

EXTRA! EXTRA!



SUMMER  
DOUBLE ISSUE  
JUNE & JULY 2022

# L'CHAYIM

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 9 Our Community
- 10 Jewish Interest
- 16 Honor Roll
- 18 Israel & the Jewish World
- 23 From the Bimah
- 26 Focus on Youth
- 28 Organizations
- 30 Temple News
- 32 Community Directory



Israelfest two-page photo spread



Students enjoy Passover Seder with Chabad at FGCU

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## Thank you for your partnership

By Alan Isaacs

When you read this, I will not be sunning myself on a yacht somewhere in the Caribbean. I am more likely to be at a dermatology appointment here in Fort Myers. Or perhaps, better yet, visiting Jordan and Andrew and playing with Elias in Colorado with Naomi.



■ Alan Isaacs

Where I am less likely to be is in our community's Federation building that we bought in 2009 and paid off in 2017; in an office and, indeed, an entire interior that was painted and redecorated entirely by a cadre of creative volunteers; sitting (or standing) behind a desk that was donated, amongst a building-full of other furniture, by Northern Trust; considering all manner of things that might (or might not) affect our Jewish community; trying to make the right decisions.

While I could reflect in detail on the nearly 15 years of my tenure here at the Federation, and thereby ensure that you stop reading this article right now, what I will actually do is thank you all for ensuring that my time as a partner with you in the vital work of community building was productive and successful.

I'll include here the brief remarks I made at our recent Annual Meeting because they express best what I feel about you, our community and the path leading to this point and going forward:

Thank you all for joining us tonight.

Barbara, Sherri, thank you for your kindness. Marsha, mazal tov to you and the newly installed board. While I am still the executive director of the Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties, at least for tonight, I feel somewhat liberated from the usual responsibilities that come with being in charge. And you know what? It feels great!

Fifteen years ago, I wasn't thinking about retirement, and Florida was where we went to remind our kids what their grandparents looked like. But between then and now, a lot of water has flowed under our local bridges, and I've learned, amongst other things, that "Caloosahatchee River" is redundant.

It is said that one of the keys to happiness is a healthy work/life balance. If you think about it though, it's puzzling. Because it suggests that on the one hand you've got work, and on the other hand you've got life. Somehow this is the wrong formulation. Rather, it is a work/everything-else balance. And I am happy to say that I have always been able to maintain a very healthy work/everything-else balance. I'm also happy to say that I'm looking forward to a healthy everything-else/everything-else balance in the near future. The trick will be to populate the everything-else with activities that keep

me interested and healthy. And this shouldn't be a problem. I'm not going to list all these activities for you, but suffice it to say that they are unlikely to cause anybody any trouble.

More importantly though, I'd like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to all of you for helping to make my time here so stimulating and fulfilling.

Those of you whom I've gotten to know very well, and have shared my efforts to build our community, have been a resource without whom I would have failed. Those of you whom I have come into contact with less intimately, have also contributed in ways that have enriched our community. In all cases, collaboration has been at the heart of this enterprise.

The Jewish Federation lay leadership has been essential to our progress, as have all of our volunteers and supporters. Our staff has facilitated our growth: Lori Ramos, Leni Sack, Jodi Cohen, Paula Zlatkin, Ted Epstein, Jim Lewin, Amy Ginsberg and, of course, Debbie Sanford, who will guide the work going forward. And Sheila Laboda, and a group of her peers, who had the foresight and dedication to formally establish this Jewish Federation in 1986. I am confident that their conviction, and the work already done, will continue to inspire those going forward to accomplish even greater things.▲

See pages 16-17 for the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties' 2021 Honor Roll

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# Remarks delivered at the Federation's Annual Meeting

By Marsha Kistler, Federation President

When we first moved here 15 years ago, we knew nothing about Southwest Florida. We knew no one here. Coincidentally, Federation had just hired a new executive director and it was looking for volunteers to man the front desk, answer the phone, and update our records of Jewish residents at the various senior living facilities. That seemed like the perfect fit for someone trying to get the Jewish lay of the land. And so began my association with this organization and with Alan Isaacs.



■ **Marsha Kistler**

One of my first questions to Alan was, "How can there be a Jewish Federation without Israeli Folk Dancing?" His answer, "Good question, why don't you start a group?" I'm happy to report that all these many years later, Israeli Folk Dancing is alive and well in SW Florida and we owe a debt of gratitude to Alan for encouraging and supporting us (many of the dancers are here tonight to express their gratitude to you). And you're all invited to come and watch us perform at Israelfest in a week and a half.

I'm grateful to Alan as well for serving as my personal technology guru ("Help, Alan, all of my dance music has disappeared!"). Alan, I will cherish our many long talks which led me to NPR, whose many stories led me back to you for more long talks. Alan, I wish you a long, happy, healthy retirement with all your fingers and thumbs intact! Naomi, we're returning your husband to you!

Thanks also go to Sherri and Barbara for imparting their wisdom during these last few months of

transition, and to Barbara in particular for sharing her years of experience with the budget process. I know you'll both be there to advise and encourage me as I take on this new responsibility. I would also like to express my thanks to the Nominating Committee for its confidence in my ability to do the job. And to my husband, without whose support I couldn't do this.

Looking forward, I would like to share a couple of themes or goals as I begin my tenure as president. First and foremost is in the area of fundraising. The more resources we have, the more we can accomplish as an organization. The need is great. I am fortunate to be able to work with two very able chairpersons in this endeavor: Sherri Zucker as our new dedicated Campaign Chair and Karin Fine as our new Foundation/Legacy Chair.

A second theme is that of collaboration – collaboration, for example, with all of the temples and religious organizations in our two counties. Debbie and I intend to visit each of these organizations to see how we can work together and to see what Federation can do for you. We hope to collaborate more with FGCU, especially now that we have a dedicated FGCU student representative joining our board. We look forward to promoting its programming to our community and perhaps sponsoring some joint programming.

As we have already begun doing, we hope to continue our collaboration with Florida Repertory Theatre, offering our constituents the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful local theatre right in our back yard.

And finally, let me just say how much I'm looking forward to working with our new Executive Director, Debbie Sanford, our dedicated professional staff – Paula, Jodi and Lori – and our wonderful newly installed Board of Directors. Thank you all! ▲



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# The passion and dedication I have for our community

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

■ Debbie Sanford



As I write this article, we are in the final few days of Alan Isaacs' tenure and my first day on the job as the new Executive Director. My official start date is Monday, May 30. I want to thank Executive Search Committee members Barbara Siegel, Sheri Zucker, Karin Fine, Bill Reynolds and Marsha Kistler and the entire Board of Directors for selecting me to be the new Executive Director. I am so excited for this wonderful opportunity you have given to me, and I thank you very much.

I am also really looking forward to working with Marsha Kistler. Marsha, Mazel Tov on your new role as our Board President. I know we are going to make a great team.

Alan, you have displayed an excellent amount of patience with me and all of my energy, and you have really

taught me a lot about our Federation and our community. Thank you for your faith in me and your undying support. We are going to miss you.

When I started working for the Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties, almost four years ago, not only did I realize the incredible impact one could have on people's lives, I realized how meaningful it was for me to be able to serve people in different ways.

Looking at the recent events in Ukraine deepens my gratitude for family, security and community. It is comforting to be able to count on family and community for support and for timely actions that empower us, comfort us and move us forward in the direction of building a better world.

All around us, through actions that most of us never see or hear about, people take meaningful steps to put Jewish values into practice, strengthen our Jewish community and repair our world. Advocating for Jewish values comes from big-hearted people who work for the greater good, day in and

day out – people like you, who generously support Federation's work to strengthen Jewish life and ensure Jewish continuity by connecting people to community.

My mom once told me, "There are no problems, only opportunities for growth." I think that quote gets me through a lot in my personal life as well as my work life. It means that God is sending me this situation so that I can grow. It frames a situation not as something overwhelming that is impossible to solve, but as a puzzle that can be worked out. And the process of working it out is where real growth takes place. No one wants problems, but who doesn't want opportunities?

I am going to take this new opportunity I have been afforded and really work hard to grow this Federation. With the support of an amazing team – Lori Ramos, Jodi Cohen and Paula Zlatkin – we can do anything. I'm amazed daily by their support and the comradery we have built for each other. I am looking forward to working with this great team on new goals and also working closer with Ted Epstein, our L'CHAYIM editor and designer.

So let's take a look forward...

I want to rejuvenate our Jewish community in Lee & Charlotte counties. WE can do that by celebrating our successes. We must be proud of who we are, what we stand for and all that has been accomplished here and take that energy and direct it to building

the future we want.

We do it by working together to have a shared understanding of our mission and purpose, to care for those in need, expand financial resources and donor relations, offer engaging programming, promote Jewish literacy, advocate for Israel and support for vulnerable Jews everywhere, and strengthen community relations both with the general community and within the Jewish community. And we must make involvement in the Jewish community fun and meaningful!

I know we all have different needs, and my goal is to first listen and learn and then work to find solutions to the most pressing issues. I want our Federation to be the key partner for all congregations and Jewish community organizations. Over our history as a Jewish Federation, we have championed amazing moments such as helping to build the State of Israel and supporting worldwide Jewry. We have built a network of philanthropy and volunteerism that impacts more Jews than any other organization in the world. If we can do that, we can do more.

It is not often you hear someone say they love their job. Well, I can honestly say I do, and I hope that shines through in the passion and dedication I have for this community and the work we will do together to create a bright future for our Jewish community for future generations. ▲

## Federation hires new program director

By Debbie Sanford, Executive Director

The Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties is proud to announce that we have a new program director. Ella Naylor will assume her new role the middle of July. I can't wait for you to meet her and get to know her. She is enthusiastic and creative, and I know she will be a dynamic addition to our staff. Here is a little more information on Ella.

Ella is an award-winning freelance journalist, and a board member of The Laboratory Theater of Florida, where she is an educator, programmer, grants writer and fundraiser. She is currently enrolled as a graduate student at Gratz College in Pennsylvania,

where she is working toward a master's degree in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Over the last 15 years, Ella has spoken around the country at schools, colleges and community organizations to promote understanding and acceptance. She lives in Fort Myers with her husband Jeff and two Scottish terriers, Dexter and Fiona.

The Federation will be hosting an Open House on Thursday, August 18 to give you an opportunity to meet

Ella and talk more with me about the future of our Jewish community and what we have in store for the upcoming year. ▲



Ella Naylor

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

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## HOW THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES SERVES



### Local Jewish Education and Culture

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



### Overseas

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



### Local Seniors Services

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



### Local Case Management Services

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

### Local Emergency Services

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



### Local Community Engagement

- ✧ Addressing pressing community needs related to volunteerism, institutional collaborations and community assessment and planning.

### Jewish Community Foundation

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



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# Jewish Family Services update

By Jodi Cohen, Senior Outreach & Food Pantry Coordinator

## Jewish Community Emergency Resettlement Fund

It is one thing to watch the war in Ukraine in real time, on TV, from the comfort of my own home. It is an entirely different experience when two Ukrainian refugees in their mid-70s walk into the Federation, shyly, slightly bewildered, unable to understand anything being said in English. The daughter of this couple lives here and reached out to Jewish Family Services for help settling her parents into their new lives in Fort Myers.

I met another woman whose parents escaped Ukraine over a three-day period, traveling while mostly standing on buses and trains, without much sleep or food and made their way to Poland. They arrived in Fort Myers in April.

The Federation is currently helping these two Ukrainian families with immediate needs as well as assessing what kind of support will be necessary moving forward regarding housing and making new lives here in Florida. There will most likely be more people arriving. Please consider a contribution to assist local families through the newly established Jewish Community Emergency Resettlement Fund.

## Jewish Family Services

In May, JFS helped families pay their electric and utility bills and medical expenses. People who are struggling to make ends meet call for assistance. People who are helping to care for elders call for support. My own heart bounces up and down on the trampoline of compassion as I listen to people and do my best to provide guidance and resources or even simply listen.

A man who called to inquire about Yom HaShoah services told me that although he isn't Jewish, he was one of the first U.S. soldiers to enter the camps at the end of World War II. It made an impression on him, he said, without going into detail. We both knew what he meant. His voice was creaky and a little hoarse. As I listened to him, I thought, "You never know who your allies are or when they'll appear."

## The Cadkin Foundation

### Food Pantry

I'd like to share a quote from a recent Harry Chapin Food Bank email because I cannot say it any better than this. "The families that we serve are facing a losing battle with inflation; they are juggling double-digit rent increases, outrageous gas costs and eye-popping prices at the grocery store. The weight of these surging expenses forces them to drop something in order to ease the burden."

Your food donations, gift cards, cash and checks make it possible for

the pantry to provide food and toiletries to our clients. Thank you for your ongoing, generous support, which is needed now more than ever.

A heartfelt thank you to all of the many dedicated and caring Jewish Family Services volunteers. There are so many moving pieces to keeping the Lunch Bunch, Friendly Visitors and food pantry programs going. None of it would be possible without the support of everyone who contributes.

## Lunch Bunch

Our May lunch was so cool because we were indoors! Jason's Deli, our community partner, provided a delicious lunch and the volunteers were helpful and spirited, as usual. It takes a village to organize and feed a village.

The Federation is grateful to Temple Beth El for hosting the Lunch Bunch. Rabbi Nicole Luna talked about hope, optimism and courage, asking people to share their thoughts

and responses to the different passages that she read. As humans we are wired to tell stories. While we visit with each



other during the lunch, it is through listening to the stories people share about their childhoods, relatives and experiences, in answer to the questions asked, that we truly learn about each other.

There is always a place at the table for you, so come on down.▲

## NEXT SENIOR LUNCH BUNCH:

Thursday, June 16 at noon

The Community Free Synagogue

(in SW Florida Masonic Ctr.) 10868 Metro Pkwy., Fort Myers

RSVP by Friday, June 10 to

Jodi Cohen at 239.481.4449 x2 or [jodicohen@jfedlcc.org](mailto:jodicohen@jfedlcc.org)

Photos below from May 12 Lunch Bunch courtesy of Shirley Frank



## JFS NEEDS

From time to time Jewish Family Services clients need housing, storage, household items, etc. While the Federation does not have the capacity to keep these items on hand, JFS NEEDS, published in L'CHAYIM and in our weekly newsletter, will list items as the needs arise in the hope that some in our community have the resources on hand to donate.

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# Israelfest on Sunday, May 15

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# I fell back on the turnip truck

By Keith Grossman

For almost two years, I was hibernating in my cave to avoid the harsh Covid season. Although I was awake, like a bear, I was in a reduced metabolic state. Unlike a bear, however, I wasn't prepared for hibernation. Rather than rapidly gaining weight prior to hibernation, I rapidly gained weight during my hibernation. I did the "lying around" part correctly,



■ Keith Grossman

though. At first, I relished being confined. Oddly, it gave me a certain freedom. I grew the "quarantine beard," letting my facial hair grow to lengths I would never want to be

seen with in public. It was fun knowing Zoom meetings were "pants optional."

Over time, the freedom started turning to frustration. I missed having photo opportunities at business lunches, so I hired my own photographer to come to my home and photograph me attending Zoom social events.

And then the time came to leave my cave. I was ready to devour once again all the world has to offer; ready to nourish myself. Just like at Passover. Well, not exactly like Passover; this time it was with yeast.

I also had a lot of waste to dispose of. No one talks about that.

It was my entry back into the world when I realized I had fallen back on the turnip truck. There was so much I had forgotten how to do during my hibernation. After being home for so long, I have forgotten how to do things outside the home. I have "pandemic brain."

My first clue was when I had a Zoom meeting that actually required me to wear a tie. "How do you tie these things? C'mon! Get your head in the game! You did this for 30 years!"

I was exasperated. "Do you start with the wide end? Is it on the right or left?" Thank God for YouTube.

Then I had to get in my car after a long absence. Do I use two feet to drive? After all, there are two pedals. Why are all those lights so bright at night?

And where was I going in my car? To the tailor. All that hibernating was reflected in my tight-fitting pants. By the way, I still can't find my belt. Thankfully, I don't need it.

On the way to the tailor, I stopped at the bank's ATM. I am struggling to remember my PIN. I sweat and tremble through numerous attempts, like a prisoner being interrogated, until it finally comes to me. I am overcome with relief.

Apparently, I'm not the only one. It's been reported that soon after we began locking ourselves in our homes, people noticed a sudden inability to focus, to remember things and to follow through on tasks. An article in *The Atlantic* investigated the "fog of forgetting" due to the pandemic.

Barbara Sahakian, a professor of clinical neuropsychology at the University of Cambridge, has been working in partnership with Fudan University researchers to assess the effects of social isolation and loneliness on people's brains during the pandemic. She says that the impacts, across multiple regions of the brain, are "profound."

I don't need to rely upon any experts, though. As soon as I started going back to the airport, I saw other people who seemingly forgot to do... well...everything. They certainly forgot how to dress. Sweats and leggings are now normal couture for a flight. I think some people are even wearing pajamas.

I can live with the travel fashion changes, though. It's the obnoxious and threatening behavior on display that's profound. People have clearly forgotten how to behave. Sahakian is correct. These people have been impacted across multiple regions of their brains.▲

# The things we own

By Brian Simon, Federation Past-President

On a recent trip to my parents' house, I found myself in a seldom-used cedar closet in their basement, and I had to take a moment.

So many items locked away for years, each a treasure chest of memories. Here's the bowling trophy from 1980, the electronic baseball game I got for my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, the musical keyboard (we called it an "organ" then) that Bubbe Toby gave me. My parents' home is a museum of my life.



■ Brian Simon

It's not a museum I want to keep in my own home, mind you. We've got our own kids' stuff

filling up boxes and shelf space.

When my wife Mindi and I got our first house, my mom tried to clear out some of the clutter by bringing the football helmets to Florida. Each Hanukkah, for many years, I would ask for replica football helmets from the JC Penney holiday catalog. My collection included the Seahawks, Giants, Dolphins, Buccaneers, Chiefs, Rams and Bills. Mom and Dad brought them down two at a time until all the helmets were transplanted. I gave away a couple of them, and I'm sad to say the ones that remain have been damaged by heat, humidity and neglect.

Still, I'm not ready to tell my parents to get rid of my childhood detritus.

Marie Kondo wrote, "Tidying is the act of confronting yourself."

Why is it that I'm perfectly happy to live my life without ever thinking about those items, but also not content to let them go? If I never discovered them, it would never bother me that they were gone, but knowing where

they are changes my outlook.

It's kind of like how you wouldn't be bothered if your cousin visited Florida without reaching out to you, but seeing a post on Facebook makes it seem rude that they didn't try to get together.

Artifacts, while materially unimportant, evoke memories. I remember having a dream one night as a child in which I kept hearing the sounds from that baseball game. When I awoke, I found that my friend who had slept over that night was playing the game.

That organ had numbers for the keys and songbooks that listed the numbers, so even though I never learned to play the piano I could play the songs. I had a John Denver songbook, so I still remember the line from "Annie's Song," "like a sleepy blue 8-6."

Artist Sandy Sunfield has a project called Things & People (thingsandpeople.com) that highlights individuals and special objects that hold meaning for them. Many of the items seem mundane, yet more grand than the artifacts in my parents' basement.

I suppose I should go through the cedar closet and start cleaning it out to save my parents the trouble.

From Marie Kondo again: "The process of assessing how you feel about the things you own, identifying those that have fulfilled their purpose, expressing your gratitude, and bidding them farewell, is really about examining your inner self, a rite of passage to a new life."

Then again, as long as my parents still have a basement, it's easier to leave the past in a place where I know how to find it.▲

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



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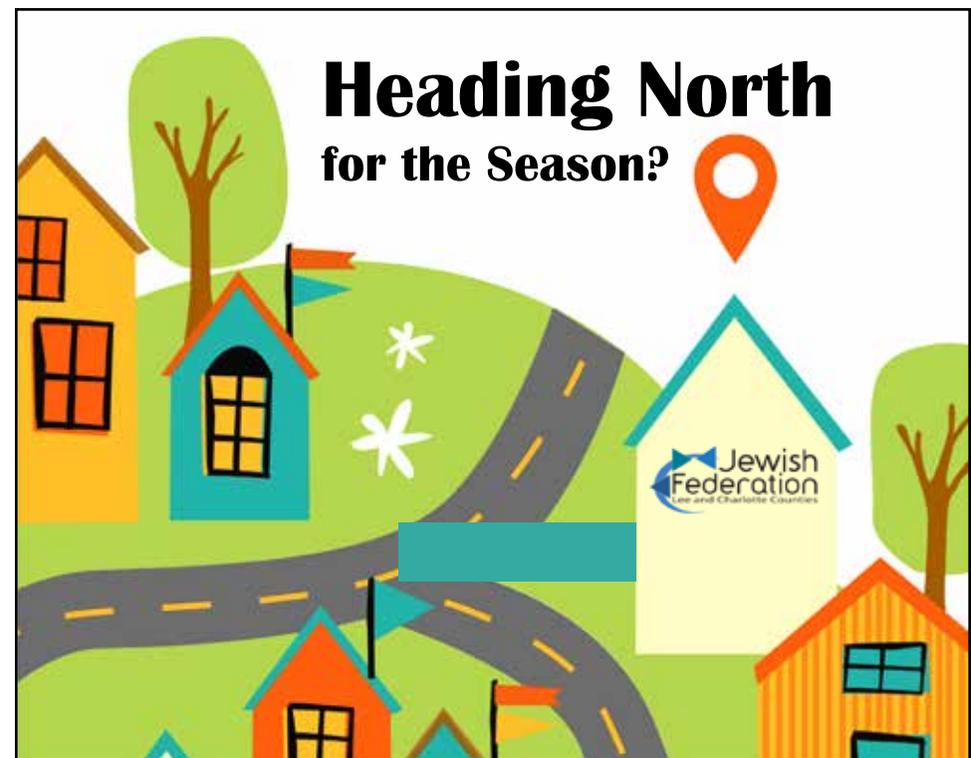
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# Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center update

By Susan Suarez, President & CEO

The Museum continues to address the war in Ukraine with our visitors on tours and students during our Education programs.



**Susan Suarez**

Sadly, there are far too many parallels to draw between the Russian forces' aggression and the actions of Nazi occupiers in World War II. The 24-hour news cycle continuously provides updates on the plight of frightened refugee families, the mounting deaths of innocent civilians and the devastating destruction of Russian bombs. In real time and with stark before-and-after satellite images, we have a clear picture of Russian aggression against Ukraine and its citizens. Unfortunately, the citizens of Russia don't see this. The propaganda campaign of the Putin government, and its crackdown on dissenting voices, the press and social media leaves Russian citizens with a totally different perspective on the situation in Ukraine.

The world is inspired by the courage and commitment of the Ukrainian government and citizens to fight back. Russia badly underestimated the resistance it would face. This, plus the economic sanctions against Russia and its leaders, and the military and financial aid to the Ukrainian government and

people, are increasing the pressure on the Putin regime to withdraw its troops.

Visitors to the Museum will see a display including a joint statement by several museums about the war crimes being committed in Ukraine. It calls upon governments around the world to do more to stop these atrocities and assist those who have been brutalized.

Early next year, we will host an exhibit called "Two Regimes – Witnesses to the Holodomor and the Holocaust." The exhibit explores a powerful family story of survival from the 1930s through World War II. It profiles the life's work of a mother and daughter who lived under the reigns of terror unleashed under the regimes of Stalin and Hitler. The stories they told of their life in Mariupol hauntingly parallel life in Mariupol today. When the Nazis seized the city, both women were deported to



Forced Labor Camps in Germany, another similarity to today's news stories of Russian forces deporting Ukrainians.

We ask you to join us in standing up to the Putin regime's aggression in Ukraine and its suppression of its own people's human rights. Speak up about it, donate to refugee organizations and keep those affected by this unjust conflict in your thoughts and prayers.

## Community Support Project for Ukrainian Refugees

Board Member Emeritus Jack Nortman and his sister, Margie Commerford, will travel in early June to the border of Poland and Ukraine and the cities of



Message of Support cards for refugee children created by Bonita Springs Center for the Arts students during their Museum visit

Warsaw and Krakow on a mercy mission. They feel a unique kinship with the Ukrainian refugees. During World War II, their parents, Rose and Morris Nortman, were forced to flee when the Nazis invaded Poland. Jack and Margie have been coordinating with local organizations on the ground assisting refugees in Poland. They have asked our help to publicize their effort to raise tax-deductible donations to go directly to these organizations. For more information, please visit [boxcarfoundation.org](http://boxcarfoundation.org) or email [theboxcarfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:theboxcarfoundation@gmail.com).

Jack and Margie will also carry messages of support to let the refugees know they and their families are not forgotten. These include cards created by school groups visiting the Museum. Museum visitors can write their own messages of support on cards available in our lobby at no charge.

## New Exhibit: "Art After the Holocaust"

Our latest exhibit, "Art After the Holocaust," features a selection of the Holocaust-themed artwork donated to the Museum over the years. These include a variety of media – fabric, glasswork, prints, sculpture, oil paintings and woodcuts. The exhibit will be on display in the Estelle and Stuart Price Gallery from May 3 through August 31.

## Private Group Tours Available in Summer

Looking for an activity for your group or association this summer? Why not schedule a Private Group Tour of the Museum. These docent-led tours can be tailored to your schedule and include the option of a light breakfast before you start. Private Group Tours are scheduled for morning hours when we are closed to the public. There will be plenty of time to look around and ask questions, as you will have the Museum to yourselves. For more information, contact Education Specialist David Nelson at [david@HMCEC.org](mailto:david@HMCEC.org) or 239.263.9200 x205.

I look forward to seeing you at the Museum this summer! ▲

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# The amazing story of how I came to write a column on Judaic music for Federation newspapers

By Arlene Stolnitz

The book sat on the top shelf of the library in our den. The title on the spine intrigued me – *On Wings of Song* by Reverend Nathan Stolnitz. Who was he? I had never heard anyone in the Stolnitz family mention him, even though his last name was the same as ours. Standing on a stepladder, I carefully retrieved the book from the shelf. I checked

with my husband and discovered that Reverend Stolnitz was, in fact, a distant relative who lived in Toronto, Canada. We had a copy of his book, yet no one in the family seemed to know anything about him.

Stolnitz's book contained essays and articles he had written for various Canadian cantorial conferences and organizations. Some were talks he had given to these groups at their meetings. Included were topics such as "The Great Debate on the Originality of Jewish Music," "The Influence of the Shofar" and "The Inspirational Power

of the Kol Nidre Melody in Jewish Generations."

Another section included biographies and pictures of more than 60 well-known cantors of that time. These included not only living cantors but some who had perished in the Holocaust. Sprinkled throughout the book were endless pictures of Reverend Stolnitz attending functions with well-known *hazzanim*. There were names I had heard of such as Cantor Moshe Koussevitzky and Cantor Gershon Sirota, and even someone I had met at the North American Choral Festival, Velvel Pasternak. Included were Stolnitz's two brothers, also religious leaders in their respective countries; Abraham Isaac Stolnitz (Nathan's father), who died in Poland in 1927; and Rabbi Dr. Efraim (Henry) Stolnitz, his uncle, of Tampa, Florida, who died in 1937. I was fascinated by the book and wanted to know more about the man who had written it.

As I was flipping through the book, an idea began to germinate in my mind. I could write articles as well, but mine would be focused on the music of Judaica. I had already been writing background material for music the Sarasota

Jewish Chorale would be singing in performance. The music of Jews in the diaspora would be my subject.

But first I had to find out more about my husband's family namesake. I was curious to know why Stolnitz referred to himself as "Reverend" Stolnitz. Thinking back, I remembered a time in the post-WWII era when cantors used the title "reverend" rather than "cantor." My unresearched theory is that this was an attempt by Judaic clergy to become part of the mainstream religious establishment after the recent horrors of antisemitism during the war years.

In further research, I discovered Stolnitz was well known as the dean of Canadian cantors and was a contributor to Yiddish, American-Jewish and Argentine-Jewish newspapers. Stolnitz was born in Vilna, Russia, and by 1926 had settled in Toronto. He founded the Ontario, Canada, Cantor's Association and was associated with the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. He wrote several books, including *Music in Jewish Life* and *On Wings of Song*, the book we owned, which was published in 1968. He was the Toronto correspondent for *Der Tog* (*Day-Morning Journal*), the New York Yiddish daily, often writing under the pen names of A Ostrover, A St-ts and A. Vilensky. (As an aside, published from 1914 until 1971, *Der Tog* was the first Yiddish

newspaper to include women on the editorial board.) Stolnitz was active as a pulpit cantor and in cantorial organizations both in Canada and the U.S. He died in Miami in 1969 while vacationing with his wife Jennie.

In spite of all my research, I had no clue regarding his connection to my husband's family, and I still don't to this day.

An interesting note about *On Wings of Song* is that it was published partly in Yiddish (reading from right to left) and with most of the book in English (left to right).

So now you have it. Seven years later, I have written 10 articles per year, amounting to 70 articles! And my writing appears in several Federation newspapers on Florida's west coast, from Sarasota to Naples!

I have Cantor Nathan Stolnitz to thank for the inspiration I received merely by finding his book on that top shelf! ▲

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



Arlene Stolnitz



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# Aging Jewishly – What our traditions teach us about growing old

## “Should I tell them I’m sick?”

By Rabbi Barbara Aiello

It has been three weeks since Dan got the news, and his head is still spinning. “I know I’m getting on in years,” says the 78-year-old retired biology teacher and part-time musician, “but I never expected that a regular check-up would end up with me hearing words like ‘inoperable’ and ‘terminal.’ But that’s what happened, and I still haven’t told my kids.”



Rabbi Barbara Aiello

Dan’s predicament, traumatic as it may be, is shared by many who receive life-changing diagnoses. After coming to terms with the nature of a serious illness and its often-frightening prognosis, seniors face the added trauma of sharing the news with adult children and grandchildren, as well.

“I just don’t want to tell my daughter... for a lot of reasons,” says Dan. “I don’t want to worry her or be a burden. And what about my grandkids? They’re both teenagers. We’ve made a lot of plans for camping and concerts and such. How do I tell them? What do I say?”

Dan is not alone. In fact, so many seniors, along with those much younger, have faced the same dilemma. So much so that Hospiscare, a U.K. hospice charity, offers suggestions for breaking the news of a life-changing illness and for helping families and friends cope with what can be disturbing information.

Hospiscare staff emphasize that there is no right or wrong way to disclose that you have a life-threatening illness. In fact, the professionals urge you to “Do it your way.” Inviting a daughter for a cup of tea and a serious talk, sending a message to distant relatives via social media, or broaching the subject with a good friend while gardening or listening to music together – it’s best to select an approach tailored to the personality of the one who will receive your news. The professionals say that it’s not necessary to tell everyone in the same way.

In Dan’s case he’s waited three weeks before considering disclosing his illness to his family – a good plan, says the Hospiscare staff. They encourage their clients to “take the pressure off,” by personally adjusting to their terminal diagnosis and then calmly considering the how, where and when to approach the family.

As kids we were told that “honesty is the best policy,” and it holds true today. Be honest about your disease or condition, and forthright about what you’ve been told by your medical professionals. Don’t make assumptions about how a family member may

react and don’t project the outcome of a frank discussion. In addition, stifle the temptation to minimize your condition. An honest and direct approach can be liberating for you and for your family and friends.

The staff at Hospiscare reminds us that “It’s OK to not be OK.” In other words, an entire range of emotions can accompany a terminal diagnosis and

adults to be honest.” That’s why taking the time to give children an accurate description of what a parent or grandparent is facing is critically important. Hiding a terminal illness with “Fine, honey, I’m just fine,” may break the bonds of trust that you and your grandchildren have built over the years.

Jewish tradition emphasizes that all life is precious – even a life that

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

it’s perfectly fine, advisable actually, to let those around you know how you are coping. If you’re feeling like talking about what’s to come, it’s important to say so. Alternatively, if you’d prefer not to open the discussion, communicate that as well.

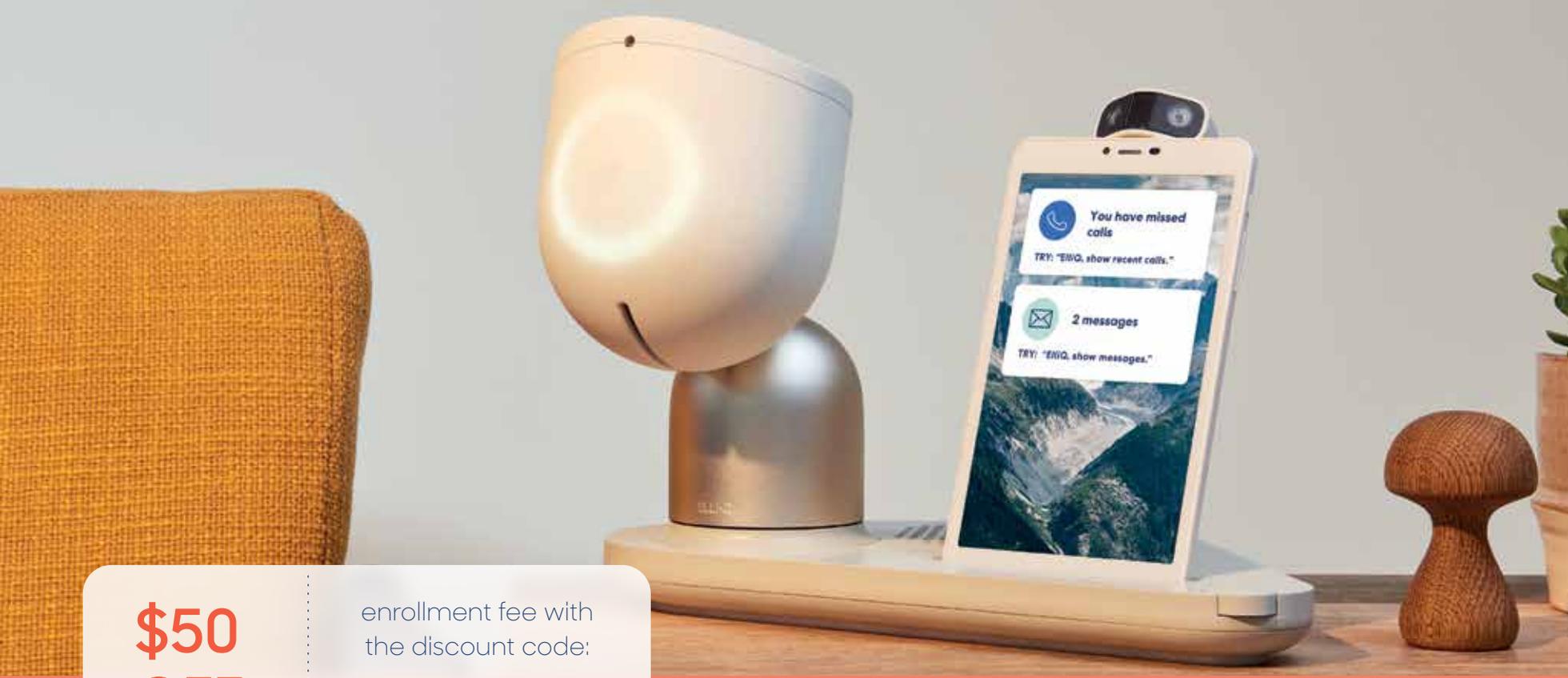
Dan’s concern was multi-generational. He worried that his teenage grandchildren would be distraught, disappointed and, as Dan put it, “Bummed out that so many of our plans might change.” As a result, Dan almost decided to say nothing. Professionals in the field of terminal illness understand Dan’s reluctance, however, they emphasize that “generally children want

is shortened by serious illness. When Dan made the decision to speak frankly to his children and to open up to his grandchildren, he recognized the wisdom inherent in his action. “I can relax now,” Dan says. “Me and my family – we’re all on the same page. No more pretending. I can focus on what’s important. That makes my life even more precious now.” ▲

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

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# Warm weather sparklers

By The Wine Whisperer

It's always been a mystery to me why people think that sparkling wine should be enjoyed only on "special occasions," especially since the warmer weather we enjoy (or tolerate) in Florida makes sparklers a great, refreshing choice all year round.

Now, I understand the desire to save the big boys, the expensive bottles, for a birthday or anniversary, but the world of sparkling wine isn't limited to just the legally designated Champagne region of France. There are many types of sparklers made all over the world, and many reasonably priced wines to open and pour on a much more regular basis.

Of course, Champagne pretty much sets the bar with its capacity for layers of subtle flavors and complexity. But you'd be surprised at the places on the planet that are producing very

drinkable wines in a wide variety of styles. It's absolutely the time to explore them.

There are so many reasons why we enjoy, and are attracted to, things that have bubbles. Remember the little jar of soapy water you had when you were a kid, and the plastic ring that came with it? Dip the ring, wave it through the air, and...bubbles! And carbonated beverages are a refreshing mainstay, in large part because they feel so good in our mouth. In 2019, cola drinks alone generated over \$11 billion in sales. And that doesn't include ginger ale, lemon lime drinks and all the rest.

We should probably start with Champagne. It's possible to find decent examples in the \$25-\$30 range, but for a really satisfying bottle, be prepared to spend north of \$40.

But other sparklers, like Prosecco, Cava and wines that get their bubbles by other methods, are well worth a try. For example, there's *pétillant naturel*, which are wines bottled before fermentation has completed. The wine continues to ferment in the bottle, releasing

carbon dioxide, which, since it can't escape, goes back into the liquid and makes bubbles.

Another production technique is called charmat. The grapes are fermented in an airtight tank. Again, since the carbon dioxide produced by the fermentation has nowhere to go, it stays in the liquid and the result is...bubbles.

The think I like most about sparkling wines is that they generally match well with almost any type of cuisine. For example, at Thanksgiving we have a spread that includes a vast array of flavors and textures, all on one plate. There are the herbal flavors in the stuffing, the full-bodied gravy, creamy green bean casserole, marshmallows on top of the sweet potatoes and the puckery tartness of cranberry sauce. Hard to find a single wine, white or red, that will enhance all those types of food. A dry sparkling wine fits the bill.

Of course, the first kind of sparkler that pops into our heads is Champagne, and yes, it can be expensive. But there are reasonably-priced wines from the

Champagne region, and plenty that are made elsewhere using the *méthode champenoise*, which is sometimes called *méthode traditionnelle*. This involves having the wine ferment first in a tank, and then for a second time in the bottle. To induce the second fermentation, a mix of older wine and sugar is added, then the bottle is tightly sealed.

The popularity of Prosecco has gone through the roof in the U.S. in recent years. Sales have increased over 10% per year, and in 2019 more than 2.25 million cases were sold.

So, sample widely. You might want to start with the following suggestions, both sparkling and non.

**Martini & Rossi Sparkling Rose NV (\$10)** – This label certainly needs no introduction. A value-priced sparkler blended from Riesling, Chardonnay, Glera and Nebbiolo. Very dry on the palate, featuring flavors of orange peel and lively acidity. WW 86

**Scharffenberger Brut Excellence Sparkling White Mendocino NV**

*continued on next page*



■ Jerry Greenfield

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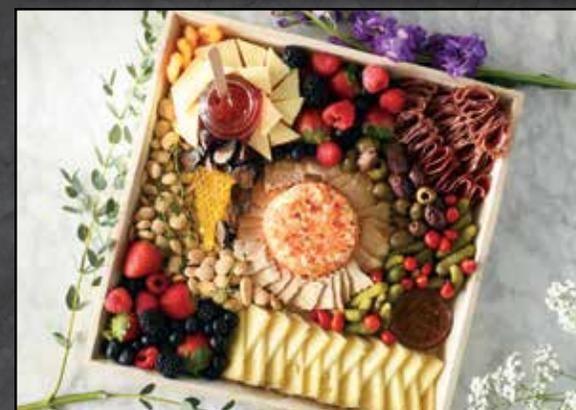
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# Modern Israeli Cheesecake – recipe by Chef Dalia

Shavuot, that happy, bright and colorful holiday, with rich cheese pastries and colorful salads, is also identified by a famous dessert that everyone waits for at the end of the meal: the modest – or not so modest – cheesecake.

Shavuot is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the wheat harvest and the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai seven weeks after the exit from Egypt. What does that have to do with cheesecake? Different theories abound, but

all we can say for sure is that refreshing cheesecake is the dessert of choice for this “festival of the weeks.”

Cheesecake is super popular in Israel, not just for Shavuot but year-round. You’ll find it on dairy dessert menus at restaurants and served Shabbat morning in Israeli homes. It’s one of the two to three cakes that most every housewife knows by heart. This cheesecake is referred to as an Israeli cheesecake because its main ingredient is Gvina Levana, a soft Israeli white cheese. This fresh, creamy cheese is made from cow’s milk, is

similar in taste and texture to quark, and makes this cheesecake quite different than the classic American cheesecake.

The most loved and common cheesecakes in Israel are variations of a baked cheesecake, using

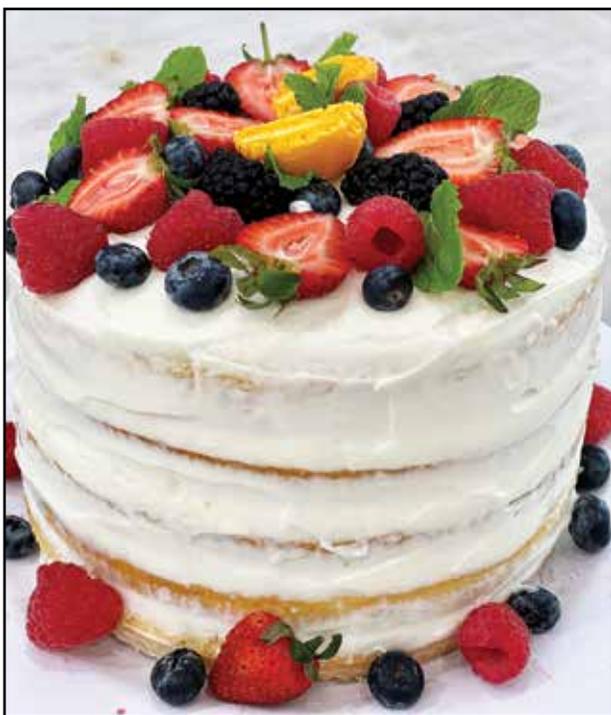
The first time I tasted cheesecake in the United States, as a 22-year-old girl on her first trip across the ocean, I thought they had gotten it wrong. Israeli cheesecake is nothing like the cheesecakes of North America. In place of the cream cheese-sugar-egg, Israeli cheesecake is light, tangy and airy. It involves many steps, but each one is actually quite simple. Once you understand the concept of putting a cheesecake together, it becomes much easier.

This year, I prepared something more modern and interesting. I ate two cheesecakes in preparation for this article. I don’t want anyone claiming I didn’t do my homework! And the result? You will want to replicate this taste forever and ever – a cake as light as air. It is so much more than you could ever want from a cheesecake. Add this one to the Shavuot menu and it’ll be part of your holiday memories forever.

**Ingredients:**

**Cake**

- 3 cups sugar
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 eggs
- 1½ cup Gvina Levana (5% white cheese)
- ¾ cups vegetable oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1½ cups boiling water



**Cream Cheese:**

- 2¼ cups powdered sugar
- 2 cups Gvina Levana
- 3.5 oz instant pudding
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract

**Instructions:**

- ▶ Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- ▶ Grease 3 x 8.5 inch cake pans, set aside.

**Cake:**

- ▶ In bowl of mixer add the sugar, flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Mix to combine.
- ▶ Add in the eggs, cheese, oil and vanilla, and mix on medium speed for about 1 minute.
- ▶ With mixer on low, slowly stream in the boiling water. Continue mixing until all ingredients are incorporated.
- ▶ Scrape the sides and bottom of bowl to release any clumps and mix well into batter. Batter will be runny. This is ok.
- ▶ Pour evenly into prepared pans. Bake 45-50 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.
- ▶ Let cool completely.

**Cream Cheese:**

- ▶ Combine powdered sugar, cheese and instant pudding in medium

saucepan.

- ▶ Whisk for 1 minute. Test by rubbing between your fingers. The mixture should feel smooth.
- ▶ Add in the vanilla extract. Mix well to combine.

**Assembly:**

- ▶ Cut cake layers level to equal six cake layers. (I used just five. You can set the extra cake layer aside for snacking.)
- ▶ Lay first cake layer on cake plate.
- ▶ Add layer of cream cheese.
- ▶ Repeat with remaining layers, adding layer of cream cheese between each.
- ▶ Crumb coat (thin layer of cream cheese) the cake on the sides and top. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to an hour.
- ▶ Garnish with fresh chopped strawberries, fresh berries and green leaves.
- ▶ Set in a cool place until ready to serve.

**Chef’s tip:**

- ▶ Living in the U.S., Gvina Levana may be hard to find in standard grocery stores. Look for it in the dairy aisle of international food stores or ask for it at your local cheese store. Another option is to make your own. It’s a little time consuming but only requires buttermilk and time. The buttermilk is heated in the oven and then has to rest for 12 hours, untouched. It then gets



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

strained and has to rest for 5 hours. While it’s a mostly hands-off process, it does require a lot of time. If you can’t find Gvina Levana in any local store, feel free to substitute quark or even sour cream filtered from the liquids. I replaced the Gvina Levana with a combination of cream cheese and Greek yogurt. The results are surprisingly similar and just perfect.

- ▶ The cheesecake tastes best after it has been chilled for a few hours.
- ▶ Add your favorite cheesecake toppings if you like. Try fruit, crushed Oreos, caramel, chocolate fudge or anything else. ▲

*Warm weather sparklers...continued from previous page*

(\$20) – Made in the traditional Champagne method, this delicate sparkler is a blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir with creamy vanilla and toast overtones that support the fruit forward style. This one will accompany just about any kind of food. WW 91

**Ask the Wine Whisperer**

What is the most widely planted grape in the world? – Evan L., Port St. Lucie  
Cabernet Sauvignon is the world’s most popular wine grape, probably be-

cause it can be made in such a wide range of styles. There are over 700,000 acres of it in cultivation worldwide. ▲

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

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# June 1942... and beyond

By Paul R. Bartrop, PhD

On May 27, 1942, against the expressed wishes of the local population who feared reprisals, British-trained Czech commandos ambushed the car of the SS Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia (Reichsprotektor), Reinhard Heydrich. Mortally wounded, he died a few days later, on June 4, 1942 – 80 years ago.

In retaliation, an enraged Adolf Hitler ordered the murder of thousands of Jews. He also wanted to kill 10,000 Czech political prisoners, but SS Chief Heinrich Himmler, aware of the need for Czech labor, persuaded him that the Czechs were needed for German industry. Nonetheless, more than 13,000 Czechs were arrested, and 5,000 were subsequently murdered in coming months and years.



Dr. Paul Bartrop

Then, acting from false information, on June 10 the Germans selected the Czech town of Lidice, not far from Prague, as the target of a reprisal and to serve as a warning by example against the Czech people for Heydrich's assassination. Lidice would suffer the full wrath of the Nazis' vengeance, who based themselves on the erroneous belief that the inhabitants had helped the assassins. Ironically, the village chosen was a case of mistaken identity: one of the partisans had connections to another village named Lidice, and the Nazis thought it was the one closest to Prague.

On June 10, 1942, the Nazis moved in. All 172 men and boys of the village, and 71 women, were summarily shot. The remaining 195 women were sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp, while the 95 village children were sent either to camps or, in the case of eight who had what were deemed to be

"Aryan" characteristics, sent to Germany, where they were fostered out to German families. Of the women sent away, 143 survived and returned after the war. Only 16 children survived.

A similar fate befell nearby Ležáky, where the Nazis located a radio transmitter thought to be sending messages for the Czech resistance. Again, all the adults were murdered, while the children disappeared except for two who were handed over to Nazi families. Once more, the town was razed.

The town of Lidice itself was then systematically razed to the ground, with the ruins bulldozed. All references to the name of the village were expunged from whatever Czech records could be located, as well as from all German maps and official documents, as though it had never existed.

In 1949, Lidice was rebuilt, together with a memorial to the victims of the massacre. The martyrdom of Lidice was one of several atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis against entire non-Jewish village populations. It, together with other massacres at Kalavryta in Greece (December 13, 1943) and Oradour-sur-Glane in France (June 10, 1944), became a byword for Nazi savagery.

Reinhard Heydrich's funeral in Berlin on June 9, 1942 – the day before German troops moved into Lidice – was remembered as the largest of its kind in Nazi Germany.

An even more dramatic and deadly tribute to Heydrich came later in the year, in the form of an operation code-named *Aktion Reinhard*, given to the Nazi implementation of the deadliest phase of the Holocaust. This was what became termed the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*), lasting from 1942 and into 1943. The name was conferred as a memorial to Heydrich after his assassination.

Initially, the plan was to inaugurate measures that would lead to the eradication of the Jewish population of the area of occupied Poland known as the *Generalgouvernement*, but the scope of the plan broadened to include Jews transferred to Poland from throughout Nazi-occupied Europe.

*Aktion Reinhard* was thus an undertaking embracing the deportation and mass murder of millions of Jews, accompanied by the plunder and transmission of Jewish property back to the Reich. The operation (also known as *Einsatz Reinhard*) eventually saw the establishment of three purpose-built extermination camps in eastern Poland: Sobibor, Belzec and Treblinka. These were established solely for the purpose of realizing the Nazis' murderous aims and were subsequently known as the *Aktion Reinhard* camps.

Anti-Jewish killing operations at Belzec using carbon monoxide gas had already begun in March 1942, continuing until December 1942. It has been estimated that some 600,000 Jews were murdered at Belzec during its operation. Sobibor, which began operating in May 1942 and functioned until October 1943, saw a death toll of at least 250,000 Jews, while the killing center at Treblinka, called Treblinka II, opened in July 1942. By the time it closed in August 1943, over 900,000 Jews had been murdered at Treblinka II, making that camp second only to Auschwitz as the greatest single murder site of Jews during the Holocaust.

The martyrdom of Lidice in the wake of Heydrich's assassination was but a prelude to much worse things to come. Not only did the Holocaust enter its most deadly phase, more and more localized massacres and the destruction of villages and towns followed, in places far removed from each other across Europe.

In 2022, 80 years later, such horror can sometimes seem unfathomable, and it is worth considering just what such utter carnage represented. It was nothing less than the greatest statement that racist extremism was able to proclaim about itself. We know who the victims were. We know who the perpetrators were. And everyone else? Therein lies the greatest lesson for us, in our own age. ▲

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

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# Stars of David

By Nate Bloom, Contributing Columnist

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

### Dinos again

The sixth *Jurassic Park* movie, *Jurassic World Dominion*, opens in theaters on Friday, June 10. In this sequel, humans and dinosaurs now live near each other all over the world and the question is: Who will emerge as the apex predator? The film was directed by **COLIN TREVORROW**, 45. His mother is Sephardi. He also directed the last two *Jurassic Park* films. They made billions.

**JEFF GOLDBLUM**, 69, reprises his role as Dr. Ian Malcolm, an expert in chaos theory. Goldblum co-starred as Malcolm in the original *Jurassic Park* film (1993) and in its first sequel (1997). He returned for the fifth film (2018).

### Sephardim

Two dramatic series about Sephardim "sneaked" on to the Netflix schedule in May. Here are brief descriptions: *Heirs to the Land* depicts the lives of Spanish Jews about 100 years before their expulsion from Spain (1492). *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem* follows a Sephardic family from about 1910 until the end of the Israeli War of Independence (1949).

### An office comedy

*Loot* is a 10-episode office comedy that begins streaming on Apple TV+ on Friday, June 24. Capsule plot: Billionaire Molly Novak (**MAYA RUDOLPH**, 49) has been living a dream-like, luxurious life. This ends when her husband of 20 years betrays her. She goes into an emotional tailspin. **NAT FAXON**, 46, has a big supporting role. (Rudolph's father is Jewish and Faxon's mother is Jewish).

### An offer you can't refuse

*The Offer*, a 10-episode mini-series about the making of *The Godfather* (1972) began streaming on April 28 on Paramount+. It concludes in mid-June. As I write this, I've viewed the first three episodes. Reviews were mixed, but I was pleasantly surprised how entertaining it was. Also, it is the "most Jewish" major mini-series or film I've ever seen (leaving aside Holocaust-related projects and films/mini-series made by Israelis or set in Israel).

Below is a list of the "real life" Jews in the series; Jews who played Jews; and Jews who played non-Jewish characters. All of them appear in all 10 episodes. Paramount+ costs \$5 a month, so for five bucks you can binge watch the whole series this month. Plus, Paramount+ is also now streaming all three *Godfather* movies.

Here goes: (1) **ROBERT EVANS** (1930-2019) was the head of Paramount Pictures when *The Godfather* was made. (2) **ALBERT RUDDY**, now 92, was the principal producer of *The Godfather*. He is played by Miles Teller, whose paternal grandfather was Jewish. *The Offer* is based on Ruddy's memories of the making of the film. (3) Francis Ford Coppola, the (Italian-Catholic) director of *The Godfather*, is played by **DAN FOGLER**, 45. (4) **CHARLES BLUHDORN** (1926-1983) was the owner of Paramount Pictures. He was an Austria-born Jew who hid his Jewish background. (5) **PETER BART**, now 89, the producer who was Evans right-hand man. (6) **ALI MACGRAW**, now 83, best known as the star of *Love Story* (1970), wed Evans in 1969. The marriage ended around the time *The Godfather* was released. MacGraw found out as an adult that her Jewish mother hid her background from her and her bigoted father. (7) **FRANCOISE GLAZER** (1937-2014) was Albert Ruddy's wife during the making of *The Godfather*. Born in France, she survived the Holocaust in hiding. She is played by French actress **NORA ARNEZEDER**, 33. Her mother is Sephardi (Italian and Egyptian), and Nora identifies as Jewish. (8) Mario Biaggi, a Bronx (not Jewish) congressman, is played by **DANNY NUCCI**, 53. (9) Dean Tavoularis, now 89, an Oscar-winning production designer. He is played by **ERIC BALFOUR**, 44.

### Robert Morse

You'd never find out from obits that **ROBERT MORSE**, who died on April 20, at age 90, was Jewish. He's best known for roles that he played at the beginning and end of his long career. In 1962 he won a Tony award for best actor (musical) for *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. He frequently guest-starred (2007-14) as Bertram Cooper, the quirky, but sharp founding partner of a big advertising agency at the center of the acclaimed series *Mad Men*. Morse got five Emmy nominations for this role.

Frankly, I never guessed that Morse was Jewish. It wasn't "out there anywhere." Right after his death, a friend dug out Morse's background in public records. His father's German Jewish ancestors came over in the mid-1800s, and one ancestor (**LEOPOLD MORSE**) was the first Jew to serve (1877) as a New Hampshire congressman. Morse's mother's parents were Russian Jewish immigrants. ▲



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# BRIEFS



## HUBERT POLLACK HELPED SAVE 10,000 JEWS FROM THE NAZIS

Dr. Hubert Pollack posthumously received the Jewish Rescuers Citation along with 12 other Holocaust-era heroes on April 28, which marked Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel. The award was created in 2011 by the B'nai B'rith World Center-Jerusalem and the Committee to Recognize the Heroism of Jewish Rescuers During the Holocaust to honor the Jewish rescue of fellow Jews. Yad Vashem honors non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews.

In the 1930s, Pollack worked in Berlin as a statistician for the German government, and also for Keren Hayesod-United Israel Appeal. Together with Wilfrid Israel, a wealthy businessman, as well as Cpt. Francis Foley, an MI5 agent who worked at the British Embassy in Berlin, Pollack helped execute a plan to issue thousands of exit visas for German Jews seeking to escape the Nazi regime. It involved Pollack bribing Gestapo officials with money given to him by Israel. Foley issued visas allowing the refugees into British territory – including British Mandate Palestine.

Pollack left Germany with his family in August 1939, just one month before World War II broke out, and came to pre-state Israel. Except for giving testimony in 1944 to an organization that would become Yad Vashem, he is not known to have spoken about the rescue operation again. (Yaakov Schwartz, *Times of Israel*)

## SURVEY SHOWS ISRAEL-DIASPORA TIES REMAIN STRONG AMONG YOUNG U.S. JEWS

American Jewish Committee surveys of U.S. and Israeli Jewish millennials (aged 25-40) show that Israel-Diaspora relations remain strong.

72% of young American Jews say it is important that the American Jewish community and Israel maintain close ties, with 48% saying it is very important.

70% think a strong Israel is necessary for the survival of the Jewish people.

55% of U.S. Jewish millennials say being connected to Israel is important to their Jewish identity, and 54% feel emotionally attached to Israel.

52% of American and 24% of Israeli Jewish millennials say a viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is possible. (American Jewish Committee)

## GLOBAL JEWISH POPULATION NOT YET RECOVERED FROM WWII

Eighty-three years since the beginning of World War II and the Holocaust, the Jewish people have still not replenished their numbers, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics.

In 1939, the world Jewish population stood at 16.6 million; at the end of 2020, it totaled 15.2 million. At the same time, the world population increased from 2.3 billion to 7.9 billion.

And the good news? The Jewish population in Israel went from 449,000

in 1939 to 7 million today. (Herb Keiron, *Jerusalem Post*)

## NAZI'S "PERFECT ARYAN BABY" WAS JEWISH

On January 24, 1935, the Nazi family magazine *Sonne ins Haus* published a front-page photograph of the winner of a competition for "the perfect Aryan child" – a beautiful six-month-old baby girl named Hessy Levinsons.

Unbeknownst to the judges, Hessy was Jewish. Her parents were unaware that Berlin photographer Hans Ballin, who had taken what they thought was a private family photo, had entered it in the photo contest.

Ballin put Hessy's photograph along with nine others into an envelope and sent it to the office of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, knowing full well that Hessy was Jewish.

He deliberately entered Hessy's photograph into the contest because "I wanted to make the Nazis look foolish."

Many years later, Hessy, whose family escaped to France and then to Cuba in 1942, was asked what she would say today to the photographer.

"I would tell him, good for you for having the courage. I can laugh about it now, but if the Nazis had known who I really was, I wouldn't be alive." (Robert Rockaway, *Tablet*)

## ISRAEL OPENS UNDERGROUND BLOOD BANK

On May 2, Israel's Magen David Adom opened a new \$135 million underground national blood bank in Ramla – the Marcus National Blood Services Center. The three underground floors are protected by extra-thick concrete walls, blast doors and airlocks, as well as shielding from biological and chemical attacks. No other country has "a facility like this, with such a high level of protection," said Moshe Noyovich, the engineer who oversaw the project. (Nathan Jeffay, *Times of Israel*)

## ISRAEL'S POPULATION REACHES 9.5 MILLION ON EVE OF 74TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Israel's population stands at 9,506,000, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced on May 1.

That includes 7.02 million Jews (74%), 2 million Arabs (21%), and 478,000 others (5%), including non-Arab Christians, members of other re-

ligions and those designated as without religion, most of whom are immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Today, 78% of Israeli Jews were born here, while 45% of the world's Jews live in Israel. (Ofer Aderet, *Haaretz*)

## ISRAEL WELCOMES MOST IMMIGRANTS IN TWO DECADES

38,000 new immigrants have arrived in Israel since Independence Day 2021, the highest number in two decades, the Jewish Agency reported.

About half are from Ukraine and Russia, while 4,000 came from the U.S. and 3,700 from France.

More than 1,000 came from Belarus and Argentina, more than 700 from the UK, 600 from South Africa, 500 from Brazil, 400 from Canada as well as others from Australia, Germany, Belgium, Chile, Italy and other countries. (*Jerusalem Post*)

## CHURCH OF ENGLAND APOLOGIZES FOR 800-YEAR-OLD ANTISEMITIC LAWS

The Church of England apologized on May 8 for its "shameful actions" in passing anti-Jewish laws 800 years ago that paved the way for the expulsion of Jews from England. A special service at Christ Church cathedral in Oxford, marking the 800th anniversary of the Synod of Oxford, was attended by Ephraim Mirvis, the chief rabbi, with representatives of the archbishop of Canterbury and a Roman Catholic bishop.

The synod passed laws forbidding social interactions between Jews and Christians, forcing Jews to wear identifying badges, imposing church tithes on them, banning them from certain professions and forbidding them from building new synagogues. Hundreds were arrested, hanged or imprisoned. Eventually, all the Jews in England were expelled in 1290 by King Edward I. They were not permitted to return for more than 360 years.

The move follows a 2019 document produced by the Church of England which said Christian attitudes toward Judaism over centuries had provided a "fertile seed-bed for murderous antisemitism." Anglicans and other Christians must actively challenge anti-Jewish attitudes and stereotypes, said the document. (Harriet Sherwood, *Observer* - UK)

*continued on next page*



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**BRIEFS**

*continued from previous page*

**UKRAINIAN ATHLETE REFUGEES TRAIN AT ISRAELI YOUTH VILLAGE**

Seven elite Ukrainian athletes who fled from their war-torn country with two coaches are continuing to train for competitions in Europe and South America while at their place of refuge: Neurim Youth Village in Israel, run by Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America.

The athletes, who were matched with Neurim through a collaboration between the Israeli Athletic Union and the local municipal authority, will remain at the village until the end of May, when they will fly to Greece for further training.

Veronika, a high jumper, and Tanya, a triple jumper, said the training conditions "are superb at Hadassah Neurim – good facilities, proper and abundant food and [good] weather."

In all, more than 50 Ukrainians are sheltering at Hadassah's two youth villages for at-risk Israelis – Neurim, near Netanya; and Meir Shfeyah, near

Haifa – through the efforts of Israel's Ministry of Education and The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI).

The ministry and JAFI also sponsor the Naale free high school program for overseas Jewish youth. Many of the Ukrainians now at the Hadassah facilities were in the application process for Naale when the war began, and all were immediately admitted.

Naomi Adler, CEO of Hadassah, said the new arrivals "are fast becoming part of life at the villages, helped by Ukrainian students living at the villages before the war started. Some have joined the orchestra at one of the villages and others are taking part in a talent show. All are receiving counseling to help them deal with the trauma caused by the war and having had to flee Ukraine."

An additional 100 Ukrainian children from an orphanage are sheltering at the KKL-JNF field school in Ness Harim.

In addition to offering a home to young Ukrainians escaping the war, Hadassah sent seven teams of doctors from its Jerusalem medical center to run the clinic at the Przemysł Humanitarian Aid Center near the Ukrainian border.

Hadassah is also partnering with Doctors Without Borders to triage patients at the border crossing and, with the Polish Red Cross, to run the pediatric ward at the refugee center in nearby Korczowa. (Abigail Klein Leichman, ISRAEL21c.org)

**EDUCATING THE ARAB AND MUSLIM WORLD ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST**

Sharaka, a grassroots organization founded in December 2020 to strengthen the bond between Israel and the Arab world following the Abraham Accords, is participating in the International March of the Living Holocaust commemoration, which includes a two-mile trek from Auschwitz I to Birkenau in Poland. There are delegates from the Emirates and Bahrain, as well as Syria and Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Turkey and eastern Jerusalem. They include authors, activists, social media influencers and politicians.

Dan Feferman, Sharaka's Director of Communications, said, "For too long because of the conflict, the Arab world has either minimized, downplayed, ignored or denied the Holocaust, claiming it's a conspiracy.... This is really meant to be an eye-opening trip. All of these people through their various platforms – traditional media, social media – are going to relay this and use this as a platform to start a wider movement of educating the Arab and

Muslim world about the Holocaust."

Aysha Jalal, who works at Bahrain's National Commission for Education, Science and Culture for UNESCO, visited Israel with Sharaka this past October and visited Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust museum. She then wanted to see the extermination camps for herself. "It's a very hard experience, but we have to see it.... I always heard that the Holocaust didn't happen." (Yaakov Schwartz, *Times of Israel*)

**PERCEPTO DRONES TO MONITOR FLORIDA POWER PLANTS FOR DAMAGE**

Hurricanes may have met their match as Israeli startup Percepto rolls out its "Drone-in-a-Box" at Florida Power & Light (FPL), the state's largest electric utility serving 11 million customers.

Percepto's autonomous drones are intended to monitor FPL's power plants, making sure any damage is quickly spotted – especially following the state's frequent hurricanes. During Hurricane Dorian in 2019, FPL reported \$274 million in damages, leaving 160,000 customers in the dark.

This is the largest commercial autonomous drone project in the world. It's also the first operation using autonomous drones within an urban setting for infrastructure inspection.

Modi'in-based Percepto has been *continued on next page*



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## BRIEFS

*continued from previous page*

working with FPL since 2018 as part of its push to comply with emerging U.S. aviation regulations.

The Florida drones will be coordinated on Percepto's Autonomous Inspection and Monitoring (AIM) platform, which allows drones to be operated remotely to ensure they work together in sync.

Phase one of the project will see 13 Drone-in-a-Box installations introduced to the West Palm Beach area over the coming year. FPL's long-term plan is to introduce hundreds of Percepto drones over the next five years.

Percepto's drones were certified in 2020 at Florida International University's "Wall of Wind" – a wind tunnel simulation facility that subjected the unmanned aerial vehicles to gusts of over 150 miles per hour. The Drone-in-a-Box solution was the first autonomous UAV to pass Level 5 hurricane testing.

Percepto's electric battery-powered drones can fly for 40 minutes between charges at a height of 130 feet (high enough to avoid power poles) and are equipped with day and nighttime camera systems, using artificial intelligence to identify malfunctions and safety risks.

The drones fly over a preprogrammed route and return to a base station (the "box" in Drone-in-a-Box)

to download data and recharge. Aerial insights can also be streamed live.

"We look forward to continuing our long and productive relationship with FPL to help ensure that Florida's electrical infrastructure is constantly monitored, providing residents with more reliable infrastructure, with power back online faster after outages," Percepto Chief Commercial Officer Ariel Avitan said.

Percepto's AIM platform made *TIME* magazine's "100 best inventions of 2021" list. The company's solutions are used by Fortune 500 customers on six continents, the company says, including Delek U.S., Koch Fertilizer, ICL Dead Sea Works and Verizon. Italy's Enel gas and electricity utility is also a client. (Brian Blum, ISRAEL21c.org)

### ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER CALLS FOR "CIVILIAN NATIONAL GUARD" TO FIGHT PALESTINIAN TERROR

Amid a series of violent attacks in Israel over the past two months, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett told the Cabinet recently, "I have instructed the National Security Council...to present the government with an orderly and budgeted plan to establish a civilian national guard by the end of the month.

"The urgent need to strengthen the personal security of the citizens of Israel was born a year ago during the events of Operation Guardian of the

Walls [in May 2021], mainly in the mixed cities, and it is more urgent than ever in the current wave of terrorism.... We see the difference between incidents in which there was a responsible armed civilian in the area and those in which there was not.

"The plan will be based on Border Police units, along with the mobilization of trained units of volunteers and reservists, who together will be defined as a national guard. They will be activated in emergencies and disturbances, and in routine times as well, as necessary." (Prime Minister's Office)

### ISRAEL'S RISE TO REGIONAL PROMINENCE

Israel's standing in world affairs is unprecedented in its reach and influence.

One reason stems from the growing sense that the world is a more dangerous place than many had hoped it would be in the post-Cold War era.

This sense was first triggered by Islamist terrorism and later by Russian invasions into neighboring countries.

Israel's security-oriented policies, once derided as irrelevant in our times, are becoming better understood against this background.

Israel's most valuable asset is its demonstrated willingness to act to oppose Iran's revolutionary ideology.

Its relentless Campaign Between the Wars has been conducted mainly by the Israeli air force and backed by highly penetrating intelligence on Iranian activities in the region.

This campaign has the effect of continuing to draw Arab states toward Israel. (Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman, Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security)

### ISRAEL, OUR GREATEST ALLY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Recently, I had the privilege of visiting Israel, our greatest ally in the Middle East, alongside five other lieutenant governors from across the county.

Israel is a vibrant country where faith is palpable and warmth is exuded at every turn. Pride is clearly in the Israeli's DNA. They do not apologize for their zeal. They promote it.

They do not reflect on their trials and lament; they perceive the triumph through their battles.

They do not wallow in defeat; they learn and surge in victory.

America's unbreakable bond with Israel is essential if we are to see peace in the region and beyond.

We must encourage leaders at every level to closely reevaluate policies, such as the disastrous Iran deal.

We must not allow BDS and antisemitism in any form to gain a foothold. We must never forget the horrors of the Holocaust.

This visit has been an encounter like none other – an encounter with beauty, light and resilience.

Israel, though small geographically, is a country with an enormous impact. (Lieutenant Governor of Florida Jeanette Nunez, *Miami Herald*) ▲



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## Israel is a part of our Jewish identity

Celebrating our American Independence Day on July 4 is always meaningful, and we all enjoy the fireworks and the festivities as we express our gratitude for living freely as Jewish Americans. Although this issue of L'CHAYIM combines June and July, we can't forget about Yom Ha'Atzmaut, our celebration of Israel's Independence Day which fell on May 4. Even though we live thousands of miles away in Southwest Florida, Israel is a big part of our Jewish identity.

Each time our ancestors lost Israel, they were devastated. Imagine

a world without Israel nowadays and how vulnerable our people would be in the face of rising antisemitism across the globe. We now face a nuclear superpower in Russia, which has killed thousands of civilians and displaced millions in Ukraine under the pretext of the "de-Nazification" of a country that is led by a Jewish president. In fact, a high-ranking Russian official recently said that Hitler was Jewish, and that Jews were their own worst enemy. Thank G-d today's Ukrainian Jews have Israel as an option unlike our people in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when they faced another genocidal madman marching on Europe during WWII.

Now more than ever we must be unified as Jews and unified in our support for our safe haven, our homeland, Medinat Yisrael.

Is there a link between anti-Zionism and antisemitism? Antisemitism is the hatred of the Jewish people. Anti-Zionism is the delegitimization and/or non-recognition of a nation. What's the connection? Hundreds of years ago we were hated for our religion. More recently, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, we were hated for our race. Today we're hated for our homeland, Israel. There are 56 Islamic nations and 159 with a Christian majority. There is only one Jewish state. That is why anti-Zionism, denying us the right to our homeland, is the new antisemitism, just as toxic and dangerous as the old.

Let's ask ourselves how we can support Israel. If we can't plan a visit anytime soon, we can always show our support by donating to the organization of our choice and trying to influence a young person to go on Birthright one day soon.

Israel is a big part of our Jewish identity. It's who we are. History reminds us of how so many of our people struggled to make Aliyah, risking

their lives to reach her shores. We recall the devastating effect on our people throughout the centuries when we lost our homeland and the galvanizing effect when we finally returned home after 1,900 years in exile.

In the words of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, "We are part of [the Jewish] story. We can live it. We can abandon it. But it is a choice we cannot avoid and it has immense consequences. The future of [the Jewish People]... rests with us."

We are all connected to Israel whether we consider ourselves Reform, Conservative, Orthodox or even cultural or secular. Love Israel, know that she is part of your Jewish soul, your *neshama*. Israel's struggle is our struggle. May we never forget where we came from, who we are and where we're going together. We are one voice, one heart, one song. We are strong. *Am Yisrael chai.*▲

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

## Summer reading

Vacation with books, articles and notepads. I start thinking about my upcoming High Holiday sermons as soon as Yom Kippur is over. But it is over the summer that I ask, "What are the most important messages I should give my congregation this coming year?" Every year is challenging; this one feels more so.



■ Rabbi Marc Sack

Last year, I read Dara Horn's *People Love Dead Jews*. It is excellent but unsettling. Her thesis is that we Jews, and the rest of the world, have looked for ways to soften, even sanitize, the persistent fact of antisemitism. In discussing the popularity of Anne Frank's diary, a book that's been translated into 70 languages, Horn points out that everyone loves the line, "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart." But on this, Horn writes, "It is far more gratifying to believe that an innocent dead girl has offered us grace than to recognize the obvious: Frank wrote about people being 'truly good at heart' before meeting people who weren't. Three weeks after writing those words, she met people who weren't." So many want to gloss over that small fact.

I also read *The Netanyahus* by Joshua Cohen, a fictionalized account of the time, in the 1950s, when Ben Zion Netanyahu, the father of the former prime minister, applied for a teaching position at an American university. The narrator of the story is Ruben Blum, the only Jewish faculty member at a small college in upstate New York who is tasked with taking the lead on the hiring committee. Blum, the *cheder*-trained Yid from the Bronx

who wants nothing more than to escape his Jewishness, is chosen for this task precisely because of it. The book is hilarious at times, but one of its messages is that there is no escaping one's Jewishness.

*The Prison Minyan* by Jonathan Stone also suggests that even for those Jews who go to prison – or perhaps especially for those who go to prison – there is no escaping one's Jewishness.

All this may sound dark, but my view of the world changed with the march in Charlottesville in 2017 and the shooting at the Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018. Even in America, we Jews must live with our eyes open. The greatness of America, and much of the Western world, is that acts of discrimination and violence against Jews and other minorities is not tolerated. But a minority group we are, and we can never take our acceptance for granted.

I remain hopeful about Jewish life in America. Jewish history shows that we have always sought strong relations with our neighbors, and interfaith relations should be a permanent part of our agenda. Building friendships with others when so many are focused on their particular identity would be good for us and good for America.

I think Jewish learning is a lifelong mitzvah for all of us. In a few weeks, I will head to Israel for the Hartman Institute rabbinic seminar, a program that brings together Modern Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis for study. Hartman is a source of innovative Jewish thinking, and I am looking forward to this learning. I'll write my August column from Jerusalem and will, hopefully, have more books to recommend.▲

Rabbi Marc Sack serves at Temple Judea in Fort Myers.

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# From the beginning of Israel's history, we have been sustained by music and song

While “Hatikvah,” Israel’s national anthem, stirs our souls with its message of hope, it was not the only contender for the official anthem of the Jewish state. Psalm 126, with its famous line, “When the Eternal returned the exiles of Zion, we were like dreamers, our mouths filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy,” was also a real possibility. The secular lyrics of “Hatikvah” were favored over the psalm’s giving credit to the divine, but the psalm captures an integral part of Israel’s identity.



■ Rabbi Nicole Luna

Israel is more than a country of conflict, politics and survival. Israel is a country of joy, culture, renaissance, dreams and life. On May 14, 1948, the formal declaration of Israel’s Independence included not only politicians and dignitaries, but orchestra musicians. The program called not only for the

solemn signing of an official proclamation, but an outpouring of musical celebration, as the Palestine Orchestra transformed into the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and, for the very first time, the Zionist hymn was played as the national anthem of the new-born state.

The history of the Israel Philharmonic is intertwined with the history of the State of Israel. Israel was created to be a refugee for Jews, and in 1936, alarmed by the rise of antisemitism and Hitler’s power, Polish-born Jewish violinist and musician, Bronislaw Huberman, persuaded 75 Jewish musicians from major European orchestras to immigrate to Palestine and founded the Palestine Symphony Orchestra.

It’s worth noting that Huberman included seven exceptional female musicians at a time when European orchestra membership was restricted to men. The Berlin Philharmonic did not accept a woman in a tenured position until 1982, and in the Vienna Philharmonic, it was not until 1997.

Alice Fenyves Rosenberg was

one of the seven women who joined the Palestine Orchestra in 1936. She was born in Budapest, and it was her brother Lorand who first auditioned for Huberman. When Lorand approached their father about moving to Palestine, he insisted that both Lorand and Alice go, noting that neither of them was safe as Jews.

Alice was accomplished on the violin but Huberman did not need any more violinists, so she mastered the viola in just a matter of weeks, and she and her brother both immigrated to Palestine and played in the orchestra. Israel was also created to be the cen-

ter of Jewish culture and art, and Alice later became one of the founders of the Israeli Conservatory and Music Academy.

In founding what would become the Israel Philharmonic, Huberman sought to create what he called the “materialization of the Zionist culture in the fatherland.”

Psalm 126 assures us, “Those who sow in tears, will reap with songs of joy.” From the beginning of Israel’s history, we have been sustained by music and song.▲

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

**Stay in touch this summer. Sign up for the Federation’s weekly e-blasts. Send an email to [debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org](mailto:debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org).**

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- ▶ and much more

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Reach our well-informed, health-conscious and savvy readers who are looking for new and better ways to enrich their lives and those of their loved ones. L'CHAYIM – the monthly newspaper published by the Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties – is mailed to 4,000 residents in the area. Additional copies are available at the Jewish Federation office.

## Life-Enriching Information

Each month, readers of L'CHAYIM get news and updates on all Jewish-related local events including the Jewish Film Festival, Jewish author programs, holiday celebrations, concerts, food festivals, book study groups, timely lectures, mah jongg and much more. They also get updates from the area’s synagogues and numerous local Jewish organizations. It’s the place they turn to for community news, candle lighting times and a business directory.

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The collage shows several pages from the L'CHAYIM newspaper. The top page is the Jewish Film Festival advertisement for February 7-28, 2021, featuring a 100% online, no-charge event with 48-hour access. Below it are articles from the 'OUR COMMUNITY' section, including 'Bat Yam Temple of the Islands to host Nefesh Mountain Bluegrass Band Concert' and 'Sunday in New York with Temple Beth El'. The bottom page features a 'JFNA statement' and a 'VIRTUAL EVENTS CALENDAR' for the month of April, listing various online programs and their times.

Opinions and letters printed in L'CHAYIM do not necessarily reflect the views of the Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties.

## Do it today!

The esteemed second-century Sage, Rabbi Eliezer, taught, "Repent one day before your death!" (Pirke Avot 2:15)



**Rabbi Stephen Fuchs**

When he heard this teaching, one of his disciples asked, "But how do I know when I shall die?"

"That's just the point," the Sage responded. "You do not. So, you had better repent today before it is too late."

To repent is to ponder the times we have failed to live up to our best selves and then to atone as best we can for the times we said or did the wrong thing and for the times we failed to say or do the right thing.

Rabbi Jack Riemer recalls a particularly sad funeral. The grieving widower remained standing next to his dead wife's grave for a long time after the service ended. After he watched him patiently for some time, Rabbi Riemer put his arm around the man's shoulder and gently said to him, "It has been a long and stressful day, Jacob.

I think it is time for you to go home and get some rest."

"I loved my wife," the man responded.

"Yes," the rabbi answered, "I know you loved her. She was a fine woman, but you have been here for some time now. Don't you think it's time to leave?"

"You don't understand, rabbi," the man insisted. I really loved my wife, and once, I almost told her."

Once I ALMOST told her!

How many times have we failed to say the things we needed to say? Or how many times have we said or done things we shouldn't?

Rabbi Eliezer tried to teach us that God does not guarantee us tomorrow. Life can end for any of us in an instant.

So, if you have someone to love, or someone you can help, or someone with whom you have quarreled and with whom you hope to reconcile, better do it today. Tomorrow may be too late.▲

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

## Deserving a chance at life

I just came back from rescuing a root-bound potted palm that had been left on the curb to be picked up by the truck that comes by each



**Rabbi Bruce Diamond**

Monday to collect foliage clippings. It is a beautiful palm that spent a long time suffering in a little pot because some heartless person regarded it as a thing, an ornament that could be easily pitched when it no longer pleased because it grew too well in spite of the neglect.

Our home and grounds are graced with lots rescues just like the palm. How can life ever be inconvenient?

Most every morning, I squeeze two Florida oranges in the juicer for a glass of fresh orange juice to start my day after I've fed the birds out back and the two turtles in the tank in my courtyard. Since I've already fed a lot of orange rinds to the tomato and pepper garden, they now go down the sink disposal. But not until I make sure all the orange seeds are safe, since they are the orange tree's babies, so to speak.

The way I see it, the purpose of the orange is to convey the tree's babies to a place where they can grow into new trees. So, I help. I've already planted lots of lots of these seeds in out-of-the-way open spaces and have about a dozen orange seedlings in pots alongside the house. Someday I will find good homes for them all.

I pretty much do the same thing for those really yummy tomatoes that my wife Melinda enjoys. And for the red peppers too. Our very happy tomato and pepper garden grows only from those seeds whose mommies gave them to us to plant and nurture at the end of their lives.

Can you think of a better way to thank the oranges, tomatoes and peppers that nourish us than to protect their babies? These babies don't belong in the sewer. They deserve a chance at life.

I know the whole idea may sound silly to some of you, but as they say in the Torah commentaries, *hamayvin yavin*, "if you get it, you get it."▲

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

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

**Jewish Federation**  
Lee and Charlotte Counties

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

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# Chabad at FGCU update

By Rabbi Mendel Gordon

Passover was amazing at FGCU. Students got together for both Seders to learn and discuss the birth of our nation. They put together some great skits about the Passover story, and thought about what we can be grateful for when we sang "Dayenu."

Right in line with Chabad's style to be open to all and in the Passover spirit, Zaman, a young guy who just moved to the area, joined us for the Seder reaching out just minutes before the holiday because his other plans fell through.

We finished the semester with a bang and a grand banquet hosted by Chabad of Bonita Springs in honor of our graduating students and a summer send-off to everyone.

We wish a big mazal tov to our graduates and wish them well in all their endeavors as they move on to the next stage in life.

We have a nice group who will be going with us to Israel on Birthright after the semester finishes.

I want to thank our student leaders who made this year be the incredible year it has been. A special thanks to club adviser Bill Reynolds, to Rabbi Mendy Greenberg of Chabad of Bonita Springs for all his help, and to the Federation for its support.

Chabad will con-

tinue to be open right through the summer months serving students staying for summer classes or working locally. We will also be offering weekly Zoom classes over the summer for those who will be out of town.

Chabad at FGCU caters to all Jewish students at FGCU and other local collages. For more information regarding student programming or to connect a student, please contact me at 347.452.0489 or rabbi@chabadfgcu.com.▲



Saying goodbye in Jewish style with putting on tefillin – pictured are: Preston Cohen and Jeffery Schour with Rabbi Mendel Gordon



Dani and Robin at the year-end banquet



Students getting ready for the Passover Seder (picture taken before the holiday began)

## TEMPLE JUDEA SCHOOLS Fort Myers

Temple Judea Religious School

Tab Scribner,

Director of Congregational Learning

The summer is upon us, and that's a great opportunity to relax. Yeah, right! Anyone who knows me knows that "relaxing" is not part of my vocabulary. The moment Pesach was over, it was time for the first planning pizza of the summer and laying the groundwork for next year. It is amazing how many ideas can be scribbled on a pizza box!

There is so much to be planned for next year. Taking in some of the lessons of "what worked" during the Covid pandemic, I am already working on our Tot Shabbat programming, High Holiday programming, and Sukkot and Simchat Torah programs for the fall. (See, busy really never stops!)

Each year, I learn a little bit more about what works for our community, and what will go over like a lead balloon. The goal, of course, is to have fun, engaging family learning experiences as much as possible. The Covid pandemic has probably done more for us in terms of distilling down to the programming that works than I could have learned in a half dozen years. The pandemic made everyone (to varying degrees) reconsider what aspects of their lives were most important and what risks were reasonable, and led to new ways of thinking about things. This new thinking doesn't stop just because most of us have put our masks away. What is the saying? Necessity is the mother of invention?

Tot Shabbat will return on Friday, August 12 at 5:00 p.m. Toddlers of all ages are welcome. Religious School will reopen on Sunday, August 21 for students entering grades K-7. We are now accepting enrollment registrations for Religious School.

For more information about registration for Religious School, Tot Shabbat or other programming, please contact me at 239.433.0201 or tjswfledu@gmail.com.

\*\*\*

Temple Judea Preschool

Joann Goldman

Our preschool was very busy during the month of May. Our moms were excited to celebrate Muffins with Mom the first week of May. We had a special surprise for each mom!

We had lunch with our Sheriff's deputies. The children were so excited to share pizza with them. Thank you to the Lee County Sheriff's Office for spending some time with our kids.

Our graduation program for all our students will be held in person on Fri-

day, June 3 beginning at 9:30 a.m.

I would like to thank every parent who supported our preschool and helped with our fundraising event. Thank you to my Advisory Board for your dedication and support. Our preschool staff and children greatly appreciated all your hard work.

This year has been an exciting one. We have had the pleasure of watching your child grow and develop in so many areas. They have learned to work together and communicate with each other in a positive manner.

For many, this was your first experience in a preschool setting. We hope that you and your child have enjoyed the experience and we look forward to another wonderful year. Thank you for allowing us to be part of their lives.

Thank you to my entire staff. There is only one word that describes you. **DEDICATED.** The time that you give each child, and the love and patience you share with them shows in everything they do while in the classroom.

To our pre-kindergarten graduates, we wish you much happiness always. Continue to love learning. You should be very proud of yourselves for everything that each of you have accomplished. We will miss you!

**Summer Camp**

Camp begins on Monday, June 13. Join us for seven weeks as we blast off into summer! We look forward to all the special treats and fun events planned.

**Preschool Registration**

We are accepting registration for the 2022-23 preschool year. Preschool begins on Monday, August 8. Our preschool accepts children 18 months to 5 years of age. At the time this article was written, we have very limited space available in some of our classes, and some classes are already closed. Please call the preschool for information regarding the many programs we offer our students.

This will be my last article for the preschool since I am retiring after a fun and fabulous 25 years. Thank you for all the memories. I have met the most remarkable families over these past 25 years and for that I am forever grateful.

Our preschool will continue to flourish under the direction of Suki Kelly, who has been a part of our preschool for the last eight years and has been the assistant director for four years. Our staff is excited to continue creating a fun and loving environment for all our students.

I know I will come back to read a story or two to our students. I am excited for Temple Judea Preschool and all the educational programs it will be offering.

## Candle lighting times:

June 3: 8:00

June 10: 8:02

June 17: 8:05

June 24: 8:06

## Candle lighting times:

July 1: 8:07

July 8: 8:06

July 15: 8:05

July 22: 8:02

July 29: 7:59

## Joseph Horowitz Israel Travel Grant

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The grant may be used for travel to Israel to participate in programs that are volunteer or educational in nature.

**OUR HOPE** is that these programs will enhance Jewish knowledge and identity in preparation for participation in American Jewish life.

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

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# Michael Shapiro

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### CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

[chavuratshalom@gmail.com](mailto:chavuratshalom@gmail.com)

*Cheryl Fulmer, Ellen Feingold  
and Marcia Rudin*

Congratulations to Chavurat Shalom of Southwest Florida on its two-year birthday! May the template for success continue as we serve likeminded individuals from near and far.

While the summer months are upon us, many members of Chavurat Shalom of Southwest Florida have scattered to cooler climes or have gone on extended vacations to other countries. The Friday Shabbat service, starting at 7:30 p.m., never misses a week because we connect with each other by Zoom. If you wish to join us, email [chavuratshalom@gmail.com](mailto:chavuratshalom@gmail.com) for the link.

Shavuot begins at sunset on Saturday, June 4. It is an ancient grain harvest festival that is celebrated seven weeks after the second Passover Seder. It is also identified with the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. It is custom-

ary to read the "Book of Ruth" and to eat dairy foods.

It is time to acknowledge those individuals who have made possible the achievements of the chavurah. The dedicated Zoom hosts are Irene and Leon Skolnick, Kathy Zoss and Marcia Rudin. The amazing Speakers Series is due to the diligence of Irene Skolnick, Barry Fulmer and Renee Minsky. The Friday Shabbat coordinators are Ellen Feingold, Myra Klahr, Evelyn Clark, Renee Sugar and Esta Berger. Those who regularly sing and chant are Mark Peppercorn, Sharon Berry, Kathy Zoss, Lev Seaton, Nava Ervin, Joan Charlson and Michael Feingold. With too many to mention individually, the rotation of Shabbat service leaders is established by Ellen Feingold, while Don Bachman is in charge of the Saturday Current Events moderators' rotation. It would be wonderful if even more people decided to volunteer to keep the chavurah vibrant. Please send an email to [chavuratshalom@gmail.com](mailto:chavuratshalom@gmail.com)

with your preference.

On April 28, Holocaust Memorial Day, the Thursday Speakers Series ended for the season with a very moving presentation by Erez Cohen about his grandmother, a Holocaust survivor. He has done extensive research, including travel to Poland to follow the travails of his grandmother. She was an amazing person who would be very proud of her grandson for making certain that the damage from the Holocaust is not forgotten.

The Speakers Series, including Rabbi Myra Soifer's "Text of the Month Club," and the Saturday morning Leonard Minsky Jewish Current Events sessions, are on vacation for the summer and will start again in November.

Our esteemed member, Rabbi Myra Soifer, was honored by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) at its March 2022 convention in San Diego. It has been 50 years since Sally Priesand was ordained as the first woman rabbi in the U.S. Rabbi Soifer was the ninth woman to

be ordained as a rabbi in the U.S. She was the first woman rabbi in Reno, Nevada, when she started at Temple Sinai in 1984. She remains actively involved with the congregation as rabbi emerita. It is the great good fortune of Chavurat Shalom that Rabbi Soifer continues to share the depth of her knowledge and experience.

Chavurat Shalom (Fellowship of Peace) is an informal group from every Jewish religious tradition and meets to worship and learn together. People of all faiths and localities are welcome. Chavurat Shalom is not affiliated with any organized movement. The group is community-led. Shabbat services are a blend of English and Hebrew, English readings and poems, Hebrew prayers recited or chanted, and meaningful songs. Worship and programs are primarily via Zoom, but outdoor in-person gatherings for Purim and Chanukah occurred. Join us now and lend your voice and thoughts for a Shabbat service, a Thursday speakers program or Saturday Jewish current events. It is a refreshing opportunity to participate.

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

*Joyce Toub*

Post Passover we have had a series of holidays that give historical significance to our very being. By the time you read this, Yom HaShoah will have passed. We are responsible for the memory of the six million and we

have to continually root out the hatred and bigotry that seem to have increased exponentially recently. The number of antisemitic incidents worldwide rose sharply last year, particularly in the United States, Great Britain, Germany and Australia. A new report by Tel Aviv University suggests the increase was prompted by left- and right-wing political movements

and by social media.

Hadassah's dedication to ensuring the well-being, security and fair treatment of everyone goes a long way in combating this plague. We reflect upon those who sacrificed their lives. We honored them on Yom HaZikaron, Israel's Memorial Day, followed by Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day. We can take great pride knowing that Hadassah has been an integral part of the Jewish and Zionist experience, instrumental in building the Jewish state and creating roles for women that simply didn't exist before Henrietta Szold.

I am not dismissing all the complex issues in our world today, but I'd like to focus on some modern medical miracles. Our recent *Hadassah* magazine tells us about robot technology that minimizes risk and performs complex healing techniques which didn't exist a few years ago. The robots, with more than \$1 million worth of equipment donated by the United States Agency for International Development, have sensitive mechanical arms that can manipulate cameras and surgical instruments. Software guides the robots, giving surgeons more precise control and minimizing human error. Procedures can be performed that transmit visual information more accurately than the human eye. Surgeries are minimally invasive.

At Hadassah Medical Organization, doctors in a new \$6 million neuro-angiography suite in the Sarah

Wetsman Davidson Hospital Tower on Hadassah's Ein Kerem campus are performing these miracles daily. The shortened time and greater accuracy mean many more patients can undergo surgery than in the past. If a patient was ill or too old, they may have been rejected, especially for brain and spinal pain surgeries. Pushing boundaries and sharing what Hadassah achieves with the rest of the world is Hadassah's moral obligation.

The podcast "Hadassah On Call: New Frontiers in Medicine" explores the detection and treatment of ovarian cancer at Hadassah. You can catch up with a panel discussion on post-traumatic stress disorder featuring HMO experts and watch four episodes of new programs at [hadassah.org/hadassahoncall](http://hadassah.org/hadassahoncall).

Please remember to view our Expanding Horizons programs in June and July. This past month we discovered how "Mindful Motion" using Qi-gong can cultivate vibrant health in the body. In June, we will discuss "The Magic of Book Clubs." In July, several women will discuss their satisfaction in creating art and handiwork in different media.

For those of you leaving the area and going to cooler climes, safe traveling and keep well! We are looking forward to your return, when we will meet in person once again. Have a safe and wonderful summer!

# Friendly Visitor Program

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We're inviting volunteers to call, Zoom or meet in person with one or two people on a regular basis.

Stories and connection are what make the world go 'round. Why not make a new friend and perform a mitzvah at the same time?



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**Russian? Ukrainian?  
Same old-country antisemitism  
has migrated to SWFL**

*Marina Berkovich*

In late 2021, in one of the many Russian-language social media groups covering Southwest Florida, an ethnic Russian (judging solely from his last name) posted antisemitic replies to another comment-maker, a Jewish Russian (obvious last name), who was responding to the request to compare Sarasota to Naples.

There is a huge migration underway of “Russian Americans” to SWFL and we all try to be helpful in these Russian-language, interspersed with the rare English word or two, exchanges. This ethnic Russian commented, “Who needs your Hebrew here?” An intense exchange between them followed to the morbidly silent approval of a more than 500-member group. Its two administrators, non-Jews, who were pressed by this Jewish person to step in, concluded the incident was not antisemitic. Yet they removed the “bully” from the group – a stereotypical Soviet-style admission-by-denial reaction.

Those who grew up in the antisemitism of the USSR and successfully escaped into the relative safety of the U.S., are pained whenever ethnic non-Jewish Russian speakers bring it with them to wherever they move. And now, it’s rapidly escalating since the war started.

Hatred of all Russian speakers, including locals, has taken a toll on businesses and friendships. Akin to the political division of the U.S., there were already many hot positions regarding the Crimea grab of 2014, and the Donbass region eight-year war that destroyed and displaced its people. If they lived through it, a tenth of their life was spent under fire. And now, much of Ukraine is in ruins.

Sadly, the Jew remains the stereotypical scapegoat for some. Since February 24, there were several instances of Ukrainian-Russian-Jewish verbal and non-verbal altercations, online and in person, along the west coast of

Florida. It is very unfortunate that this centuries-old problem is having resurgence in our little SWFL enclave and spoiling its tranquility.

I cannot escape drawing parallels to various times in Ukrainian history. Most of the Ashkenazi Jews hail from the Pale of Settlement, seek deeper understanding, and want to share some of our knowledge of Ukraine and Russia and its history with the Jewish Historical Society of SWFL’s audience, focusing mainly on the history of Jews in Ukraine. That it is regrettably marred by antisemitism is widely known, but Jews are an inseparable part of Ukrainian history, culture, music and art.

Anecdotally, in 2004, the greatest Ukrainian theatrical actor of all times, Bogdan Stupka, delivered the modern version of Gogol’s *Inspector General* with the cast he brought from Kiev to a grateful New York City audience. The Inspector’s lines were delivered in Russian to underscore the “eternal” conflict. At the post-performance party at a Russian restaurant, where about 20 of us broke out into Ukrainian singing, Bodgan and I were the last two still knowing more songs, when he took my hand, kissed it and whispered, “I always knew that only a true Jewish woman can preserve true Ukrainian culture.” That remains the biggest social compliment of my life.

Please join us Sunday, June 12 at 11:00 a.m. on Zoom or at the Jewish Federation of Greater Naples for “History of Jews in Ukraine.” Check our website for times and to register.

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

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



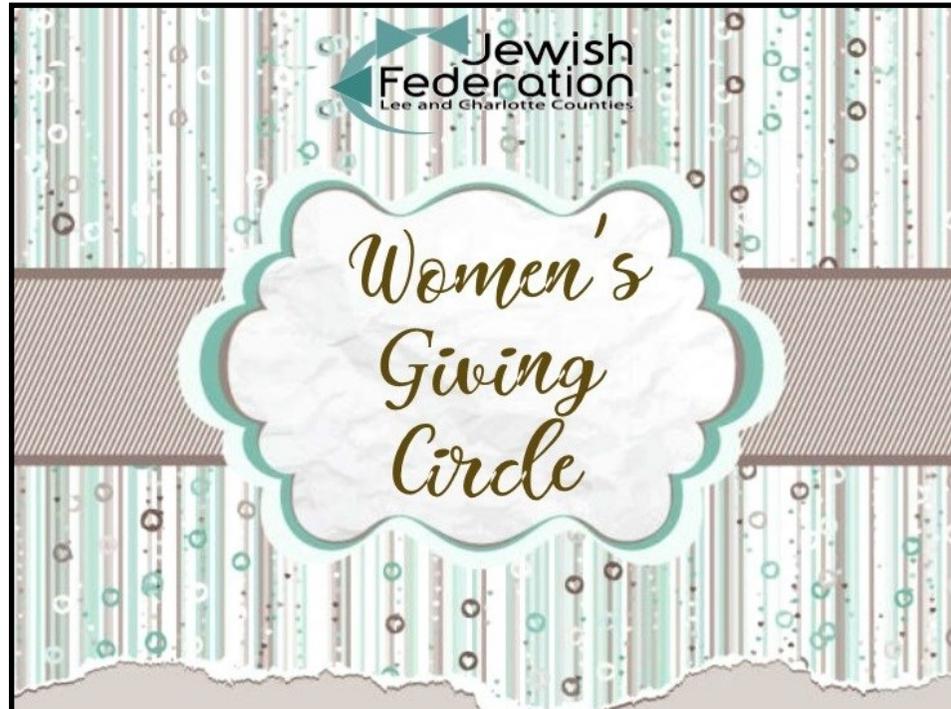
**VICTIMS & WITNESSES OF ANTISEMITISM**

Please report incidents to the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties.

Call 239.481.4449 x6



Due to recent incidents, the Jewish Federation is collecting reports for tracking patterns.



*What is a Women's Giving Circle?*

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

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

To join and for more information call Debbie Sanford  
239.481.4449 x4 or [debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org](mailto:debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org)

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



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

Send an email to

[debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org](mailto:debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org)

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

Temple Beth El warmly invites congregation and community members to take advantage of the many resources that the temple has to offer.

Calling all babies, toddlers, pre-schoolers and their siblings! Join us on June 3 at 6:00 p.m. for Tot Shabbat, bringing young Jewish families together with Rabbi Nicole Luna and our congregation at a kid-friendly service with fun, music and song. And don't miss the pizza dinner preceding the service. Call us at 239.433.0018 for more information. Congregation members and community members are all welcome.

A hearty Mazel Tov to Zachary Shuster, who will become a Bar Mitzvah on June 4. Congratulations to Zachary and his family as they celebrate this great milestone.

Come to the temple on June 7 and

July 5 between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. and participate in our monthly Drive In Drop Off. Donations are also accepted at the temple office. Gas cards, food cards and, of course, monetary donations are particularly needed.

The Israel committee will host a Zoom lecture by Dr. Itzhak Brook on June 23. Dr. Brook was a physician in the IDF during the Yom Kippur war in 1973. He will share his experiences with us.

Temple Beth El is excited to share some news about our beloved Rabbi Nicole Luna. This summer, Rabbi Luna will be taking a rabbinical sabbatical. The word "sabbatical" has its roots in the biblical concept of Sabbath ("to rest" or "to cease"). Sabbaticals are common throughout the rabbinate because congregations know the importance of a rabbi having time for study, rest and renewal, to take a break from day-to-day responsibilities, and renew oneself spiritually, returning reinvigorated with new ideas, new inspi-

ration and a renewed sense of calling.

Rabbi Luna will spend seven weeks in a combination of study and travel. First, she'll be joining a group of 38 Reform rabbis, members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), as part of the Tisch rabbinical fellowship, a fellowship meant to foster transformational rabbinical leaders. The rabbis will gather outside of Washington, D.C., to learn together, discuss the state of American Jewry and share experiences during these two years of Covid. This professional gathering will be a wellspring of creativity, support and growth. Rabbi Luna will also travel to New York and to England, visiting family and joining colleagues and friends at their Shabbat services, experiencing worship from the pews, and getting new ideas and inspiration.

We are fortunate as a congregation to have both Cantor Beth Schlossberg and Cantorial Soloist Karen Pincus as part of our community. Cantor Beth or Karen will be on the bimah for each of the seven Shabbats that Rabbi Luna will be away, and will also be avail-

able for life cycle emergencies. And congregants will be involved as well, offering a d'var Torah during Shabbat service or teaching a class.

We also welcome Ranata Goodman back to our congregation this summer. Ranata is finishing up her year in Israel as a rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and will be on the bimah to share her learning with us.

Because we hold Torah study over Zoom, this is an opportunity to welcome some phenomenal rabbis in the field to lead us in study. Even if you're not a regular at Torah study, we hope that you'll join us in June and July for this great opportunity.

We are excited about Rabbi Luna's upcoming time and season of growth.

To learn more about Temple Beth El and our special events, Shabbat services and recurring programs, visit [templebethel.com](http://templebethel.com). Follow us on Facebook @TempleBethElFortMyers and on Instagram @templebethelfortmyers for updates, information and more details about our community experiences.

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

Our heartfelt condolences to Laurie McConville, whose mother, Elaine Goldsmith, 96, died in early May in New York City.

C.F.S. is going to Israel next May on its sixth custom-designed tour with the rabbi. A high point of each tour are remarriage services under a *huppah* by the Montifiore Windmill overlooking

the Old City.

Sabbath Eve worship begins at 7:00 p.m. followed by a social hour and desserts.

Each Sabbath morning at 9:30 a.m., breakfast and Torah Study are at the rabbi's home in the Forest Country Club. The study is also on Zoom and is easily accessed at [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com). All are welcome. The guard at the gate will give you directions.

Tuesday evening Adult Education continues at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom only. To get your weekly reading assign-

ments, email [synfree@comcast.net](mailto:synfree@comcast.net).

Now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year and with the continued guidance of Rabbi Bruce Diamond, the Community Free Synagogue meets at the S.W. Masonic Center, 10868 Metro Parkway, Fort Myers. It is a Jewish community open resource without formal membership requirements whose activities are open to all for free and without financial solicitations.



Rabbi Bruce Diamond proposes to Melinda under the *huppah* in Jerusalem during the 2017 C.F.S. Israel Tour

**TEMPLE SHALOM****Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands****(941) 625-2116****www.templeshalomfl.com**

Starting with April, Temple Shalom experienced a return of its congregants to events and programs.

During April there was a wonderful music program entitled the "Songs of Passover and More." The program was presented by Jane Galler assisted by Rabbi Solomon Agin on bass. The turnout was wonderful, and the event delighted all who attended. Many thanks to Anita and Joe Sabatino for

their sponsorship.

The Jewish Film Festival Committee presented the film *The Jazz Singer* on Tuesday afternoon, April 12. Many thanks to the Lesleigh and Sylvia

Hershkowitz Memorial Fund for the sponsorship.

The last Tuesday of April there was a "Lunch and Learn" sponsored by the Lesleigh and Sylvia Hershkowitz Memorial Fund that was well attended with great discussions.

The Passover Seder, held this year at the Maple Leaf Country Club, was well received. Close to 100 people were in attendance. The Seder was

beautifully presented by Rabbi Agin with all the attendees participating. Everyone had wonderful comments about the Seder. Many thanks to Odette Port, Judi Migdol, Naomi Alexander, Jimmy the Chef and his entire staff.

In May, there was a special Shabbat Service marking Mother's Day, Israel's 74<sup>th</sup> birthday, as well as birthdays and anniversaries. In addition, there was special music by Dr. David Katz. It was a beautiful Shabbat.

This year, the Harry and Emmy Loeb Holocaust Community Remembrance Day Service was held on Thursday, April 28 at the First United Methodist Church of Punta Gorda. The program featured the "Songs of the

Holocaust" performed by the North Port High School Choral Group under the direction of temple member David Sommer. The students received a standing ovation. The program was outstanding, and a reporter made a very positive statement in the local newspaper. It was truly a proud moment for the Charlotte County community.

The season of community/synagogue programs concluded with the wonderful film *The Frisco Kid* with Gene Wilder and Harrison Ford.

Information about Temple Shalom can be obtained by calling the temple office at 941.621.2116.

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

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

Shabbat evening services are held every Friday at 7:00 p.m., both in person and on Livestream throughout the summer. SLC welcomes everyone to experience joyful, meaningful and inspiring services, special events, activities and clubs, dinners, concerts and more all year long.

Every Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m., Shalom Life Center offers an interactive and participatory Torah study

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

SLC offers Individualized Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation, Torah and Kabbalah study, The Shalom Shmoozers Social Club, Women's Circle, Men's Club, Book Club, Yiddish Culture Club, special events, concerts, dinners and so much more.

If you'd like to learn more, please send us an email or give us a call at 239.218.3433.

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

Let your spirit soar at Shalom Life Center, where community is family and prayer is always inspirational, meaningful and musical. For more information, please visit [www.shalomlifecenter.org](http://www.shalomlifecenter.org).

**TEMPLE JUDEA**  
**Fort Myers**

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

Shavuot services at Temple Judea, including Yizkor, will be held on Sunday, June 5 at 9:30 a.m.

On the weekend of July 8-9, services will be led by our special guest, Cantor Neil Newman. Cantor Newman is retired from congregation Beth El Synagogue in Minneapolis and currently lives in Sarasota. Rabbi Marc Sack's first job after graduating from JTS was as an assistant rabbi at Beth El Synagogue where Neil was the Hazzan. We look forward to welcoming the rabbi's friend to our congregation.

Tot Shabbat, led by Director of Congregational Learning Tab Scribner, will resume in August.

Rabbi Sack has begun another "Introduction to Judaism" class on Monday evenings. The class is a must for anyone interested in conversion to Judaism but is open to all who have an interest in learning.

Monthly lunchtime Torah study, taught by Rabbi Sack, will be on Thursday, June 2. The class is held on the first Thursday of each month at noon on Zoom. There is no cost to attend, and all levels of Jewish background are welcome. Contact Rabbi Sack at the synagogue office for more information about either of the two classes.

During the summer months, HAZ-AK 55+ at Temple Judea is planning to get together for lunch or dinners out, and also possibly show movies at Temple Judea. Please email [tjhazak@gmail.com](mailto:tjhazak@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining us.

Chaverot's Honey from the Heart project will begin this summer, in time to send the gift of sweetness to your family and friends before the Jewish New Year. Chaverot activities will resume in August and September, including plans to meet in person. We welcome new faces and ideas. Please contact Lynn Talone to participate.

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

There are also collection envelopes near the front door for contactless monetary or gift card contributions. Contributions can also be mailed. Please call the synagogue office to ensure your

contribution has been received by the office.

Temple Judea is again conducting in-person services, with a Zoom option still available. Programs and events will also be held inside. Currently, wearing a mask in the synagogue is optional, and open to change if CDC guidelines and recommendations change.

**Regularly scheduled events:**

- Friday evening Shabbat services at 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday morning Shabbat services at 9:30 a.m. Kiddush lunches after services twice monthly.
- Morning minyan every Monday at 9:00 a.m.
- Tot Shabbat: Check with the synagogue for the August date.
- Rabbi Sack's lunchtime Torah study sessions, the first Thursday of each month at noon on Zoom. Check with the synagogue office for the summer schedule.

**TEMPLE BETH SHALOM**  
**Cape Coral**

**(239) 772-4555**  
**www.templebethshalomcc.org**

Temple Beth Shalom is growing! Nine months after our rabbi retired and with the help of dedicated congregants and outside organizations like the Union of Reform Judaism and the Jewish Community Legacy Project, we have at-

tracted new members and the reenergized existing Temple Beth Shalom is ready to hire a part-time rabbi or cantor.

Our dedicated lay leader, Marc Einstein, has returned to his northern home for the summer. The congregation turned out for a delicious potluck dinner and musical Kabbalat Service to thank him for his wonderful services. In his absence, we have been lucky to have dif-

ferent cantors, cantorial soloists and lay leaders leading services and giving us an idea of the future options we have.

While summer is usually a slow time in Florida, we have a lot going on. We will have a program on June 2 about three Jewish singers: Bette Midler, Carole King and Barbra Streisand. Although the program will be via Zoom, we will watch together at a member's home. The cost is \$15 and everyone is welcome. We also have game nights, movies, pot luck dinners

and more coming up. For more information, email [templebethshalomcommunications@gmail.com](mailto:templebethshalomcommunications@gmail.com).

Our religious school is regrouping and getting ready for the fall. Tot Shabbats will also start up again soon. In the meantime, we are looking forward to Ryan Brucker's Bar Mitzvah on June 24.

All of us at Temple Beth Shalom are excited about upcoming events and hope you will join us.

**BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS**  
**Sanibel**

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

**Colleyville connection**

Rabbi Stephen Fuchs and his wife Vickie spent the May 20-21 Sabbath at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas.

This is the congregation where Malik Faisal Akram, a man armed with a pistol took four people hostage on January 15. After a 10-hour ordeal, the hostages were able to escape due to the quick thinking and courageous actions of the synagogue's rabbi, Charlie Cytron-Walker. When Akram looked away from his victims momentarily, Rabbi Cytron-Walker threw a chair in his direction, and he and the hostages were able to run to a nearby exit to safety.

One of the four hostages was Jeffrey Cohen, who secretly dialed 911, alerting the authorities to their plight. As a teenager, Cohen studied with Rabbi Stephen Fuchs for his Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation at Temple Isaiah in Columbia, Maryland, where Rabbi Fuchs served at the time. The rabbi became aware of his former student's involvement in the incident and got in touch with the congregation, which invited him to speak on the above-mentioned dates.

Rabbi Fuchs delivered a sermon Friday evening, May 20, entitled "How True is the Torah?" He led a congregational Torah study class the following

morning. Both the service and the class were broadcast on Zoom.

Bat Yam Temple of the Islands is proud of Rabbi Stephen Fuchs for his sincere compassion and desire to assist a sister congregation and former student following a traumatizing incident.

**Good luck Pastor John**

As many of you know, we consider Sanibel United Church of Christ (SUCC) a sister congregation. We hold our services there, and our rabbi and Pastor John Danner have a meaningful relationship having shared pulpits and taught together over the years. On Sunday, April 24, many of us attended John's final service during which he performed a special puppet show – one of his best. Several of us, including Cantor Simon, Toby Simon and Edina Lessack, joined the SUCC choir in a few of the hymns. Following the service, we enjoyed a reception at the Community House, during which several prominent people spoke along with members of John's family. We were grateful to receive the following letter from John on the Friday following this special day:

Dear Sisters and Brothers, Family and Friends,

It was so wonderful having so many of you at the celebration this past weekend.

You all have been such an important part of my time at Sanibel Congregational UCC. Having Steve, Murray and Toby participate in the service was so very meaningful. And the presen-

tation by Alan and Sandy at the party was perfect. I shall treasure your beautiful gift.

I hope you realize how much I have learned from you as a congregation, and how much pleasure (and if I am honest, pride) I have taken in the relationship between the two congregations – especially in being considered your pastor!

As I write this, it is about two hours before the beginning of Shabbat. As the sun sets, I will be remembering you all with deep affection, and praying that the Holy One continues to bless your witness to interfaith cooperation, respect and genuine affection.

Shalom,

John Danner

**"Run, Hide and Fight"**

In addition to having police protection onsite during services and events, in March, Lt. Towler of the Sanibel Police Department conducted training prior to services. Our members learned the importance of "Run, Hide and Fight" – how to determine which action to use in the case of an attack and how to go about carrying out that action. We were very appreciative of the time taken by

Lt. Towler and others in the department to make sure we understood how to think quickly and move appropriately in the event of an emergency.

**President presents**

On May 4, Bat Yam President Alan Lessack gave a presentation on Chicago Architecture at Shell Point. Alan is a docent for the Chicago Architecture Center, having lectured on over 500 river cruises. This was the first time he spoke on dry land using PowerPoint and pictures to weave the history and architecture of Chicago together. The audience of over 80 people loved it.

**Summer services**

During June, July and August, services will be held the second Friday of each month: June 10, July 8, August 12. These will be led by members of the congregation. We expect they will be unique, based on the ideas of each of the leaders. Services will be preceded at 5:00 p.m. by informal dinners at local restaurants followed by services at 7:00 p.m. Any and all are welcome to attend. For more information, email [BatYamSanibel@gmail.com](mailto:BatYamSanibel@gmail.com). We look forward to seeing you.

**Changing your address?**  
**Keep L'CHAYIM coming**  
**to your home. Email**  
**[loriramos@jfedlcc.org](mailto:loriramos@jfedlcc.org).**

**BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS  
REFORM**

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

**CHABAD  
OF BONITA SPRINGS/ESTERO  
ORTHODOX**

24611 S. Tamiami Trail  
Bonita Springs, FL 34135-7024  
Rabbi Mendy Greenberg  
Phone: 239-949-6900  
Web site: www.JewishBonita.com  
Services: Saturday at 10:00 a.m.  
followed by a Kiddush

**CHABAD JEWISH CENTER  
OF CAPE CORAL  
ORTHODOX**

1716 Cape Coral Pkwy. W.  
Cape Coral, FL 33914  
Rabbi Yossi Labkowski  
Phone: 239-963-4770  
E-mail: info@chabadcape.com  
Web site: www.chabadcape.com  
Services: Friday Evening 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday morning 9:30 a.m. followed by  
Kiddush luncheon  
Sunday morning 8:00 a.m.  
Monday-Friday morning 7:00 a.m.  
JLI Courses: Monday evening at 7:00 p.m.  
Weekly Torah Study:  
Tuesday evening 7:30 p.m.  
Hebrew School:  
Sunday 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
Jgirls: Tuesday 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

**CHABAD OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY  
ORTHODOX**

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

**CHABAD LUBAVITCH  
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
ORTHODOX**

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

**SYNAGOGUES &  
JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS  
IN LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES**

www.Jewishfederationlcc.org

**COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE  
REFORM**

7210 Falcon Crest Drive  
Fort Myers, FL 33908  
Rabbi Bruce Diamond  
(bdiamond5@comcast.net)  
Phone: 239-466-6671  
E-mail: synfree@comcast.net  
Web site: www.fortmyerssynagogue.com  
Community Sabbath eve dinner  
each Friday at 6:00 p.m.  
Sabbath eve worship is at 1068 Metro  
Parkway every Friday at 7:00 p.m.  
Light breakfast and Torah study with  
the rabbi every Saturday morning  
from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

**SHALOM LIFE CENTER  
TRANS DENOMINATIONAL**

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

**TEMPLE BETH EL  
REFORM**

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

**TEMPLE BETH SHALOM  
REFORM**

702 S.E. 24th Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33990  
President: Peter Simenauer  
Phone: 239-772-4555 • Fax: 239-772-4625  
Email: templebethshalomcommunications@gmail.com  
Web site: www.templebethshalomcc.org  
Services: 7:30 p.m. Friday  
Enrichment night every Wednesday at 7:00  
p.m. via Zoom  
Shabbat 10:30 a.m.

**CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SWFL  
CHAVURA**

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

**TEMPLE JUDEA  
CONSERVATIVE**

14486 A&W Bulb Road  
Fort Myers, FL 33908  
Rabbi Marc Sack  
E-mail: rabbi@tjswfl.org  
President: Dan Fox  
Director of Congregational Learning:  
Tab Scribner  
Preschool Director: Joann Goldman  
templejudeapreschool@gmail.com  
Phone: 239-433-0201 • Fax: 239-433-3371  
E-mail: tjswfl@gmail.com  
Web site: www.tjswfl.org  
Services: 6:15 p.m. Friday and 9:30 a.m.  
Saturday Minyan: 9:00 a.m. Monday  
Religious School: Sun. 9:30 a.m. - noon;  
Wed. 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.  
Early childhood education: Preschool, M-F,  
ages 18 months-5 years;  
"Mommy & Me," 12 months-2 years  
*Affiliated: United Synagogue of  
Conservative Judaism*

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

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

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

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