibel and Captiva.

"Great Cantors of the Golden Age"

The Shalom Group at Shell Point is hosting Temple Bat Yam Cantor Murray Simon, who will present a talk about cantorial music, the role of cantors, their education and the music they sing. He will focus on the "Great Cantors of the Golden Age." Cantor Simon will bring copies of his DVDs which will be available for purchase at a special price. The event will take place on Friday, January 14 from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. in the Grand Cypress Room at the Woodlands.

Upcoming Event in January (Date TBD)

Experts on the synagogues in the Czech Republic, including Prague will talk about some of these synagogues and will share pictures. One of the speakers is a trustee of the Memorial Scrolls Trust, a London-based non-profit that oversees the legacy of 1,564 Czech Torah Scrolls that survived the Shoah. One of these, from the town of Brno-Boskovice, is housed at our very own Temple Bat Yam. Another speaker will be able to tell us about this town – what life was like, what the synagogue was like and what the people were like before their lives were snuffed out by Hitler. Please check our website for updates or use the email address below.

We welcome visitors, guests and members of the community. For more information on any of our programs, questions about membership or donations, please email us at batyamsanibel@gmail.com. Be sure to visit our website at www.batyam.org.

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM
Cape Coral
(239) 772-4555
www.templebethshalomcc.org

Temple Beth Shalom is looking forward to 2022. We will explore new and interesting approaches to Reform Jewish observance and learning, while, of course, preserving our cherished traditions. TBS is committed to continuing our tradition of highlighting music in our Shabbat services and congregants have been enjoying varied musical approaches to worship. We are very fortunate to have visiting cantor Beth Schlossberg with us for the weekend of January 21-22 to conduct services and lead Torah study.

We had a wonderful Hanukkah celebration, with our members joining together to bless and light their menorahs and then enjoying latkes and jelly donuts before services.

Our weekly Friday night Shabbat services are held in person and on Zoom.

The new Photography Club will visit Solomon's Castle in Ona in January. Other upcoming events are Movies Under the Stars, Game Day and a Jewish get-together in the park.

Check templebethshalomcc.org for more information on our activities. Guests are always welcome. We hope you will join us for some of our activities.

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

Jewish Federation
Lee and Charlotte Counties

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

Send an email to debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org

SYNAGOGUES & JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS IN LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

Jewish Federation Lee and Charlotte Counties

www.Jewishfederationlcc.org

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: 773-251-8862
Email: batyamsanibel@gmail.com
Cantor: Murray Simon
Web site: www.batyam.org
Services: 7:30 p.m. Friday (Oct-Apr)
7:00 p.m. Friday (May-Sept)
Adult Education:
Saturday, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. (Nov-Apr)
Jewish Current Events: Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. (Nov-Apr)
Write: P.O. Box 84, Sanibel, FL 33957
Affiliated: Union for Reform 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: 239-949-6900
Web site: www.JewishBonita.com
Services: Saturday at 10:00 a.m.
followed by a Kiddush

CHABAD JEWISH CENTER OF CAPE CORAL
ORTHODOX

1716 Cape Coral Pkwy. W.
Cape Coral, FL 33914
Rabbi Yossi Labkowski
Phone: 239-963-4770
E-mail: info@chabadcape.com
Web site: 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.

CHABAD OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY
ORTHODOX

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

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
ORTHODOX

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

COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE
REFORM

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

SHALOM LIFE CENTER
TRANS DENOMINATIONAL

PO Box 61346
Fort Myers, FL 33906
Rabbi Lawrence Dermer
Phone: 239-218-3433
E-mail: info@shalomlifecenter.org
Web site: www.shalomlifecenter.org
Shabbat Evening Services
7:30 p.m. (Oct-Apr)
7:00 p.m. (May-Sept)
Saturday Torah & Kabbalah Study
10:00 a.m.

TEMPLE BETH EL
REFORM

16225 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33908
Rabbi Nicole Luna
E-mail: info@templebethel.com
Learning Tree Preschool Director:
Jesyca Virnig
Email: LearningTree15@yahoo.com
President: Hank Betchen
Email: HankTBE@gmail.com
Phone: 239-433-0018 • Fax: 239-433-3235
Web site: www.templebethel.com
Shabbat services: 7:30 p.m. Friday;
Torah study 9:00 a.m. Saturday; B'nai Mitzah 10:30 a.m. Saturday Religious & Hebrew School: 9:00 a.m.-12:30 Sunday
Judaica Gift Gallery
Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM
REFORM

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

CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SWFL
CHAVURA

P.O. Box 722, Sanibel, FL 33957
Chavuratshalom@gmail.com
www.chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org
Leonard E. Minsky, President
Shabbat services - 7:30 p.m. Friday
Jewish current events - 11:00 a.m. Saturday

TEMPLE JUDEA
CONSERVATIVE

14486 A&W Bulb Road
Fort Myers, FL 33908
Rabbi Marc Sack
E-mail: rabbi@tjswfl.org
President: Dan Fox
Director of Congregational Learning:
Tab Scribner
Preschool Director: Joann Goldman
templejudeapreschool@gmail.com
Phone: 239-433-0201 • Fax: 239-433-3371
E-mail: tjswfl@gmail.com
Web site: www.tjswfl.org
Services: 6:15 p.m. Friday and 9:30 a.m.
Saturday Minyan: 9:00 a.m. Monday
Religious School: Sun. 9:30 a.m. - noon;
Wed. 4:30 - 6:00 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

TEMPLE SHALOM CHARLOTTE HARBOR AND THE GULF ISLANDS
REFORM

23190 Utica Ave., P.O. Box 494675
Port Charlotte, FL 33949-4675
Rabbi Solomon Agin
President: Judith Migdol
Phone: 941-625-2116
E-mail: shalom06@netzero.com
Web site: templeshalomfl
Beginning Hebrew:
Tuesday 4:15 - 5:15 p.m.
Advanced Hebrew:
Thursday 4:15 - 5:15 p.m.
Organizations: Sisterhood

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- AIPAC
  (American Israel Public Affairs Committee):
  Jacki Waksman - 954-653-9053
- AJC (American Jewish Committee):
  Brian Lipton - 941-365-4955
- Anti-Defamation League: 561-988-2900
- B'Nai B'rith International: 941-302-4500
- Chabad Jewish Student Life at FGCU
  Rabbi Mendel Gordon - 347-452-0489
  mendelgordon@gmail.com
- Chevra Kadisha: Gene Sipe - 239-841-4615
- Generations of the Shoah SWFL: 263-9200
- Hadassah - Collier/Lee Chapter:
  Joyce Toub - 518-330-1559
- Hadassah-Sharon Chapter (Charlotte County):
  Odette Port - 941-505-1409
- Hazak 55+ Chapter:
  Joyce Rosinger - 239-437-1566
- Israel Bonds: Regional Headquarters:
  800-622-8017
- Jewish Community Services:
  239-481-4449
- Jewish National Fund:
  Joshua Mellits, Director, Western Florida
  941-462-1330 ext. 865
  Memorial Tree Planting in Israel
  1-800-542-8733
- Jewish War Veterans:
  Post 400: Commander
  Harvey Charter - 239-246-3151
- Mikvah Bashka of Southwest Florida:
  Nechamie Minkowicz - 239-822-2784