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Make a Meaningful Difference
JFS relies on your generosity and compassion. See how you can help your community. Page 2



**Holocaust Museum
Summer Exhibit**

An original exhibition, "Convincing the Masses: Propaganda at Home and Abroad," is on display through mid-August. Page 5



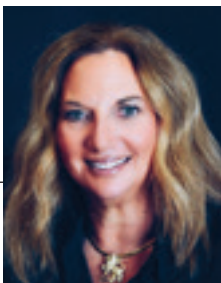
For the most current news and articles on the war in Israel, please visit our website at JewishFederationLCC.org.

Introducing SecureLCC

Our security campaign's new name

FROM THE
**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

■ **Debbie Sanford**



Our Security and Safety Initiative, SecureLCC, is funded entirely by generous donors. With your help, and the assistance of The Jewish Federations of North America, we have already:

- Hired Regional Security Advisor John Murtagh, whom we share with two other Federations, helping to keep the costs down.
- Provided SecureLCC security training to community members.
- Partnered with the Secure Community Network (SCN) to assess baseline needs of all Jewish institutions in Lee and Charlotte Counties.

- Conducted security awareness and preparedness training for community members, organizations and synagogues.

- Allocated supplementary funding to assist local synagogues and Chabads with security bills to protect our children.

SecureLCC is an initiative designed to enhance the safety and resilience of our community. I would like to emphasize a crucial point: **this program incurs no costs for our Jewish institutions or community members.** The expenses are fully covered by Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties. With partial funding from LiveSecure, our Federation will be equipped to offer the necessary training, tools and resources to safeguard individuals within all Jewish institutions, synagogues and schools in both Lee and Charlotte Counties.

Nationally, LiveSecure collaborates with the Secure Community Network

(SCN), the Department of Homeland Security, the National Counterterrorism Center, and the Anti-Defamation League to fight antisemitism and keep our communities safe.

Make a difference Today!

In Pittsburgh, Poway, Monsey, and most recently Colleyville, Texas, violent antisemitism has targeted Jewish communal institutions. Yet, in every case, survivors have credited the security measures their institutions put in place for saving their lives. As one survivor of the tragic Tree of Life shooting remarked, "I would have been the 12th casualty that day if I hadn't had the training."

We can do even more with your help! Fifty percent of each dollar you give will be matched by LiveSecure, the national security initiative. Donate now or reach out to me at 239-481-4449 ext. 5 to discuss giving opportunities. ☎

Moments of celebration, learning and community

Life enrichment event highlights

By **Tali Gomel**, Life Enrichment Coordinator

This past month, our community came together in joyful and meaningful ways, through events that celebrated culture, tradition and connection. As part of our ongoing Life Enrichment programming, residents, staff and guests shared special experiences filled with warmth, creativity and purpose.

One of the most uplifting gatherings was our Mifgash Café where we explored the beauty and depth of the Hebrew language. Participants learned Hebrew words related to Passover and everyday life, engaged in a thought-provoking discussion about the role of language in shaping our



■ **Tali Gomel**



experiences and even sang the timeless spiritual "Let My People Go" in Hebrew! The event sparked smiles, insights and a beautiful feeling of togetherness.

Another touching highlight was our Passover Lunch Bunch Seder held in collaboration with the Temple Judea Preschool. The joyful voices of children mixed with the laughter of our participants, creating a festive and heartfelt atmosphere. Everyone enjoyed a delicious Kosher-for-Passover meal, including matzah ball soup, vegetable kugel and other traditional dishes. Both generations joined in a creative holiday activity — crafting

colorful frogs and pyramids inspired by the Passover story.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Temple Judea for generously hosting us and to our wonderful sponsors, Keepers Comfort, whose support made this beautiful gathering possible.

Looking ahead

As we take a short break from Lunch Bunch events in June, we're already hard at work planning for the months ahead. Stay tuned for upcoming programs that promise to enrich, delight and bring our community even closer together. We look forward to welcoming you back soon for more meaningful gatherings filled with connection, joy and inspiration — because together, every moment is worth celebrating. ☎



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Jewish news published monthly by
**Jewish Federation of
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 Fort Myers, FL 33908
 (239) 481-4449
www.JewishFederationLCC.org

June 2025
Volume 47, Number 9

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L'CHAYIM invites correspondence on subjects of interest to Jewish people. Partisan political opinions will not be published, but opinions on subjects affecting the Jewish community are welcome. All inquiries regarding copy for **L'CHAYIM** should be directed to the editor. All news material must be very clearly printed or typed (not in all-capital letters) and double-spaced. Electronic submissions encouraged. The editor reserves the right to edit for space and content.

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

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**JULY/AUG ISSUE
 EDITORIAL
 DEADLINE:
 Tuesday, June 3**



OUR MISSION

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

OUR VISION

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

Meeting the moment

JFS Food Pantry serves hundreds in Southwest Florida

By Monica Wildonger, JFS Case Manager & Food Pantry Coordinator

From March 1 to April 24, Jewish Family Service (JFS) — a program of Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties — welcomed 341 new clients to its food pantry. That number reflects a growing need throughout the region, and the critical role JFS plays in supporting individuals and families facing food insecurity.

Located at 9701 Commerce Center Court, Fort Myers, FL 33908, the JFS food pantry is open every Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It serves anyone in Lee and Charlotte counties, offering shelf-stable essentials like canned goods, pasta, sauces and more — no ID, paperwork or questions required.

“We’re here for anyone in need,” a JFS representative said. “Whether someone is facing a short-term crisis or ongoing challenges, we welcome them with dignity and care.”

The pantry is always in need of donations, especially:

- Peanut butter and jelly
- Canned tuna
- Pasta and sauce
- Manual can openers



■ **Monica Wildonger**

These items help ensure the food provided is not only nutritious but usable by everyone — even those without kitchen equipment.

De-escalation training

In addition to providing food, JFS offered a free de-escalation training on Thursday, May 15

for anyone who was interested in learning how to handle tense or challenging situations calmly and effectively.

Get involved

JFS relies on the generosity and compassion of the community. You can make a meaningful difference by:

- Donating food or funds
- Volunteering during pantry hours
- Hosting a food drive
- Spreading the word about our services

To donate or volunteer contact Monica at 239-481-4449 ext. 2.

Together, we can make sure no one in our community goes hungry — and everyone has the tools to face life’s challenges with hope and support. 🌍

The Jewish Federation Seeks Volunteers with Foreign Language Skills.

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

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

Do you speak

Spanish, Russian, French, Creole, Haitian, Mandarin, etc.?

Please share your gift of language with the needy in our area.



**Send your response to Monica Wildonger at
 239.481.4449 x2 or casemanager@jfedlcc.org.
 She will contact you as needed. Thank you.**

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& **informed.**



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TRIBUTES

Honors & Memorials



With a tribute gift you can mark a milestone, celebrate a special occasion, extend your sympathy or send wishes for a speedy recovery. It is a meaningful way to acknowledge friends or family and strengthen our Jewish community by contributing to the Annual Campaign.

A personalized tribute card will be sent to the honoree or bereaved on your behalf, reflecting a personal message if you wish.

In Memory of Tracey Goldenberg Siegel

She volunteered so often and was such a caring person.
Alan & Rowena Angell

In memory of Tracey Siegel, my dear cousin.

Joanne Colt

In Honor of Mike Kistler's Birthday

Debbie Sanford, Lee Strauss, Ian and Mackenzi

In Honor of Dee Greenwald

Hi, Mom! Happy Mother's Day! With love and hugs.

Gaye (Grimz) Greenwald

HOW

THE JEWISH FEDERATION SERVES

Local Jewish Education and Culture

- Community-wide Jewish Education and Cultural Programs for all ages
- L'CHAYIM published monthly to keep the Jewish community informed about local, national and international Jewish issues.
- CRC-Community Relations Council to address issues of anti-Semitism and Interfaith Relations.
- Israel Advocacy and Initiatives to strengthen local Jewish community ties with Israel. Holocaust education for middle and high school students in the community and a college campus Jewish life experience committee.
- Volunteer opportunities for all ages.

Overseas

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

Jewish Community Foundation

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



Jewish Federation
of Lee & Charlotte Counties

Jewish Family
Services

Local Seniors Services

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

Local Social Services

- Non-sectarian, individual & family outreach, information & referral services.
- South Fort Myers United Way House.

Local Emergency Services

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

Education, Arts & Culture Programs

Israeli Folk Dancing
Jewish Social Club
Mah Jongg
Holiday Senior Visits
PJ Library
Federation Hits the Road-Day Trips

Holocaust Remembrance
Jewish Film Festival
Community Breakfast
Major Gifts-Pacesetters
Jewish Heritage Day

Lion of Judah
Women's Day
TRIBE
Annual Meeting
Men's Division
P2G Partnership Together

Stay **connected**
& **informed.**



Sign up for the Shalom JFED Newsletter

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

jewishfederationlcc.org/newsletter

What do you think?

L'CHAYIM wants to know!

Send your letters and comments to Sharon Hood, L'CHAYIM Editor, at sharon@marketcrank.com.

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At the Museum

By Erin Blankenship, President & CEO

All of us here at The Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center were proud to partner with Jewish Federation of Greater Naples, Temple Shalom and GenShoah SWFL at this year's meaningful Yom HaShoah Community remembrance service. It started with a pre-service reception hosted by GenShoah of SWFL for survivors, GenShoah members and their families. Multiple generations then participated in the Remembrance program. Candles were lit by survivors, 2Gs and 3Gs. Students from the Temple's Sunday School also participated to remember notable Holocaust survivors.

A poignant feature of the program was honoring the memory of the 1.5 million children who were murdered during the Holocaust. As people entered the Temple, each received a slip of paper with the name and age of one of these children. The congregation was asked during the service to remember each of these young victims and continue to do so in the future, so they are never forgotten.

Honoring survivors

In Temple Shalom's lobby, the Museum had an exhibit honoring survivors who have worked with our education programs. Over the years, these volunteers have shared their important stories with thousands of students and members of the public. Part of the exhibit featured QR codes that enabled a listener to hear clips of 11 survivor testimonies as well as Nuremberg Trial Chief Justice Robert Jackson. Several of the Museum's collection of Eric Kellar black and white survivor portraits were also on display.

We invite you to visit our website, www.hmcec.org, for more survivor and liberator testimonies, as well as the Portraits of Remembrance series with essays by 2Gs about their families' experiences during the Holocaust.

V-E Day anniversary

In honor of the 80th anniversary of V-E Day, the Museum offered complimentary admission. We also screened



■ Erin Blankenship

short films about World War II and liberation as we remembered with gratitude the sacrifices made by the Allied Forces to defeat the Nazi Regime and secure freedom for the world.

School programs

The 2024-25 school year was a very busy one for the Museum. Our Holocaust education programs were offered in seven Southwest Florida counties and more than 2,000 students came to the Museum for field trips. The Boxcar Exhibit, on loan to the Museum from Jack and F.E. Nortman and The Boxcar Foundation, visited multiple school and public library locations, where thousands of additional people of all ages were able to view it. In addition, the Museum's two Pop-Up Museum exhibits were in great demand and were shown at several Southwest Florida public schools.



Irving Waldman at the Museum with Pine Ridge Middle School students

We are already accepting bookings for the 2025-26 school year. If you are a teacher interested in our Holocaust education programs, or know of someone who is, please contact Katie@hmcec.org for more information.

This month, the Museum is leading a Southwest Florida educator trip to Washington, D.C. Education Manager Katie Butte and I will lead the group and join educators from across the state on this trip. Participants include school administrators and principals from



Rabbi Miller speaks at Yom HaShoah event

Collier, Lee, Leon, Palm Beach and Sarasota Counties. The purpose of the trip is to expand educators' knowledge of Holocaust education and encourage them to advocate for the inclusion of quality Holocaust education programs in their schools and districts.

The trip also represents a unique opportunity for us to strengthen our existing relationships with Southwest Florida



Art after the Holocaust, Irena Sendler painting by Bill Farnsworth

was impacted by the Holocaust? If so, we encourage you to learn more about GenShoah SWFL — an affinity group of the Museum for children and descendants of Holocaust survivors and anyone interested in their mission: promotion of Holocaust education and human rights, preservation of history



Rob Nossen and Maureen Lerner

Holocaust educators as well create new opportunities for cross-state dialogue on our programs. The group will visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and learn more about USHMM's Community of Holocaust Education Centers (CHEC) program, which we have participated in. Additional visits will be made to the Museum of African American History and other sites in the D.C. area.

On display now

Our original exhibition, "Convincing the Masses: Propaganda at Home and Abroad," is on display in the Estelle and Stuart Price Gallery through mid-August. We are working on the fall 2025 exhibit, "Painting Irena Sendler's Story," which will feature the original artwork a Southwest Florida artist created for the children's book on the Holocaust, "Irena Sendler and The Children of the Warsaw Ghetto." The book was written by Susan Goldman Rubin, and following its publication, Bill Farnsworth donated his artwork to our Museum. More details about the exhibition will be available soon.

GenShoah SWFL

Do you have a family member who

and memories of the Holocaust, connecting the second-generation with one another, and support of the Museum. Contact genshoahswfl@hmcec.org for more information.

Thank you, Board members

Finally, this month we honor retiring Board members Maureen Lerner and Rob Nossen for their many years of dedicated service to the Museum and its mission. They have been instrumental in the development of the Museum and growth of Holocaust Education in Southwest Florida. Each has impacted the thousands of students, teachers and members of the public who have been to the Museum or attended our education programs and events. We are tremendously grateful to them for their leadership.

Hope to see you at the Museum this summer! ☺



Yom HaShoah survivor panel



A Jewish 12-step recovery group

Every Saturday at 11 a.m. via Zoom

Are you looking for a path to recovery? Whether it is alcohol, drugs, and/or other addictions such as food, gambling, sex, shopping, etc., we invite you to experience

this Jewish Twelve Steps program and discussion group.

We meet Saturdays at 11 a.m. via Zoom, and we use a guidebook authored by a rabbi and M.D. The

guidebook is, "Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery" by Rabbi Kerry Olitzky and Stuart Copans, M.D., second edition.

All who might benefit from this group are welcome. Zoom details are

available by calling the Temple Beth El office at 239-433-0018. [📞](#)

Nar-Anon support meetings

By Joann Goldman

Nar-Anon Family Groups, a 12-step fellowship that offers a recovery program for those affected by someone's addiction, will be meeting in the community room at Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties.

The disease of addiction can affect family members and friends of addicts physically, emotionally and spiritually.

In the group meetings, these family members and friends share their experiences, strengths and hopes to help each other and themselves.

Addiction is a family disease. It affects the relationships of those close to the addict: parents, spouses, siblings, children, longtime friends and employers. If someone's addiction is affecting you, first you must help yourself.

Just come to a meeting. You will hear others who are going through similar problems and talk about how they cope and find recovery.

Nar-Anon is based on a set of spiritual principles and has no affiliation with any particular religion. There are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a problem of addiction in a relative or friend.

This group has been a part of the Lee County community for over 18 years. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. every Thursday at Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties (9701 Commerce Center Court, Fort Myers).

For more information, please contact me at jogo118@gmail.com or 239-470-4827. [📞](#)

The role of the scribe in ancient times

By Arlene Stolnitz

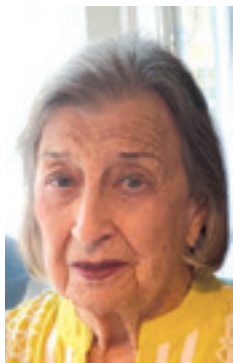
Life can have strange twists! One of the weirdest twists I have ever heard is a story from my own family which relates to my interest in all things Judaically ancient! The result has been my series of columns this year on Judaic folk art. (I will jog readers' memory to help remember this year's articles on "paper cuts," "Illuminated Hebrew texts" and "The Szyk Haggadah.")

Now, for the story: Back in the '50s, I met a young man who later became my husband. My prospective husband to be (Avrum Stolnitz) came to dinner to meet my parents. After the typical introductory family type conversations, my father asked my beau, "Did you say your mother's maiden name was Ring?" My father recalled that as a young boy his Hebrew teacher was Baruch Zvi Ring. Any relation?

The story unfolded, revealing my dad, David, and his brother, Sam, had seen a young girl caring for younger children in the family, while her father was preparing the young students for their bar mitzvahs! What a coincidence! That young girl, Ida Ring Stolnitz (z'l) was to become the mother of my beau/prospective husband and later, my mother-in-law.

But that is not all. Much later, I discovered that Baruch Zvi Ring was a scribe and master paper cutter. That was enough for me to embark on my inquiry into all things Judaic.

So, what did it take to be a scribe in the days long ago, way before the time of



■ Arlene Stolnitz

Baruch Zvi? Before printing presses and copy machines, every document and every book had to be copied by hand. A scribe, or sofer, was a person who was trained to produce such documents.

More than just copying a page, the sofer was involved in counting out the syllables and letters, laying out the wording in advance, spacing, knowing how many lines to be copied, being sure a line was not duplicated, and the intricacy of writing on a piece of parchment that could be animal skin.

Nor could you make a mistake if it were a Torah scroll, or it would not be kosher.

Scribes had nothing to do with authoring the Bible. They were important because of their role in making and distributing copies of the Bible.



Hebrew writing on scrolls by Baruch Zvi Ring, from the collection of A. Stolnitz

During biblical times, scribes were in demand to prepare copies of scripture on parchment scrolls. They were often experts in the law and often took on the role of teaching since most people were illiterate.

Especially during the time of the Babylonian exile, scribes helped keep people's faith alive. They often organized

small groups to study the law of Moses and the history of their people.

Just as in this country today, where most people speak English and have limited knowledge of Hebrew, during the Babylonian exile, most Jews spoke only Aramaic or Chaldean. They were no longer able to speak or even read Hebrew. When they returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the role of the scribe expanded. Scribes supplied copies of the scriptures to synagogues and became teachers of the law. People were dependent on scribes to interpret the writings.

During the time between the Old and New Testament, scribes were often referred to as "lawyers," experts in Mosaic law, the sole legislation that governed the Jewish people in civic as well as religious matters. Some other duties were writings for mezuzot, tefillin, Megillot, gittin (divorce papers), and ketubot (marriage contracts).

Scribes' services were given without payment. Often, they were quite poor and had to supplement their living by other means. There is speculation by some scholars that the scribes' unpaid status is reflective of the order that judges not receive gifts, as decreed in Deuteronomy 16:19: "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; though shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous."



parchment binding

Learning to be a sofer was (and still is) a difficult task. It was an apprenticeship-like situation, learning by the side of an expert scribe. It required someone who was religiously observant, of good character and knowledgeable about the laws of sofrut (the practice of scribal arts).

Becoming a sofer required someone who had a love of **the word**.

Arlene Stolnitz, the "Jewish Music" contributor to Federation papers for the past eight years, has started a new series focusing on Judaic Folk Art. It will appear in Federation newspapers on an irregular basis. Stolnitz, a native of Rochester, New York, is a retired educator and lives in Venice, Florida. [📞](#)

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Interfaith grandkids and Crayola crayons

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

By Rabbi Barbara Aiello

“Rabbi, I have to ask you something and it’s very personal,” said Ann as she wagged her finger in the typical “don’t tell” motion. Back then, Ann was a relative newcomer to her retirement community. She was still learning the intricacies of her new home, and I was happy to help. Later, as I stirred my cup of tea in Ann’s apartment, I noticed Ann twisting a napkin in her hand. So, I asked, “What is it that seems to be troubling you so?”

Ann paused, then asked, “Do you remember Crayola crayons? When we were kids, everyone had them.” In a flash Ann had brought me back to second grade. “I sure do,” I said. “I was fascinated with ‘burnt sienna!’”

“All those colors,” Ann mused. “That’s what I have to talk to you about.”

The quizzical look on my face must have had an effect, as it prompted Ann



■ Rabbi Barbara Aiello

to quickly explain. “Crayola crayons, that’s what I call my family. My children, their spouses, my grandchildren, my whole *meshpucha* are the crayons in one big crayon box!”

As I looked around Ann’s apartment, I began to understand. Beautifully framed photos were displayed on shelves and tabletops, each one featuring individual close ups or large and small family groups.

“There they are,” Ann said proudly, as she brought the photos to the table so I could see them up close. “Here are all of my crayons! My daughter there is married to a Korean man. So, look, I have Asian grandchildren — four of them! My son is married to a doctor from Kenya, so those grandkids are part African. My other son and his wife adopted two girls, one from Peru and the other from Ethiopia. My family has more colors than Crayola!”

As Ann carefully replaced the family photos, I couldn’t help but comment, “Ann, you have a beautiful family. What’s the problem?” That’s when Ann opened the door to her fears. As a retirement home resident for just under two months she was concerned about family visits. “I know that I’m living in a Jewish community, but it’s obvious that my family is mixed. How will it be when they come? Will my new friends accept my ‘crayons?’”

Today, according to the most recent Pew Research Report, the overall intermarriage rate among non-orthodox Jews is 72%.

For a person from Ann’s generation, the question is a legitimate one, especially when we look at the statistics on interfaith families. When Ann was newly married nearly 50 years ago, the rate of intermarriage between Jews and gentiles was 17%. Quite possibly, Ann’s concerns stem from her memories of how unusual interfaith marriages were back then. Ann might even remember that very few rabbis would officiate at interfaith weddings, many synagogues were unwelcoming, and some families refused to accept their son or daughter’s non-Jewish spouse.

Over the years, as acceptance and appreciation of diversity has become the norm in American culture, interfaith families benefited from this sociological shift. In the 1990s interfaith marriages rose to 43% of all Jewish marriages, a figure that more than doubles the numbers from the 1960s. Today, according to the most recent Pew Research Report, the overall intermarriage rate among non-orthodox Jews is 72%.

What this means for Ann, and others with “Crayola crayon” families, is that the stigma of the interfaith couple is nearly gone. Rather than “marrying out,” the idea of “marrying in” has become the term of choice when discussing pairings, especially since 62% of Pew’s young Jewish adult respondents said that “being Jewish is primarily a matter of ancestry and culture.”

In only six weeks after our meeting at which Ann discussed her fears regarding her “crayon” kids, I had the opportunity to experience Ann’s diverse family and how they were treated by her new friends first-hand. It was Passover week and visiting families lounged in a beautifully appointed space that served as a large living room. Ann’s children and grandchildren were visiting, and Ann was kvelling at the warm welcome and loving attention residents gave to each one of Ann’s clan. Grandchildren with roots from cultures all over the world put down new roots as they climbed on the laps of the bubbys and zaydes they had just met.

“Do you know my bubby,” Edye from Ethiopia asked the smiling gentleman sitting beside her on the sofa. In a flash, little Edye was pulling her grandmother toward her new friend. “Let’s get my cousin. She can sing a song in Korean. Want to hear it?” she said.

Ann was beaming, secure in the knowledge that her new Jewish retirement community was open and welcoming to all, including her own “Crayola crayon” family. “We’re a lot of crayon colors” Ann said, “and we’ve found our new crayon box. It’s so good to know that we fit right in!”

Rabbi Barbara Aiello is Italy’s first woman rabbi. For 10 years she served the Aviva Campus for Senior Life in Sarasota, Florida as resident rabbi. Currently as Aviva’s Rabbi Emerita she shares her experiences on *Aging Jewishly*. Contact her at Rabbi@RabbiBarbara.com. ☺



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Portman as Indy Jones?, a detective and comedy series, and much more

Stars of David

By Nate Bloom, Stars of David Contributing Columnist

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

“Fountain of Youth”

On May 23, AppleTV+ began streaming “Fountain of Youth” (free for Apple subscribers). Here’s the official premise: A pair of estranged siblings team up and embark on a journey to find the famed Fountain of Youth. **Natalie Portman**, 43, and John Krasinski play the “estranged” siblings.

Guy Ritchie directed the film that he describes as a family-friendly, action-adventure film. He told *Entertainment Weekly*, [the film] “is in the vein of ‘Indiana Jones’ but contemporary.” He added that the sibling characters both have an archeological background.

By the way, last April, Portman gave a long, very personal interview to *Interview* magazine. She said that as a child actor, she was “really sexualized,” which she felt “very scared by.”

It caused her to develop an outward persona as a strategy to shield herself. She said, “My way of protecting myself was to be like, ‘I’m so serious. I’m so

studious. I’m smart, and that’s not the kind of girl you attack.’ I was like, if I create this image of myself, I’ll be left alone.” Portman added, “Early on, if you tell people how private you are, your privacy gets respected a lot more.”

“Department Q”

A Netflix original series, “Department Q” began streaming on May 29. The central character is Carl Morck (Matthew Goode), a very sharp Scottish police detective who “screws up” and is sent to the department’s cold case unit, which they call “purgatory.” But there’s a way out of purgatory — a cold case Morck is assigned to “heats up,” and he runs with it.

“Department Q” was written and directed by **Scott Frank**, 65, an American Jew. He also wrote and directed two of the best Nexflix original series: “Godless” (2018), a Western that got five Emmy nominations, and “The Queen’s Gambit” (2021), about a top female chess player in the ’60s. “The Queen’s Gambit” won the Emmy for Frank’s directing as well as the Emmy of the best limited series. Bottom line: If it’s Frank, it has to be good.

“Stick”

A “feel-good” sports comedy series (10 episodes), “Stick” begins streaming on AppleTV+ on June 4. Premise: Price

Cahill (Owen Wilson) is a washed-up pro golfer. But, maybe, he will revive his golf-related career by coaching Santi, a troubled 17-year-old golf phenom. **Marc Maron**, 61, has a big supporting role.

“The Ritual”

This horror film opens in theaters on June 6. Here’s the premise of “The Ritual,” which was based on a real Catholic exorcism in Iowa in 1928: Father Riesinger (Al Pacino) and Father Steiger (Dan Stevens) work together to complete a series of exorcisms on Emma Schmidt (Abigail Cowan), a young woman who’s allegedly experiencing demonic possession.

The film was co-written by **David Midell**, 35-ish, who also directed the film. Midell is on the autistic spectrum and prior to working in films, he taught autistic children. He talked to a Catholic church online newspaper recently where he said he is Jewish, and he got a lot of help from Catholics in making this film. I got the sense that the church appreciates his sensitive take on the 1928 exorcism.

“I Don’t Understand You”

If you prefer something lighter, “I Don’t Understand You” is a comedy that also opens on June 6. Here’s the premise: A wealthy Los Angeles gay couple, Dom (**Nick Kroll**, 46) and Cole (Andrew

Rannels), are planning to adopt a baby while vacationing in Italy. A pregnant Italian woman (Amanda Seyfried) told the couple over the phone that they can adopt her baby. However, things go haywire shortly after they arrive in Italy.

Morgan Spector, 44, has a biggish role as Massimo, the son of a restaurant owner in Italy. Spector, whose father is Jewish, has a starring role (George Russell) in “The Gilded Age,” a hit HBO series. The third season (8 episodes) of “The Gilded Age” begins “some-not-yet released” date in June 2025.

“Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore”

On June 20, a documentary, “**Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore**,” opens in theaters. It explores the life of (deaf) actress Marlee Matlin, 59. It received good reviews at the prestigious Sundance Festival. They say that the film covers much more than her deafness and her movie career.

The film was directed by first-time director **Shoshannah Stern**, 44, whose parents were observant Jews. They were deaf, as is Stern and her two siblings. Stern has acted in many TV shows and in a few movies. Additionally, PBS’ “American Masters” bought the film for TV broadcast. 🌐

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Floridians get the big bottles!

By Jerry Greenfield, the Wine Whisperer

As I began to think about a topic for this month's column, a major event recently occurred in the Florida wine world. It suddenly became legal to sell wine in larger bottles. Turns out that a law passed in 1939 made it illegal to sell wine in bottles that contained more than three liters. There were some exceptions for the trade, but wine lovers were limited to the familiar 750-milliliter bottles and magnums.

This battle is not new. For quite some time, the House of Representatives has been puzzling over the issue. But today, we can purchase those glamorous and festive larger-format bottles containing up to six liters, which is equal to eight regular sized bottles.

The photo included with this article is one that I took outside a wine store in Saint Emilion, France. It shows all the sizes that are now available to lucky (and well-resourced) Floridians.

Starting at the right with the tiny split and half bottle, next is the standard size bottle, which we all know and love. Then, the magnum that holds 1.5 liters. Next comes the Jeroboam, Rehoboam, Methuselah, Salmanazar, Balthazar, and the big boy, the Nebuchadnezzar that holds the same amount as 20 regular bottles and weighs about 85 pounds. For some reason, the sizes of wine bottles are named after biblical kings and other figures from ancient history.

There are bigger ones, too, but you'll probably never see them. The Melchior holds the equivalent of 24



■ Jerry Greenfield

bottles, and the Solomon holds the equivalent of 26 bottles. Even larger, the Sovereign holds the equivalent of 35 bottles — one was specially produced for the christening of the cruise ship Sovereign of the Seas in 1988. It probably took two or three people to even lift it up.

But why put wine in such huge containers? First, they're very eye-catching and have huge labels. Winemakers like that kind of recognition and visibility on the wine store shelf. Second, if you're having a party, the large size offers plenty for everyone and definitely puts the "special" in the "occasion." Thirdly, fine wines age better and more slowly in larger bottles, lasting longer. Many collectors prefer at least magnum sizes for this reason.

It's reasonable to ask, what's the big deal about sizes? Why have large bottles been illegal in the state for so long? The matter has been brought up in the Florida Senate annually for years and kept getting stalled. Well, apparently there was some major (and well-funded) opposition from some very large wine distributors concerned that the law would open the door to wines being packaged in other types of containers,

like plastic bags and bladders. Sounds strange to me.

Anyway, don't expect to see that many 80-pound bottles of wine on shelves any time soon, because they do pose some interesting problems. They're really heavy, and one wine professional suggests that instead of trying to pour, it's easier to siphon the wine out of the bottle. Put a plastic tube in, suck on it until the wine starts to flow, and then pour it into decanters or glasses. Actually, that sounds like fun!

Even more fun is sampling through our latest discoveries.

months in new French oak imparts more savory characters rather than fruit, so expect aromas and flavors of smoke, pepper, bacon and even a bit of citrus. Much more subtle than some fruit bomb Syrahs. WW 93

Fort Ross Pinot Noir "FRV" Sonoma Coast 2019 (\$54) – On the nose, you'll enjoy alluring scents of raspberry and cherry, along with some distinctive meaty notes and a touch of violets. The flavors are robust, including characteristic raspberry, red cherry and gentle hints of warm earth and spice. WW 92



Robert Mondavi Pinot Noir Carneros 2022 (\$14) – A characteristic California Pinot Noir, with snappy strawberry right up front and tiers of black plum and cherry. A bit of mocha or chocolate around the edges and hints of rose and purple flowers. Wine Whisperer Rating on a scale of 100: 91-92

Ramey Syrah Rodgers Creek Vineyard 2017 (\$65) – Winemakers often blend a bit of Viognier into a Syrah, and there's 12% Viognier co-fermented in this example, which creates a smoother mouthfeel. The 25

Ask the Wine Whisperer

Q: What does the French word "terroir" mean? — Sharon C., Parkland

A: The word is widely used to describe the unique characteristics of a vineyard, including the climate, soil, elevation and topography.

Jerry Greenfield is a wine author, educator and consultant. Order his books, "Secrets of the Wine Whisperer" and "Ask the Wine Whisperer" and read his blog at www.winewhisperer.com.



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Sports parenthood

By Brian Simon

May marked the end of a phase in our lives. Mindi and I are no longer sports parents. Our children played sports from YMCA soccer at age 4 to club sports at the University of Florida.

Our son played Quidditch — the Harry Potter game where players ride “brooms” and it looks like a combination of football, dodgeball and basketball. Our daughter rowed on the club crew team. Rowing is a combination of a CrossFit workout, ancient slavery and torture. I’m quite certain neither Mindi nor I ever imagined that we were raising young athletes to play Quidditch and row crew. The kids played a lot of sports. They never did either of those until they got to Gainesville.

Sports parents are a thing in America. Soccer moms became a voting demographic, but there are moms and dads for every sport — and there are a **lot** of sports. A survey by projectplay.org estimates that parents spent \$40 billion on their kids activities last year. And that doesn’t count the untold billions that other people spent for fundraising — chocolate bars, popcorn and other *chazerai*.

Sports parents have aspirations for their children. Will they earn a scholarship to college? Maybe make the Olympics? Could they sign a big



■ Brian Simon

endorsement deal with a shoe company so their parents can pay off the second mortgage they took on their home to pay for all the expenses to support their children’s athletic endeavors?

But athletic success often comes down to factors beyond the parents’ control. Does your son have the drive and focus to excel?

Will your daughter lose interest along the way? Does your son have a genetic makeup that differs from his father so he can be taller than 5 feet 7 inches?

As a sports parent, it’s my responsibility to tell you how awesome my kids are at sports. But I’ll spare you the details. Telling everyone how my kids are better than your kids is what social media is for.

Once Sander graduated from the little flower-pickers and cloud-starkers in YMCA soccer, we got him onto a competitive team. By “competitive” I mean that the coach is from another country where they’re born playing soccer, and the parents still think we can coach the team better. Competitive youth sports is the opportunity to spend seven hours in a car every weekend and speak authoritatively about how the Fairfield Inn in Auburndale, Florida is so much nicer than the Holiday Inn Express in Gwinnett County, Georgia.

Sari was the surprising athlete. A “girly-girl” who was obsessed with shoes before she could walk, she developed an interest in sports as a teenager. It was Mindi who suggested she check out the crew team when she got to college. Turns out Sari was good at rowing. Mindi’s suggestion should make her eligible for the Sports Parent Hall of Fame, located next to the coffee shop in the lobby of a Hampton Inn in Charleston, South Carolina.

Sports parents have aspirations for their children ... But athletic success often comes down to factors beyond the parents’ control.

Sander found Quidditch as a freshman at the University of Florida. I remember thinking it would be funny to show up at a tournament with juice boxes for the team. It never occurred to me that other parents might also come. But this is what 21st century parents do! We follow our kids around to attend their activities. And bring snacks.

The food at rowing events is a serious endeavor. There are pots of chili! Grills! Plus, folding tables! I’m not

sure, but I think \$30 billion of that \$40 billion nationally might have been spent on rowing. Mindi and I attended regattas in Chattanooga, Boston, Sarasota and Oak Ridge, Tennessee. I highly recommend the Sonesta Suites in Andover, Massachusetts — much better value than the Marriott in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee.

It will be interesting to see the adjustment for the kids. Sander has moved on. He’s about to start his first job. He hasn’t been a part of an organized team for three years. I asked him if he missed it.

“I miss **my** team,” he told me. Not the sport, but the people.

I suspect Sari will have similar feelings. Each year, the rowing team has an end-of-season banquet where the seniors speak. They **always** talk about their teammates.

When Sari first joined the team, the coaches and upperclassmen told the new people that their teammates would become their closest and life-long friends.

“And I thought they all were exaggerating,” Sari said.

Update: they were not exaggerating.

Reflecting on this part of life, I’m proud to have been a sports parent. What more could you want for your children than for them to make friends and have meaningful experiences with them? I mean, other than a big shoe contract. ☺

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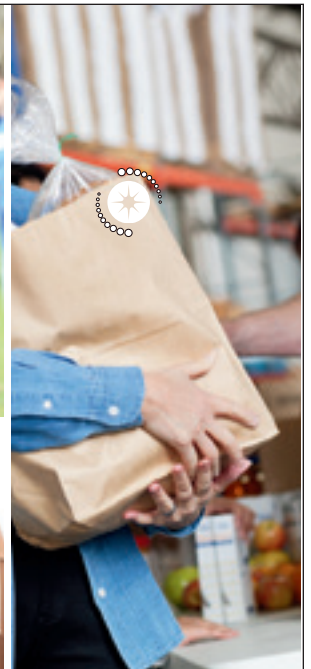
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Celebrating Shavuot
Remembering Pope Francis and more

By Cheryl Fulmer, Ellen Feingold and Marcia Rudin

This year, Shavuot begins on June 1. It falls exactly seven weeks — on the 50th day — after the first day of Passover. We count those days, called “Counting the Omer” so we won’t miss it.

Shavuot is one of the three pilgrimage holidays decreed by God in the Torah, which means we’ve been celebrating this holiday together for approximately three millennia! In ancient times, it was an agricultural holiday, celebrating the onset of the wheat harvest. Jews living in Jerusalem would bring the first sheaves of wheat to the Temple for the priests. During Talmudic times when the Temple in Jerusalem no longer existed, the holiday commemorated the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, which also happened fifty days after the Exodus.

Today, we eat dairy foods on Shavuot to commemorate the giving of the Torah. Since it was given to us on Shabbat, we were not allowed to slaughter animals, and so we remember the giving of the Torah by not eating animal flesh. We also read the Book of Ruth on Shavuot because of its connection with the barley and wheat harvests.

Ruth meets Boaz as she was gleaning in his fields, and we remember that Ruth, a convert to Judaism, is the great-grandmother of King David.

After five years, Chavurat Shalom continues to thrive, thanks in large part to the ability to be together via Zoom. This is especially important during off-season when our snowbirds have flown away. Don, Karen, Mark and Marge are in Massachusetts. Barry and Barbara are in Ohio. Tobi, Steve, Irene and Leon are in Pennsylvania. Norman is in Maine. Cheryl and Barry are in New Jersey. But we gather together via Zoom for Shabbat services every Friday evening joined by others living in North Carolina, Virginia, Illinois and Florida.

Remembering Pope Francis

Our Chavurat Shalom member Rabbi James Rudin wrote the following after the death of Pope Francis on April 21:

When I joined the American Jewish Committee’s Interreligious Affairs Department in 1968, the only knights I had heard about were members of King Arthur’s merry band in fabled Camelot. Who knew back then that I — a newly-minted young rabbi, fresh from serving as a United States Air Force Chaplain — would someday become a ‘real’ knight?

But in 2022, after I served nearly 50 years as director of inter-religious affairs at the American Jewish Committee, Pope Francis chose me to become a Papal Knight of Saint Gregory the Great, an honor bestowed to non-Catholics who have contributed to social progress. This was an honor accorded to only two other rabbis

before me and the only one Pope Francis granted.

I was deeply saddened by Pope Francis’ recent death. His passing makes my knighthood even more precious. That Papal honor represents a visible tribute to the many remarkable women and men, who for six decades since the conclusion of the historic Vatican Council in 1965 have labored to build sturdy permanent human bridges of mutual understanding and respect between



Pope Francis

Catholics and Jews and to overcome all forms of religious bigotry and prejudice — especially antisemitism.

Pope Francis was a universal champion of human compassion and constructive inter-religious relations. But for me and my family, he was the person who provided one of the most meaningful moments of my life. May his memory always be a blessing.

Upcoming services and events

Chavurat Shalom holds weekly Friday evening Shabbat services **every Shabbat** throughout the year. All other activities take place on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. All times are Eastern Time.

On the first Tuesday of the month, Marcia Rudin hosts our informal “Schmoozes” via Zoom.

On the second Tuesday, Dr. Ellen Feingold leads our “Torah Talk” discussion of the current Torah portion.

The third Tuesday is reserved for Len Minsky Current Events, led by Dr. Don Bachman.

On the fourth Tuesday, we enjoy lectures by Chavurat Shalom members and outside speakers arranged by the program committee of Irene Skolnick and Barry Fulmer.

All Chavurat Shalom activities are held via Zoom, with in-person gatherings planned occasionally. All are welcome to attend our activities.

Check our website chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org or email chavuratshalom@gmail.com to get further information and to obtain the schedules. 🕒

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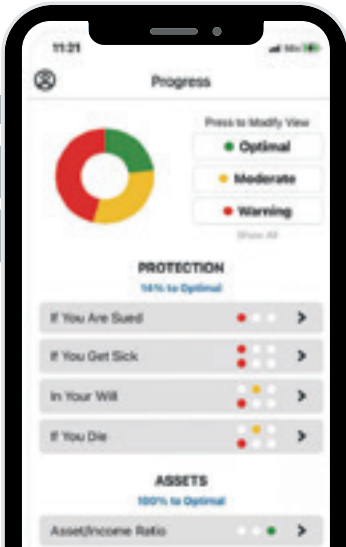
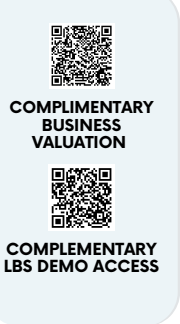


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Sivan 5785

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

Below is a message from Chair of Hadassah Medical Organization Dalia Itzik and HMO Director General Professor Yoram Weiss. Just as we must fundraise to keep our hospitals in top shape, our colleagues in Israel face daunting challenges.

Passover, the Festival of Freedom, carried special meaning as Israel continued to face immense challenges. While most hostages have returned home, we continue to pray for those 59 who are still held captive.

Even in times of hardship, we persevere. In December 2024, Hadassah Medical Organization made history by earning the highest honors in international accreditation from the Joint Commission International (JCI) across all its facilities. This recognition

reaffirms our excellence in medical care, research and physician training.

We are growing and strengthening Israel's future. This year, we will open the Hadassah-Helmsley Medical Center in the city of Netivot, bringing essential medical services to the country's south. Additionally, the recent extension of Jerusalem's light rail to the main entrance of Hadassah Ein Kerem enhances accessibility for all.

Despite ongoing challenges, at Hadassah we stand united in our commitment to healing, dignity and peace.

Thank you for your unwavering support.



Nancy Wiadro

Local news

Here in Collier and Lee Counties, we bid farewell to seasonal members. As you enjoy the summer months ahead, please know that the Hadassah Collier/Lee chapter continues to function with Raquela book groups, Hadassah greeting cards (contact collierlee hadassah@gmail.com), and we have a delegate, Denise Sultan, who will attend the August National Conference in Aventura, Florida. Our June Board Meeting will be held Monday, June 9 via Zoom at 10:30 a.m. Watch for our July Book Swap at Janett Edelberg's.

We wish all a healthy summer, Happy New Year (Sept. 23 and Oct. 2) and look

forward to greeting you at our fall meeting, Monday, Nov. 17 at the Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center (4720 Pine Ridge Road, Naples).

Save the date

Please plan to join us Sunday, Dec. 14, when we welcome Hadassah National President Carol Ann Schwartz for brunch. Invitations to follow.

Hadassah gratefully accepts donations year-round, as our hospitals continue their lifechanging work 24/7. Donate at hadassah.org or send your check to Hadassah, 6017 Pine Ridge Rd., Suite 319, Naples, FL 34119. For information about membership or other questions, kindly email collierleehadassah@gmail.com. 📧

Patients and staff blazed the trail in Jerusalem's marathon

By Nancy G. Wiadro, Co-President, Collier/Lee Chapter

The running team from the Gandel Rehabilitation Center at Hadassah Hospital Mount

Scopus filled the streets for the Jerusalem marathon with inspiring runners — war heroes.

The group, made up of patients who had been severely wounded in the “Iron Swords” battles and who have been undergoing intensive and prolonged treatments, also included rehabilitation staff who have been supporting the heroes along their road to recovery. Clad in turquoise team T-shirts, they conquered the Winner Jerusalem Marathon, which took place April 4, showing their true fighting spirit.

but continued working to save his team despite his injuries.

Many others who were injured in different circumstances joined them, spurred by the announcement of the Hadassah running group — an initiative that motivated them to achieve significant physical capabilities and prepare for the marathon.

The initiative to establish the team, composed of both caregivers and



The marathon marks the pinnacle of a long training period in which the staff trained alongside the patients, encouraged them, pushed them toward possible achievements, and helped them discover their hidden physical and mental strengths.

Among the runners were Lt. Col. Asaf Ilan, a tank battalion commander who was severely injured and rehabilitated at Hadassah; Y, a soldier from a multidimensional unit wounded while trying to rescue his company commander, who was shot by terrorists in Gaza; and On, a reservist who was critically wounded in combat in Lebanon

patients, was envisioned and realized by physiotherapist Ayala Hirst, who decided to set an ambitious goal for rehabilitation patients, training together with caregivers to prepare mentally and physically.

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**GENERATIONS OF THE SHOAH
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genshoah@hmcec.org

Thank you and an invitation from GenShoah

By Ida Margolis and Shelley Lieb

In one of the most popular musicals, “Fiddler on the Roof,” you may remember hearing the lyric “One season following another ...” That is true everywhere, but so visible here in Southwest Florida. While concluding one season of programing, GenShoah SWFL is planning for the next. We are reminded that no programs are done in isolation and certainly not worth doing without individuals supporting the programs. We want to thank all who have helped in planning, promoting, executing, working on, presenting and attending our programs this season. As we say each year, “We can’t do it without you.” Thank you so much for all you have done this season. We are looking forward to your help and to seeing you next season!

Already planned for next season is an expanded program open to all members. If you like to read or like to learn, you are invited to the Gen-Shoah “Readers and Learners” programs. In past seasons, Gen-Shoah has had one scheduled book review but has added discussions of books, films and articles in response to requests.

Last season, due to the efforts of Estelle Kafer, two book discussions were held in addition to the book review at the annual potluck. The books were so insightful and informative, and those who attended said they learned a great deal new by reading the book. Others said they learned just by listening to the discussion. The comments encouraged us to continue, and we will start by scheduling two book discussions, each with something special added, and more to come. Kafer has once again agreed to facilitate the reading and discussion group, which we are calling Readers and Learners.

For those who want the opportunity to get a head start on reading, we are announcing two of the books that will be discussed this season. The first book is “Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler

Project” by Jack Mayer. This is not a new book and those who have read it told us it is a great read — a true story that reads like a novel. It is a story about a very interesting project and an amazingly heroic person, Irena Sendler, who deserves to be remembered. The discussion will take place Nov. 19, 11 a.m. at the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center. Prior to the discussion, those attending will have the opportunity to see a special exhibit of original paintings by Bill Farnsworth from the picture book “Irena Sendler and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto” by Susan Goldman Rubin.

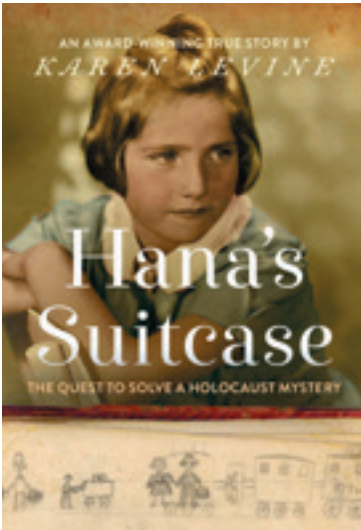
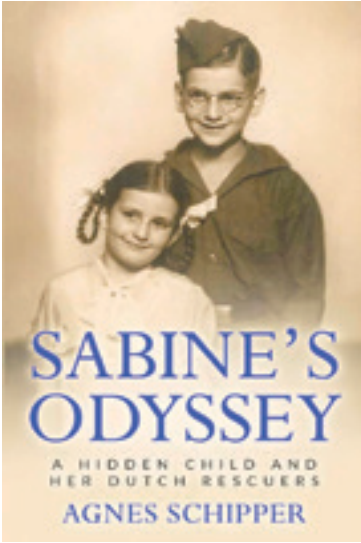
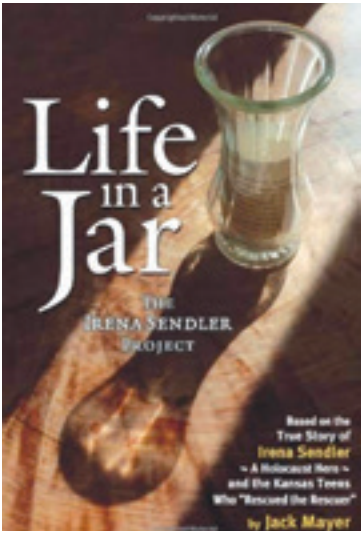
The second book in the Readers and Learners series is “Sabine’s Odyssey: A Hidden Child and Her Dutch Rescuers” by Agnes Schipper. The discussion of this fascinating story will take place in March. The author of the beautifully written memoir will give great insights into the story of her mother’s life during WWII, and her father, a member of the Dutch resistance.

At the potluck in December, there will be a review of the award-winning true story “Hana’s Suitcase: The Quest to Solve a Holocaust Mystery” by Karen Levine.

More information to come on Readers and Learners, the book discussions, and many other GenShoah programs for the 2025-26 season. Again, thank you to all who helped and attended our programs.

We invite anyone who has a relationship to someone who is a descendant of a Holocaust survivor or who is inter-

ested in our mission of “promotion of Holocaust education and human rights, preservation of the history and memories of the Holocaust, connection of the Second Generation with one another and support of the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center,” to join us next season. Simply email genshoahswfl@gmail.com for information and to receive our free newsletter. ☺







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

By Marina Berkovich, JHSSWFL President

Personalities behind the origins of Southwest Florida Jewish history are vague, and the legacy they left behind is mangled by time passage and, in certain cases, through the interpretation of their role. Because I constantly search for details that may spark particular interest in our work, i.e. the work that we do at



Marina Berkovich

The Jewish Historical Society of SWFL, I ponder various historical connections between seemingly disconnected people.

Case in point, on our recent travels to Australia, our Sunday afternoon city guide, avoiding yet another paid pro-Palestinian protest, brought us to a shell theater in the "Central Park of Melbourne." The letters MYER immediately stood out. Apparently, it is a very well-known concert venue, of which I was unaware until that moment. In fact, The Sidney Myer Music Bowl has been there since Feb. 12, 1959.

The entire present day Jewish population of Australia is approximating 118,000, with most residing in Melbourne and Sydney. As a longtime social media follower of the Australian Jewish Association, I am consistently impressed by their courage to speak the truth and stand up to antisemitism, which has taken a deeper hold since the groups supporting Islamism and pro-Hamas activities have become more prominent in their country and worldwide, particularly post Oct. 7, 2023.

Sadly, in our 10 days in Australia we only spotted one kippah-wearing male. Any visible signs of Judaism are disparaged by the government, even deemed provocations to terror-seeking groups. This point was communicated to the kippah-wearing male after a recent antisemitic outburst in a café — as if he was

the cause of the attack, not the victim!

When Sidney Myer Baevski came to Australia from Belarus in 1899, things were hardly friendlier. Despite numerous challenges, he rose to prominence through the ancient Jewish talents of perseverance in trade, starting small

and building an empire. He likely chose his second name Myer as his last name, because it was less ethnic, or more German. The Myer store chain is the largest in Australia. Myer Baevski and his charitable trust support many causes. He converted to Christianity in 1920 to marry a socialite.

That brings me back to Abraham C. Myers, a man we all cherish as the founding father of Southwest Florida Jewish history. He too applied the ancient know-hows of his Jewish ancestry to rise to the post of provisions general. He, too, married a socialite. Was the name Myers also adopted by his grandparents? Did he convert? I have not come across any information. Yet.

His family, too, carry Jewishness in name only. Mrs. Myers, formerly Ms. Twiggs, was not a Jew, so her children are technically, not considered Jewish.

Mine is not a genealogical analysis. I am merely observing what is on the surface. I am increasingly pleased to witness how countless young Jews are resisting the pressure to assimilate and become more religious even than immediately preceding generations. Because of them, Jewish people and Jewish history will continue.

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



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Marcia Can Help

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

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



Help us meet these pressing needs by contributing to the **MARCIA CAN HELP** fund.

For further information please contact
Debbie Sanford at (239) 481-4449 ext. 6 or debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org

TEMPLE JUDEA PRESCHOOL
Fort Myers
Suki Kelly, Preschool Director

As we welcome the sunny days of June, we're filled with gratitude and excitement. We are wrapping up the school year and kicking off summer fun! May was full of joy and special memories — and June promises even more fun and celebration!

Legacy Stones

Our families came at the end of April to work on their Legacy Stones for our new garden and outdoor classroom area. We had a rainbow garden party with rainbow colored fruit and veggie after-school snacks and refreshments. Families came to decorate their stones with paint, marbles, mosaic pieces and stamps. Their handprints and names will be forever in our garden to remind us of their time at our preschool and the legacy they leave behind. Thank you to all of our families who participated.

“Muffins with Mom”

We loved celebrating all the amazing moms and grandmas at our “Muffins with Mom” event for Mother’s Day! Thank you for taking the time to join us and making the day extra sweet.

Teacher Appreciation Week

Our amazing families sponsored lunch for our staff every day for Teacher Appreciation Week. We are so grateful to have such wonderful students and families. Our bellies were full and our hearts were full of love.

“Pizza with Deputies”

A big thank you to the Lee County Sheriff’s Office for joining us for “Pizza with Deputies” in May. The kids had a blast learning about safety, asking questions,

and of course, eating pizza! Events like this help build community and trust, and we’re so grateful for the visit.

Pre-K graduation

We are so proud of our graduating Pre-K GEMS! Thank you to all the families who joined us in celebrating this big milestone. Watching our students grow has been an incredible journey, and we can't wait to see all the amazing things they'll do next!

Summer camp

Our exciting Summer Camp kicks off on June 16, and we have an action-packed schedule planned! From themed weeks and field trips to arts and crafts, every day will be a new adventure. Highlights include tie-dye day, water play, special



Father’s Day baseball

We are looking forward to heading out to a Mighty Mussels baseball game to celebrate Father’s Day! Dads and father figures are invited to join the fun on this special field trip. Best of all — it’s also a fundraiser for our school. Come cheer, snack and enjoy a great day out while supporting our programs!

We have great news!

In August, Temple Judea Preschool will be opening up an infant and young

toddler (12-month to 18-month) room. Space is very limited for both classes so please schedule a tour now to reserve your spot for August!

There are limited spaces available for the upcoming school year for our 18-month to Pre-K program as well. If you are interested in joining our preschool family, please contact us at 239-482-1121 or templejudeapreschool@gmail.com.

Here’s to a summer full of laughter, discovery and memories to last a lifetime! 🌈



visitors and more! There are still a few spots left in our Summer Camp program for students who are enrolled for the next school year. If you are interested in joining our school, please contact the preschool.





TEMPLE JUDEA RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Fort Myers

Linat Bahar, Religious School Coordinator

From Matzah to Mount Sinai, we are full of joyful Jewish learning. Passover came to life via taste, song and story. Our students explored the Haggadah as more than just a text — it became a living story. They sang beloved Passover songs like Ma Nishtanah and Dayeinu, learned the symbols of the Seder plate, and discovered the themes of freedom, identity and hope.

The kitchen became a classroom as children made charoset inspired by global Jewish traditions and baked matzah together. In the week before Passover, our Friday “Mini Seder” was a joyous celebration: students sang, told stories, tasted traditional foods and made matzah pizza and matzah ball soup. These sensory-rich moments deepened their understanding — and their love — for the holiday.

Elijah, the Prophet

As we prepared for the Seder, students also learned about Elijah, the Prophet whose cup sits on every Passover table. Through stories and midrashim, they heard about his miraculous visits and acts of compassion and kindness — from helping the poor to bringing hope during hard times. These tales inspired our students to think about the ways they can bring light and kindness into the world.

Counting the Omer

After Passover, our learning turned to Sefirat HaOmer, the 49 days between the Exodus and the giving of the Torah. We introduced students to the practice of counting each day as a way of growing spiritually and emotionally — a journey of values and growth.

Our learning centered on the wisdom of Rabbi Akiva, especially his timeless teaching: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Children explored kindness, inclusion, and how to care for others in both big and small ways. We also discussed the story of Rabbi



Akiva’s students and the value of respecting each person — a message that continues to resonate.

Bringing values to the table

This month, we also explored the Jewish laws of kashrut. Students learned about the separation of meat and dairy, kosher symbols and how food preparation reflects mindfulness and values.

Discussions were thoughtful and practical: What does keeping kosher mean? How do different families practice it? Why do we bless our food? These conversations helped children see that Jewish tradition is not only about holidays — it’s woven into everyday choices and meals.

Shabbat prayers

Our Shabbat curriculum continued to flourish. Students practiced familiar prayers like Shalom Aleichem and Lecha Dodi, learned new melodies and connected deeply with the meaning behind the words.

Through song, movement and storytelling, prayer has become a joyful and personal experience — a way to find our



voice. We’re watching our students grow not only in fluency, but also in confidence and spiritual connection.

A school open to all

Our Open House this month was a huge success! Families with children ages 3–12 joined us for a morning of community and celebration. Guests enjoyed crafts, storytelling, Israeli dancing, classroom visits and conversations with teachers.

For many, it was a beautiful window into the warmth and creativity that define our approach to Jewish

We wrapped up with Israeli folk dancing and a community celebration full of ruach (spirit), pride and connection to Am Yisrael.

Hebrew comes alive

Throughout the month, we continued building Hebrew language skills in fun, practical ways. Students expanded their vocabulary, practiced conversational phrases, read Hebrew texts and explored prayer language. Whether through games, music or dialogue, Hebrew at our school is alive, joyful and rooted in meaning.

Looking ahead

As the school year draws to a close, we’re excited to end with more learning and celebration. Our students will explore Lag BaOmer, learning the story of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and the traditions of bonfires, bows and arrows. We’ll reflect on resilience, faith and the light that Torah brings to our lives.

We will conclude with Shavuot, the holiday that celebrates the giving of the Torah. Children will learn about standing together at Mount Sinai, study the customs of the holiday — like eating dairy and decorating with flowers — and celebrate the idea that the Torah belongs to all of us, at every age.

A year to remember

This month (and this year) has been filled with growth, laughter, questions, stories and song. We are so proud of our students for the joy and care they bring to their Jewish learning. As we approach the final weeks of the year, we carry the light of everything we’ve learned and shared into the summer and beyond.

We invite you to keep learning, celebrating and connecting with us, because the journey of Jewish life and learning never truly ends. 🕊️



education — and a reminder that our doors (and hearts) are always open.

Celebrating Israel with heart

We honored Yom Ha’atzmaut — Israel’s Independence Day — with an exciting school-wide program. Students went on a virtual tour of Israel, visiting cities and landmarks like Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the Dead Sea, and the Galilee. At each stop, they received a passport stamp and engaged in activities tied to that location, from tasting Israeli snacks to learning songs and stories.

BBYO
Naples/Fort Myers
Cayla Schreier, BBYO Southwest Coordinator

Updates from Naples and Fort Myers BBYO

By Cayla Schreier, BBYO Southwest Coordinator

In April, our teens and their families had the opportunity to enjoy a meaningful Passover with friends and family. Some stayed in the local area, and some traveled out of state to observe the holiday. The teens and their families held and attended seders and heard the story of Passover in the Haggadah once more. A few of our teens had to attend school and navigate the week with their Jewish friends, eating kosher for Passover foods while their non-Jewish peers ate chametz. This reminded everyone to be proud Jewish leaders and celebrating Passover meant celebrating the continuous resilience of the Jewish people.

Pool party

Once the holiday of Passover ended, the teens returned to school and advertised the Naples BBYO Pool Party taking place Sunday, April 27 at Noah's house to their Jewish peers. The teens indulged in a relaxing afternoon with their friends, hanging by the pool, eating delicious snacks and pizza, and playing games such as Monopoly along with an icebreaker to ensure everyone knew one another's names and could find something in common. It was a nice time for the teens to gather and socialize before advanced placement final exams began the first week of May.



Graduates

Mazal Tov to all our Naples BBYO teens in the graduating class of 2025! We are so proud of you and wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors. Graduating seniors can join the BBYO Alumni Association to stay involved in BBYO, get alumni-exclusive opportunities, network with others in the alumni community, and continue to be involved in BBYO beyond high school. You can join the BBYO alumni association with this link: <https://alumni.bbyo.org/>

We hope you all have a wonderful summer. Stay safe and see you in the fall!

Upcoming events

Details on all upcoming events will follow. Please keep an eye out for emails regarding all upcoming Naples and Fort Myers BBYO events.

What is BBYO?

BBYO is a diverse and inclusive Jewish youth group to encourage Jewish teens to become more immersed and interested in meaningful Jewish activities and programs. This organization accepts Jewish teens attending eighth through twelfth grades of all backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender, race, denominational affiliation or socioeconomic status. BBYO currently reaches more than 70,000 teens worldwide, with participants in over 60 countries and hundreds of chapters across the United States.

Supporting our teenage Jewish community

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



our chapters, please email me at cschreier@bbyo.org. You can also follow us on Instagram: @Mishpacha_BBG and @Negevaza.

Scholarships to attend BBYO conventions and summer programs are available through both Jewish Federation of Greater Naples and the Temple

Shalom Men's Club. Please contact me for more information on scholarships. If you are a BBYO Alum and would like to be included in our Friends and Alumni of BBYO mailing list, please email us at mjs0821@aol.com.



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is that this program will enhance Jewish knowledge and identity in preparation for participation in American Jewish life.

 *This Grant*

is for Jewish residents of either county who are 25 years old or younger and can demonstrate a financial need. Academic standing and community involvement may also be considered.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

 JewishFederationlcc.org/scholarships



What really happened at Mount Sinai?

By Rabbi David Arias

We are celebrating the festival of Shavuot, which occurs 50 days after Pesah. These two Hagim are deeply connected in various ways. In Pesah, we celebrated our freedom; in Shavuot, we give that freedom a framework, a safe place, because in Shavuot we celebrate the receiving of the Torah, the great revelation at Mount Sinai!

But what actually happened there? Do you remember being there?

How is it possible that a covenant that took place thousands of years ago still influences how we do things today? It is because we were also there, present, at Mount Sinai. In fact, every day we are invited to receive the Torah again.

You don't remember being there? Don't worry, it's not a memory problem; your mind may not remember, but your soul surely does. We were all there; all the neshamot, all the souls of Am Israel were present at that very



■ Rabbi David Arias

moment. I usually share this with the couples whose weddings I officiate. Being under the Huppah is like standing at Mount Sinai; a brief event that will influence the lives of future generations, an unrepeatable moment that will last forever.

During the Pesah Seder, we declared, "in every generation we should see ourselves as we were freed from Egypt."

Even more, during that night we also sang "*Vehi Sheamda*," remembering that in every generation someone tried to hurt and kill us. If you said these two phrases on Pesah and are not celebrating Shavuot, as a symbol that in every generation we receive the Torah again and therefore we are committed to it, then you are missing at least half of the meaning of Passover. The Jewish people validate their freedom through their commitment to the Mitzvot, the commandments. That's how we express our freedom and share it with others.

On Shavuot, in some congregations, there is a custom of reading a "*K'tubah*" — the traditional wedding document — in which the counterparts are Hashem and the People of Israel. This celebrates this particular bond and reminds us of

Being under the Huppah is like standing at Mount Sinai; a brief event that will influence the lives of future generations, an unrepeatable moment that will last forever.

our obligations in this relationship. How do we celebrate it? As we usually do in the Jewish tradition, we eat and pray.

Shavuot is referred to in the Torah as The Festival of the Weeks (literally, Shavuot), marking the end of the seven-week period that begins with Passover. It is also known as *Hag HaKatzir*,

The Festival of Reaping, which emphasizes its agricultural context. Additionally, it is mentioned as *Yom Habikurim*, The Day of the First Fruits, further highlighting its connection to the land. In the Mishna and the Talmud, it is called *Atzeret*, meaning the restrain or stop, symbolizing the conclusion of the period that began on Pesah. However, it is only later in Jewish history that Shavuot is called *Z'man Matan Torateinu*, The Times of the Giving of the Torah. The sages added an additional layer to this festival, inviting us to celebrate it through the study of the Torah itself, strengthening the eternal bond of our people to the ancient text and bringing it back to life.

What happened on Mount Sinai was that our souls were present, receiving the Torah and inheriting it for generations to come, until today.

Hag Shavuot Sameah!

Rabbi David Arias serves at Temple Judea in Fort Myers. 🕊

The truth about gossip

By Rabbi Nicole Luna

If you look at the Jewish laws around gossip, it can appear as if Jewish tradition prevents speaking

about other people entirely. Even a seemingly innocent, true statement such as "James got a new car" falls

under the category of *rechilus*, gossip, or forbidden speech. Gossip goes beyond saying something that might damage another person's reputation, like "James is a bad driver." Gossip encompasses even harmless statements about a person.

Our tradition recognizes that a statement about James getting a new car might lead to conversation about what type of car he bought, how he could afford the new car, and how he could donate more to Jewish causes if he could afford a car like that!

Pirkei Avot 4:2 (The Ethics of the Fathers) warns *aveirah gorere aveirah*, one transgression leads to another. Thus, any talk about another person can and often does very easily lead to judging that person. However, a closer look at the source of this prohibition offers us an exception, albeit not a straight-forward one. The source against gossip comes from Leviticus 19:16, "Do not gossip among your people; do not stand by the blood of your fellow: I am God." The midrash sees these two statements in tension with each other. Don't gossip except if withholding information will cause harm to your fellow.

The Chofetz Chayim, who wrote the authoritative book on forbidden speech in 1873, offered guidelines for determining if it is appropriate to share negative information in order to prevent harm.

Imagine if James' new car starts to have some problems and he gets



■ Rabbi Nicole Luna

it towed to a mechanic. His friend Bill gives him a ride to pick up his car but James receives awful service and the mechanic overcharges him. Bill hears every exchange and is upset on James' behalf. Jewish law sets a very high bar for Bill being able to share James' experience with others and disparage the mechanic.

According to the Chofetz Chayim, he has to have experienced the wrongdoing firsthand, take some time to think through if the mechanic was truly in the wrong and speak to the mechanic directly about his concerns. Even then, if he's talking to someone

in need of car repair, he's better off recommending another car repair shop than speaking ill of the mechanic directly.

The criteria for determining when to make our voices heard is complicated. They are meant to make us think through the situation and to take

pains to avoid embarrassing someone or inadvertently spreading falsehoods. When we're tempted to talk about someone, the guidelines make us stop and think our words would truly benefit someone else. Then, may we live out the words from Psalm 34:13-14 "Who is the one who desires life (*chafetz chayim*) and loves days to see goodness? Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from deceitful speech."

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

... any talk about another person can and often does very easily lead to judging that person.

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Lee & Charlotte



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

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Debbie Sanford at 239.481.4449 ext. 6
debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org

We are the ones we've been waiting for

By Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer

Many Jews are unaware that a belief in reincarnation (in Hebrew called *Gilgul*) is a core belief of Rabbinic Judaism. Nowhere is this more evident than in the rabbinic teaching of Megillat Ruth, which we read each year at Shavuot, which occurs this year on June 2.

Megillat Ruth opens with Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons, Machlon and Kilyon, moving from Bethlehem to the Land of Moab in the midst of a famine. Elimelech dies soon after the move; our sages explain that his death was a spiritual consequence of closing his hand to the poor and leaving the Land of Israel. His sons followed him to Moab, where they marry Moabite princesses, Orpah and Ruth.

Machlon and Kilyon also suffer an early death, and they too die childless. Naomi, now bereft, decides to return to Bethlehem. She kisses her two daughters-in-law goodbye. Orpah returns to her mother's house nearby, but Ruth utters her famous words to Naomi: "...Where you go, I will go, and where you sleep, I will sleep. Your people are my people, and your God is my God ..." (Ruth 1:16)

On the way to Bethlehem, Ruth draws the attention of a local landowner named Boaz. When Naomi learns of his interactions with Ruth, she explains to her the concept of levirate marriage and points out that Boaz is in the line of relatives who would be required to marry her according to the laws of *Yibum*.

Levirate marriage (*Yibum*) is a mitzvah incumbent on the brother of a married man who dies childless. In order to maintain the soul of the deceased and keep the assets of the deceased within the family, the brother (or other close relative) is obligated to marry the widow and redeem his brother's property. The first of their offspring will be counted as a descendant of the deceased and inherits his father's estate.

How does this work? How does one man produce another man's child?

Rebbetzin Tehilla Jaeger teaches that since, in this world, the physical is inextricably intertwined with the spiritual, along with the physical transfer of genetic material, spiritual "genetics" are also transmitted.

The medieval Spanish sage, Nachmanides, explains that levirate marriage is actually a vehicle for reincarnation. Reincarnation happens when God gives a soul a second chance to fulfill its destiny. Occasionally a soul does not accomplish what it was sent to earth to achieve. If the soul did not complete the work it was incarnated



■ Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer

to do, then God may give it an additional opportunity to return and finish perfecting the soul.

But the old soul can't be comfortable in just any new body. There must be a genetic relationship to the deceased. Ideally this is accomplished through the seed of the deceased's brother. Creating this vehicle for the soul of the deceased is considered a tremendous act of kindness and the fulfillment of a noble mitzvah.

And what if either the widow or the brother doesn't want to enter into this relationship? A ceremony called

chalitzah is performed before a rabbinic tribunal. The brother removes the shoe from his foot, and his name is called "the house of the one who had his shoe removed."

This occurred in the story of Ruth. The closest relative available for the redemption of

Machlon's estate refused to marry Ruth, afraid to taint his lineage through marriage to a Moabite convert. But why subject the refusing brother to a bizarre shoe-removing ceremony? What is the relationship of shoes to marriage?

The Kabbalists liken the body unto "the sole of the soul." Just as a fastidious person needs shoes to protect his feet while standing in dirt and mud, so too does the soul require a "shoe" to protect it during its sojourn in a world of physicality. By refusing to enter into a levirate marriage, the soul of the deceased husband is denied the "shoe" he needs to reenter this world and fulfill his destiny.

Boaz recognized, through witnessing Ruth's acts of modesty, kindness to her mother-in-law and courage, that Ruth's intentions were pure. Ruth conceived on her wedding night, and when the baby was born, Megillat Ruth states that "a son was born to Naomi" (Ruth 4:17) — confirming that the soul that Ruth brought into the world was indeed the reincarnation of Naomi's son Machlon.

The baby's name was Obed. He became the father of Yishai (Jesse), whose son, David became king of Israel. It is from David that all other kings of Israel, and ultimately the Messiah, will descend.

Whether one is waiting for a human Messiah or a broader Messianic age, it is tempting to look beyond ourselves for a savior. However, our Jewish mystics teach that "the messiah will arrive one minute after they are no longer needed." Therefore, it is incumbent upon us, through our deeds and intention, to pave the way ourselves.

Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer serves Bat Yam Temple of the Islands. 



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Shavuos: Humility and self-esteem

By Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz

The *Midrash* relates that G-d chose Mount Sinai for the giving of the Torah because it was “the smallest of all mountains,” emphasizing the importance of humility. If so, however, one might ask: Why didn’t G-d give the Torah on a plain or in a valley?

Implied is that the choice of a mountain indicates the need for a certain degree of self-esteem. For both these qualities — humility and self-esteem — are necessary for our acquisition of the Torah.

An individual who is beset with egotism cannot connect with G-d. As the *Talmud* states, “[With regard to] any person who possesses haughtiness of spirit, the Holy One, blessed be He, declares, ‘I and he cannot both dwell



■ Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz

in the world.” In our daily prayers, we express the link between humility and Torah study by requesting in direct succession, “Let my soul be as dust to all; open my heart to Your Torah.”

Nevertheless, humility alone is insufficient for the acquisition of the Torah. A person who lacks strength of character and self-esteem will be unable to overcome the many obstacles that can obstruct his way to the observance of the Torah.

Humility and pride need not be mutually exclusive. Pride and self-esteem do not always stem from self-concern, nor are they always the result of an individual’s perception of his personal virtues. A positive self-image and feelings of self-esteem flow naturally

from a healthy outlook on life. No one needs a reason to feel good about himself. The very fact that he exists and that G-d created him is reason enough for one to experience self-worth.

These feelings are enhanced by our awareness of the connection to G-d we

The knowledge that we can fulfill G-d’s will through the observance of *mitzvos* is the greatest possible source of personal strength.

are able to establish through the Torah. The knowledge that we can fulfill G-d’s will through the observance of *mitzvos* is the greatest possible source of personal strength.

From this perspective, the qualities of humility and pride may be seen as complementary. Humility encourages the development of an ever deeper connection to G-d, which, in turn, increases the above-described mode of self-esteem.

The feeling of pride produced by a connection to G-d is more powerful than the feeling generated by the appreciation of one’s positive virtues. Self-centered pride is limited by the finite scope of one’s qualities and can be dampened by a formidable individual or challenge. The personal strength derived from a commitment to fulfill G-d’s will, by contrast, is reinforced by G-d’s infinity. No obstacle is able to stand in its way.

Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz serves at Chabad Lubavitch of Southwest Florida. 🕊

God’s place

By Rabbi Bruce Diamond

Underneath the legalistic and ceremonial layers of Genesis-Exodus is the story of God wanting a *maqom* (a place). In the majestic hymn of creation attached to the beginning of Genesis, the essence of what can be God is fluttering over the surface of a chaotic abyss, similar to the Greek Tatarus, presumably for an eternity before time itself began. Yet God cannot “actualize” and become God without a creation, a place.

Not very pleasant at all, and the proposed remedy is creating dry land and the other conditions for God’s special garden place, including a gardener. God is very pleased with results and



■ Rabbi Bruce Diamond

establishes the Sabbath to enjoy what was created, but good help is hard to find.

The larger arc organizing the present order of our canonical historical writings from Genesis to the end of II Kings informs us that, ultimately, God cannot have a place per se in a world created for that very purpose. Human behavior makes it impossible, be it just one man and one woman in a garden or an entire people God cultivated and planted in the land where God wants that place.

While Rabbinic Hebrew often refers to God as *hamaqom* (הַמָּקוֹם), “the place,” the composers of our prayers asserted that place was not in our world and remains so mysterious that even the ministering angels do not know its

location: שְׁוֹאֲלִים זֶה לָזֶה אֵינָה מְקוֹם כְּבוֹדוֹ מְשֻׁרְתֵּי

The ministering angels ask each other: “Where is the place of God’s glory?” (*shabbat musaf qiddushah*)

“God’s glory” is meant to be a tangible manifestation that a place or event is the object of God’s special focus in this world. The Book of Exodus ends with that “glory of God” possessing the newly erected wilderness Tabernacle.

“God’s glory” is meant to be a tangible manifestation that a place or event is the object of God’s special focus in this world.

Not exactly the paradisiacal garden that God first wanted in the beginning of the story, but it would have to do, for as Solomon declares in the dedicatory speech for his new cedar temple: “But can God really dwell on Earth? Even the heavens

to their uttermost reaches cannot contain You, how much less this House that I have built! (I Kings 8:27)

God is the tragic hero of our Bible whose “fatal flaw” is desiring what by definition cannot exist anymore than there can be a round square. That seems to be a quality that we who live in this failed Divine experiment share with its Creator.

Like the Stones sang back in ’65:

“I can’t get no satisfaction
I can’t get no satisfaction
‘Cause I try and I try and I try and I try
I can’t get no, I can’t get no.”

So, what is left for God and for us to do? What can be salvaged from this mess? It is the Sabbath, which is immeasurably more than gulping down a meal on Friday night and rushing off to a mostly vacuous Friday evening “service” at the “temple.”

The *shabbat* is an ‘ot (אוֹת), a reminder both for God and for us to “let it go” and give ourselves a rest from our mostly Sisyphean existences.

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



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COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE
Fort Myers

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Baron Cohen left this life on April 23 to join the loved ones who went before him. Our deepest, heartfelt condolences are extended to his wife Kim (the other Cohen in Cohen & Cohen Catering) and to his entire family. Baron and Kim have been mainstays of our synagogue since its founding over 21 years ago, each year donating our Hanukkah and Passover dinners so that they

remain free to hundreds of participants at each celebration. We commended Baron's wonderful soul to God during that week's Sabbath eve service. A gathering to honor his memory was held in mid-May.

At this time of the year, weekly Sabbath Eve worship begins 7 p.m. at the rabbi's home (7210 Falcon Crest Court in the Forest Country Club) and will be available via Zoom (easy access via the CFS

website: www.fortmyerssynagogue.com). A social hour follows, and all are welcome.

On the first Friday of each month, a traditional Sabbath Eve dinner is enjoyed



Baron Cohen

at the rabbi's home starting at 6 p.m. Bring whatever you'd like, but please no meat, poultry or leftovers. A dessert, wine or flowers are also welcome. Worship follows at 7 p.m.

Weekly Sabbath morning Torah Study begins at 9:30 a.m. and concludes at 11 a.m. with prayers for healing and *qaddish*. Now in its 30th year, it is the longest continuous Jewish adult education program in Southwest Florida. Although wide-ranging and intellectually rigorous, knowledge of Biblical Hebrew is not required, however, some grounding in biblical studies is helpful.

If you wish to receive weekly CFS emailed updates, send a request to synfree@comcast.net. 

Torah reading with Baron and Kim Cohen



Eve Aron and her daughter, Jennifer Donnellan, at the rabbi's home

Candle lighting times:

June 1: 7:57 p.m.

June 6: 8:00 p.m.

June 13: 8:02 p.m.

June 20: 8:04 p.m.

June 27: 8:05 p.m.



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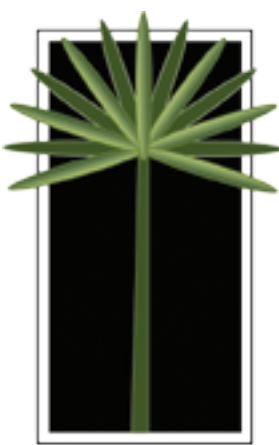
Welcome to the hot, longer days of summer in Southwest Florida! That doesn't slow us down at Temple Beth El.

Upcoming programs

Rabbi Luna will be finishing up her Wednesday class series, "Voices of the Talmud" on Wednesday, June 4, at 4 p.m. in the Dubin Center social hall. You do not need to have attended the prior classes which explored the personalities and decision-makers who shaped Jewish history.

The month also begins with a loving baby naming on Friday night, June 6. Congratulations to the D'Alonzo family. Our services begin at 7:30 p.m. which includes reading from our sacred Torah scroll. The service includes both Hebrew and English readings and lasts about an hour. We'd love for you to attend in person and then join a tasty Oneg following the service, but we also welcome all to join us via Zoom or on Facebook live — A Facebook account is not required: www.facebook.com/TempleBethElofFortMyers

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TO JOIN & FOR MORE INFORMATION

contact Debbie Sanford at 239.481.4449 ext. 6
debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org



During June, our rabbi goes on vacation. Please join us during the month for services led by our Temple leadership, our Board, our Sisterhood, our Men's Club, and others.

Just a reminder that Father's Day is Sunday, June 16 this year. May all fathers be honored and remembered on this day and every day.

On Thursday, June 19, our Temple offices will be closed for Juneteenth, celebrating the ending of slavery in the United States.

June 19 is also our Sisterhood's next Ladies who Lunch at noon. Mark your calendars and check the Temple online calendar for the location and to register. Remember, neither Sisterhood nor Temple memberships are required to join in the fun. Any questions, email: sisterhood@templebethel.com.

Our relatively new group, Jews by Choice, meets monthly online on the last Thursday of the month at 8 p.m. via Zoom. If you are considering the process of converting to Judaism, if you are in the conversion process, if you are rediscovering Judaism, and if you've got questions and/or a need to talk with like-minded individuals in a friendly, nonjudgmental atmosphere, please contact Dawn Wineinger at d.wineinger@yahoo.com.

Save the date

We will not be holding Friday night services on July 4 but will be holding a Red, White & Blue Shabbat service and cookout at 11 a.m. the following morning, July 5. Please join us!

Love to sing?

Have a nice voice? Our choir has openings. Please email your interest and contact information to info@templebethel.com.

Recurring programs

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

- Non-perishable collections in the lobby shopping cart whenever the Temple is open.

- Torah Study continues while the rabbi is on vacation. No prior study experience is required. Saturday mornings at 9 a.m. via Zoom. Please see the calendar for the Zoom link.

- Tot Shabbat, a kid-friendly service, is June 6 and will be on hiatus in July and August. Tot Shabbat begins at 6 p.m. Bring your kids, bring your grandkids — come for the fellowship, the fun and the pizza. Please RSVP to 239-433-0018.

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

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

- 12-Step Recovery Group: 11 a.m. on Saturdays via Zoom. We are seeking a path to recovery via Judaic spiritual principles and the 12 Steps, using the book "Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery," by Olitzky and Copans, second edition.

There's always something happening here at TBE, and our members make it happen: Current Events, Coffee & Chat, Theology & Life, our monthly Book Club, Francophone & Hispanophone groups, Solo Travelers, Caring Visitors, etc. Follow us on Facebook and/or Instagram: [@TempleBethElofFortMyers](https://www.facebook.com/TempleBethElofFortMyers). You can always contact the office at 239-433-0018.

Let's pray for the release of all remaining hostages and for peace around the world.

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

Women's Seder at Temple Beth El

By Reina Schlager



On April 3, more than 50 women sat together at Temple Beth El in the Dubin Center for a Women's Seder. They shared an experience, gathering strength from each other and connected with women of history both

ancient and current. They also enjoyed a delicious repast along with the traditional (and some new) seder plate and matza accompaniments. A great time was had by all! 🕯️

**Sign up for the Federation's
weekly e-blasts. Send an email
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CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
Fort Myers

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Please feel free to join Chabad Lubavitch of Southwest Florida (5620 Winkler Rd., Fort Myers, FL 33919) for the month of Sivan/

June Schedule of Prayer, Torah study and celebrations.
Sunday, June 1 – Candle lighting at 7:58 p.m.; Evening prayers at 8 p.m.

Monday, June 2 – Morning prayers at 10 a.m.; Evening prayers at 8 p.m.; Light candles after 8:56 p.m.
Tuesday, June 3 – Morning prayers at 10 a.m.; Yizkor prayers at 10:45 a.m.; Evening prayers at 8 p.m.; Yom Tov ends at 8:56 p.m.
Friday evening services – Prayer service 8 p.m.
Saturday morning services – Kabbalah at 9 a.m.; Prayer service at

10 a.m.; Kiddush and Farbrengen at 12:15 p.m.
Evening prayers and Torah study – One hour before Shabbat ends.
We are looking forward to celebrating with you.
For information and to join, please call 239-433-7708, go to www.Chabadswf.org or email Chabad@Chabadswf.org.

TEMPLE JUDEA
Fort Myers

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Celebrate Shavuot with us at Temple Judea.
Musical Shabbat services will be held Friday, May 30 beginning at 6:30 p.m.
On Shavuot evening — Sunday, June 1 at 6:30 p.m. — we will gather together for a potluck dinner and study.
On Monday, June 2, Shavuot services, including Yizkor, begin at 9:30 am, followed by lunch.
The bat mitzvah of Yarah Alley will be on Monday, June 16 at 9:30 a.m.

Alley is a resident of Cape Coral and a member of the Israeli Folk Dancers.
Temple Judea Religious School's open house will be in August. Check with the office at 239-433-0201 for additional details.
Classes lead by Rabbi Arias are paused for the summer. Classes will resume in the fall after the High Holidays.
Hazak will continue to plan events and activities. Contact Joyce Rosinger at 239-437-1566 or gjrosinger@gmail.com for additional information.

Suggestions for Chaverot book club are always welcome. Contact Rivkah Katz at 770-891-0101 or rsk5041@comcast.net for additional information.
Temple Judea continues to accept food donations for the Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry at Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties. There are collection envelopes near the front door for contactless monetary or gift contributions. Contributions may also be mailed. Please call the office to ensure your contribution has been received.
Temple Judea is conducting in-person services with an online Zoom option. Synagogue members can use the Zoom ID and password as published in our weekly megillah. Non-local residents may contact the synagogue for information.

Regularly scheduled events
Friday evening Shabbat services at 6:30 pm.
Saturday morning Shabbat services at 9:30 am. Kiddush luncheons are served every Shabbat. If interested in sponsoring a Kiddush, please contact JoAnn Lewin at jalewin2@aol.com.
Morning minyan, normally held on Mondays at 9 a.m., is paused until after the High Holidays.
President Jan Klein's Monday morning meetings are also on hiatus until after the High Holidays.
We would love to see you in person or via Zoom.



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Forty years ago, summertime in Cape Coral was so slow it earned the nickname Cape Coma. Snow birds went back to their northern homes, some businesses closed for summer and those that remained open did little business. Fast forward 40 years, and everything has changed. While some of our members go north for summer, most of them are here

year-round. Our activities don't stop or change — we just head indoors for the air conditioning.

June events

Our new officers will begin their jobs starting June 1, and they will hit the ground running. Last year we welcomed the arrival of a new Torah, donated by Lea Rosenberg on the



The 67th anniversary of Marc Einstein's bar mitzvah



Stephanie and Lori Levine light the candles at our Shabbat Diner for Israel

occasion of her 80th birthday. It was a celebration never to be forgotten. This year on Saturday, June 14th, we will celebrate her 81st birthday and the 1st anniversary of our new Torah. It will be a morning of singing, dancing and pure joy that will rival last year's celebration. Don't miss it! Everyone is welcome to come.

The next week, on Sunday, June 22, we will have a Brunch & Learn at the home of Barbara and Paula Anderson. Cantor Barry Butensky won't divulge the topic in advance, but the discussions are always lively — sometimes heated, interesting and informative. Of course, nothing happens at Temple Beth Shalom without food, and you can expect a sumptuous feast prepared by the many talented cooks in our congregation. You don't have to be a member to come, but we would appreciate it if you would RSVP. There will be a link on our web page, www.templebethshalomcc.org. Just click the link and fill in your name, phone number and email address.

Last, but definitely not least, on Saturday morning, June 28, at 10 a.m., Aaron Fiorentino will become a bar mitzvah. Since coming down from New York four years ago, he and his family

have become a special part of our community. Fiorentino and his cousins help run our Zoom services and manage the cameras and microphones. They also help with the Onegs and kiddushes. We are proud of him and how he has grown since moving here and look forward to celebrating his big day with him and his family.

Future summer plans

All of the above is just in June. Over the summer, we are planning a new member brunch, a dinner celebrating the completion of our renovations and to honor Jorge Glocer who got the grants and made it happen. There will also be a community picnic and a blessing of the animals, an open house for prospective members and much more. Check our website or subscribe to our weekly newsletter for more details.

As usual, we will also be working hard to make sure that the religious school is ready to take off in September, the High Holidays will be beautiful and all of our members are safe if there is a storm.

Please join us for any and all of our activities. We love visitors, and we believe you will find us to be the home of joyful Judaism. 🕊️

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Looking for a meaningful way to give back every month? Join our volunteer team for Lunch Bunch around various locations in Lee and Charlotte Counties! Lunch is included.

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Contact Tali Gomel to sign up
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President: Janice Block Chaddock
Vice Presidents:
Sandra Teger, Annette Pacyga
Email: batyamsanibel@gmail.com
Website: batyam.org
Services: October through April
For more information on our service times and programs, please write to batyamsanibel@gmail.com or PO Box 84, Sanibel, FL 33957

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E-mail: info@chabadcape.com
Web site: chabadcape.com
Sunday - Friday 8:00 A.M Shacharit
Friday Evening 5:30 P.M.
Saturday Kabbalah Class 9:00 A.M.
Shabbat Services 9:30 A.M.
Kiddush Luncheon 12:00 P.M.
Hebrew School of the Arts Sunday 10:00 A.M - 12:30 P.M
JLI Classes Monday 7:00 P.M.
Torah Study Tuesday 7:30 P.M.
Women's Weekly Class Wednesday 11:30 A.M.

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Phone: 941-833-3381
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Web site: chabadofcharlottecounty.com
Services: Saturday at 10:00 a.m. followed by a kiddush
Torah study: Wednesday at 8:00 p.m.

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5620 Winkler Road
Fort Myers, FL 33919
Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz
Phone: 239-433-7708 • Fax: 481-9109
E-mail: rabbi@chabadswf.org
Web site: 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.

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of Lee & Charlotte Counties

www.JewishFederationLCC.org

**COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE
CONTEMPORARY TRADITIONAL**

Phone: 239- 237-4556
Email: synfree@comcast.net
Website: www.forymyerssynagogue.com
Zoom Meeting Room ID: 52:7 117 7864 passcode 435419
Weekly Sabbath Eve Worship 7:00 PM at the Rabbi's home,7210 Falcon Crest Court in the Forest Country Club
1st Friday of the month Sabbath Eve Dinner at 6:00 PM
Weekly Sabbath Torah Study Zoom at 9:30 AM
Holiday worship on the Unity Campus, 11120 Ranchette Road
Rabbi Bruce Diamond, D.D.
Cantorial Soloist: Traci Pavel
Moderator: Natalie Fulton
Treasurer: Richard McConville

**CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SWFL
CHAVURA**

PO Box 722
Sanibel, FL 33957
Chavuratshalom@gmail.com
Web site:
chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org
Cheryl Fulmer, President
Shabbat services - 7:30 p.m. every Friday
Schmooze - 7:30 p.m. 1st Tuesday
Torah Talk - 7:30 p.m. 2nd Tuesday
Current events - 7:30 p.m. 3rd Tuesday
Speakers - 7:30 p.m. 4th Tuesday

**TEMPLE BETH EL
REFORM**

16225 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33908
Rabbi Nicole Luna
E-mail:rabbiluna@templebethel.com
Learning Tree Preschool Director: Ronni Vega
RonniLearningtree@gmail.com
President: Michael Altman
Email: President@templebethel.com
Phone: 239-433-0018
Office Manager: Karen Kagan
Email: manager@templebethel.com
Web site: templebethel.com
Shabbat services: 7:30 p.m. Friday
Torah study 9:00 a.m. Saturday
Religious School: 9:30 a.m.- Noon Sunday
Mazel Tots (0-5 yrs. old). Sunday 11:00 a.m.
Religious school coordinator: Allison Fego
Religiousschool@templebethel.com
Judaica Gift Gallery
Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

**TEMPLE BETH SHALOM
REFORM**

702 S.E. 24th Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33990
President: Helene Glocer
Phone: 239-772-4555
Spiritual leader: Cantor Barry Butensky
Email: templebethshalomcommunications@gmail.com
Web site: templebethshalomcc.org
Services: 7:30 p.m. Friday
Saturday morning Torah Service/Torah study twice monthly at 10:00 am
Enrichment night every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.
Shabbat 10:30 a.m.

TEMPLE JUDEA

CONSERVATIVE
14486 A&W Bulb Road
Fort Myers, FL 33908
Rabbi David Arias
E-mail: rabbi@tjswfl.org
President: Jan Klein
Religious School Coordinator:
Linat Bahar
E-mail: linatbahar@gmail.com
Preschool Director: Suki Kelly
templejudeapreschool@gmail.com
Phone: 239-433-0201 • Fax: 239-433-3371
E-mail: tjswfl@gmail.com
Web site: 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
President: Judith Migdol
Phone: 941-625-2116
E-mail: Shalompc06@gmail.com
Web site: [templeshalomfl](http://templeshalomfl.com)
Organizations: Sisterhood
Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

SHALOM LIFE CENTER

TRANS DENOMINATIONAL
Rabbi Lawrence Dermer
Phone: 239-218-3433
Email: info@shalomlifecenter.org
Web site: shalomlifecenter.org

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: Taryn Sasser
- 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

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Certified, American Board of Ophthalmology

Claudio Ferreira, MD

Specialist in Surgery of Retina
UCLA, University of Virginia, University of Tennessee
Fellow, American Academy of Ophthalmology
Certified, American Board of Ophthalmology



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