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L'CHAYIM

Published by the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties

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Volume 45, Number 7

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Avi Liberman in Ft. Myers
Enjoy a "Night of Laughter" with comedian Avi Liberman on Sunday, March 12.



New Men's Division Event
Take me out to the ballgame! Minnesota Twins take on Pittsburgh Pirates at Federation's Men's Division's first event.

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For security purposes, we ask that you pre-register for this event at jewishfederationlcc.org/IF75





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 Partisan political opinions will not be published, but opinions on subjects affecting the Jewish community are welcome.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

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

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**APRIL ISSUE
 EDITORIAL
 DEADLINE:
 Monday, March 6**

Strengthening Jewish connections

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

■ Debbie Sanford



Changing to meet the needs of our community, Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties has created the JFED Men's Division. The Men's Division will offer a wide variety of ways to connect Jewishly while expanding networks and giving back. For many people, once we've finished work and spent some time with our families, it can feel like there's no time left for friendship, but it's important in all stages of life. With everything that's going on in the world, it's too easy to rush

right past opportunities for connection and camaraderie.

The new men's division will bring together a group of active men who inspire each other through their values and actions. They will build community through networking, events and philanthropic investment. They will connect socially, professionally and Jewishly, while taking positive action for our community.

There are no membership dues to join. However, you need to be on the mailing list to learn about upcoming events. Events will include sporting events, guest speakers, day trips, dinners out, and more.

It is not only the beginning of men's resurgence in Jewish philanthropy, but a resurgence of Jewish pride in their past, present and future.

For more information, please contact Director of Programs and Engagement Aimee Levine-Miles at aimeemiles@jfedlcc.org or 239-481-4449, ext. 4.

Amongst so many changes and expanding programming at the Federation, we have also transitioned to a new editor and designer for our *L'CHAYIM* newspaper. We thank Ted Epstein for all his hard work and wish him the best in the future. Our new editor is Sharon Hood and MarketCrank, Inc. in Naples. For future submissions, please make note of the new email address: sharon@marketcrank.com.

We look forward to working with Sharon and her team to provide our community this wonderful monthly resource. B'Shalom. 🌟



MAHJONG AT THE JEWISH FEDERATION

Mahjong - Tuesday Afternoons 12pm-3pm

If you are interested in leading either of these groups, or a beginner looking to learn how to play, please contact aimeemiles@jfedlcc.org or call 239.481.4449 x4



**For more info visit:
 JewishFederationLCC.org**



OUR MISSION

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

OUR VISION

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

We're planning an exciting, eventful month

By Aimee Levine-Miles, Director of Programs and Engagement

The Jewish Film Festival of Southwest Florida kicked off on opening day with remarkable success. The Cypress High School band surprised our audience with a drum line, and the audience loved it! Thank you to our wonderful sponsors and volunteers. Thank you, Cypress High School band. The sponsor reception was enjoyed by many. It was great to get everyone together to celebrate in person.

March is going to be an exciting, eventful month.

Holocaust Remembrance Day
The Jewish Federation is excited to

announce we will have a Holocaust Remembrance Day special showing of "J'Accuse." Save the date, April 16, 2023 and keep an eye out for more Holocaust programming in April.

New Men's Division
And here's some exciting news for the men of Fort Myers — we're launching the new Jewish Federation Men's Division. Many momentous events are yet to come.

Purim Carnival
Come celebrate Purim Carnival with our PJ Library families on March 5, 10 a.m. to noon at Temple Judea. Admission is

free and there will be games, crafts and food. Kids of all ages are welcome.

Mahjong
Mahjong players, please join us Tuesday afternoons, noon-3 p.m. at the Jewish Federation.

Paint and Pour
Get ready to paint and pour that wine. Register to attend our Paint and Pour, scheduled Wednesday, March 29, 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Behind the Buddha Art Studio. Have fun painting on your favorite shirt, purse, wallet or denim jacket. We will serve refreshments and wine. The cost is \$36 and seats are limited.

Celebrate Israel @ 75
Celebrate Israel's 75th birthday, with us Sunday, April 2, 2-4 p.m. at Alliance for the Arts. A concert on the big stage will showcase Israeli musicians. There will also be food trucks, vendors and fun for the whole family. Admission is free and open to the public.

Please check our website often for new events and any pertinent information concerning these events.

For more information or to register for these events, please reach out to me at Aimeemiles@jfedlcc.org.

I look forward to seeing everyone. Have a healthy and happy March. 🌸

Two slips of paper

By Rabbi Michael J. Schorin

The tale is told of a Hasidic Rebbe named Simcha Bunim, who lived from 1765 until 1827. Reb Simcha Bunim used to carry two slips of paper, one in each of his pockets. On one of the slips, he wrote, "for me, the whole world was created." And on the second slip, he wrote, "I am but dust and ashes."

Whenever necessary, Reb Simcha Bunim would take out one of these slips and remind himself.

What a fascinating lesson Reb Simcha Bunim has left for us! How often do we look at the world in one of these ways — and totally forget about the other perspective? Of course, the true lesson is not to use just one of these viewpoints, but to combine ... well, let's not get too far in front of ourselves.

This idea jumped out at me as I was reading a fascinating article called "Loving Guidance," written by Hindel Swerdlov and published in "Our Tapestry." Swerdlov had suffered the terrible loss of her 3-year-old daughter, Shula, and had come to visit Rav



■ Rabbi Dr. Michael J. Schorin

Adin Even-Yisrael Steinsaltz to ponder her loss. (Rav Steinsaltz, by the way, was a genius of the first magnitude and he died in 2020. One of his finest books was "The Thirteen Petalled Rose.") Anyway, Swerdlov had been busy working to keep Shula's memory alive. She sponsored a Sefer Torah to be written, opened a children's library, etc. These are all good works and praiseworthy. But Rav Steinsaltz looked at her and said, "It's not about you."

All this time, Swerdlov thought she was doing all of these things for her daughter's memory, and it turned out she was doing them to care for her own feelings. Rav Steinsaltz said to her, "... the only way you can truly affect her soul was through your (Swerdlov's) happiness. Shula needed permission from me to be free to live her life in another capacity and I had to stop 'dragging her down' here."

Between "the world was created for me" and "I am but dust and ashes," is a whole universe. Swerdlov needed to learn to balance these two slips, much like Reb Simcha Bunim.

As the holiday of Purim approaches, we can see this lesson there, too. Megillat Esther tells us that when

Mordechai asked her to go and protest Haman's decree to the king, she demurred. At which point, Mordecai reminded her that, even if she is the queen, she is still a member of her people. And perhaps she was anointed for just this purpose. (Esther 4:10-17)


Can you imagine Queen Esther's reaction to this news? I hear her responding, "but the world was created just for me!" To which, Mordechai would remind her of the second slip of paper.

Of course, Queen Esther comes through this test beautifully. She denounces Haman and keeps her head. Much like Swerdlov, she learns that it is not all about her. By combining ego and humility, we learn to walk in a humble, more harmonious way. When it comes to Reb Simcha Bunim's two slips of paper, we would all be well advised to 'not leave home without them.' 🌸

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



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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In memory of Paul Simko

from the Board & Staff of the Jewish Federation
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From Lynn Jaffe



Jewish Federation
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

HOW THE JEWISH FEDERATION SERVES

Local Jewish Education and Culture

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

Overseas

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

Jewish Community Foundation

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



Jewish Family Services
A Division of the Jewish Federation
of Lee & Charlotte Counties

Local Seniors Services

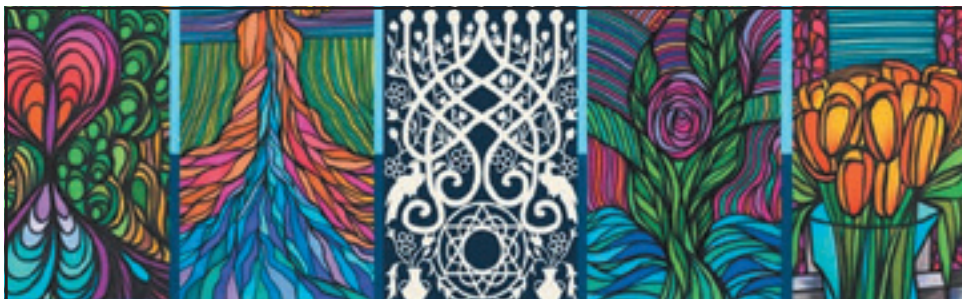
- ☆ Lunch Bunch, a monthly gathering with a free lunch for older adults to meet and schmooze.
- ☆ Holiday baskets and teen visits to seniors and senior facilities for Rosh Hashanah, Hanukkah and Passover.
- ☆ Holocaust survivor outreach.

Local Social Services

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

Local Emergency Services

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



MAKE A TRIBUTE GIFT

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



Jewish Federation
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or LoriRamos@jfedLCC.org.

Jewish Family Services update

By Jodi Cohen, Jewish Family Services Coordinator

During Saturday morning Shabbat services at my temple, before we sing the *misheberach*, the prayer for healing, the rabbi invites us to stand and say the names of the people for whom we are reciting the prayer. I always end my list by saying, “and all of my clients who could use a *misheberach*.” I carry everyone with me, along with their stories, their circumstances and the help needed.

Days after meeting a man on the porch, I can still see the tears streaming down his face as he filled out the



■ Jodi Cohen

form for the Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry. It has been over two months since I met the matriarch of an 11-person household and worked in tandem with Community Cooperative so we could get the family’s power turned back on. At night, my dreams involve shopping for bedding, carrying mattresses and installing new light bulbs.

While so many people have been able to move on from Hurricane Ian, Jewish Family Services is busier than ever, providing food and toiletries to hundreds of people every month as well as fielding nonstop requests for financial assistance from furniture to housing and everything in between.

While I can’t quite remember the pace of life at JFS before the hurricane,

I do know that the carousel was not spinning as fast as it is now.

From the outside looking in, I am a woman plink-plinking at my computer. But on the inside, my heart soars every single time I pay electric, water, car insurance, auto loan, phone and medical bills for clients. On the inside, I wiggle with glee every time I hand out a gift card or tell someone that JFS can help them with hurricane recovery.

It is because of you, our Jewish Federation family, and your overwhelming generosity and support for those devastated by loss, that we are able to help so many people. Your contributions have made it possible to assist people in the rebuilding and repair of their homes and lives. Thank you for your support.

Lunch Bunch

Our January Lunch Bunch at Temple Beth El was fabulous, as you can tell by the photos here.

Our next Lunch Bunch will be **Thursday, March 16 at Temple Beth Shalom** in Cape Coral. Come join us — the food is great, the people are juicy and the programs are lively. Please contact me at 239-481-4449 x1 or jodicohen@jfedlcc.org if you would like to volunteer.

Speaking of volunteers, I would love to skywrite my gratitude in big letters to all the Jewish Family Services volunteers. Thank you for being so compassionate and kind, for working hard and making an impact in our community. 🌟



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



A “Night of Laughter” with Avi Liberman

Sunday, March 12 at 5 p.m.

Temple Judea invites you to a “Night of Laughter” with comedian Avi Liberman on Sunday, March 12 at 5 p.m.

Avi Liberman’s comedy is funny, timely and insightful. Born in Israel, raised in Texas and now living in Los Angeles, Liberman has a winning combination of life experiences and topical issues that have made him a favorite in comedy clubs from coast to coast.

Some of you may remember Liberman from the documentary film about his Israel comedy tour entitled “Land of Milk and Funny” that was screened at our local Jewish Film Festival a few years ago. Liberman’s love of Israel was apparent throughout the film, as he toured with both



■ **Avi Liberman**

Jewish and non-Jewish comedians. While entertaining audiences throughout the country, his fellow comedians also learned much about Israel and came to appreciate its culture and significance.

Liberman performed stand-up comedy on Comedy Central’s “Premium Blend” and “Make Me Laugh” as well as NBC’s “Friday Night!” and three appearances on CBS’ The Late Late Show. His acting credits include “Dave’s World,” CBS; “Boston Common,” NBC; and “Anytown U.S.A.,” Comedy Central. Liberman appears regularly as a frequent guest on the very popular E! Countdown series. He guest-starred in “Movies at Our House” as well as a pilot, “Through the Keyhole,” on AMC.

He performs in synagogues, Federations and Jewish community centers throughout North America. Liberman traveled overseas to Iraq and Afghanistan to perform for our troops.

Since 2003, Liberman successfully arranged widely acclaimed stand-up comedy tours in Israel to help boost morale while donating all of the proceeds to a charity. The successful “Comedy for Koby” tour, www.comedyforkoby.com, is now a biannual event, benefiting the Koby Mandell Foundation.

The Koby Mandell Foundation was set up in 2001 by Rabbi Seth and Sherri Mandell after their 13-year-old son, Koby, and his friend, Yosef Ishran, were brutally murdered by terrorists near their home in Israel. Their personal loss led the Mandells to envision a system of support programs that they hope will make a real difference in the lives of people who have lost parents, children or siblings through terrorism. Today, the Koby Mandell Foundation is the largest provider of emotional support services for bereaved Israelis who have lost an immediate family member to terror.

Liberman was one of the few people in the world who traveled and performed extensively during the pandemic. He was the first Israeli citizen to perform in Dubai in addition to a one-hour show in Moscow. Liberman used Israel as a home base and traveled to eight countries in seven months. He wrote a book about his travels entitled “Traveling During the Pandemic: How Two Weeks Turned Into 7 Months, 8 Countries and the Adventure of a Lifetime.” The book will be available for purchase before and after his performance.

Attendees are invited for wine and hors d’oeuvres at 4:30 p.m., before the show, which begins at 5:15 p.m. A dessert reception will follow.

Tickets are \$54 each. Sponsorships that include having the opportunity to meet and talk with Liberman are available. Call the synagogue office at 239-433-0201 for more information. 🌐

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At the Museum

By Susan Suarez, President & CEO

Our visitation numbers continue to grow. In January, for our International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration, we welcomed the most guests we have

had since before COVID! More than 100 people joined us for film presentations and tours of the museum. Also on that day, WINK News TV reporter Gail Levy filmed a story at the museum for the evening's newscasts featuring her interviews with Holocaust survivors Sarah Rockler and Rob Nossen.



■ Susan Suarez

I hope you will visit our website to learn about and participate in some of our interesting upcoming programs. You can learn about Nazi-looted art and medical ethics, participate in a film discussion, learn Yiddish or observe the solar calendar lighting up on our Liberation Wall in the Reflection Room on many different dates of liberations from January through May.

Meanwhile, designs for the exhibits in our expanded space are being finalized. After months of discussing what to include and what not to include, text is written and images, videos, recorded testimony and artifacts are selected. Our exhibit firm will take this information and design the appropriate panels, cases, lighting and other elements to make the exhibits complete. We can't wait for you to experience our newly expanded museum sometime this summer!

We are so grateful to all our donors and volunteers for making this work possible. Together, we are teaching the lessons of the Holocaust to inspire action against bigotry, hatred and violence. Our messages of mutual respect and understanding are a beacon of light against the darkness of hatred that is too prevalent in our world.

Help us grow!

Our adjacent space will become a large classroom, Auschwitz Gallery, Gallery for Other Genocides and Human Rights, special exhibit gallery, and more. This new space will increase the size of the museum from 6,000 to 9,600



Naples Newcomers tour Museum



School group in Museum classroom

square feet, allowing us to provide additional exhibits and serve thousands more students and guests each year. For more information on making a gift, please contact me at 239-263-9200 or susan@hmcec.org.

Triumph event on March 15

We are very much looking forward to our annual Triumph event, "Triumph of Freedom." It will take place on Wednesday, March 15 at the Arthrex One Conference Center. A limited number of tickets are still available. Our featured speaker is Michael Abramowitz, president of Freedom House, the

longest-operating pro-democracy and human rights organization in the U.S. As a grant-making organization, Freedom House provides financial support to courageous individuals and organizations fighting for basic human rights at the local level in countries across the world.

Abramowitz has served as director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Levine Institute for Holocaust Education and is the former national editor and White House correspondent for *The Washington Post*. We look forward to the insights Abramowitz will share with us at this special event.

Many thanks to this year's Triumph of Freedom sponsors and supporters. Here is a list of our sponsors (as of the Feb. 2 print deadline:)

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I look forward to seeing you soon at the museum! 🌍



WINK reporter Gail Levy interviews Holocaust survivor Rob Nossen.



WINK reporter Gail Levy interviews Holocaust survivor Sarah Rockler.

It's never too early to make amends

Aging Jewishly – What our traditions teach us about growing old

By Rabbi Barbara Aiello

Hot, dusty and tired, Poppy and his grandson, Ari, burst into the kitchen where Ari's mother, Rachel, was preparing dinner. "You guys look a wreck," Rachel said, "but it looks like you had fun."

Indeed, they had. Rachel's father, Ari's beloved Poppy, organized a perfect day that began with fishing from the pier followed by a race around the go-kart track, topped off with a pizza picnic.

As Poppy headed for the door, Ari couldn't resist giving him one last hug. "Thanks, Poppy. You're the best."

Later that evening, when Ari was asleep, Rachel could no longer contain her frustration. Sharing a pot of tea with Ari's dad, Josh, Rachel's tears said it all. "You know, Josh, I love seeing my dad and Ari together. Dad adores him and Ari loves his Poppy. I'm happy they have this special relationship but when I think back to my growing up, I get so resentful. Dad was never there for me."



Rabbi Barbara Aiello

Rachel's lament included bitter memories of years when her father's workaholic behavior kept him far from his family, especially his daughter. He regularly missed sporting events, school performances and sometimes even her birthday. "Spending a day with my dad would have been wonderful. But I get so upset when I see Ari getting what I never had and I wonder, 'Does Dad ever think about what he missed?'"

"Every day," says Rachel's father, as he regaled Rachel's mom with the details of his day with Ari. "Every day, I think about the time I wasted writing one more memo, making one more phone call, taking one more business trip. Before I knew it, Rachel was grown and out of the house. Spending time with Ari shows me how much I missed with Rachel. I'm trying to make it up to her by being a better grandfather than I was a dad."

Writing in the online publication *Family*, Ann Richardson explains that it is not uncommon for grandparents to view "...their new relationship with their grandchildren as a perfect opportunity to make amends." However, Richardson cautions that, although making these "secondhand" amends may be soothing for the grandparents, their children may harbor resentment

that they missed out on the special relationship and attention the grandchildren now enjoy.

"Seems like an apology is in order," said Rachel's mother as she rubbed her husband's shoulders. "You need to explain to Rachel how your relationship with Ari brings back so many memories of the time you lost with your own daughter."

Rachel's mother's advice to her husband is imbedded in the ancient Jewish tradition of "teshuvah," which includes admitting what we've done wrong and making a face-to-face apology to the person harmed. In fact, a guiding principle of atonement is emphasized during the Yom Kippur service, where we hear the words of the Mishna, "For transgressions between a person and God, Yom Kippur atones; however, for transgressions between a person and another, Yom Kippur does not atone until he appeases the other person."

Although Rachel's father understood his Jewish traditions regarding asking forgiveness, he was reluctant to approach his daughter. "Can't Rachel see that I've changed? Isn't it obvious that the attention I give to Ari is my way of making it up to her?"

Certainly, Rachel can see that her father has changed, but the hurt is

deep and the residual resentment profound. That's why it is essential to speak directly to the person we've wronged.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (z"l) spoke to this issue when he wrote, "I forgive you because, when you admit you did wrong, express remorse and do all you can to make amends, especially when I see that, given the opportunity ... to repeat the crime, you do not do so because you have changed ..."

The relationship between Rachel and her father will be strengthened if and when her father acknowledges, directly to Rachel, the hurt he caused by his neglect.

Asking forgiveness and reaping the emotional rewards that come with an honest "I'm sorry" need not wait for a once-a-year observance. Restoring a relationship by making amends is an ancient tradition available at any time.

For 10 years, Rabbi Barbara Aiello served the Aviva Campus for Senior Life as resident rabbi. Her most popular columns are now published in her new book, "Aging Jewishly," available on Amazon books. Rabbi Barbara now lives and works in Italy, where she is rabbi of Italy's first Reconstructionist synagogue. rabbibarbaraiello.com.

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Gyorgy Ligeti – Music of the Imagination!

By Arlene Stolnitz

Since September, I have focused on Jewish musicians who fled Europe just prior to the Holocaust, coming to the U.S., not only to find a safe haven, but also to pursue their passion musically. Many of these musicians found success in Hollywood, which served as the springboard for their future musical development.



■ Arlene Stolnitz

In doing research for this month's article, I discovered a man (curiously, there don't seem to be any women) who became important in Hollywood, even though he never left Europe during that period.

I am sure you never heard his name and, yet, I am positive you would recognize his music. Do you recall the music for Stanley Kubrick's "2001 Space Odyssey?" That strange electronic sound called music? That music was created in part by Gyorgy Ligeti, born in Hungary in 1923 of Jewish parents but later emigrating to Vienna where he became an Austrian citizen. With a full career in classical music composition, how, you may

ask, did he get involved in the "Hollywood" scene?

Turns out, Ligeti was fascinated with 12-tone music and started experimenting with it early on. (I am not attempting to explain this type of music, but my musical friends will understand; it is music related to the style of Schoenberg).

The young Ligeti was discouraged from studying music and never took piano lessons until he was 14 years old, even though he had a strong interest in music. The family, however, had a radio, and Ligeti was able to hear the music of Wagner, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, and others, who later influenced his style. About this time, he composed his first piece, a waltz, strongly influenced by Grieg. Other compositions followed.

In 1941, he sat for examinations in physics and mathematics at the University of Cluj in northwest Romania where the family had moved. He passed, but Nazi laws severely restricted Jewish university applicants and he was rejected. It was then that his father finally allowed him to pursue his musical ambitions. In January 1944, his studies were abruptly halted when he and other Hungarian Jews were forced into labor for the remainder of

the war. During this period, Ligeti lost his entire family in Auschwitz, except for his mother. Luckily, Ligeti escaped death and returned to Vienna to resume his studies.

I had to search long and hard but finally found the Hollywood connection. Ligeti first heard of "2001" when a friend in New York wrote to him in Austria, saying that a very important film had come out in America and that he ought to go to hear the music as soon as possible. Ligeti could not afford to travel for the premiere, but he went to the Vienna opening and was absolutely astonished. Excerpts from his pieces had been included in the Kubrick film.

The tradition in music is, apparently, that brief excerpts can be used with merely the formal permission of the publishers but that, for longer passages, consultation is required. Ligeti went again to "2001," armed this time with a stopwatch, and found that just over half an hour of his music, including excerpts from at least four of his works, appeared on the soundtrack! What ensued was a lawsuit, which was finally settled with a monetary agreement.

Ligeti, like Kubrick, was intent on precision in performance. By the end of their careers, both men were

considered to be the best in their professions. Perhaps their ultimate affinity was that of a lifetime devoted to perfecting new horizons.

Ligeti was a resourceful and multi-faceted character; a cosmopolitan intellectual who taught composition at universities in Hungary, Germany, Sweden and the U.S. He was fluent in French and Romanian; an atheist Jew who wrote an important Réquiem; and a gregarious and generous man who spent countless years haunted by the specter of death and evil. My research revealed that he was a conservative Christian in practice. He died in Vienna in 2006 where he is buried.

I often wonder how I have the "chutzpah" to write about these talented and gifted musicians.

My background in music is literally nothing compared to those I write about. It is merely my interest in what they, particularly as Jewish composers and artists, have achieved. It is remarkable to me, as I think about it, that the Jewish people, so small in number, have achieved such outstanding accomplishments.

Arlene Stolnitz, a retired educator, has been a regular contributor to Federation papers in Southwest Florida. Her interest in all kinds of Judaic music has led to this series of articles. 🕯️



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Refreshments will be served.

New and returning series, History of the World, Part II, more

Stars of David

By Nate Bloom, Stars of David Contributing Columnist

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

In chronological order, here are premieres this month that have a "Jewish connection."

"Daisy Jones & The Six"

On March 3, "Daisy Jones & The Six" premieres on Amazon Prime. The "official" description says it follows "a rock band in the 1970s from their rise in the LA music scene to becoming one of the most legendary bands in the world and explores the reason behind their split at the height of their success." Riley Keough, Elvis' granddaughter, plays the title character.

Based on a novel, the series was created by **Scott Neustader** and **Michael H. Weber**. They have long been writing partners ("500 Days of Summer," and many more). The duo also produces the series, along with Laura Neustader, Scott's wife.

"Perry Mason"

In 2020, HBO released "Perry Mason," a reboot of the famous TV series. But, unlike the original, the new series was set during the Great Depression in 1932. As the first season ended, Mason opted to go to law school with the aim of being a defense attorney.

In the first season, Mason and Hamilton Burger, an assistant district attorney, are very friendly. **Justin Kirk**, 53, played Burger in the first season and will return as Burger, a main cast character, in the second season, which begins on March 6 (HB0).

Michael Begler and **Jack Amiel**, both 54, took over as the main producers of the show in the second season. They also wrote most of the second season scripts.

"History of the World, Part II"

Also on March 6, the highly anticipated series, "History of the World, Part II," premieres. Every **Mel Brooks** fan knows that "Part I" was a hilarious 1981 film directed and written by Brooks. Scenes included Moses (played by Brooks) bringing down the 10 Commandments from Mt. Sinai.

The 1981 film hinted that there would be a Part II. But Brooks always said that was a joke. Well, the 95-year-old Brooks was coaxed to co-write a sequel, which will air on Hulu in the

form of eight half-hour episodes. On March 6, two episodes will be released, with two more episodes released each following day.

As I write this, a complete cast list is unavailable. I know that **Pamela Adlon**, 56, and **Evan Shafran**, 40, will appear. It's likely that comedic actors **Ike Barinholtz**, 45, and **Nick Kroll**, 44, who are listed as producers of the series, will also act in the series. (FYI: Barinholtz won the "Celebrity Jeopardy" final last month.)

David Stassen (not Jewish) co-wrote "Part II" and he acts in at least two episodes. His frequent writing partner is Barinholtz, who he met when they were 7 years old. In a Stassen interview, I learned that Barinholtz went to a Chicago Jewish day school before transferring to the same (secular) high school as Stassen.

"Extrapolations"

A six-part Apple+ series, "Extrapolations" premieres March 17. Here is part of the official description: "'Extrapolations' is a bracing drama that introduces a near future where the chaotic effects of climate change have become embedded into our everyday lives. Eight interwoven stories about love, work, faith and family from across the globe will explore the intimate, life-altering choices that must be made when the planet is changing faster than the population."


The Jewish cast members are **Judd Hirsch**, 87, **Daveed Diggs**, 41, **Peter Riegert**, 75, and **David Schwimmer**, 56. Riegert and Schwimmer's characters have "Jewish names." I presume they are Jewish characters.

Here's some of the big-name (not Jewish) actors in the series: Meryl Streep, Forest Whitaker (best actor Oscar), Kit Harington ("Game of Thrones"), Edward Norton and Tobey McGuire.

Einstein royalties benefit university

Finally, a note about the many Verizon ads featuring an actor (Paul Giamatti) playing **Albert Einstein**.


There's a silver lining to Einstein being used to sell Verizon stuff. Einstein left his estate to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. To use Einstein's image, companies have to get permission. If permission is granted, they have to pay royalties.

To date, the Hebrew University has received "Einstein image" royalties totaling \$250 million. About \$12 million in "Einstein image" royalties flow annually to the university. 

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March 1939 and Slovakia's Holocaust story

By Paul R. Bartrop, PhD

Czechoslovakia, situated in Central Europe, was created in 1918 in the aftermath of World



■ Paul Bartrop

War I. It had been created by joining the regions of Bohemia and Moravia (historically part of Austria) and Slovakia (historically part of Hungary), together with Ruthenia. This meant that Czechoslovakia was a nation comprising multiple ethnicities: Czechs, Germans, Slovaks, Hungarians, Ukrainians and other minorities including Poles and Jews.

Despite this complex mixture of ethnicities, cultures and religions, Czechoslovakia remained relatively stable politically during the interwar years, with a functioning democratic parliamentary system. It was Central Europe's only true democracy, enjoying the highest standard of living in the region.

The aftermath of the September 1938 Munich Conference, which saw the Sudetenland ripped away from Czechoslovakia, precipitated a political crisis resulting in the exodus of Czech democrats and the installation of a right-wing rump regime known as Czecho-Slovakia. Neighboring Hungary and Poland took advantage of the situation, also annexing Czech territory.

On March 15, 1939, Adolf Hitler abrogated his earlier pledges and German forces swept into what remained of the country. Bohemia and Moravia were now made into a German "protectorate," while Slovakia, governed by the Slovak People's Party, declared its independence under the leadership of Monsignor Jozef Tiso, a Roman Catholic priest who quickly established a one-party fascist-style dictatorship.

Prior to World War II, 135,000 Jews lived in Slovakia, though many sought to leave during the later 1930s. At a census on December 15, 1940, there were about 88,951 Jews still in the country. With independence, a series of antisemitic measures were introduced, the first of which excluded Jews from the military and all government positions. Tiso, himself thoroughly pro-Nazi, began negotiations with the German government to work on having the country's Jews deported.

A "Jewish Code," based in part on Germany's Nuremberg Laws, was passed in September 1941. Among other things, it banned intermarriage between Jews and other Slovaks, excluded Jews from many professions and demanded that Jews henceforth wear a yellow armband. By October 1941, 15,000 Jews were ejected from Bratislava; 10,000 were expelled outright, and 5,000, who either held work permits or were government employees

or business professionals, were permitted to remain with their families.

Earlier, in November 1940, Slovakia had joined the Axis alliance and accompanying Germany in the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. It declared war on Britain and the United States in December 1941.

Where the Holocaust was concerned, Slovakia was the first of Germany's allies, in March 1942, to consent to the deportation of its Jewish population in pursuit of the Nazis' "Final Solution." The Holocaust then became a distinctly Slovak national project, as the Slovak police and military, together with the antisemitic paramilitary Hlinka Guard, assembled tens of thousands of Slovak Jews and concentrated them in locally built camps at Sered, Novaky and Vyhne.

Deportations of Jews from Slovakia to "the East" started on March 25, 1942, when the first transport, comprising almost 1,000 women, was sent to Auschwitz. Jews were then sent into occupied Poland or to Germany itself; here, the Slovak authorities turned their Jewish captives over to the SS, who, in turn, deported them to Auschwitz, Majdanek or Sobibor.

By October 1942, some 58,000 Jews had been deported. More than 99% of those deported between March and October that year were murdered. About 6,000 Slovak Jews fled to Hungary during this time. The deportations were halted on October 20, 1942.

The deportations were stopped, largely, on account of intervention from President Tiso. He had learned of the fate of Slovakia's Jews via the Papal Nuncio in Bratislava, who had, in turn, been alerted from the Vatican

after news was received from two Slovak Jewish leaders, Gisi Fleischmann and Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandl. After strenuous efforts at negotiation, they were successful in persuading the government to cease the deportations and the remaining 24,000 Jews in Slovakia were not deported to their deaths.

The deportations resumed on September 30, 1944. Not only had the Soviet Red Army reached the Slovak border by this stage, but an uprising among Slovak nationalists had broken out on August 29. In response, German troops occupied all of Slovakia and the country's independent status came to an end.

Nearly 14,000 Slovak Jews were now deported; 7,936 went to Auschwitz (where they were gassed on arrival), and 4,370 to nearby Theresienstadt (Terezín), with most of the rest murdered within Slovakia itself by German SS and Hlinka Guard units. This final round of deportations lasted until March 31, 1945, when the last group of Jewish prisoners was taken from Sered to Terezín.

Overall, it can be concluded that up to 70,000 Jews were deported from Slovakia across the duration of World War II. Of these, some 65,000 were murdered or died in concentration camps at the hands of German SS and Slovak police, troops and Hlinka Guard militias.

Throughout this period, thousands more Jews remained in hiding, or did not identify themselves openly during the roundups or other actions. Although figures are difficult to fix, it has been estimated that up to 105,000 Slovak Jews, representing 77% of the prewar population, died during the war. 🇮🇱



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The “other Italy”

By Jerry Greenfield, the Wine Whisperer

Most of us who eat pasta and pizza are pretty familiar with the wines that come from the Chianti region of Italy. At least we’ve heard the name of the area and we know that the tannin and acidity of these wines are a perfect offset to the acidity of the tomato sauce so characteristic of Tuscan cuisine.



■ **Jerry Greenfield** is made in every single region, which means there are discoveries all over the place, and there are wines with names like Aglianico and Piculit Neri that almost never make it to the shelves of local stores.

The good news is that the wines from the Piedmont area, in the very north of the country around Milan and Turin, are sensational in a way different than Tuscan varieties. The cuisine they match with is different; the climate (at the foot of the Alps) is different. These wines offer a whole ’nother dining and drinking experience.

Let’s start with the “Three Bs.” That’s Barolo, Barbera and Barbaresco, the most characteristic red wines of the area. It’s a little confusing, though ... Barolo is made from the Nebbiolo grape, and is named after the region, while Barbera and Barbaresco are the names of the grapes themselves. (See? That’s why we need to go to wine school).

The bad news is that Barolo, which has been historically described as “the king of wines and the wine of kings,” can be quite expensive. It’s big, bold, rich and elegant. It ages and improves forever and ... it costs a car payment.

Speaking of Barolo, when you do want to splurge, look for the wines of Angelo Gaja. First of all, he’s a sweet-heart, second, he’s crazy about my wife, Debi, and third, he’s kind of like the godfather of winemaking in Northern Italy. His single vineyard Barolos and Barberas will knock your socks completely off. The problem is the wines are made in fairly limited quantities and pricing starts well north of \$250 a bottle.

The good news is that buying a wine labeled Nebbiolo instead can offer

just about the same great experience at a fraction of the price. However, even with Barolos, there are some values to be found. Look for anything by Vietti, a producer that offers good value in the \$40 range and produces wine in plentiful quantities.

The big reds from Piedmont are usually released about 2 to 3 years after the vintage date, so the 2009s are in stores now. All will require some time in your spacious wine cellar or the bottom of your closet. Here are my current suggestions:

Marchesi di Barolo Barbaresco 2019

This is a big producer and offers consistent quality. Look for this name on many varieties of wine from Piemonte. The Barbaresco offers characteristic richness and density, along with flavors of cherries and berries. There’s some licorice and spice, too. Around \$45.

Azelia Barolo 2018

Here’s the exception that proves the rule. This producer offers Barolos for around \$40. This highly rated vintage is on the sweet side, very fruit-forward, with raspberry and tea flavors leading to a nice long finish.

Vietti Barolo Castiglione 2021

Like many Barolos, this wine gives you undertones of licorice, cherry and spices. It’s a big wine, perfect for pairing with heavy stews, filets, etc. Around \$50.

Azelia Nebbiolo Langhe 2019

Another bargain from this fine producer, this highly rated offering is quite elegant, with those cherries and berries again and some spice on the finish. A steal at \$24, if you can find it (don’t forget about searching for some of these wines online).

Sample widely.
Jerry Greenfield is Creative Director of Greenfield Advertising Group. He welcomes your questions and comments at jerry@winewhisperer.com. His wine blog is at www.winewhisperer.com, and his new book, “Secrets of the Wine Whisperer,” is available on the site.

Interested in Your Family’s History?

Nate Bloom (see column on page 11) has become a family history expert in 10 years of doing his celebrity column, and he has expert friends who can help when called on. Most family history experts charge \$1,000 or more to do a full family-tree search. However, Bloom knows that most people want to start with a limited search of one family line.

So here’s the deal:

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

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Mishloach Manot

By Chef Dalia

With Purim just around the corner, there is a lot of enjoyment in our house right now. One of the fun things about Purim is the chance to get dressed up and act with a kind of ridiculous behavior that most of us don't have in our everyday lives. Purim, for me, brings out many colorful and joyful memories, but none as strong as the faces of happy children with their mishloach manot, the delicacy baskets traditionally given to friends and family for this holiday.

Purim is a day for celebrating how much kindness we can give to others.

In fact, on Purim we are compelled to give two forms of gifts. The first is Matanot L'evyonim, gifts to the poor. The second is Mishloach Manot, which is Hebrew for "sending of portions."

There's no special requirement for what goes into mishloach manot, but they usually contain sweets. It's also traditional to include at least two portions of food for sharing. Depending on your tradition, mishloach manot can be simple to gourmet and everything in between. An Ashkenazi must-have is hamantaschen (Oznei Haman), filled, triangular cookies.

Sephardim enjoy dates and walnut roulade-shaped cookies, and kids love Kadorei Shokolad.

While it's best to fill your baskets with customary and favorites treats, it's always fun to add a little taste of something new.

So, you're in the Purim mood? That means you're probably looking for quick and easy treats to make for your mishloach manot (including Oznei Haman, of course). Yep, these recipes are probably what you're looking for! 🥰



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



Marzipan-Amaretto Hamantaschen

Did you know it's a mitzvah to get drunk on Purim, at least according to the Talmud. Why limit alcohol to Manischewitz only? Here is a recipe for boozy hamantaschen (Oznei Haman).

- Ingredients
- Almond filling:
- 8-ounce almond paste
 - ½ cup melted butter
 - 4 tablespoons sugar
 - 1 teaspoon amaretto liqueur (almond-flavored liqueur)
 - 2 eggs
 - 4 tablespoons almond flour

- Dough:
- ½ cup unsalted butter
 - ¾ cup sugar
 - 2 teaspoons fresh lemon zest
 - ½ teaspoon amaretto liqueur (almond-flavored liqueur)
 - 2 eggs
 - 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 cup ground almonds
 - bit of salt

- Directions
- Filling:
1. Mix the almond paste, butter, sugar, amaretto liqueur, eggs and almond flour in a mixer until very smooth.

- Hamantaschen:
1. Combine butter and sugar together in a mixer until light and fluffy.
 2. Add the lemon zest and amaretto liqueur to the mixture.
 3. With the machine running on low, add the eggs one at a time, making sure to fully incorporate each egg.
 4. Add the flour, ground almonds and salt. Mix to combine.
 5. Roll the dough to 1/4-inch thickness. Dip a round cookie cutter into flour and cut circles in the dough. Fill the dough with 1 teaspoon of filling and pinch the edges together to form a triangle. Place on a parchment-lined cookie sheet and bake for 12-15 minutes at 325 degrees until lightly browned.

Kadorei Shokolad: Israel's favorite dessert

Chocolate balls are as iconic as falafel in Israel. *Kadorei shokolad*, as they are known in Hebrew, are part of the typical Israeli childhood but they're rarely seen outside the home. They might be ignored by culinary experts, but insiders know that the very best are made by excited kindergarteners.

- Ingredients
- 2-pack tea biscuits
 - 1 cup granulated sugar
 - 6 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa

- powder
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup of butter or margarine, melted
- ½ cup milk
- Fine shredded coconut, in a bowl
- Rainbow sprinkles, in a bowl

- Directions
1. Put the biscuits in a plastic or paper bag and close tightly. Using a rolling pin or meat tenderizer, crush or pound the biscuits until they have the consistency of rice.
 2. Pour the biscuits into a large bowl.

- Add the sugar, cocoa and cinnamon and mix well. Add the vanilla, softened butter and milk and stir until the batter comes together. If the mixture doesn't bind, add another tablespoon of milk.
3. Take a tablespoon of the batter and roll it between your hands to form a ball.
 4. Coat these balls in either coconut or rainbow sprinkles by rolling them from side to side. Transfer to a plate or tray, and place in the refrigerator for at least one hour. Once chilled, the Kadorei Shokolad are ready to serve.



Date and walnut roulade-shaped cookies

Date-filled roulade cookies are very popular in Israel, especially before Purim.

- Ingredients
- 12 oz. pitted dates
 - 2 tablespoons brown sugar
 - ¾ cup toasted walnuts
 - 2¼ cups flour, plus more for the work surface
 - ⅓ cup sugar
 - 1 teaspoon baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1 stick soft butter
 - ⅓ cup orange juice

- Powdered sugar for dusting
- Directions
1. Soak dates in boiling water for 30 minutes and strain well. Put in a food processor with brown sugar and process until very smooth. Keep aside.
 2. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
 3. Put walnuts in a plastic bag and crush them into small pieces using a rolling pin. Set aside.
 4. To make the dough, put flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in the bowl of a food processor and blend for a minute. Add butter and orange juice, and process to make crumbs. Transfer to a large bowl and knead dough with

- your hands to create a ball.
5. Lightly flour working surface and rolling pin. Divide dough into two, then roll one half into a thin 10-by-13 inch rectangle. Spread half the date mixture on the rolled dough, leaving a half-inch clean near the longer edge. Sprinkle with walnut pieces. Start rolling lengthwise towards the clean long edge to create a 13 inch-long roulade. Gently transfer to the baking sheet. Using a sharp knife, make slits in roulade, ¾ of an inch apart. Repeat with second half of dough.
 6. Bake for 25 minutes, until golden at the bottom. Cool on a cool rack. Dust with powdered sugar and cut slices to serve.

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Fahrenheit or Celsius

Daniel Fahrenheit was a physicist who lectured in chemistry and trained as a glassblower but was supposed to learn bookkeeping.



■ **Brian Simon**

Anders Celsius, also a physicist, was better known as an astronomer and mathematician before he developed a new scale for measuring temperature.

Fahrenheit was born in Poland in 1686. Celsius was born 15 years later in Sweden. Their names and temperature scales are still going strong 400 years later. And their biographies are even more fascinating.

Orphaned at 15, Fahrenheit was apprenticed to a merchant in Amsterdam. He was more interested in other pursuits than bookkeeping (I mean, who isn't?) and became fascinated by Florentine thermometers. The problem with the Italian instruments was that they couldn't be calibrated. No two gave the same reading. So, Fahrenheit went to work, trying to build a better one.

His apprenticeship had ended, but Fahrenheit was still too young to access his inheritance, so he borrowed money. When the city fathers of his hometown found out about his debt, they planned to have him arrested(!) and sent off as a seafaring laborer to pay off his obligations. Fahrenheit spent the next

few years on the run from the Dutch authorities. At age 24, he was old enough to access his inheritance and pay off his debt, but he continued to travel, meeting some of the pioneers in his field and continuing his work.

In 1714, the 28-year-old Fahrenheit produced two mercury thermometers that gave the same readings, which was a huge breakthrough; however, he had not yet developed the temperature scale. So, what did those first thermometers say? Perhaps general terms like, "Oy, it's cold!" to "I'm schvitzing!"

The precocious Celsius was reading Isaac Newton's work as a child and, by age 12, could solve all the problems in a college math textbook. He studied meteorology, math, astronomy and physics at the University of Uppsala. In 1737, Celsius joined a scientific expedition that helped confirm Newton's theory that the shape of the earth flattens near its poles.

Fahrenheit's name in Yiddish either means "drive father" or "to go-ness." He's No. 12 on ToursPoland.com's 22 most famous Polish people, a few spots ahead of former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres (No. 18), and behind cosmetics magnate Helena Rubinstein (No. 10) and astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (No. 1).

Celsius did not make the discoverwalks.com ranking of Top 15 Swedish people, but they list golfer Annika Sorenstam twice and put young climate activist Greta Thunberg as No. 1, way

ahead of the musical group ABBA, so can you even call the list legitimate? I think not.

Wanting to avoid negative numbers, Fahrenheit set the freezing point of water as a benchmark at 32 degrees and the human body temperature at 96 because the numbers were related and easily divisible by 2, 4 and 8. He created a mixture of ice, water and salt to find a stable temperature he called 0 degrees.

Celsius used the melting point and boiling point of water as his two benchmarks and set them 100 degrees apart in his scale, which he called centigrade. Ironically, he initially set the boiling point as the low temperature and freezing point as the high. A Frenchman named Jean Pierre Christin

later inverted the scale, which just makes more sense. But it gives me an idea for a new way of measuring weight where, say, 300 pounds is considered 0, and I could look at myself in the mirror and think, "Brian, you really need to gain weight."

Fahrenheit's scale was adopted by England's Royal Society in the 1770s and became the standard for English-speaking countries for 200 years. The centigrade scale was renamed in honor of Celsius by international agreement in 1948.

Neither man ever married, which was probably for the best. Think of all the teasing: "Hey Celsius, Fahrenheit's wife is way hotter on his scale than your wife is on yours!" 🌡️

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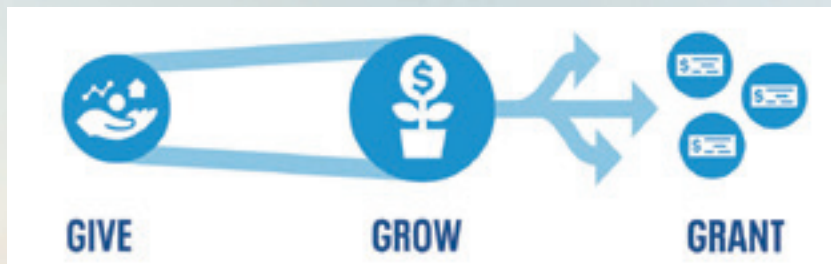
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What the pickle?

How did pickleball get its name? How did this insanity start? Why is it becoming so popular?

These are the questions that have



■ Keith Grossman

been keeping me up at night, like having heartburn from eating too much spicy pastrami. By the way, have you ever tried to cure heartburn by drinking dill pickle juice? But I digress.

Pickleball seems like it should be a Jewish sport invented by a couple of boychiks sitting around a small booth in a bustling New York kosher-style deli. Abe and Jacob are noshing on the whole schmear and discussing the lack of sports they can play indoors during the winter months. They are avid tennis players who can't play their beloved sport due to the snowy weather. That's when Abe grabs a pickle and hits it toward Jacob with a wooden spoon-like utensil, or maybe a wooden cutting board, or maybe some old Jewish seeded rye.

Was it a dill pickle? A sour pickle? Does it matter?

The sport quickly gains popularity, like a rising Red Sea, with many delis, synagogues and retirement homes setting up courts for the new game. Leagues start to form. The JCC starts an annual pickleball tournament. Everybody is competing for space with the mahjong ladies.

It didn't happen that way, though. If it did, Abe would have probably picked something that makes more sense, like a matzo ball or a boiled egg.

Instead, pickleball started in the '60s on Bainbridge Island in

Washington state. Joel Pritchard, Bill Bell and Barney McCallum came up with the idea of pickleball, using ping-pong paddles and a wiffle ball.

And, let me tell you, it was a huge success! A tremendous success. Gated communities are converting parking lots into pickleball courts (everybody is driving golf carts, anyway). *Architectural Digest* and *Mansion Global* have named pickleball courts the hottest real estate amenity. And now pickleball is taking over the whole world, baby! It's hotter than a burning bush.

But my primary question still isn't answered. It continues to torture me. If they were using a wiffle ball, why the name pickleball? Is there a strong wiffle ball contingency with deep pockets that would have prevented them from just stealing that name? Were all other appropriate names taken? What was the affinity with pickles? Wouldn't a cucumber have been good enough? A pickle is really just a derivative of a cucumber, so why not?

Have the rackets and the court been reduced in size due to some pickling process? Is the court so small you barely need to move, so you can just stand there and enjoy a jar of Bubbie's kosher dill pickles without spilling any pickle juice?

These are the times that brine men's souls. I relish a wonderful tale.

And now for the rest of the story...

Legend has it that Joel Pritchard's wife suggested naming the sport "pickleball" after their family's cocker spaniel, Pickles, who would chase after the ball and hide it in the bushes.

Sure, the name pickleball is catchy and a bit humorous, but really? That's the origin story? It sounds like bubbameister to me. 🥒

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Living deliberately

By Rabbi Marc Sack



■ Rabbi
Marc
Sack

I am, no doubt, out of sync with current work and social habits, but I believe the trend toward working from home is not healthy. For sure, it served a purpose during the pandemic: business could go on even though we were cooped up in our homes. It is also cheaper for businesses who can spend less money on renting office space. (One woman told me that her company, that used to rent space in three buildings, has now consolidated its office into one.)

It's been at least 10 years since I started worrying about how our mobile devices encourage us to take our work with us everywhere we go, at all hours of the day. Television shows and movies regularly show us images of people working on their laptops while in bed. Working exclusively from home only standardizes this; there is no place and no time when we can put work aside. So much for the idea of compartmentalizing our lives, of separating work from home and family, or from entertainment. Work is now with us 24/7.

Before cellphones and the pandemic, we already had a hard time structuring our time. We were constantly enticed to go to more places, do more exotic things (rappelling? bungee jumping?) and, of course, buy more. We were encouraged to fill our lives with busyness and things.

During high school, I was active in USY, the Conservative Movement youth group. At USY conventions and camp, I began to learn that Shabbat was meant to be a different kind of time. But it wasn't until I was in college that I saw parents bless their children at the beginning of Shabbat — when Eva and Mayer Schwartz, a modern-Orthodox family in Cleveland Heights, invited me to spend Shabbat with them. (This was a great

mitzvah: the Orthodox community of Cleveland Heights invited other Case Western Reserve students for Shabbat. The Schwarzes were exceptional in their hospitality.)

At the Schwartz home, it was an expectation that the children would be home for dinner on Friday nights. Their lights were set to timers and, when they went off, everyone went to bed. When Shabbat was over, Eva Schwartz, a nurse, went into the hospital and life returned to its normal rush. But for 25 hours each week, the Schwartz family stopped all work and spent time together. It was in their home that I realized I wanted that life for myself.

Shabbat is not a time for isolation, for being left alone. It is a time for non-rushed connection. It is not a time for getting stuff done that we cannot do during the week but, rather, a time for letting things be as they are.

This is what Judaism gives the world: we believe that all of God's creation, because it is God's creation, has inherent dignity. The world — other people, animals, vegetation — do not exist solely for what they can do for us. The world does not exist only to serve us. Shabbat enforces a nonutilitarian understanding of creation. The world has dignity — is entitled to dignity — because it and everything in it were created by God. As the psalmist wrote, "The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains" (24:1). Our own dignity and the dignity we give the world around us is made real in our celebration of Shabbat.

Judaism wants us to live deliberately: structuring our time, our lives, so we can have a day of rest. The world of work and acquisition wants to own us. We put that on hold when we light our candles, bless our children, have Shabbat dinner and spend time with others giving thanks and enjoying their company.

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

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Mordechai and Haman

By Rabbi Lawrence Dermer

The beginning of the story of Purim tells us how Mordechai saved the king from the two assassins, Bigtan and Teresh. We would think the king might somehow repay him for watching his back, but Mordechai is not looking for a monetary pay day. He just wants to get closer to Ha Shem, and his Jewish soul, his neshama, rejects any personal reward.

Surprisingly, it's Haman, not Mordechai, who is honored when the king appoints him to the position of head minister. Haman becomes a big macher in the kingdom and all the king's subjects are ordered to bow before him. In other words, this has all gone straight to his head and his ego is out of control. Out of all the people in the town of Shushan, only Mordechai has the chutzpah to refuse to bow to Haman and, in doing so, risks his life. The people could now see how inflated Haman's ego had



■ Rabbi Lawrence Dermer

become and they could also be inspired and influenced by Mordechai's bold and fearless actions.

There's a distinct difference between Mordechai and Haman, and herein lies the deeper meaning of Purim. Haman's only interest is his own gain, his desire for power. He wants to rule the world and doesn't care who he destroys in the process, even if he ultimately destroys himself. Haman certainly paved the way for other megalomaniacs like Mao, Stalin and Hitler, and we may now add Putin to this list as well.

Mordechai, on the other hand, wishes only to remain loyal to the true king, using him as a mentor and good example of how to conduct himself in a G-dly manner. Mordechai can't be bought at any price. He can stand firm, tall and proud while everyone else bows to Haman. He has the absolute faith and certainty that everyone will soon see who the real king is. He leads by example, inspiring others to respect and not fear him.

Haman gains control of the kingdom and decides to use the power he's

been given to execute his evil plan and destroy his main enemy, Mordechai, who represents the spark of Divine light that is within each of us — the inner spiritual strength and still small voice that allows us to stand up for what is right. This is the strength that can give us the ability to rise above any challenge, to stand up to any tyrant.

Facing Amalek, those who wish to destroy us, is something we've dealt with throughout our rich Jewish history in the form of Haman, Pharaoh and Hitler. Even today, we deal with

Amalek in the form of nations that swear to our destruction, such as Iran and terrorist groups like Isis, Hamas and Hezbollah.

Each year, the story of Purim demonstrates what we can accomplish when we hold fast to our Jewish traditions and Torah values. Whether in the past or in the present day, we hold the key to our own success or failure. Anachnu Chazakim — We Are Strong!

Rabbi Lawrence Dermer serves at Shalom Life Center of Southwest Florida.

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It's Adar, be happy!

By Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer

Our sages teach us, “When the month of Adar enters, we increase in joy.” (Babylonian Talmud, Taanit 29a.)



■ Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer

This is a month of celebration. Purim is just around the corner. We will sing, nosh on hamantaschen and give expression to the ways we would like to see ourselves by dressing in costume to emulate the heroes and villains of our Purim story and, perhaps, the modern counterparts of those archetypes. Check out a photo of Purim parades in Israel or here in the U.S. and you will see Luke Skywalker vs. Darth Vader, Captain America vs. The Red Skull, and many modern characters representing the struggle of good vs. evil.

But before we can get to Purim, we must first observe Shabbat Zachor — the Shabbat of remembering. But what are we supposed to remember? We're supposed to “zecher Amalek.” We're supposed to remember Amalek, a people in the Biblical story who are infamous for attacking the Israelites when they were at their weakest point.

Amalek sneaked up on the weakest Israelites when their strength had been sapped by their struggle to keep up with the rest of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. Amalek sneaked up and took the people straggling behind, those who were weak and struggling. They didn't attack Moshe and the

leaders; they picked off the weak people. That's what Amalek does. And Amalek does it still. In every generation, there is an Amalek.

We have to understand what this memory is, what we have to “zachor.”

In the Torah, it says, “Remember to blot out the memory of Amalek — don't forget.” Don't forget to remember that we have to blot out every bit of Amalek. Amalek, the quality that sneaks up on us. The thing that gets us in our weakest place and brings us down to where we're most vulnerable. Where we could be captured, as it were, by a power that holds us back from reaching our potential, that holds us back from becoming *tzaddikim* — righteous people, the best people we can be.

It is interesting that before we can get to Purim, we have a Shabbat focused on memory and before we can get to Shabbat Zachor, we must observe Shabbat Shekalim. The Shabbat of Shekels. The Shabbat of money. The Shabbat, where we read the Torah portion that deals with *tzedakah*, that deals with giving. This is the side of compassion, the side of the heart, the side of caring, the side of sharing — all the attributes we need in order to be prepared to reach the highest of the high.

This month, we move from compassion to memory to joy and ensure that Amalek never overtakes us.

Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer serves at Cantor of Bat Yam Temple of the Islands on Sanibel Island. 🌴

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Ensuring a future built on the past

By Rabbi Nicole Luna

When we imagine our children’s lives, we undoubtedly want them to be healthy and happy, to have a meaningful and fulfilled life. But our dreams for our children’s futures include the values, the history, the stories and the lessons of those who came before us. We look to the past when imagining the future.



■ Rabbi Nicole Luna

This is mirrored in a blessing that our biblical ancestor Jacob gives to his own grandchildren. Jacob blesses his grandchildren, Ephraim and Manasseh, by invoking the name of his father and grandfather. He says, “May the God before whom walked my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, the God who has shepherded me ever since I came into being until this day — the angel who has rescued me from all harm — bless these lads! Through them, let my name and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, be recalled, and let them greatly multiply within the land!” (Gen. 48:15-16)


Jacob wants his grandchildren to be part of the blessing God gave Abraham and Isaac. He wants his grandchildren to multiply, not just in any area, but in the land that God promises to their great-great-grandfather Abraham. One commentator explains that the line, “let my name be recalled,” means that Jacob wants them to be called “Hebrews, ivrim,” meaning “from ever, across the river Euphrates,” despite the grandchildren being born in Egypt. Jacob wants his grandchildren to remember where they came from.

Jacob, however, is not immune to a common worry, an anxiety that has existed probably from the beginning of humanity. How do we know our descendants will remember their ancestors? How can we ensure the past will be part of the future? This transcends having children. How do we know that the values and causes we cherish will continue?

In a midrash, a story about the Torah, Jacob is described sitting on his deathbed surrounded by his sons. He worries that his sons will not follow the God of their father, grandfather Isaac and great-grandfather Abraham. He asks his sons, “Listen to the God of Israel, your father in heaven. Is there perhaps division in your hearts about the Holy Blessed One?” His sons quickly reassure him, and reply “Shema Israel, Hear, O Israel, our father. There is no division in our hearts. On the contrary, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad. Adonai is our God, Adonai is One.” Jacob responds, “Baruch Shem k’vod malchuto l’olam vaed. Blessed is the name of God’s glorious sovereignty forever and ever!”

According to the rabbis, this is why we say the first line of the Shema loudly, with the strength of 12 sons, and the second line softly, like the elder Jacob sighing in satisfied relief.

May our actions today honor our ancestors and cause our descendants to have pride in us. May we put in the effort to create the world we want our future generations to inherit. May we serve as an example of dedication to the Jewish community and Jewish learning. We exist on the shoulders of our ancestors, with visions of our descendants.

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



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March 11 | 7:30pm | **Thomas Mesa, Cello** Montgomery | Dvořák | Elgar
April 1 | 7:30pm | **A Night at the Opera** Robert Van Winkle, Narrator
April 22 | 7:30pm | **Ying Li, Piano** Higdon | Rachmaninoff | Mussorgsky

BRAVE NEW POPS

Remember When Rock Was Young The Elton John Tribute
January 20 | 7pm | Charlotte Performing Arts Center
January 21 | 7:30pm | Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall

Bowie & Glass A Symphonic Tribute
February 10 | 7:30pm | Big Arts Sanibel Island
February 11 | 7:30pm | Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall
February 12 | 4pm | Charlotte Performing Arts Center

The Orchestra Starring Former Members of ELO
May 6 | 7:30pm | Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall
May 7 | 4pm | Charlotte Performing Arts Center

TICKETS \$25 | **SWFLSO.ORG** | **239.418.1500** | 



Become a Part of Florida Jewish History

The Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU is collecting old photographs, artifacts, objects, memorabilia, and stories to enhance our collection of Florida Jewish History.

Examples of what we are looking for include: historic ritual objects, artifacts or ephemera related to Sephardic/ Mizrahi communities, LGBTQ+ experience among other topics.

History Harvest is presented by the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU and the Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab as part of the project *Community Data Curation: Preserving, Creating, and Narrating Everyday Stories*. Funding for this program is provided through a grant from the Mellon Foundation.

Use this QR code to submit item for evaluation. For additional information contact JMOF-FIU Curator Jacqueline Goldstein jacgolds@fiu.edu

www.jmof.fiu.edu



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Jewish Family Services
A Division of the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties



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Purim — I have come to save the day

By Cantor Barry Butensky

The current spate of antisemitic media cartoons, op-eds and boycott movements serve to remind



■ Cantor
Barry
Butensky

us that Amalek is alive and thriving, as usual. There was a short period of time, a few decades ago, when many Jews were lulled into thinking that all of this baseless hatred and nastiness was a thing of the past.

Even the naivest among us today realize that this is unfortunately not the case.

Therefore, remembering Amalek is a relatively easy commandment to fulfill today — one need only read the newspaper, listen to the radio or TV or view the internet to meet Amalek face to face, live and in person.

How to counteract and deal with Amalek has been a never-ending problem throughout Jewish history. Apparently, no satisfactory and permanent solution to the problem has been found. Perhaps that in itself is the basic lesson of the commandment of remembering Amalek. We have to remember that the problem is constant and continuing, and that it has remained insoluble for millennia.

We should not be surprised or even overly discouraged by its sinister presence in our lives and world today. We must do everything possible to combat it, but we should always remember that it is not given to pat solutions or wishful thinking. It is, apparently, part of the Jewish condition — our very terms of existence.

The story of Purim is the story of Amalek contained, but not completely defeated and destroyed. Haman is hydra-headed and has always had disciples and followers. Haman and his sons were thwarted and hanged, but that did not prove to be much of a deterrent to the “Hamans” that followed throughout history.

In terms of the destruction of Jews, Hitler was far more successful than Haman, having killed six million Jews in five years of hate and terror. Yet,

Hitler destroyed Germany completely as well, with far more Germans than Jews being killed in that terrible and tragic war.

So, again, one would think that the lesson of Amalek would have been learned by now. But the reality of Amalek is that it defies logic, self-interest, and history and its lessons. Purim is our only hope in containing Amalek. Purim is always hidden, unpredictable, surprising and unexpected. Yet it is also a constant in Jewish life and history.

The survival of the Jewish people remains the miracle of all history, and that miracle is omnipresent in our current world. The existence and accomplishments of the state of Israel is an offshoot of this constant and continuing miracle. Israel and its achievements give us a sense of Purim every day of the year. The miracle may not be visible, but it is certainly present and alive.

The Talmud's statement about the inability to distinguish between Haman and Mordechai is indicative of the mystery of Purim. Purim is not always what it appears to be at first glance. It is the hidden part of Purim that fascinates and confuses us. Our salvation is always unexpected, and, many times, defies any form of human wisdom and expertise.

Purim tells us never to despair or lose hope regarding our current difficulties and uncertain future. It is easy to fall into a funk when viewing all the difficulties that surround us. Purim preaches to us that such a dark attitude is inconsistent with Jewish faith and Torah values. That is why the rabbis stated that Purim is the only eternal holiday on the Jewish calendar.

We will always need Purim and its message to continue to function and achieve. For without Purim present and operative, we fall into fearing that Amalek may yet, God forbid, triumph. So let us rejoice in the knowledge that Purim is with us, and all will yet be well for the nation and people of Mordechai and Esther.

Purim samech.

Cantor Barry Butensky serves at Temple Beth Shalom in Cape Coral. 🌟

What do you think?

L'CHAYIM wants to know!

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

Letters Policy

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

Opinions printed in L'CHAYIM do not necessarily reflect those of the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties, its Board of Directors or staff.

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



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

Send an email to
aimeemiles@jfedlcc.org

The joke is on you

By Rabbi Solomon Agin

Purim, which marks the first serious antisemitic event in history, is celebrated in an unusual way. Instead of observing the day in seriousness and gravity, and contemplating the possible dreadful consequences, we traditionally treat the whole event as a huge joke. In fact, Haman — the archetype of the classic antisemite — is portrayed as a clumsy clown. Children masquerade as Haman, musicals



■ Rabbi Solomon Agin

and parodies are the order of the day and even a special cookie has been created bearing the name of Haman. This kind of observance gives us a great insight into the Jewish mind. It is precisely his/

her ability to accept life with a sense of humor that has helped the Jews to survive. This saving humor comes out of the wellsprings of the Jewish character, which affirms life and enables Jews in every generation to gain a perspective of Jewish history from his/her contemporary vantage point. When it can be shown that the antisemites of history have hurled themselves in vain at Jewish existence,

then it becomes clear that to try to stamp out Jews and Judaism is an act of supreme folly. It is laughable. And Haman has been treated to the supreme insult of being reduced to a biscuit — the Hamantaschen, which we polish off in one mouthful! Rabbi Solomon Agin serves at Temple Shalom in Port Charlotte.

When all is said and done

By Rabbi Stephen Fuchs

My friend since I entered rabbinical school in 1968, Rabbi Joseph Edelheit, had the honor to present the *azkarah*, the memorial tribute to colleagues who have died in the past year at the recent convention of the National Association of Retired Reform Rabbis (NAORRR). Because the convention honored Rabbi Edelheit and his classmates on the 50th anniversary of their 1973 ordination, he also prepared a special *azkarah* for members in his class who are no longer living. His beautifully crafted, sensitive



■ Rabbi Stephen Fuchs

and caring remarks vividly brought to life each of the individuals he named. They also filled me with gratitude that I am not on the list of deceased colleagues eulogized. Then it struck me. The *azkarah* list is one that no rabbi escapes forever. So, I found myself envisioning my own funeral and asking, “What will they say about me?” They would recall, I guess, the books I have written and some of the distinctions and honors bestowed on me over the years. These milestone events crop up at various points on a clergy person’s path if he or she does not commit murder or some other egregious offense that disgraces the calling. As these “highlight moments” came to mind — and each had seemed so

precious at the time — I found myself asking aloud, “What do they matter?” And the honest answer is, “very little, indeed.” What I really would like my *azkarah* to include are some moments no one knows about, many of which I have forgotten myself, or an impact of which I was not aware in the first place. As legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden once wrote, “A teacher never knows what stays with those he or she is teaching.” At the end of the day, the only moments that really matter in my life are the moments when something I said or did made a positive difference in another person’s life. Those are the moments that matter ... the only moments that matter.

Awards and honors afford only ephemeral gratification. Often, they result from luck or circumstances that have nothing to do with objective merit. Often, too, they are an excuse for an organization’s fundraising effort. As the late Alvin Fine wrote, “Victory lies not at some high place along the way but in having made the journey ... a sacred pilgrimage.” As famed sportswriter Grantland Rice put it so eloquently, “When the one Great Scorer comes to score against your name, He writes, not that you won or lost, but how you played the game.” Rabbi Stephen Lewis Fuchs serves at Bat Yam Temple of the Islands on Sanibel Island.



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Jonathan & Bobbie Daitch Share Exciting News for TYPE 1 DIABETICS

The Daitches are proud to announce that their son-in-law's company, Tidepool, recently received FDA approval for a new device that is a life changing innovation in Type 1 diabetes management.

Tidepool is a non-profit dedicated exclusively to the management of Type 1 diabetes.

The device, the TIDEPOOL LOOP, received clearance from the FDA as the first device to enable insulin delivery from a compatible Apple Watch. The TIDEPOOL LOOP enables Type 1 diabetics to choose and control the pump, CGM, and algorithm that are best for them and have all three work together.

Brandon Arbiter is the Vice President of Development of Tidepool and joined the company when it was a start-up. He is married to the former Rosalyn Daitch.

Learn more about this visionary development in the individualized management of Type 1 diabetes at:

<https://www.tidepool.org/automated-insulin-dosing>



TEMPLE BETH EL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Fort Myers

Allison Fego, Religious School Coordinator

As our religious school students returned to class after a nice long holiday break, they started to learn about the concept of Achrayut. Our second- through fourth-graders are discovering the need to fulfill different types of roles and creating their place within their families and communities. In the exploration of the value of achrayut, our students will examine the different responsibilities they have in

various aspects of their lives. We focus on family roles, but also include personal responsibility to our families and broader Jewish communities, as well as taking care of our bodies.

In this unit, students will start with learning a range of ways in which we can show responsibility and how Judaism teaches us to show our achrayut. Students will learn about the rules we follow and how they can

choose to hold themselves responsible for their actions.

Our K-1 class learned about Ometz Lev — courage of the heart. Courage of the heart is inner strength. The students talked about ways they can be strong and how they can learn to be brave, even when something is scary.

Our students ended the month celebrating Shabbat together on the bima. They sang songs and said prayers along with the cantor and rabbi while leading the congregation. The students always enjoy leading songs and prayers and teaching congregants the hand motions we use during tefilla on Sunday mornings.

Religious school students, their families and our congregation finished out January with Mitzvah Day. Instead of being in class, the children participated hands on, doing good deeds for our community. The children wrote and decorated cards to be sent to soldiers in Israel and to children at Goli-sano Children's Hospital. Some of our kids helped make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, packing them with other snacks to give out to the homeless community. A few of our fifth- through seventh-graders and confirmation students participated in planting new trees and cleaning garbage from the back of the temple. 🌳



Priya Dunkelgrun, Josh Fego and Dexter Medlock make PB&J sandwiches



Students doing David Melech on Shabbat



Iris Luna-Bord shows off her beautiful card she made



Serenity Bronson planting a tree and filling the dirt



Josh Schwartz preps to plant a tree

High School Students: Earn CAS Credits!

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

If you are interested, please send the following information to debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org:

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



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TEMPLE JUDEA RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
Fort Myers
Tab Scribner, Director of Congregational Learning

We're in the thick of it, with non-stop activity. We planted our trees for Tu B'shvat and now we turn our attention to Purim and Pesach.

On March 5, we will begin celebrating Purim with the 5th annual Purim Carnival with our friends from Temple Beth El and PJ Library. The carnival will run from 10 a.m. through noon. Admission is \$10 per family for games, crafts and food for all.

On March 6, our students will show off their Hebrew reading skills by participating in the Megillah Reading. Food and games begin at 6 p.m.; Megillah reading is at 6:45 p.m.

For the little ones, we'll have a Purim-inspired Tot Shabbat on Friday, March 10 at 5 p.m.

After I recover from Purim, our focus will shift to Pesach, with a special children's program on Sunday, April 2 (pre-Seder). On Friday, April 14, we'll have a Tot and Family Shabbat program with matzah pizza beginning at 5 p.m.

I am so excited about our spring programming, especially the Purim Carnival. Please join us. Kids of all ages are welcome!

For more information about the Temple Judea Religious School, our spring programs or volunteer opportunities, please contact Tab Scribner, Director of Congregational Learning at 239-433-0201 or tjswfledu@gmail.com.



Candle lighting times:


Mar. 3: 6:11 p.m.

Mar. 10: 6:15 p.m.

Mar. 17: 7:19 p.m.

Mar. 24: 7:22 p.m.

Mar. 31: 7:25 p.m.



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

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





Chabad FGCU Estero Rabbi Mendel Gordon

Semester is on a roll at FGCU Chabad. We started with an exciting Welcome Back BBQ, which was joined by regulars from last year and many new students, too. We continue with busy shabbats full of Jewish pride and inspiration.

We had the special opportunity to host two IDF soldiers to share their experiences protecting our brothers and sisters in Israel. Amit shared of a dangerous mission to take over a terrorist

cell in Gaza in which he was wounded. And Chen shared of being attacked at a bus stop by a terrorist, which he miraculously survived.

JewishU classes are flourishing with 10+ students coming after a long day of classes to learn Torah.

During January, we conducted a course on the Patriarchs and their relevance to our lives today as Jewish people. After her first class this semester, Reagan shared with me that this is her

first time to explore Jewish learning since before her bat mitzvah.

In honor of this year being a year of Hakel, a year of gathering, we are excited to join Jewish students from schools all over Florida for a big shabbaton at UF in February.

We have a wonderful new group of Sina Scholars, another incredible class we do every year that explores Jewish fundamentals at college level. Together, we went to visit the local Jewish seniors, and then discussed how the Jewish view on kindness and helping others isn't just because we find it meaningful. Rather it's part of our purpose and responsibility in this world.

Like the saying of the Baal Shem tov, "A soul can enter the world for a lifetime of 80 years just to do a favor for another."

We are looking forward to more social events and learning opportunities and are excited for a special Jewish Heritage Day on March 16. The whole community is welcome to join the students for a Jewish festival on campus, with opportunities to learn and experience many parts of Jewish life. For more information or to RSVP, go to chabadfgcu.com/heritageday.

Chabad at FGCU services Jewish students at FGCU and nearby schools. For more information, reach out to Rabbi Mendel at 347-452-0489 or Rabbi@chabadfgcu.com. 🌟



Alon, Barrel and Benji connect at the Welcome Back BBQ



Zoe and Nicole make desserts for Shabbat



Jewish Federation
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

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JEWISHFEDERATIONLCC.ORG/SCHOLARSHIPS

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

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

Do you speak

Spanish, Russian, French, Creole, Haitian, Mandarin, etc.?
Please share your gift of language with the needy in our area.



**Send your response to Jodi Cohen at
239.481.4449 x1 or jodicohen@jfedlcc.org.
She will contact you as needed. Thank you.**

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Friday evening Services at the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties
9701 Commerce Center Court, Forty Myers
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)
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E-mail: info@chabadcape.com
Web site: chabadcape.com
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Hebrew School of the Arts Sunday 10:00 A.M - 12:30 P.M
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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.

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Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz
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Web site: www.chabadswf.org
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Learning Tree Preschool Director:
Amy Amon
Email: LearningTree15@yahoo.com
President: Reina Schlager
Email: reinaschlager@aol.com
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Email: templebethshalomcommunications@gmail.com
Web site: www.templebethshalomcc.org
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Enrichment night every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
Shabbat 10:30 a.m.

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CHAVURA
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Fort Myers, FL 33908
Chavuratshalom@gmail.com
www.chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org
Cheryl Fulmer, President
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Jewish current events - 11:00 a.m. Saturday
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templejudeapreschool@gmail.com
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E-mail: tjswfl@gmail.com
Web site: www.tjswfl.org
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Web site: templeshalomfl
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- AJC (American Jewish Committee):
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Rabbi Mendel Gordon - 347-452-0489
mendelgordon@gmail.com
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Fort Myers

(239) 433-0201 • www.tjswfl.org

If there is an overarching theme to Jewish lifecycle rituals, it is that the community is with us when we go through life's changes. Ideally, a brit milah or baby naming and a wedding should take place in the presence of a minyan, a microcosm of the Jewish people. (All of these ceremonies are "valid" even if they don't take place within the context of a minyan, but they are meant to be celebrations of the community as well as the individual. Also, it goes without saying that a bar or bat mitzvah, when a young person is called to the Torah for the first time, must take place in a minyan.)

The 1962 sociological study of the shtetl, "Life is With People," captures well the ethos of our people: we live our lives in the context of community.

So, too, with dying and death. It is a *mitzvah* to visit the sick (*biquir cholim*) and it is a special *mitzvah* to prepare a body for burial. There are two names for the group of people who do this: most commonly, the *Chevra Kadisha*, the Sacred Society; but also *Chesed Shel Emet*, the Act of True Kindness, called this because taking care of a person after they have passed away is a gift that cannot be repaid.

Fort Myers has two *Chevra Kadishas*, one that is Orthodox and run

out of Chabad, the other that is non-Orthodox and has its base at my congregation, Temple Judea.* After a death, groups of men or women go to the funeral home to lovingly wash, groom and dress a body and put it in a casket. The ritual, called a *taharah*, a purification, shows kindness both to the deceased and to their family, who is comforted with the knowledge that the Jewish community is caring for their loved one. There is a liturgy of prayers said, asking that God be compassionate with the deceased and that the people performing the *taharah* be worthy of their sacred task.

Right now, the *Chevra Kadisha* operated out of Temple Judea needs volunteers, people who would be available to perform this *mitzvah*. Training sessions will be held. The *Chevra* will perform this ritual for any Jewish person, affiliated or not affiliated, who would like this ceremony for themselves or their loved one. Please contact Rabbi Sack, 239-433-0201, for more information.

*Temple Judea houses the equipment for the men's and women's *Chevra*. The group is made up of members of several congregations. Temple Judea gets no remuneration for this service.🕯️

BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS

Sanibel

(773) 251-8862 • www.batyam.org

As we return to normal following the devastation of Hurricane Ian, I am pleased to report that Bat Yam Temple of the Islands is alive, thriving and looking forward to the coming months.

Bat Yam has held several special Shabbat services in the last month. At the end of January, our cantor, Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer, was part of our Refugee Shabbat service. He talked about refugee trends worldwide including developments on the island of Cuba, leading to record numbers of Cubans leaving their homes.

On March 8, Rabbi Schnitzer, president of the Cuba American Jewish Mission, will present The Story of the Jewish Community of Cuba. Please note: This is one of Shell Point's Academy of Learning programs, and residents can register online or at one of the concierge desks.

From Columbus' first voyage to the New World to the present, Jews have always been a part of the story of Cuba, and their 20th-century story illustrates their determination and fortitude. Come learn about their turbulent history for independence from Spain and the revolution under Fidel Castro.

Rabbi Schnitzer has worked with the Jewish communities of Cuba for 20 years. He has visited the island 21 times in service to the community, building synagogues, free pharmacies, school classrooms and providing both spiritual and material support. Rabbi Schnitzer's presentation will include photos and videos of the history and latest developments of the "Chosen Island."

Last month, Bat Yam observed Tu B'Shevat, the birthday of the trees and a celebration of nature and our responsibility for the environment. Rabbi Schnitzer chanted the famous Song of the Sea, with its unique trop in honor of the holiday. He and his wife, Yaffa, provided the treats for our Oneg Shabbat and included the fruits and nuts that are traditional during this holiday.

This month

Moving ahead, Purim, occurring from sunset March 6 to sunset March 7, commemorates the saving of the Jewish people from Haman. There are Purim "speils" (plays or skits), hamantaschen (cookies baked in the shape of Haman's 3-cornered hat) and groggers that are shaken whenever his name is mentioned. Rabbis Fuchs and Schnitzer will co-host a Purim Shabbat service on Friday, March 3 beginning at 7 p.m.

One of the highlights of the evening will be Rabbi Fuchs' famous Purim quiz. Members and guests are encouraged to read the Book of Esther in any translation of the Hebrew Bible. Throughout the service, Rabbi Fuchs will ask a number of questions about the characters and scenes in the text. Those who have the correct answers will receive a bag of candy. Some of the questions will be easy and others obscure. The size of the prizes will be commensurate with the difficulty of the questions asked. "Diligent study will pay off," says Rabbi Fuchs.

March 23, beginning at 4 p.m., is Bat Yam's Annual Meeting. Officers and trustees will be elected for the coming year, and the slate looks promising!

We are pleased to announce the showing of the film "God on Trial" on March 27 at 1 p.m., at the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties. The film is free of charge. Bring your own lunch; Federation will supply beverages, and it is suggested that you plan to arrive at 12:30 p.m.

Looking ahead

Rebetzin Yaffa Schnitzer will present a workshop, "Healing the Spirit, Transforming the Mind, Deepening the Heart," next month. Meditation has already been proven to enable us to clear our minds in order to relax and connect to others. Yaffa's practice expands on this methodology with the addition of chanting — a powerful path to healing. No prior knowledge of Hebrew, singing or chanting is necessary, and all are welcome.

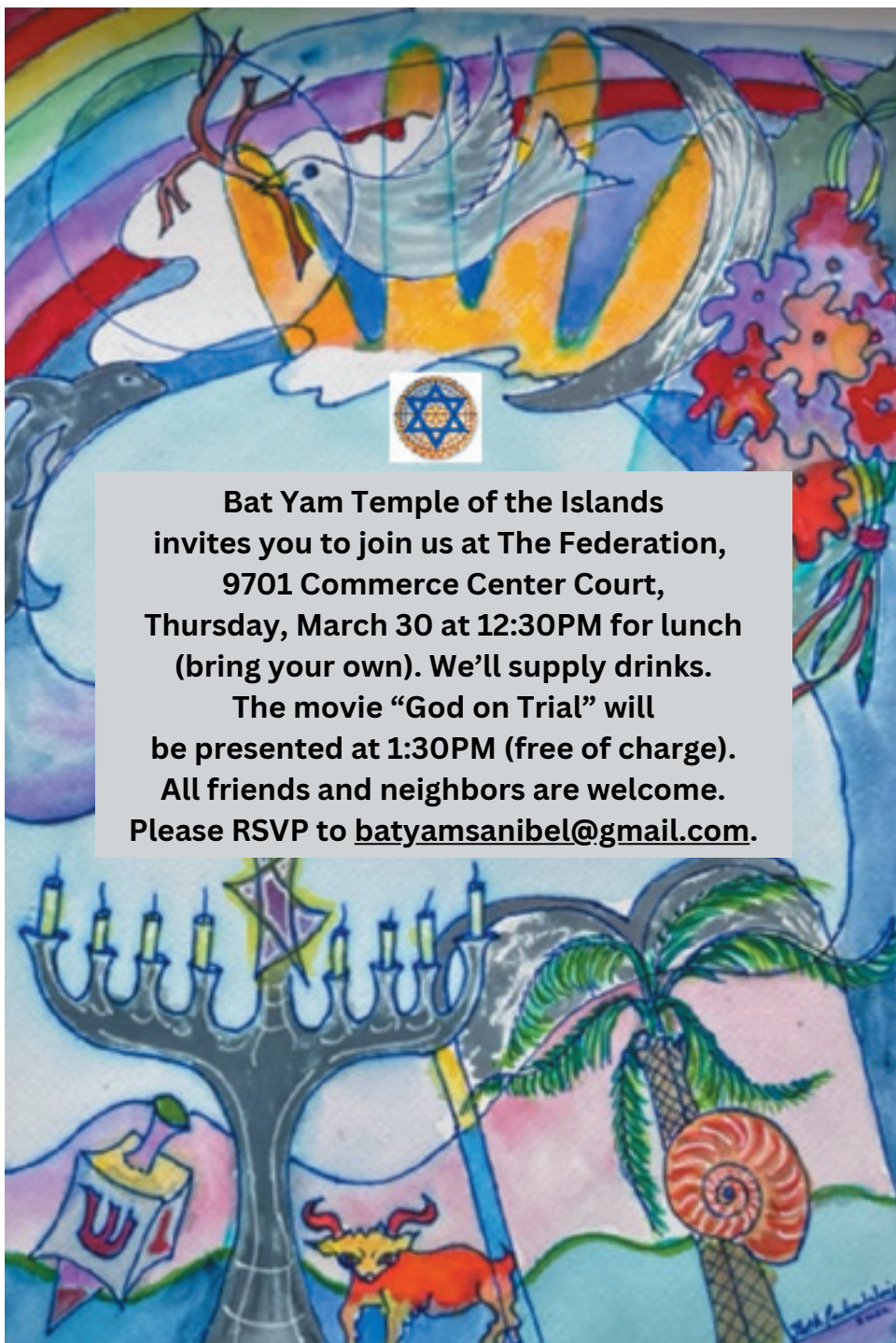
Finally, after a several-year COVID-related hiatus, we are thrilled to announce the return of our Community Passover Seder, which will take place Wednesday, April 5. Watch for additional details.

As always, Bat Yam Temple of the Islands continues to welcome all who are in the Southwest Florida area to join us for:

- Shabbat Services every Friday night at 7 p.m. in person or on Zoom from our temporary home at Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties, 9701 Commerce Court, Fort Myers

- Weekly Shabbat Torah discussion led by Rabbi Stephen Fuchs and held at the home of Sheila and Herb Sklar of Shell Point in Fort Myers or on Zoom.

For more information, the Zoom link and/or questions, please email us at batyamsanibel@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you soon. 🕯️



Bat Yam Temple of the Islands invites you to join us at The Federation, 9701 Commerce Center Court, Thursday, March 30 at 12:30PM for lunch (bring your own). We'll supply drinks. The movie "God on Trial" will be presented at 1:30PM (free of charge). All friends and neighbors are welcome. Please RSVP to batyamsanibel@gmail.com.

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

TEMPLE BETH EL
Fort Myers

(239) 433-0018 • www.templebethel.com

On Jan. 29, Temple Beth El members and nonmembers filled the Dubin Center for Mitzvah Day. For weeks, diapers and other baby supplies, linens, foodstuffs and other sundries were gathered and sorted so stations could be established, and items packed, bagged and boxed for delivery to food pantries and assorted Lee County help sites. Our theme was Hurricane Relief and Recovery. We came together as a community and packed food, cooked for hot food trays, packed bags of nonperishables and made 200 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Working outside, others collected trash and gathered debris remaining from Hurricane Ian.

Thank you to the leadership and volunteers who got it all done. It was a powerful day. Later that evening, the Men’s Club had its 2023 kick-off event with almost 40 folks enjoying

dinner at the Fort Myers Ginger Bistro. Good food, good friends and much fun.

We have a baby naming on March 3rd! Mazel Tov to the Popa/Ciccoli family on this joyous occasion.

March 5th brings a special Men’s Club members-only event: best seats in the house at Jet Blue Stadium. For ticket information, email Men’s Club President Michael Altman at maltman@bellsouth.net.

All are invited to our Winter Lecture Series, “Momentous Events in Modern Jewish History,” presented by Gerald Ziedenberg on Mondays at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom through March 6.

On Friday night, March 10, the Leslie Luzar Memorial Cantorial Series continues with guest cantor Marshall Portnoy joining Rabbi Luna.

Saturday morning, March 11, Jacoby Litvak will be called to the

bimah for his bar mitzvah. Mazel tov to the entire Litvak family.


Sisterhood’s fashion show in January was a great success, with beautiful outfits and models from our own membership. Thank you, Chico’s! Sisterhood will show the movie “Haute Couture” at noon on March 23 in the Dubin Center. This in-person event will not be on Zoom.

Recurring Temple Beth El programs

- Nonperishable food items can be dropped off in the temple lobby shopping cart whenever the building is open.
- All are welcome Saturday mornings at 9 a.m. for Torah study with Rabbi Luna on Zoom.
- Book club – first Wednesday of the month at 2:45 p.m. on Zoom
- Tot Shabbat is March 3 for a kid-friendly service at 6 p.m. Come for the fellowship, the pizza and the fun. Please RSVP by calling 239-433-0018 to be sure we have enough food.
- History & Heritage of Our People is the third Tuesday of the month, March 21, 7 p.m. on Zoom.

- Shabbat services are open to all – Fridays, 7:30 p.m. live in the sanctuary, on Zoom and streaming on Facebook.
- 12-Step Recovery Group – Every Saturday, 11 a.m. on Zoom. Experience the Twelve Steps from a Jewish perspective, seeking a path to recovery through Judaic spiritual principles. We are a fellowship of people who are recovering from alcohol, drugs and other addictions such as food, gambling, sex, shopping, etc... The book we use is Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery by Rabbi Kerry Olitzky and Stuart Copans, M.D., second edition.

To learn more about Temple Beth El and our special events, Shabbat services and recurring programs, visit our website at templebethel.com. There’s always something happening here: Current Events, Coffee & Chat, Theology & Life, Francophone Group, Hispanophone Group, Environmental Group, Solo Travelers, etc.

Follow us on Facebook @Temple BethElFortMyers, and on Instagram @templebethelfortmyers. You can always contact the office at 239-433-0018. 

In memory of Paul Simko

By Dottie Ruberto

They are both gone now. The matriarch, Gerda Friedeman, and our patriarch, Paul Simko. They were the conscience of our Jewish community in the Fort Myers area.

They were both survivors of the Holocaust and used the time they had to enlighten us with their wisdom, enriching us all as Jews. Gerda passed at age 101 and Paul recently passed at age 95.

He left behind his wonderful wife, Sylvia, his children, and many grandchildren whom he adored.

He was a person who didn’t just talk the talk; he walked the walk.

He wrote an excellent book, “Escape from Disaster,” about his life during the Holocaust.

There wasn’t a day that I didn’t receive at least one political email from him. We were great lovers of Israel and would do anything to help.

This is a story that I want to share. The Iran nuclear deal was, and still is, life threatening for Israel and the world. Many of us were horrified about it and decided we were going to get a petition to bring to Florida Senator Bill Nelson to make sure he voted against it.

We brought the petition to temple on a Friday night and, after services, Paul, Sylvia and I went around the room asking people to sign it. Many people did sign, saying they wanted to do something to help and were happy to have a chance to speak out about the survival of our Jewish homeland.

I called Senator Nelson’s office and Paul, my husband, Bob, and I went to downtown Fort Myers to present the

petition. We gave it to his secretary who assured us he would get it.

While we were talking to her, she noticed Paul’s accent and asked where he came from. Paul told her about his life during the Holocaust.

The minute he began speaking to her, my husband and I just vanished from the room. She was absolutely charmed by him, and he sent her a copy of his book.


Unfortunately, our petition did no good at all. After so many years of sham talks with Iran about their nuclear program, they are still going on to this very day.

Paul and Sylvia went on many missions from different Jewish organizations to support Israel. I’m sure the one he loved most was Friends of the Israel Defense Force (FIDF). The mission went first to Auschwitz, which was painful for him.

But sadness turned to happiness when they left Poland on a special Friends of the Israel Defense Force plane to celebrate Yom Haatzmaut (Israel Independence Day) ceremonies with the Israeli people. He was 90 years old at the time.


On April 26, we will celebrate Israel’s 75th birthday. Paul would have been so happy that they reached the three-quarters of a century mark. It is because of help and dedication from people like Paul and Sylvia Simko that Israel arrived at that milestone.


Rest in peace Paul. You were a very special person who will be loved and missed by many of us.



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COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE Fort Myers

(239) 247-4556 • www.fortmyerssynagogue.com

The transition to Community Free Synagogue's new home on the Unity campus went smoothly. The participants adapted easily so that the first Sabbath Eve dinner in our new home went smoothly and the qabbalat shabbat that followed was enthusiastic and joyous.

Unity's Reverend Crystal Muldrow and some of her people were in attendance and were invited up to the Torah as expression of gratitude for their gracious welcome.

Thanks go to all those strong hands and backs that helped with the move. Spending 10 years at the Masonic Center enabled a lot of "good accumulation" that needed to be sorted out and moved.

We are deeply indebted to Rabbi Devorah Buchen, who helps lead a weekly interfaith gathering at Unity, for letting us know about Unity's beautiful campus and good-hearted people.

A special thanks to "CFSers" Scott Thomson and Valli Lamar for



Ilene and Charlie Flores enjoying Sabbath Eve dinner at C.F.S.' new home.



Rabbi Diamond invited Unity's Reverend Crystal Muldrow (right) and some of her people to the Torah during C.F.S. 1st Sabbath Eve worship on campus.



Rabbi Diamond makes qiddush before C.F.S.' Sabbath Eve dinner during the synagogue's first evening at its new home on the Unity campus.

creating our new Torah reading desk and its cover, donated to the synagogue by the rabbi to honor his mother of blessed memory.

Mazel Tov to Cheryl and Paul McLaughlin on the naming of Re'uvayn (Paul Jr.) and Brakhah (Laurel) at the start of Sabbath Eve worship on Feb. 10. The ceremony is the parents' extra-halakhic public affirmation of their covenant with the Jewish grandparents to raise the children "in accordance to the faith of Moses and Israel." The child's conferred Jewish name is a token of that commitment witnessed by the congregation.

Community Free Synagogue's costume-optional Purim Eve celebration is on Monday, March 6, starting at 7 p.m. Between the reading of each of the Megillah of Esther's chapters will be a round Purim Bingo, calling to mind the lottery the villain of the story used to choose the most auspicious day to start a pogrom against the Jews of the Persian Empire. The Hebrew Bingo cards are free, and winners can select from some wonderful prizes. Donations will be sent to C.R.O.W., the Clinic for Rehabilitation of Wildlife on Sanibel, to help with its reconstruction.

Sabbath eve meals begin at 6:30 p.m., are open to the public and free. Worship is at 7:30 p.m., followed by a social hour.

Sabbath morning Torah Study at the rabbi's home (7210 Falcon Crest Court in the Forest Country Club) is from 9:30 to 11 a.m. each week. A light breakfast is served. It is also Zoomed to students around the world via the CFS Zoom room, easily accessed through the synagogue's website, www.fortmyerssynagogue.com.

Weekly Tuesday evening Adult Education is 7-8:15 p.m. on Zoom only. It covers a wide range of topics from obscure ancient Jewish texts to American Jewish history and current events. It is intended for serious students who are prepared to do the weekly 15-20 pages of readings. To receive the weekly topic and links to the sources, email synfree@comcast.net to be placed on CFS twice-a-week email "blasts."

Now in its 18th year, CFS continues to thrive by remaining true both to its vision as an open, free and giving community religious resource and to its mission of TA'G (torah, avodah, gmeelus hasadim — study, worship and benevolence [Pirqay Avos 1:2]).

CELEBRATE

ISRAEL'S 75TH BIRTHDAY

WITH US!

Concert
at the "ARTS"
(on the BIG stage)

SUNDAY
APR 2
2-4 P.M.

Alliance for the Arts
10091 McGregor Blvd, Fort Myers

Performing on the "BIG" stage
Israeli recording artist,
Noam Agami

FREE Admission
Open to the Public

CARNIVORE
"Kosher" Food Truck

Showcasing

- Israeli Folk Dancing
- Israeli Artists
- Food Trucks
- Vendors
- Music
- Face Painting
- Bounce House
- Activities for the whole family

Shaded seating available under the tent.

Jewish Federation
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

SWFL Regional Partners
Alliance for the Arts

For security purposes, we ask that you pre-register for this event at jewishfederationlcc.org/IF75

SHALOM LIFE CENTER
 Fort Myers

(239) 218-3433 • www.shalomlifecenter.org

Shalom Life Center is Southwest Florida’s premier 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 a spiritual community, a warm and welcoming Shalom Life Center family!

We’re going to Israel! Join your SLC family for the trip of a lifetime to Eretz Yisrael. Just give us a call or email for more information.

Shabbat evening services are held every Friday at 7:30 p.m., both in person and livestreamed. 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 a.m., SLC offers an interactive and participatory Torah study led by Rabbi 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, weekly Torah study, Café Kabbalah, The Neshama Mamas Women’s Wisdom and Wellness Group, Book Club, The Shalom

Shmoozers Social Club, special events, concerts, dinners, and so much more. If you’d like to learn more, please send us an email or give us a call.

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

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

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM
 Cape Coral

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

Perhaps you’ve heard the rumors emanating from Cape Coral. Maybe you are interested in attending an exciting event. Do you have a business that you may want to feature? By chance you may have seen some advertising in a previous edition of *L’CHAYIM* or the *Cape Coral Breeze*.

The rumors you have heard are all true. Yes, you can get an invitation to the event. You could also feature your business or place a tribute or ad in our

program book. You had best act quickly though, because the deadlines for the Tribute book and invitation requests are fast approaching.

What are we talking about, you may ask? Temple Beth Shalom of Cape Coral is sponsoring an elegant gala on Saturday evening, April 1, 2023, to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Our Temple opened its doors in 1973 on land donated by brothers Leonard and Jack Rosen. These men are credited with

being the founders and original developers of Cape Coral.

In conjunction with this celebration of our longevity, we are honoring Dr. Lawrence Antonucci, president and CEO of the Lee Health System.

Our members are working very hard to make this event a wonderfully exciting evening for everyone in attendance. At the black-tie optional affair, attendees will be treated to a delicious, gourmet meal provided by Café YOU of Cape Coral. The evening will include music, dancing and lots of fun. A silent auction will ensue, featuring jewelry, stays at condos in Mexico and Orlando, artwork and other wonderful prizes.

In the presentation portion of the evening, a check will be presented to

Dr. Antonucci for his special projects fund from money generated by the program book. This fund pays for items such as staff training, pet projects, PPE, etc. The evening should be a very special one for Dr. Antonucci and all who are participating.

Your presence would enable you to see our newly designed sanctuary and social hall in addition to all the aforementioned activities.

Have we piqued your interest? Want to attend this exciting first-of-its-kind event? Would you like to place a tribute or ad in the program booklet? For more information, to place a tribute or ad or to request an invitation, please contact Cantor Barry Butensky at 347-205-5413 or cant434@aol.com.

TEMPLE SHALOM
 Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands

(941) 625-2116 • www.templeshalomfl.com

The month of February at Temple Shalom was most enjoyable as the Temple observed Jewish Music Month.

On Friday, Feb. 3, there was a music service under the direction of Dr. David Katz who sang and played keyboard.

Rabbi Agin assisted with playing the bass fiddle. Members observing a birthday or anniversary were called upon to receive a blessing from Rabbi Agin.

Tuesday, Feb. 7, Cantor Riselle Bain presented a wonderful program, “The Yiddish Song – The Music of our

Fathers and Mothers.” The cantor was assisted at the keyboard by Lee Ross.

On Friday, Feb. 10, Temple Shalom formally welcomed its new members at a special service followed by an Oneg Shabbat.

Tuesday, Feb. 14, Rabbi Agin recreated his role as a radio disc jockey for station WSUL located in Monticello, New York. The program was called “Traditions.”

The “Lunch and Learn” program continued its monthly session on Feb. 21, exploring Jewish current events and more.

The month of February came to a close with a delightful showing of “Keeping the Faith” with Ben Stiller.

The month of March begins with a great Purim Spiel on Sunday afternoon, March 5, with participation from all. Start time is 2 p.m., with reading the Megillah to follow and hamantashen — all are welcome.

There are many other programs; for information, contact the Temple office at 941-625-2116 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Shalom to all.

Victory over antisemitism

By Cheryl Fulmer, Ellen Feingold and Marcia Rudin

This year, the Jewish holiday of Purim begins on Monday evening, March 6 (corresponding to the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Adar) and lasts until the following evening. We celebrate Purim as a victory over antisemitism. This is why Purim resounds so deeply within us today.

Purim is our story of how a Jewish woman had the courage to fight against antisemitism in the fifth century B.C.E. As the story is recounted in the Book of Esther, Esther was the Persian king Ahasuerus’ favorite queen. Esther’s cousin, Mordechai, encouraged her to develop and carry out an ingenious plan to foil Haman, the royal vizier to the king and an evil antisemitic demagogue.

We have to remember that the king did not know Esther was Jewish, so she risked her position at court and even her life when she went to the king without his permission to warn him about Haman’s plan to kill the Jews.

In rereading the Book of Esther, we find so many parallels to our situation today, when antisemites demean

our Jewish culture and twist facts to slander a brave and ingenious people.

For the month of March, Chavurat Shalom has a full lineup of speakers for its Thursday discussion series available on Zoom. Request the Zoom link from the email address above.

March schedule

- March 2 – “Aging and Stress” with Rabbi Dr. Michael J. Schorin, Jewish Community Chaplain, Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties
- March 9 – “Why Hate Speech Cannot be Defined” with Dr. Stanley Fish, Davidson-Kahn Distinguished University Professor and Professor of Law at Florida International University
- March 16 – Torah Talk, led by Dr. Ellen Feingold with all participating. Parshat Ki Tisa in Exodus 30:11-34:35 will be discussed.
- March 23 – “Reflections from Campus: What Jewish Student Life on Campus Today Might Teach Us about Jewish Life Tomorrow” with Rabbi Rachel Isaacs, executive director,

CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

chavuratshalom@gmail.com

Center for Small Town Jewish Life, Colby College, Maine

Shabbat services

Chavurat Shalom continues its tradition of holding Friday evening Shabbat services every week at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. Everyone from all religious traditions is welcome to participate. Services are a blend of English readings and poems and Hebrew prayers and comforting songs led by volunteers, allowing interested participants to take whatever part is comfortable for them. Come to a Friday Shabbat service via Zoom, starting at 7:30 p.m. and lasting approximately one hour, by sending an email to chavuratshalom@gmail.com to secure the link.

Other programs

On Saturday mornings, Len Minsky Jewish Current Events starts at 11 a.m., moderated by volunteers. Join us and share your opinion about vital current events concerning the U.S., Israel and Jews anywhere in the world.

Request the Zoom link from the email address above.

Monthly “Schmooze” sessions via Zoom provide an opportunity to informally keep in touch with each other on the second Tuesday of every month. The next “Schmooze” will be on Tuesday, March 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Chavurat Shalom is a welcoming community committed to the study and celebration of our Jewish cultural heritage and religious traditions. It is an informal group, from every Jewish religious tradition, that meets to worship and learn together. People of all faiths and localities are welcome. We are community led and are not affiliated with any organized movement.

Come, join us and be with friends. Visit the website at www.chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org for more information about the group and to get the current schedule. You can also send an email to the address noted above for information and Zoom links to programs.

Honoring our veterans

By Eryka Aptaker

While our articles haven't been consistent, JWV VPT Post 400 has had much to share. We are trying to get back to normal, as much as we can, after Hurricane Ian. Four of our post members suffered major losses and are trying to recover. The post was able to assist with getting some funds to aid in the effort.

A few of our members, including Commander Harvey Charter and Senior Vice Commander Bob Ruberto, were invited to the Golden Gate VFW Post 7721 to attend a dinner honoring local VFW scholarship winners from Lee and Collier counties. This dinner additionally honored local

first responders for their outstanding service. Congratulations to the scholarship recipients and a heartfelt thank you to our first responders.

Our post was given the honor to award members of the Lee County JROTC with medals, which will be given to one member from each of the 16 surrounding high schools. Date TBD. Good luck to all!

Members of our post served on the honor guard at the opening of the Lee County Homeless Veterans Stand Down. They went on to assist at the Hearts and Homes for Veterans table for veterans in need. While a humbling experience, our post is always willing

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

to go above and beyond to help those who served.

At our most recent meeting, we had the pleasure of hearing from guest speaker Brian Simon. A former WINK TV sportscaster, Simon is also a former Jewish Federation president. He shared stories of his career and time in Southwest Florida. It lovely to get to know this member of our community at this wonderful meeting.

We had a fun post member outing at a Florida Everblades game. While our Everblades did not win the game, a fun time was had by all. We were visited by the Everblades cheerleaders and, most importantly, the team

mascot, Swampy! The latter was truly my reason for attending the game!

As always in these articles, we ask that you consider joining this amazing and dedicated group. Come join us as we engage in great conversation over bagels and cream cheese. Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 26 at the Jewish Federation in Ft. Myers, to begin at 9:30 a.m.

To become a member or if you have questions, please contact Commander Harvey Charter at hbcharter@aol.com or 239-246-3151.

Founded in 1896, Jewish War Veterans is the oldest continuing veteran's organization in America. We are challenged in the pursuit of new members to keep our organization alive. With the loss of many of our WWII veterans and older members, we are striving to have members of our younger generation(s) join and show support to the JWV. We also have a Patron membership for nonveterans.

If your family members were or are veterans, think about honoring them by joining the JWV Post 400. I joined to honor the memory of my father, a Korean War veteran. It was the best decision I have ever made. This group has been a blessing in my life and some of the members have become like family to me. You would be part of a very dedicated, committed and welcoming group of individuals.

We hope to see you at our future meetings! 🇺🇸



Meeting with guest speaker Brian Simon



Hearts and Homes for Veterans table at Homeless Veterans Stand Down



Post members at Everblades game

Examples of the triumph of the Jewish spirit

By Joyce Toub, Collier/Lee Hadassah President

I want to share with you some highlights from the most recent issue of our award-winning *Hadassah* magazine.

Holocaust Remembrance Day was Jan. 27, marking 78 years since the liberation of Auschwitz. Since then, we’ve seen many ways that the triumph of the Jewish spirit has been realized. One example is Agnes Keleti. At this writing, she is the oldest living Olympian. In January, she celebrated her 102nd birthday. Agnes won 10 Olympic metals for Hungary — five of them gold — after surviving the Holocaust!

Another example is Andrea Videlefsky, president of the nonprofit Holocaust education and awareness organization, Am Israel Chai, in Atlanta. She noticed that daffodils, with their six petal yellow blooms, reminded her of the yellow stars of David that the Jews were forced to wear during the Holocaust. She began the Daffodil Project in 2010. So far, she has raised funds and helped to plant 750,000 daffodil bulbs in 372 locations around the world. The group is halfway to completing its goal

of planting 1.5 million, the number of Jewish children who perished.

From planting daffodils to planting trees ... what a wonderful way to honor Tu B’Shvat, celebrated Feb. 6. Jewish law and ethics mandate that we must preserve, protect and cherish this Earth, invoking themes of environmental advocacy. We can help change communities and enlighten our citizens through education.

A medical revolution was created when mRNA vaccines were produced to protect people from COVID-19. While it took decades to develop vaccines for smallpox, measles, polio and so many other diseases, a COVID-19 vaccination using mRNA was produced in less than one year! The Hadassah Cancer Research Center, Hebrew University – Hadassah Medical School and pharmaceutical giant Merck are in partnership to try to use this mRNA technology to treat cancer.

Dr. Tamar Perri, an expert in gynecological cancers, came to Hadassah in January 2021 to establish and run the Gynecologic Oncology Center. Ovarian cancer is usually asymptomatic

and goes undetected until the disease is advanced. However, if it is discovered in its early stages, before it spreads, its cure rate is 95%. After it metastasizes, the prognosis is less favorable.

Dr. Perri is using BRCA gene testing to see if there are any mutations present and is using BRCA inhibitors, a class of cancer-fighting drugs. This new cancer center is a one-stop shop with diagnosis, treatment and follow-up in one place. That fosters better and more comprehensive care, whether it’s advanced therapy, surgery, preserving fertility or minimizing side effects.

Closer to home, at the Jewish Museum of Florida in Miami Beach, artist Bonnie Lautenberg has expressed what’s on her mind, reacting to the overturning of Roe vs. Wade. She created an image of the Statue of Liberty with tears running down her cheeks. It’s called “Tears of Roe” and it expresses how devastated she and many women felt. Lady Liberty, the first image you see arriving in New York harbor, represents freedom to all.

The Genesis Prize (the Jewish Nobel Prize) for 2023 was awarded to

Jewish activists and NGOs for their work supporting the Ukrainian people in the wake of the humanitarian crisis. This includes Hadassah Medical Organization and Hadassah International. Given the extraordinary circumstances of the war, the destruction and human suffering on a scale not seen since WWII, Hadassah, committed to healing, is grateful to their generous donors who raised nearly \$1.7 million to make Hadassah’s humanitarian efforts possible!

Here in Southwest Florida, we hope you’ll join us at Collier/Lee Hadassah’s next major event (if you get to read this article before the event happens). Our Inspiring Women luncheon on Feb. 26 will celebrate the achievements of three women while supporting Hadassah Medical Organization’s world-class hospitals.

Rounding out our activities for the next few weeks, mark your calendars for Hadassah Shabbat on March 3 at Temple Shalom and March 4 at Beth Tikvah. We hope to see you participate with us!🇺🇸



Marcia Can Help

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



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



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



Honoring our local history

By Marina Berkovich, JHSSWF President

The Jan. 19 film presentation of The Jewish Historical Society of SWFL original production of “Jack Nortman, The Boxcar Education Giant” was a success, thanks to Collier County South Regional Library and our volunteers, under the leadership of Ellen Seigel.

This month, we present four films from our ongoing documentary series, Southwest Florida Jewish Pioneers, at the new Jewish Federation of Greater Naples Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center to honor four outstanding individuals who are no longer with us.

- March 7 – “Irving Berzon, Engineering the Future” is about the WWII veteran and Collier County visionary water engineer. d. 2021

- March 14 – “Richard Segalman, The Man and His Art” is about a renowned local artist, whose Naples beach landscapes are at Metropolitan Museum of Art and many other museums. d.2021

- March 21 – “Murray’s Mile” is the film about Murray Hendel, the most famous unelected official Naples/Collier County ever had. d. 2022

- March 28 – “The Song Meister” is a film about Gene Goodman, Benny

Goodman’s younger brother and a prolific music publisher. d. 2022.

All presentations will begin at 3 p.m. and end at 4 p.m., except March 21, which will end at 4:30 p.m.

We usually have a wonderful response to our events and the majority of our members are happy to support

the work of Jewish Historical Society of SWFL in many ways. But the convoluted workings of modern times, regrettably, demand clarity. So let me emphasize, the work we do is *local* Jewish history preservation.

We strive to make sure our Jewish history is not written out and over. The importance of protecting and preserving the imprint earliest Jews left on this region is not replicated by any other organization. Although other local historical preservation groups pride themselves on understanding diversity and inclusion, Jewish pioneers continue to be excluded.

Since our inception in 2010, we have offered a variety of cross-cultural and expanded territory programming. One such example was “Early History of Reform Judaism in USA” that was presented by Emil G. Hirsch, whom we were privileged to have in our Collier County community for decades. He is the direct descendant of the two famous rabbis who were imperative to the establishment of Reform Judaism in USA.

Another, a program we brought last year was about the history of Jews of Ukraine, because, let’s face it, most of us can be genetically traced to that area and the tragic war developments there do not leave any of us unmoved.

I was told a couple times during this year’s Florida Jewish History month that all contributions should be sent to Ukraine instead of local Jewish history preservation. It is unfortunate

that in any “contest” between Ukrainians and Jews, Jews lose. Historically, institutionally and socially, the prejudices against the Jews are systemic and rooted in ancient history of most other nations since antiquity.

Sadly, some people will offer that choice as an excuse not to renew, but we forge forth, because our mission of historic preservation occupied its proper place in the hearts of the majority of our community. I am certain that deep inside your heart and soul, most of you support our cause, and I ask you to continue your gracious support. It is always very much appreciated.

You may now purchase Jewish Historical Society of SWFL memberships online or mail us a check. A family membership is \$54; individual membership is \$36; student membership is \$18; and corporate sponsorship is \$300. If mailing a check, please send to The Jewish Historical Society of Southwest Florida, 8805 Tamiami Trail North, Suite #255, Naples, FL 34108.

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

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



Marina Berkovich, Alexander Goldstein, Mitch Spaiser, Rabbi Zaklos, Bob Davidson and Shellie Specter at Feb. 5 premier of Spaiser Family Story by JHSSWF. Credit: Lois Bolin

Community Relations Council

Lee & Charlotte



CRC Mission Statement:

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

We Advocate. Educate. Act.

For more information or to join, contact
Debbie Sanford at 239.481.4449 ext. 6
debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org

**For a continuously updated
calendar of events, visit
www.JewishFederationLCC.org.**

Photo Gallery

Lunch Bunch



Jewish War Veterans



Post members and Everblades cheerleaders



Eryka Aptaker and Swampie



Honor Guard at Stand Down.
Senior Vice Commander Bob Ruberto,
Commander Harvey Charter and
member of American Legion post 38

LUNCH
BUNCH

FUN!
Free!
Food!

GREAT PROGRAMS
GREAT PEOPLE

THURSDAY, MARCH 16
12:00-1:30 PM

Temple Beth Shalom
702 SE 24th Ave.,
Cape Coral FL 33990

RSVP BY Monday, March 13

jodicohen@jfedlcc.org or 239-481-4449 x1

Let us know if you need a ride.

Jewish Family Services

Advocates of the Jewish Community
in South Florida



**TEMPLE
BETH SHALOM**

1973 to 2023

Celebrating our

50th

Anniversary

and commemorating the occasion by honoring

Dr. Lawrence Antonucci

President and CEO of Lee Health

For his outstanding service to the people of Lee County

April 1st 2023

6:00 PM

Temple Beth Shalom

702 SE 24th Ave.

Cape Coral, FL 33990

For more information or to place a tribute
in the Commemorative Journal or to donate
to the Silent Auction, contact:

Cantor Barry Butensky 239-223-2310