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# L'CHAYIM

Published by the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties

September 2023 / 5783

[JewishFederationLCC.org](http://JewishFederationLCC.org)

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### JFS Begins Sharing Shabbat Program

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**Volume 46, Number 1**

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**OCTOBER ISSUE  
 EDITORIAL  
 DEADLINE:  
 Tuesday, September 5**



### 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 are the new site of the South United Way House

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

■ Debbie Sanford



To say we accomplished a lot over the summer would be an understatement. I am most proud and excited about the expansion of Jewish Family Services. If you are not familiar with the Jewish Federation building, we occupy Suites 1 and 2. Suite 3 has always been rented out. When our tenants in Suite 3 gave their notice to move, it could not have come at a better time. We are busting at the seams here.

I reached out to my friends at United Way and asked if they knew where I could get a grant to supplement the income we would lose if we took over the third suite for JFS use. They have witnessed the Federation's increase in

services and assistance to the community as well as the demand for more. There is still a tremendous need for food and supplies, case management and senior services, not to mention the need for more room to expand our Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry.

United Way offered a perfect solution. A grant designed to allow us to expand JFS and our food pantry, plus offer more services. More services than we ever thought we could with a staff as small as ours. We will officially be the site of the new South United Way House.

What is a United Way house, you may be asking? A United Way house is a centralized location where individuals and families can receive wraparound social services from multiple community organizations. Our new office will be open to other local nonprofits offering social services, not only helping us provide more services to our constituents, but the entire community.

I would be remiss to not formally thank Jodi Cohen for her passion and dedication in running the food pantry for the last five years. It is time for her to pass the torch to Silvia Garcia, our new case manager & food pantry coordinator.

Our new doors have opened but our grand opening and ribbon cutting are scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 21 at 8:30 a.m. I invite you all to stop by, check out our new digs, have a snack and meet our United Way friends and donors who have helped make this all possible, especially our amazing volunteers! The invitation is on the cover of this issue. I hope to see you there.

Happy 5784. Be on the lookout for your Rosh Hashanah appeal letter. Please support Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties and help us continue to offer local Jewish programming, adult services and overseas support this new year.

I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year! 🌍

# Meet your new special event and program coordinator

By Danielle Bernstein, Special Events and Program Coordinator

Hello readers! I am thrilled to join the Jewish Federation as the new special event and program coordinator, and I am eager to contribute to the vibrancy of our community. My name is Danielle Bernstein and I bring a deep passion for event planning as well as a commitment to fostering meaningful connections within our Jewish community.

With a background in event management and a deep appreciation for our cultural heritage, I am eager to bring my passion and expertise to the table. My goal is to curate a diverse range of engaging events that will foster connections, celebrate our traditions and inspire growth within our community.

Over the past month, I have been focused on establishing a Jewish singles group catering to the needs of men and women above the age of 50. We are calling this group Shalom Singles. The hope for this group is to foster a sense of community and companionship.

Additionally, I have organized an exciting event that will include a children's magician for our PJ Library families at Lakes Park.

Our film festival is also taking shape, featuring a carefully curated selection of films that celebrate Jewish culture and identity.

Furthermore, I am thrilled to have secured a highly talented speaker for our upcoming community breakfast. She will engage our audience in a thought-provoking discussion.

Rest assured, there is much more to come, as we continue to plan and execute engaging programs and events that will enrich our Jewish community. I can be reached at 239-481-4449, ext. 4 or [Danielle@jfedlcc.org](mailto:Danielle@jfedlcc.org). 🌍



Danielle Bernstein

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# Returning to G-d

By Rabbi Michael J. Schorin, MAPC, BCC

In his book “Soul Stories,” Gary Zukav pictures a massive fleet of ships taking sail. In the center of the fleet is the Mother Ship. Larger than the biggest ocean liner, it is much like a floating city. All the other ships are small, one-person boats. The Mother Ship knows what is happening on each small boat. It is connected. And, if a small boat asks for help, the Mother Ship will grant it.

For Gary Zukav, and for us, the Mother Ship is similar to G-d. And each small boat is one of us. All individual souls, we are each a part of the Mother Ship. Since we have freedom, each of us can turn around and sail away from the Mother Ship. But when the squall arrives, each small boat strives to reverse course and gain proximity to the Mother Ship and the security it provides.

As you read these words, we in the Jewish world will be steaming towards the Yamim Noraim, the Days of Awe. Maybe we have sailed toward the Mother Ship this past year and maybe we have sailed on a tangent away from her. The message of this season, and the book of Deuteronomy, is that we can return.

This is reflected in a fascinating book by Rabbi Levi Meier (z”l) called “Ancient Secrets.” Rabbi Meier, who was an Orthodox rabbi and a hospital chaplain, saw different levels of spiritual development in each book of the Torah.



■ Rabbi Dr. Michael J. Schorin

Speaking about the book of Deuteronomy, Rabbi Meier suggests this is Level 5 — the level of atonement.

Imagine! No matter what we may have done: worshipped a strange god, “dissed” Moses, stolen someone’s identity or committed perjury, forgiveness is possible. Judaism reminds us that we do not say “great is the person who has never fallen.” What we say instead is “great is the person who has fallen and risen.”

No boat sails year after year without facing storms. And, even if our boats are small, we know that we affect, and are affected by, the boats of our spouses, families and friends. We are all impacted by the storms coming through. That is why Moshe Rabbenu reminds us so often about the storms that would be coming through when we took possession of Canaan. Forewarned is forearmed.

So, as we enter this Holy season, our first job is to examine our conscience, see where we have fallen short and where we might do a better job. If we do this examination honestly, we will know where we have erred. To admit our failings allows us to approach and gain a closeness to the Mother Ship. After all, if the Prophet Jonah can flee in the wrong direction and then be brought back, why not us?

May each of us, and all Israel, be granted a Shanah Tovah of health, happiness and smooth sailing! 🌊

# A proud Citizens Academy graduate

By Debbie Sanford, Executive Director

Last September, I enrolled in a program at the Lee County Sheriff’s Office called Citizens Academy. It was postponed due to Hurricane Ian but finally resumed again a few months ago, and I am proud to say I just graduated.

A friend at the Sheriff’s office recommended I take the class, which met

every Tuesday night for three hours and lasted 12 weeks. They jammed a lot of information into each class. It is meant to educate residents and build positive relationships with our law enforcement. I learned so much week after week. Of course, I asked a lot of questions and met a lot of good people and resources for the Federation. 🌊



Debbie Sanford completes the Citizens Academy program.



**In 5784, rise to the moment and ensure safe, welcoming Jewish communities worldwide by supporting the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties.**

In moments like this, preparing for a new year, we find ourselves both reflecting and looking ahead. As we reflect on this past year, we can’t help but see the incredible impact we made **TOGETHER**. Because of compassionate donors like you, we’re there for all of life’s most important moments.

Your commitment creates moments of Jewish joy and Jewish pride - and it enables Jewish families to thrive. Your support will ensure that in 5784, individuals and families who need us now more than ever are able to get the vital help they need and you help us ensure a thriving Jewish community exists through programs and special events for young children to older adults.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and compassion.

Sincerely,

Debbie Sanford  
Executive Director



Sherri Zucker  
Campaign Chair

**Please watch for your Annual Campaign Pledge Card in the mail.**





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

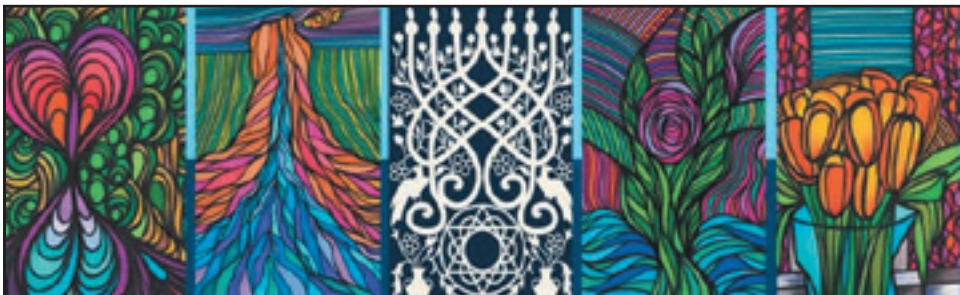


This year please consider making an additional campaign contribution in honor or memory of a loved one. Because kindness is contagious, we would like to highlight your generosity in L'CHAYIM and notify personally those whom you honor. You may choose how your generosity is noted and how we share your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



## TRIBUTES

In honor of Rabbi Sol Agin's retirement  
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Honoring a special person through a tribute gift to 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.



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Jewish Federation  
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### 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.



#### 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.

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.

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# Inaugural mahjong tournament a resounding success

By Danielle Bernstein, Special Events and Program Coordinator

The Federation’s community room was buzzing with excitement as we hosted our very first mahjong tournament on the much-anticipated National Mahjong Day! From beginners to seasoned players, everyone came out to play, filling the room with laughter, cheers and a whole lot of mahjong magic. We even had a delicious lunch served to keep our players fueled.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to each and every mahjong player who came out and made this event an absolute blast! We also want to thank Karen Adelstein and Gail Margolis for their invaluable help in running and guiding the tournament. We look forward to seeing you all again at our next event. 🍵





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# Embracing companionship amidst isolation

*How robotic companions bring comfort to veterans and seniors*

By Nancy Klein, Friendly Visitor Coordinator

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unique challenges, particularly for vulnerable populations such as veterans and seniors. The increased risk of severe illness

due to age or preexisting health conditions, coupled with social distancing measures, led to heightened feelings of isolation and loneliness among these individuals.

In response to this pressing issue, Federation is working with the Area Agency on Aging on a heartwarming initiative to distribute robotic cats and dogs to veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and to seniors residing in senior living facilities throughout Lee County. These lifelike companions have become a beacon of hope, combatting isolation while providing much-needed comfort and joy.

Senior citizens bore the brunt of the pandemic's impact, facing not only health concerns but also the emotional toll of being separated from loved ones and support networks. The Jewish Federation's Friendly Visitor Program and the Area Agency on Aging recognized the urgent need to address the loneliness experienced by this demographic



they offer has contributed to improved cognitive function, memory and overall mental well-being. Furthermore, these lifelike pets have become catalysts for social interaction among seniors residing in care facilities. They serve as conversation starters, facilitating connections among residents and fostering a sense of community.

While robotic companions have undeniably improved the lives of veterans and seniors, it is essential to recognize that they do not replace the significance of human interaction. The Federation is actively working to facilitate regular Friendly Visitor visits to supplement companionship provided by the robotic pets.

If you are interested in participating in the program, know someone who might benefit from a robotic dog/cat or, perhaps, you are interested in meeting with an isolated senior on a regular basis yourself, please contact Nancy Klein for more information at [nancyklein@jfedlcc.org](mailto:nancyklein@jfedlcc.org) or 239-481-4449, x2.

and took the initiative to make a positive change. These fluffy companions boast impressive features, responding to touch, making gentle sounds and simulating natural movements such as purring and wagging their tails.

Initially met with some skepticism, the robotic pets soon proved their worth by establishing an interactive and lifelike experience for their recipients. The impact of these robotic companions has been remarkable. Firstly, the emotional support they provide has proven invaluable in alleviating feelings of loneliness and isolation. Recipients have found comfort in the companionship offered by these lifelike pets, providing solace during difficult times. Interacting with robotic pets has been proven to reduce stress levels and promote a sense of well-being. For many seniors, these moments of relaxation are much-needed breaks from the constant worries and uncertainties brought on by the pandemic.

Additionally, the cognitive benefits of engaging with robotic pets have been widely observed. The stimulation



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# Simchas, celebrations and gratitude

## Jewish Family Services update

By Jodi Cohen, Jewish Family Services Coordinator

Jewish Family Services has some boop-di-doo updates to share! First and foremost, we are grateful to welcome Silvia Garcia as the new case manager for people needing assistance and as the new Food Pantry Coordinator! She has experience doing both, along with a wonderful attitude and is already rocking and rolling.

Jewish Family Services has moved into Suite 103, at the other end of the building from where it was located. It is now one of several United Way Houses in Lee County, serving as a centralized location where individuals and families can receive wraparound social services from multiple community organizations.

I can no longer refer to the Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry as “small but mighty” because the the new space has ample room for food, packed bags and storage. As a child, I used to measure the size of a room by how many cartwheels I could do. For the record, the new pantry is at least a six cartwheel-sized space.

The best part is that recipients can now come inside the building to sign in or sign up and pick up their food and toiletries. There is a big lobby, so no one has to stand outside on the porch. Garcia is training the amazing and dedicated pantry volunteers on how to use the new food pantry management software for signing people in, collecting recipient data, scheduling volunteers and tracking JFS inventory. Buh-bye paper forms and notebooks!

### Lunch Bunch updates

While my title as Jewish Family Services Coordinator remains the same, my focus will shift toward more outreach and programming for older adults in Lee and Charlotte counties.



■ Jodi Cohen

The Lunch Bunch program will expand programming in late fall through season, offering at least two lunches a month in different parts of both counties, including Port Charlotte, Estero, North Fort Myers, Cape Coral and Fort Myers.

There are two important “firsts” to crow about in the Federation’s free Lunch Bunch programming.

We had our inaugural Lunch Bunch in Port Charlotte at Temple Shalom in May. The lovely Judi Migdol, president of Temple Shalom, graciously served as liaison between Temple Shalom’s congregants and the Federation. We had a great turnout for our first lunch, played “Jewish Bingo,” gave away some terrific prizes and got to know each other a little better. What a fabulous group of people. I enjoyed meeting everyone and, by the end of the lunch, they all felt like *mishpacha*, family. Our next Lunch Bunch in Port Charlotte will take place at Temple Shalom on Thursday, Dec. 7. Stay tuned for more details.

The July Lunch Bunch was hosted for the first time by the benevolent people at Gulf Coast Village (GVC) in Cape Coral.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Pam Timmins, media and event coordinator at GCV, for being so attentive to the big, as well as the small, details about hosting the Lunch Bunch. Everyone at GVC takes such pride in their facility and all it has to offer.

Several staff members warmly greeted the participants. The chef, who is French, came out to talk to us about the food he prepared and the importance of



freshness, color and variety. (My thank you letter to him was en français.) Pam held a raffle, and the three prizes were beautiful woodshop items made by Gulf Coast Village residents.

Our program was The Power of Gratitude. Everyone in attendance received their own gratitude journal and pen. Pastor Cheryl Leftwich talked about basic principles and their importance in our everyday lives. At the end of her presentation, she sang to us. To be serenaded in the middle of the day ... ah, what a luxury.



### Speaking of gratitude

As we approach the Jewish new year, the Days of Awe, part of me looks forward to sitting in *shul*, singing prayers, contemplating the rabbi’s sermons. I have the time to reflect on what I’ve done well as a mortal on the planet, along with the 5,000 things I must change about myself, immediately, if not sooner. Another part of me cannot bear the thought of looking back at the year because of the wreckage to my city and my soul.

Holocaust scholar Terrence de Pres wrote, “All things human take time.” My head understands this, yet my heart is still twisted and leaky as I listen to the people who continue to suffer on a daily basis. The calls to Jewish Family Services for assistance are nonstop.

Fortunately, through grants and your generosity, the Federation has been able to help hundreds of people with rental assistance, furniture, groceries, cleaning supplies, appliances, clothing, linens, housewares and beds.

Amidst the recovery from Hurricane Ian, there is so much to be grateful for, including calls from people asking if there is a family who needs whatever items are being given away; continuous food drop-offs, those of you who changed your gifts to monthly “for whatever is needed,” the donated gift cards that you bought or were given to you and then given to JFS. The care and support of everyone locally, as well as far away, is what has allowed the Federation to remain open and become an anchor in the community.

I am personally grateful to the people who say, “Thank you,” “I appreciate you and all that you are doing” and “I love you.” There are days when my spirit starts out at ground level, then, due to the kindness of others, ends up soaring.

Let me close by singing the praises of the food pantry, Lunch Bunch and Friendly Visitor volunteers. Time is precious and there are a million ways to spend it. I bow in respect to the people who show up, week after week, month after month and ask, “How can I help? What can I do? What’s shakin’?” Their goodness simply shines.

I appreciate the humor, the tenderness, patience and respect I witness our volunteers sharing with the people they serve. Being amidst such generosity of spirit keeps me humble and in awe of every single thing that each person contributes as a member of the Federation family.

Best wishes to you and yours for a happy, healthy new year. 🌟





# Jewish Family Services introduces “Sharing Shabbat” program

By Jodi Cohen, Jewish Family Services Coordinator

This September, JFS will begin its Sharing Shabbat program, where volunteers and I will visit various older adult living communities to celebrate Shabbat. We’ll gather together for a half hour to sing Shabbat songs and say the prayers over the candles, challah and wine. We’ll talk about upcoming holidays, the weekly Torah portion or special memories connected to the time of year.

The intention behind Sharing Shabbat is to create opportunities for Jewish residents, along with any friends who care to join them, to spend time together and welcome Shabbat.

When I lived in Madison, Wisconsin, I volunteered as a helper for a monthly Shabbat service, and it was so much fun. The facility was huge, in the shape of a spaceship. Every month, a friend and I transported residents, in

wheelchairs and hospital beds, from their rooms to where the Shabbat service was held. Although we did this for several years, we were not confident navigators and repeatedly got lost. There were many elevator episodes where we laughed uncontrollably,



along with the residents, when the doors opened and we were at the beauty salon or laundry facilities.

When the cantor, who led the singing at our monthly Shabbat service, accepted a post in the Caribbean, I

took over leading the music with my dinky guitar. The *ruach*, spirit, of everyone was delicious. Young Jewish children in the community came to help pass out the wine, juice and challah. The residents shared stories about their lives that made us laugh as well as cry. My father started a first Friday of the month Shabbat service where he lived. He ended every service with “levity,” and told a couple of jokes. I intend to carry on that tradition.

I’m so excited to start this program, as it involves my favorite things — singing, telling stories and celebrating the older adults in our community.. If you’d like to be a part of Sharing Shabbat in any way, please be in touch. The schedule will be included in the weekly e-newsletter, and the information will be posted on the Federation’s social media sites as well as our calendar. 🌟

SHARING SHABBAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2023

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# Museum expansion news

By Susan Suarez, President & CEO

We can't wait to welcome you to our expanded and updated Museum! We will tentatively reopen Tuesday, Oct. 31 and have special reopening celebrations planned in November. Our website, [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org), will have additional opening information as we get closer to October.



■ Susan Suarez

In addition to new galleries and classroom space in the new North Wing, you will also find new displays in the existing Museum. The "Resistance and Rescue" displays will highlight upstanders who demonstrated the strength and power of moral courage in many different situations during the Holocaust. Among the areas covered are the Kindertransport, Hidden Children, the Warsaw Underground (Zegota), the Reigner Telegram, Oskar Schindler, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the Danish Rescue, the Auschwitz Revolt, and more.

As you reflect on the brave acts of the people in these stories, we hope you, too, will be inspired to stand up for those who are unjustly bullied or persecuted because of who they are, not what they do.

## New Holocaust education programs

Now that school is in session, we invite Southwest Florida teachers to contact

our education department to schedule their 2023-2024 student field trips and at-school Museum educator visits.

We're introducing several new student activities for fifth grade through high school, available at the Museum and for in-school classes. Reservations are also being accepted for the traveling Boxcar exhibit, and popup Museum displays.

Please note these exhibits are also available to community organizations. Contact Education Specialist David Nelson, [David@hmcec.org](mailto:David@hmcec.org), for more information.

Our Holocaust education programs are available to teachers and students at public, private, charter, home school and alternative school learning environments in five Southwest Florida counties. If you know of a teacher interested in learning more about the Museum and its programs, please ask them to contact Education Specialist David Nelson at [David@hmcec.org](mailto:David@hmcec.org).

## Museum public programming

We have many interesting programs and events scheduled for the 2023-2024 season and we hope to see you there! Please grab your calendars and save the following dates.

## 2023-2024 Museum fundraising events

• **Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023:** The Luncheon with special program "Letters from Anne and Martin," 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at The Vineyards Country Club; RSVP required; tickets \$150; sponsorship packages available.

• **Wednesday, March 6, 2024:** Triumph 2024 Annual Fundraising Evening; 5:30-8:30 p.m.; Arthrex Conference Center; RSVP required; tickets \$350; sponsorship packages available.

## Movies That Matter Series

Three documentaries on important social topics will be discussed with expert panels and Q/A:

• **Wednesday, Oct. 18** at 4 p.m. on Zoom – "Poor Kids" (about child poverty in America)

• **Wednesday, Oct. 25** at 4 p.m. on Zoom – "Repairing the World" (about combatting anti-semitism)

• **Wednesday, Nov. 1** at 4 p.m. on Zoom – "The Invisible Class" (about homelessness)

Sponsorships are available. Registration is required at [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org).

## Exhibits in the new Estelle and Stuart Price Gallery

October-December 2023: "Forgeries and the Holocaust"

January-March 2024: "Stitching History from the Holocaust"

April-October 2024: "Lawyers Without Rights: The Fate of Jewish Lawyers in Berlin After 1933"

## Lectures and programs in the new Herbert H. Schiff classroom

• **Saturday, Nov. 4: Family Day** – reopening celebration with activities for kids of all ages, 1-3 p.m.

• **Saturday, Nov. 11: Special Veterans Day Museum reopening program**, 1-3 p.m.; complimentary admission; film program; RSVP required

• **Wednesday, Jan. 17: "The Rescue in the Philippines,"** 2-4 p.m., film/Q&A with the filmmakers; ticketed event; RSVP required

• **Friday, Jan. 26: International Holocaust Remembrance Day**, 1-3 p.m.; complimentary admission; film program; RSVP required

• **Wednesday, Feb. 7, 14 & 21: Ellaine Rosen Lecture Series "Witness to Goodness,"** 2-4 p.m.; ticketed events; free of charge/donations appreciated; RSVP required

• **Thursday, Feb. 15: Jack Norman and The Boxcar Film and Survivor Talk**, 3 p.m.; ticketed event; RSVP required

• **Wednesday, March 20: Stuart Mest, M.D. Lecture "The Holocaust: Medically Driven Genocide,"** 2-4 p.m.; ticketed event; RSVP required

• **Wednesday, May 8: VE Day Commemoration**, 1-3 p.m.; complimentary admission; film program; RSVP required



## Community commemoration events

• **Sunday, Nov. 5:** Annual Community Kristallnacht Commemoration; 2:30-4:30 p.m.; St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Naples. Open to the public and free to attend.

• **Sunday, May 5:** Annual Community Yom HaShoah Commemoration; 4-5 p.m., Jewish Federation of Greater Naples, 4720 Pine Ridge Road, Naples. Open to the public and free to attend.

## New private group tour options

If you are looking for a memorable experience for your community, organization, friends and family members, schedule a private group tour of our new, expanded Museum! Four new tour options will be available this year. Private group tours are offered when the Museum is closed to the public and can be customized for your group's interest and time schedule. For questions and to schedule a private group tour, please contact Education Specialist David Nelson at [David@hmcec.org](mailto:David@hmcec.org) or 239-263-9200, ext. 205.

Many thanks to all who support our important mission to teach the lessons of the Holocaust to inspire action against bigotry, hatred and violence. We look forward to sharing our new space and exhibits with you this coming season! 🌟



## "Movies That Matter" Steve Brazina Memorial Film Series Discussion Programs with Expert Panels/Q&A

We hope you'll join us for these important discussions of Human Rights topics affecting SWFL, and learn how you CAN make a difference in our community. Free of charge to participate, reservations are required, and donations are appreciated. Sponsorships are also available.

Please visit [www.hmcec.org](http://www.hmcec.org) for more information.

• **"Poor Kids" - Wednesday, October 18 ZOOM Discussion at 4:00pm EST** (U.S. and Canada) on Zoom. Documentary exploring what poverty means to children in America, through the stories of three families.

• **"Repairing the World" - Wednesday, October 25 ZOOM Discussion at 4:00pm EST** (U.S. and Canada) on Zoom. Documentary on the Pittsburgh community's response to hate and antisemitism following the 2018 Tree of Life Synagogue attack.

• **"The Invisible Class" - Wednesday, November 1 Zoom Discussion at 4:00pm EST** (U.S. and Canada) on Zoom. This documentary examines homelessness in America, and the stereotypes and systemic causes of this issue.

**Note: Film Viewing links will be provided prior to the ZOOM Expert Panel/Q&A discussion.**

## 2023 "Movies That Matter" Series Partners:

Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center, GenShoah SWFL, Interfaith Alliance, Jewish Community Relations Council, Jewish Federation of Greater Naples, Naples United Church of Christ, Temple Shalom

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





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**Saturday Evening, Sept. 9, 2023**

**Dinner 6:00 pm**

**Havdalah & Selichot Service 7:30 pm**

**Rosh Hashanah Services**

**Friday, Sept. 15, 2023 7:30 pm**

**Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023 10:00 am**

**Youth Service 10:00 am**

**Yom Kippur Services**

**Kol Nidre, Sunday, Sept. 24, 2023 7:30 pm**

**Monday, Sept. 25, 2023 10:00 am**

**Youth Service 10:00 am**

**Mincha 3:30 pm**

**Yizkor Memorial Approx 4:30pm**

**Concluding Service 5:00 pm**

**Break the fast, approx. 6:30 pm**

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# Where is the Jewish world news?

By Sharon Hood, editor

We have been asked why news from around the Jewish world is no longer included in *L'CHAYIM* and I want to take this opportunity to answer that question here for anyone wondering the same thing.

With today's technology and a plethora of digital news outlets where news articles of interest to you are delivered to your personal digital devices almost instantaneously, we felt it redundant to include that type of article in a monthly newspaper with longer editorial lead

times. By the time you see Jewish world news articles in *L'CHAYIM*, it's old news and, thus, not the best use of the Federation's funds to include them.

If you need help customizing your news feeds, Google "How can I customize the news delivered to my phone?" and you will see a number of things you can do to make sure you're getting the type of Jewish world news articles you want — and you'll get them in a much more timely manner than we could ever provide. 🌐



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**GENERATIONS OF THE SHOAH  
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**  
genshoah@hmcec.org

## GenShoah SWFL items of interest

*Save the dates!*

By Shelley Lieb and Ida Margolis

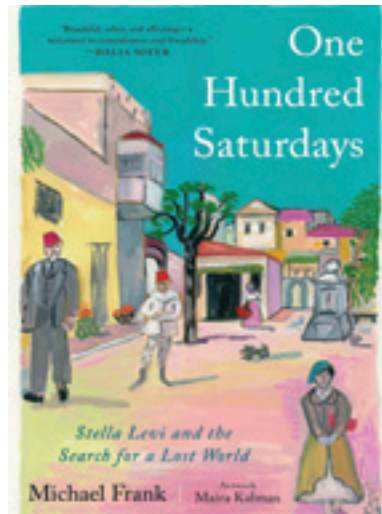
GenShoah SWFL is planning a number of programs for the upcoming season. You may want to mark your calendar for some of them. Dates are subject to change.

### Something new — Book Discussion Group

A new addition to GenShoah programs this season will be the GenShoah Book Discussion Group led by Estelle Kafer. The first meeting was on Tuesday, Aug. 22 via Zoom. Future meetings may be held in person.

The book discussed was "One Hundred Saturdays: Stella Levi and the Search for a Lost World" by prize-winning author Michael Frank.

"The remarkable story of 99-year-old Stella Levi, whose conversations with the author over the course of six years, brings to life the vibrant world of Jewish Rhodes, the deportation to Auschwitz that extinguished 90% of her community, and the resilience and wisdom of the woman who lived to tell the tale."



### Additional events

The third Sunday, Oct.-April, 3:30 p.m. — "Zoog Mir in Yiddish" Yiddish Discussion Group. All levels of Yiddish welcome to schmooze a bissel. (Location: Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center.) Registration required at hmcec.org.

Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2 p.m. — Movies That Matter. "Poor Kids" on Zoom. Expert panel will discuss film. Link to film available prior to panel discussion. Registration required at hmcec.org.

Wednesday, Oct. 25 — Movies That Matter. Important and powerful film "Repairing the World" will be shown, with a panel discussion/Q&A following. (Time and location TBD.) Registration required at hmcec.org.

Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2 p.m. — Movies That Matter on crucial housing and homeless issues. Viewing link available prior to panel discussion on Zoom. Registration required at hmcec.org.

Sunday, Nov. 5, 2:30 p.m. — Kristallnacht Commemoration. (Location: St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, 5225 Golden Gate Pkwy., Naples)

Sunday, Dec. 10, 5 p.m. — Annual Potluck. (Location: private residence.) More information to follow.

Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2 p.m. — Watch "The Rescue in the Philippines" followed by Q&A. (Location: Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center.) Registration required at hmcec.org.

Friday, Jan. 26 — Holocaust Remembrance Day. (Location: Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center.) More information to follow.

Sunday, Feb. 4, 1 p.m. — "Our Stories." (Location: private residence.) Registration required with Shelley at liebro@gmail.com.

Sundays, Feb. 25 and April 7, 1-3 p.m. — Genealogy Workshops, Naples. Register and get more information through Shelley at liebro@gmail.com.

Sunday, May 5, 4-5 p.m. — Community Yom HaShoah Commemoration. (Location: Jewish Federation of Greater Naples Nina Iser Center, 4720 Pine Ridge Road, Naples.) 🌐

## Open house to be held at Temple Beth El

*Sunday, Sept. 10, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.*

Light refreshments will be served with guided tours of the sanctuary, religious school, library, social hall and preschool. If you have not made High Holiday arrangements, last-minute tickets will be available for purchase, which include our delicious Break-Fast spread following Ne'ilah.

We have adopted a vision statement which truly reflects our culture: We

are a vibrant, multigenerational Jewish community that engages and inspires learning, mitzvot and spiritual growth ... *where everyone matters.*

Please come check us out at 16225 Winkler Rd., Fort Myers. RSVP preferred to allow us to ensure we have enough refreshments. Call 239-433-0018 to RSVP. 🌐

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



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September 15  
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Service  
Children's  
Programming\*

September 16  
9:30 AM ROSH  
HASHANAH  
Congregational  
Service  
Children's  
Programming\*

September 17  
9:30 AM ROSH  
HASHANAH  
Congregational  
Service  
4:30 PM Tashlich at home of  
Leni and Marc Sack

September 24  
7:00 PM KOL NIDRE  
Congregational  
Service  
Children's  
Programming\*

September 25  
9:30 AM YOM KIPPUR  
Congregational  
Service  
Children's  
Programming\*  
4:30 PM Afternoon Program  
5:30 PM Minchah &  
Reading of Jonah  
6:45 PM N'ilah/Havdalah  
7:46 PM Shofar Blowing

\* RSVP Required

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## The Community Free Synagogue's Israel and Greece adventure

The Community Free Synagogue will depart Saturday, May 25 for nine days in Israel, followed by an optional five-day add-on in Greece. Led by Rabbi Diamond, the custom-designed itinerary will be both a powerful learning opportunity and a profoundly moving spiritual experience.

"This is our sixth Israel pilgrimage in our 18-year history," notes Rabbi Diamond. "Many participants tell me it was the trip of a lifetime!"

The optional Greek add-on is a new feature. Those choosing the add-on will fly from Tel-Aviv to Athens for five days of touring, including exploring the ancient

roots of Jewish life in the other cradle of Western civilization and cruising for two nights on Mykonos and Santorini.

The Israel "package" will include stays at 4-Star+ hotels in Tel-Aviv, the Dead Sea, Safed and Jerusalem, all breakfasts and several dinners (including the welcome and farewell dinners), a deluxe coach with a certified guide, all admission fees, and much more. The cost will be around \$3,400, excluding air fare.

Detailed information and registration will be available starting Sept. 1 through a custom link on the synagogue's website, [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com), or by emailing [synfree@comcast.net](mailto:synfree@comcast.net).

## Fort Myers Memorial Gardens holiday visitation

Sunday, Sept. 17 at 5 p.m.

The Fort Myers Memorial Gardens, located at 1589 Colonial Boulevard, will host a traditional Days of Awe visitation Sunday, Sept. 17, 5 p.m., at its Gan Shalom. After conducting a brief memorial service, Rabbi Diamond will accompany those persons wishing to recite qaddish at individual graves.

A yearly event between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the Days of Awe visitation enables those wishing to observe the ancient practice known as "qever avot"—ancestral graves.

"According to Makkot 5b in the Babylonian Talmud, a burial place

can be visited to ask forgiveness from the deceased. Seeking forgiveness is an essential element of the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur," notes Timothy Haskell, managing funeral director at Memorial Gardens.

"And the Hasidim emphasized visiting the graves of tsadiqim (Righteous Ones) to plea for their intercession with Hashem as our verdicts are about to be sealed in the Book of Life," says Dan Bryan, its general manager, adding, "And it's good to think of our cherished deceased as tsadiqim!"

## 12-step recovery group at Temple Beth El

Every Saturday at 11 a.m.

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.

We meet every Saturday at 11 a.m. on Zoom and welcome all who might benefit.

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### ROSH HASHANAH

Friday, Sept. 15

7:30 pm Evening Service

Saturday, Sept. 16

10:00 am Morning Service

10:00 am Junior Congregation

12:30 pm Tashlich at Lakes Park

Be our guest for lunch following  
Tashlich. Families welcome.

Sunday, Sept. 17

10:00 am Morning Service

### YOM KIPPUR

Sunday, Sept. 24

7:30 pm Kol Nidre

Monday, Sept. 25

10:00 am Morning Service

10:00 am Junior Congregation

2:30 pm Exploring The Book of  
Jonah (Zoom only)

4:30 pm Musical Meditation

5:30 pm Yizkor Service

6:30 pm Neila

Complimentary Break the  
Fast following service.

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10:00 AM Saturday September 16

11:00 AM Sunday September 17

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### Yom Kippur

7:00 PM Sunday September 24

10:00 AM Monday September 25

Study with the Rabbi 4:00 - 5:30 PM

5:30 PM *Minhah*, *Yizkor* & *Ne'ilah*  
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לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכְתְּבוּ וְתִתְחַמּוּ

## The heroes and the tragedy of Vilna

By Paul R. Bartrop, Professor Emeritus of History,  
Florida Gulf Coast University

Early on Sept. 1, 1943 — 80 years ago this month — the Vilna ghetto was surrounded by German and Estonian security forces who began arresting Jews and removing them from the ghetto. This was the culmination of an action that had begun on Aug. 6, when SS chief

Heinrich Himmler ordered that the Germans commence the deportation of Vilna's Jews to Estonia. The Germans demanded that the Jewish Council (*Judenrat*) provide 3,000 men and 2,000 women for deportation to Estonia.

Immediately, the Fareynegte Partizaner Organizatsye (United Partisan Organization or FPO), led by Yitzhak Wittenberg, issued a general call to arms.

Inspired by the Warsaw ghetto fighters who rose in rebellion in April 1943, the Fareynikte Partizaner Organizatsye (FPO) was organized in the ghetto on Jan. 21, 1942, led by Wittenberg, Abba Kovner and Josef Glazman. The group was one of the first resistance groups to form in a ghetto in Nazi-occupied territory during World War II.

The FPO hid weapons for self-defense throughout the ghetto, with Kovner making the call to the remaining inhabitants of the ghetto: "Hitler plans to destroy all the Jews of Europe, and the Jews of Lithuania have been chosen as the first in line. We will not be led like sheep to the slaughter! True, we are weak and defenseless, but the only reply to the murderer is revolt!"

After World War I, both Lithuania and Poland had claims on Vilna (in Lithuania, modern-day Vilnius), and it was part of Poland prior to World War II. After the Germans and Soviets signed their nonaggression pact in August 1939, Vilna, along with the rest of eastern Poland, was handed over to Soviet occupation. The Soviets in turn, then considered Vilna to be part of Lithuania.

A city of 200,000 people, 30% of whom were Jewish, Vilna was known as the "Jerusalem of the North," with 106 synagogues, despite a 60% Catholic presence. Approximately 265,000 Jews lived in various parts of Lithuania at the time of German occupation in 1941, though the majority were in Vilna.

After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Vilna was quickly overrun. Nazi administrators and policemen were not far behind the German army. By July 1941, the Nazis had implemented a series of antisemitic laws in Vilna and the rest of Lithuania, and soon after this, mobile killing units, the *Einsatzgruppen* together with Lithuanian collaborators, began to murder the Jewish population.



■ Paul R. Bartrop

In short order, they were responsible for the murder of 5,000 Jewish men in the Ponary Forest, eight miles outside of Vilna. Such killings at Ponary would continue well into 1944, resulting in the death of over 100,000 people. Of these, approximately 70,000 were Jews.

In June 1943, Himmler issued his first instructions for the ghetto's liquidation, which commenced on Sept. 1, 1943. The FPO found their moment, just as the Germans were closing in and entering the ghetto to begin the deportations. Many of the fighters stepped forward, but about 100 who had mobilized around secret arms caches were surrounded by German troops before they managed to arm themselves. Their subsequent removal was a bitter blow to the already small FPO force.

Unfortunately for the FPO, the ghetto inhabitants did not respond. Yechiel Scheinbaum, a fighter who led his own underground force known as the "Yechiel Group," was one of the first casualties. Jacob Gens, the leader of the *Judenrat*, refused to support the revolt.

Following an order of Rudolf Neugebauer, the Nazi head of the Vilna Gestapo, the ghetto was liquidated on Sept. 23-24, 1943, under the command of *Oberscharführer* (Sergeant First Class) Bruno Kittel.

The FPO fighters were defeated quickly, and Kovner's proclamation calling on the Jews of the ghetto to arms became irrelevant. When the battle seemed lost, all that was left was for the remaining fighters to escape. Moving through the city's sewers, some 80 to 100 members of the FPO managed to make their way to the forests, where they could continue the fight outside of Vilna. Establishing their own units and becoming transformed into Soviet partisans to continue the war from there, FPO resisters lived to participate in the liberation of Vilna by the Red Army on July 13, 1944.

Meanwhile, back in the ghetto, the liquidation process proceeded apace. Most of those who did not join the revolt — the majority — were captured and sent to labor camps in Estonia, where they were eventually killed by the SS, with few survivors. By the end of World War II, 95% of the Jews of Vilna had been exterminated.

No other Jewish population was so devastated in the Nazi-occupied areas of Eastern Europe. Of the 57,000 Jews who lived in the city when the Germans invaded Vilna, it is estimated that only 2,000 to 3,000 survived the war.

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

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# How to tackle too much stuff

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

By Rabbi Barbara Aiello

Can I help you with that?" The question came from the UPS driver who had just delivered a package to Jeanette's next-door neighbor. Jeanette offered a grateful smile and let the young man lift the box she was carrying and place it in the open trunk of her car. The box would later make its way to the local Goodwill store, joining about a dozen others Jeanette had already taken there this week alone.

"Decluttering," Jeanette said to the young driver. "Over the years, we've accumulated so much stuff. It's overwhelming."

Jeanette's dilemma and her dogged solution are not unique. In recent years, books, articles, YouTube videos and television programs have touted the benefits of leading a simpler, "stuff-free" life — a laudable goal but, as Jeanette has discovered, not as easy as it sounds.

As the Jewish new year approaches, the time is right for a fresh start, sans the trappings of rampant consumerism, retail therapy and a gnawing sense of "I just can't let this (dish, picture, love letter, award, mug, etc.) go." But how to tackle what seems to be an insurmountable task?



■ Rabbi Barbara Aiello

Call for reinforcements. Take to heart Ken Bresler's assessment of the cluttering problem ("A Jewish Take on Decluttering,") where he explains in the *Boston Jewish Times* that "For Jews, decluttering is not a fad. It's a tradition starting with God, the first organizer."

Bresler even points to the Jewish prayer for getting rid of stuff; "Blessed is the One who brings order to the world, as You bless my efforts to bring order."

Journalist Bresler found the prayer (offered in English and Hebrew) in "The Book of Jewish Sacred Practices: CLAL's Guide to Everyday & Holiday Rituals & Blessings." This 2001 publication by the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership has a two page spread titled "Organizing Your Room, Your House, Your Office, Your Affairs, Your Life."

So, now that we've said the prayer, let's get at it. That's where author Rita Wilkins comes in. Writing in the online magazine, *Sixty and Me*, Wilkins outlines a method for moving mountains of papers, clothing, keepsakes and mementos of all kinds. The Wilkins article, "The Therapeutic Benefits of Decluttering Your Home and Your Life," (July 30,

2023) offers an organizational basis for approaching an activity that seems to be beyond impossible.

Breaking clutter down into manageable categories is an essential but often overlooked first step, says Wilkins, who cautions that the random accumulation of a variety of tangible and intangible possessions can literally make us sick. To that end, the author offers an overall framework from which to begin.

"Digital clutter" manifests itself in unopened emails, disorganized desktops or hundreds of undeleted photographs, while "sentimental clutter" includes little chachkies like our children's art projects, years of birthday greetings and holiday cards — stuff we've relegated to cardboard boxes in the basement or plastic bins in storage facilities that we pay for each month but haven't visited for years.

Have you considered "calendar clutter?" Rita Wilkins has. She writes, "When our calendars are filled with too many commitments and obligations (the "have to's" but "I don't want to's") and when we allow unsolicited expectations of others to consume our time, attention and energy, our calendars leave no room, no white space for our own priorities and desires."

Then there's "financial clutter" in the piles of unfiled receipts often mixed with unpaid bills, not to mention the

often-ignored hidden clutter in the form of "relationship clutter," that Wilkins describes as patterns of toxic behavior such as constant yelling, blaming and enabling that, "just like physical clutter, can hold us back from living the life we want and deserve."

In an upside-down version of the six days of creation, these six clutter categories represent a personal Rosh HaShanah — a place to start as we work toward effectuating a seventh day of peace.

In Kohelet, we read "There is a time for everything ... a time to keep and a time to cast away ... a time for every purpose under heaven."

According to the experts, decluttering your home and your life has great benefits, including a feeling of great relief. To begin, focus on one of these six categories. As the burden of too much stuff is lifted, you will be able to create space for a simpler, more abundant life.

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. Contact her at [rabbibarbara.com](mailto:rabbibarbara.com).

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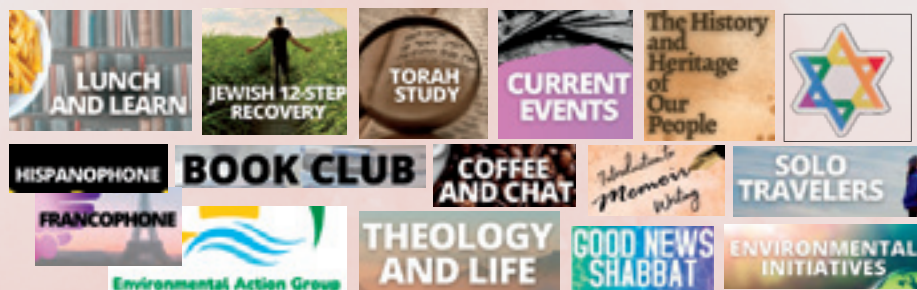
**Rosh Hashanah** Friday, September 15 at 7:00pm EDT - Evening Service  
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## Mostly “Oppy”

By Nate Bloom, Stars of David Contributing Columnist

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

Since the pandemic, broadcast networks have moved most of the premieres of new series to October. So, there isn't a lot to write about in September and “new stuff” may be rare in October, even if the writers and actors strike is settled by the time this column is published.

For whatever reason, there aren't any notable new films this month with a strong Jewish connection.

So, I decided to look back to two films that opened on the same day (July 21) and have become cultural events — “Oppenheimer” and “Barbie.” As I write this, “Barbie” has grossed over a billion dollars worldwide, and “Oppy” has grossed over \$500 million. Even before the films opened, a term was coined to celebrate their same-week-end opening — “Barbenheimer.”

I have seen a few articles that talk about “Oppenheimer” as an intro to discussing “Barbie.” One *Wall Street Journal* article noted that **Ruth Handler** (1916-2002), the woman who created the Barbie doll, founded her toy company (in her garage) the same year (1945) the A-bomb was dropped.

But I haven't seen a single article that notes, in the same article, that Handler and **J. Robert Oppenheimer** were both Jewish. I would love to see a T-shirt or poster that has side-by-side images of Handler and “Oppy” with this caption: “The Jewish father of the A-Bomb and the Jewish mother of Barbie.” Except for the word “Jewish,” that's what these two inventors were called in their lifetimes.

To me, the most surprising thing about “Oppenheimer” was how little screen time so many characters had. Even **Einstein** had a couple of brief scenes. If you ‘blinked,’ you'd miss the names of many characters.

Just below are three Jewish “Oppenheimer” characters (all physicists) who had more than a very brief appearance. Even so, I don't think the film did them justice.

The film does convey that Danish physicist **Niels Bohr** (1885-1962), a Nobel Prize winner, was a “giant” and without his work, nuclear power, etc. would have never existed. The film also accurately shows that Bohr declined an invitation to work on the Manhattan Project (the A-bomb project).

However, I was annoyed that his Jewish background (his mother was

Jewish), was never mentioned. The film did show Bohr being welcomed in America following his escape from Nazi-occupied Denmark, but it didn't note that he fled (Sept., 1943) when he got “word” that he was probably going to be arrested because the Nazis viewed the secular Bohr as a Jew.

Bohr was smuggled out of Denmark and taken on a fishing boat to neutral Sweden, then on to the States. Less than a month later, most Danish Jews (about 3,000) were taken to Sweden in the same way. Bohr fervently lobbied on behalf of Danish Jews and, according to many sources, really helped to get the Swedes to decide to accept a “mass exodus.”

**I.I. Rabi** (1898-1988), as depicted in the film, had grave misgivings about making “the bomb.” He didn't work at Los Alamos but agreed to consult with Oppenheimer when asked. As depicted in the film, he was at Los Alamos for the first A-bomb test.

Rabi's and Oppenheimer's Jewish backgrounds were made clear in the same early scene. What isn't mentioned is that Rabi won the Nobel Prize (1944) as WWII raged. His prize was for his discovery of nuclear magnetic resonance. Unlike many scientific discoveries, Rabi's discovery has led to very ‘practical’ things — the invention of microwave ovens, microwave radar and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines.

Rabi lived long enough to have an MRI test. He said that he saw his reflection on the machine's shiny inside and said to himself, “I never thought my work would lead to this.”

Physicist **Frank Oppenheimer** was the brother of J. Robert. As depicted in the film, he couldn't work on the “Project” because he was briefly a member of the Communist Party. The film mentions that he was blacklisted after the war. It doesn't mention that he made a huge career comeback. He couldn't get a teaching job until 1959, so he bought a cattle ranch and ran it for 10 years. In 1967, he moved to San Francisco and created the Exploratorium, a hands-on science, technology and arts museum. It started with a smallish grant and became, over time, a major city attraction — and a model for similar museums all over the country. He was the museum's director until his death in 1985 at age 72.

All the info written above couldn't be worked into the film. But, I think, the audience would have benefited if there was a “fact” scroll, after the film ended, of information about the characters. I think most of the audience would have stayed to read it. 🕒

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# New Year's Greetings




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*The Start of the New Year*

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**Phyllis & Berny Aronson-  
Love to all**

*L'Shana Tova*



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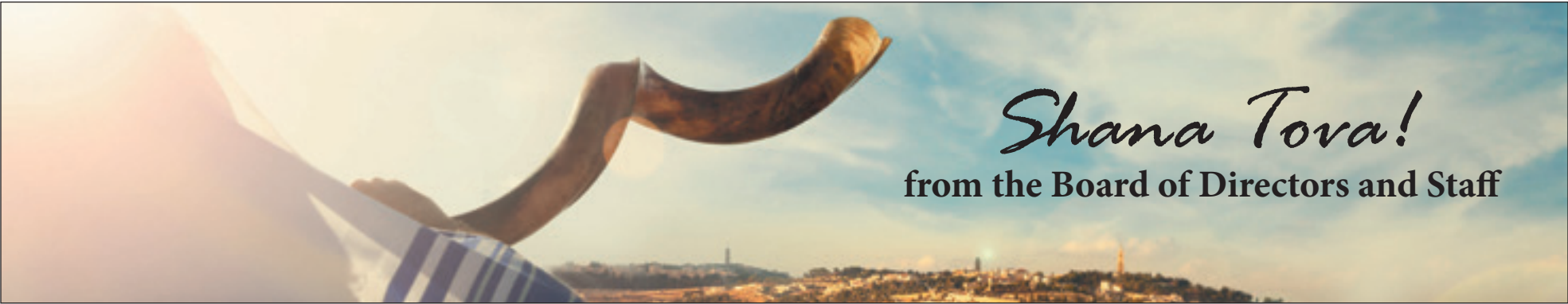
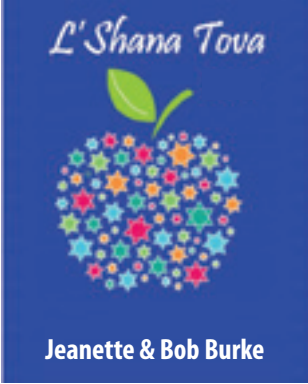
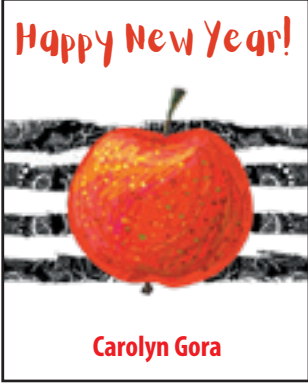
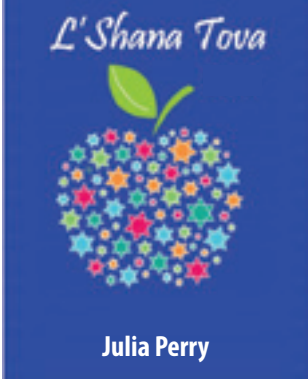
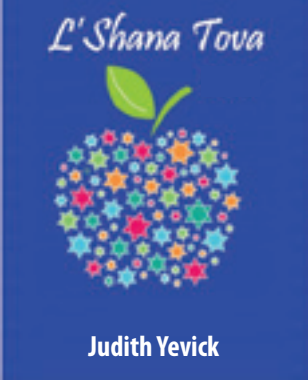
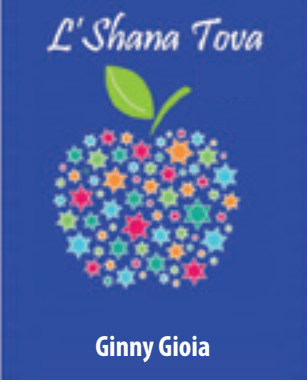


Shana Tova

**Lydia Gattanell**



# from Your Community





# Culinary journey to Morocco

By Chef Dalia

Rosh Hashanah is almost here. It is one of my favorite holidays. It is a time of renewal and of family, always filled with good food, festive traditions and wishes, and hopes and prayers for the future. At the same time, Rosh Hashanah has an unhappy side. It brings back memories for me that are both sweet and painful. There are some days when I feel melancholy and full pain. These feelings are most acute on the Jewish holidays — especially Rosh Hashanah and especially this year, after I lost both of my parents within a four week period.

Last month, in a fit of desperation and loneliness, I had the opportunity to travel to Morocco for the first time — just before Rosh Hashanah.

Logistically and even physically, it was an ill-advised decision, I know. But for my soul, it was the right thing to do. And so, with a suitcase and my husband, kids and great friends, I traveled to the place from where my parents embarked on their journey to Israel.

For years, my column has centered on Moroccan memories and writing about Moroccan culture and food. For years, people were dumbstruck when I told them I hadn’t been to Morocco. The time finally seemed right. Sometimes, I think my entire life was a preparation for Morocco.

Morocco, a country that steals visitors’ hearts, its charming cities, its narrow streets full of history and its colorful souks rich in aromas and flavors conquer the heart of anyone who visits.

As I packed my suitcase, I thought the trip would mainly be focused on finding and returning to the country of my parents’ roots and place of birth to

fulfill my father’s dream. While there, however, I was blown away to discover Morocco’s flourishing culinary scene. The food there is incredible — it’s fresh, it’s flavorful and it’s as colorful as it is delicious.

There are many reasons to visit Morocco but one of the best has to be the food.

Moroccan gastronomy is one of the most popular — sophisticated and of great wealth and diversity, being a mixture of gastronomies of Mediterranean, African, Middle Eastern and even Sephardic cuisine. Moroccan cuisine is considered to be cuisine for royalties, using expensive ingredients such as saffron, pure honey, pistachios, almonds, Argan oil, and much more.

I ate my way through the best restaurants of Tangier, Casablanca and Tetouan.

I tried couscous and kefta tagine, stuffed fried sardines, Moroccan fish tagine, Moroccan frena bread, even well-known foods like hummus and falafel as well as Moroccan desserts like chebakia, sfenj, Mufleta and mint tea ... always mint tea. My kids had kebabs almost daily.

Moroccan food has so much more flavor and crunch compared to what we have in the States. I think we ate about every hour or so in the three days we spent in Morocco and, while my jeans may have been uncomfortably tight, my stomach grumbled happily along.

Moroccan cuisine is famous among tourists for couscous and lamb tagine. True, these are some of Moroccans’ finest food options, but there is one dish that every single Moroccan loves and is worth all the trouble of traveling to Morocco. The one dish you need to

try before leaving Morocco is pastilla — a bit of Moroccan genius and one of the most well-known dishes there — a delicate pastry that brings sweetness into a savory dish. One of my family’s Rosh Hashanah dishes that I remember served in my childhood home and beyond, Moroccan Pastilla still makes my tongue smile, even after all these years.

To honor the memory of my mom and dad, I am sharing our family pastilla recipe. We used to make it in individual portions, which gives it a serious “crunch factor” the moment your teeth rip into the cinnamon-dusted pastry. This version is filled with shredded chicken and ground almonds. With a touch of honey, it’s the ultimate marriage of sweet and salty, wrapped up in the plainness of the perfect pastry package.

Happy Rosh Hashanah! 🌸



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



## Moroccan Pastilla

### Ingredients for the pastry:

- 4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 6-8 phyllo sheets
- 1 Tbsp. powdered sugar
- 1 Tbsp. honey or cinnamon

### Ingredients for the filling:

- 2 cups hot water
- ½ tsp. turmeric

- 3 tsp. salt
- 6 boneless skinless chicken thighs
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 tsp. grated ginger
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. paprika
- ¼ tsp. Baharat spice mix
- ⅓ cup toasted walnuts
- ⅓ cup toasted sliced almonds

- ⅓ cup chopped dried apricots
- ¼ cup golden raisins
- 1 tsp. salt
- Black pepper
- 3 Tbsp. honey

### Directions

- Put hot water, turmeric and 2 tsp. salt in a saucepan and bring to boil over high heat. Add chicken, bring back to boil, then cover the pan, reduce heat to low and cook on low simmer for 45 minutes. Transfer chicken to a plate and discard the liquid.
- Put olive oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat and sauté onion until golden. Add ginger and spices and sauté for another minute. Add nuts, apricots, raisins, 1 tsp. salt and black pepper and cook for another 3 minutes, stirring frequently. Drizzle honey all over the mixture, mix and cook for another minute, and then remove from heat.
- Shred chicken using a fork and add to the nut-fruit mixture in the pan together with chopped parsley. Let mixture cool down.

- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
- To prepare the pastry, line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Put 4 Tbsp. olive oil in a cup and have a pastry brush ready.
- Remove phyllo dough from its box and put next to you, flat on a working surface, then cover with damp towel to make sure it doesn’t dry out.
- To make individual pastries – work with one phyllo sheet at a time. Put a sheet on a working surface, long side near you, and brush oil on the left half. Then fold the right half on top of the left half, and brush again with oil. Put ⅓ cup of the chicken filling in the center of the phyllo sheet and fold bottom and top to cover, like an envelope. Then fold each corner in, to create a round pastry. Transfer folded pastry to baking sheet and continue with the rest of the sheets.
- Brush folded pastries with oil and bake for 15-18 minutes or until golden brown on top.
- Dust with powdered sugar and cinnamon and serve.

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# Enjoying the California classics

By Jerry Greenfield, the Wine Whisperer

A recent article in the *Robb Report* commented on some of the really age-worthy wines from California that might be lingering in someone's collection and are more than ready to drink.

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, the trend in California, especially in Napa, was to make wines with higher acidity and lower alcohol (relatively speaking). Today, critics seem to think that those wines have aged better than newer vintages, where the trend went toward more extracted, full-bodied reds with up to 15% alcohol ... and even a bit more.

For example, justly famous wine-maker Manfred Krankl, with his Sine Qua Non label, has consistently crafted fruit bomb syrah and grenache that will purple your teeth. And since the fruit content is so dense, the wines support a very high level of alcohol. The problem, for me at least, is that the fruit fades over time and the wines lack the other components (acidity, tannin, etc.) to make them age for 10, 20 or 30 years.

There seems to be some sort of prejudice or caution regarding aged wines from certain regions. Collectors will pay up to \$4,000 for a bottle of 1961 Lafite Rothschild from Bordeaux, which is chump change compared to a 2000 Domaine de la Romanée Conti from Burgundy, which can set you back about \$18,000. But they'll approach the purchase of a 20-year-old Napa cabernet with cautious trepidation. There's really no reason for that.

I can attest to that personally. Somehow or other, we acquired some California wines from the 1970s. Among them were three bottles of 1974 Inglenook charbono, a very obscure varietal, to say the least. Inglenook started making it back around 1940. Founded in 1897, Inglenook has been owned by film director Francis Ford Coppola since 1975. Well, we opened one bottle on New Year's Eve of 2014. It was 40 years old and was absolutely sensational. We had another bottle at Bern's Steak House in Tampa a few years later. By the time you read this, we will have enjoyed the remaining bottle, as well.

An article in *Forbes* points out, a group of wines they call California



■ Jerry Greenfield

classics, and note that many of them, bottled before 1995, are "stunning." The names are familiar to wine lovers. There's Chateau Montelena, whose chardonnay won the famous Paris tasting in 1976, surpassing the most expensive and revered white Burgundies. Stag's Leap also made its mark at that Paris tasting. There

are several wines made by Garen and Shari Staglin, who are no strangers to Southwest Florida.

They're not cheap, but even at \$400 a bottle, it's a better buy than something like a current vintage of Harlan Estate that costs \$1,200 a bottle and won't be ready to drink until your grandchildren get out of medical school.

So, if you have the opportunity ... and the resources ... some older California wines can be a good investment in enjoyment for special occasions. Works for me. So do my latest selections.

**Clos Pegase Pinot Noir Mitsuko's Vineyard 2021 (\$40)** – Fermentation and aging in barrel imparts graceful aromas of the oak and expressive flavors of cherry and mixed red fruit. WW 90

**Ferraton Père & Fils Côtes du Rhône Samorens Red 2020 (\$16)** – A blend of grenache, cinsault and syrah, all characteristic varietals of the region. Rich and heady red fruit aromas and a palate of well-knit blackberries, other black fruits and a tiny finesse of spice and licorice. Drinks well beyond its price point. WW 93

**Mer Soliel Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands 2019 (\$40)** – The area northeast of Santa Barbara is rightly proud of its pinots and chardonnays. Winemaker Charlie Wagner has the family chops to make a supremely elegant red that surrounds you with scents of cherry and blueberry, with touches of cocoa and oak from nine months aging in barrel. Complex cola, licorice and baked cherry coat the palate. Worth the price. WW 96

*Jerry Greenfield, the Wine Whisperer, is Creative Director of Greenfield Advertising Group. His new book, "Secrets of the Wine Whisperer," is now available through his website or on Amazon. Read his other writings at [www.winewhisperer.com](http://www.winewhisperer.com).*

## ASK THE WINE WHISPERER

*I recently received a bottle of chardonnay as a gift, and it didn't have a vintage date on the label. What does this mean? R.F., Pembroke Pines*

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## My hometown

Podcast host Bill Simmons uses a concept called Apex Mountain. It's when someone or something is at the peak of its popularity in American culture.

We've reached Apex Mountain for my hometown of Kansas City.

My moment of clarity came when Rabbi Marc Sack started his *d'var Torah* by referencing "Ted Lasso." Lasso, the fictional football coach from Kansas City, is a creation of Jason Sudeikis, who grew up in Kansas City and graduated from Shawnee Mission West High School a few years after Paul Rudd.

Kansas City is the adopted home of the NFL's best quarterback, Patrick Mahomes. His teammate, Travis Kelce, hosted "Saturday Night Live" earlier this year after their Super Bowl victory. One SNL cast member who played a



■ Brian Simon

prominent role in that episode was Heidi Gardner, a Kansas City native.

You have to understand something about being from the Midwest. We're not used to this. Kansas City is nothing like New York or Philadelphia or even Chicago. We're big enough to have a couple of major sports teams, but we feel smaller. When I watch Chiefs games on TV, I expect to see someone I know in the crowd.

Adam Sandler wrote "The Chanukah Song" about which celebrities were Jewish. Finding famous people from our hometown is like that for us. Maybe we could write a silly little ditty:

*The guy from "Modern Family" likes Gates's burnt ends.*

*So does Melissa Etheridge, Rob Riggle and all their friends...*

When I was growing up, we had Ed Asner on TV (his sister-in-law taught me seventh-grade math) and George Brett in baseball. The most famous alumnus of my high school might have been Susan Stafford, who turned the letters on Wheel of Fortune pre-Vanna White. Sure, we took civic pride in Walt Disney and Harry Truman, but they were already deceased.

My kids were born and raised here in Ft. Myers, but I indoctrinated them to KC sports. I remember picking up Sander from school one day — he had to be 7 or 8 years old — and he told me, "Dad, we've got to get with the program with the Red Sox. They've won two titles!" I told him, gently but firmly, that we are fans of the Royals and Chiefs, and that we were meant to suffer.

As it turned out, we didn't have to suffer much longer. The Royals won the World Series before Sander was out of high school. Sporting KC won the Major League Soccer Cup, and our new women's team, the Current, played for the NWSL championship last year, during just their second season in KC. And then there are the Chiefs.

A little background: the Chiefs won the Super Bowl after the 1969 season, then didn't make it back for 50 years. In other words, my people wandered in the proverbial desert for 10 years longer than our people.

Today, they dominate the NFL behind the sublime play of Patrick Mahomes (that's *Saint Patrick* to us).

I can't say enough nice things about Mahomes. I'm sure one day the sports media will tear him down for something he does or says, because that is the fate of every famous person but, so far, he's a true-to-life Hallmark movie character (Hallmark is a Kansas City company). Mahomes married his high school sweetheart, and they have two beautiful

children. He bought ownership interests in the Royals and the Current. He heard Henry Winkler was a fan, so he invited The Fonz to a game in LA and gave him a signed jersey. Winkler, who has no ties to KC (but was mentioned in Sandler's Hanukkah song), kvelled.

Mahomes has avoided controversies off the field and been darn near miraculous on it.

What I love about watching Mahomes is that he is novel. He does things that you haven't seen before — throw a pass with his opposite hand, throw a pass while looking in a different direction, sprint to the sideline being chased by defenders, then suddenly spin, stop and flip a pass for a touchdown.

His most miraculous throw didn't even count. In the Super Bowl loss to Tampa Bay, Mahomes was being hounded by a defender, got tripped then as he was falling — parallel to the ground — threw a pass 30 yards downfield, where it bonked off the receiver's face mask.

He does things like this so often that one analyst published a list of "Patrick Mahomes' best throws that didn't count." It was a two-part series.

I know those of you from Boston can appreciate this. Your long-suffering Red Sox and Patriots suddenly became juggernauts in the early 2000s. And you had Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. Maybe the Boston faithful became a little less bitter in the process of transformation, but they never had anyone as friendly and positive as Ted Lasso.

So, on behalf of my fellow Kansas Citians, I want to say a *shehecheyanu*. Blessed are you, Lord, who has granted us life, sustained us and allowed us to reach this occasion. For the first time, my hometown in the Great Plains is on a mountaintop. 🏔️

**We're not used to this. Kansas City is nothing like New York or Philadelphia or even Chicago.**

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# A horse with no name

My colleague Brian Simon wrote in June about athletes whose names fit certain themes, such as “legal,” “medical” and “Jewish” holidays. His article was in response to my previous article about noms de plume. (See, you really need to keep up with these L'Chayim articles!)

For those wanting to keep score, we’ve covered fake names and themed names. But what about people who have no name at all? Now, that’s a horse of a different color. Or better yet, a horse with no name. Let’s go through the desert together, shall we? In the desert, you can remember your name (if you have one).

With all the uproar over Elon Musk changing Twitter’s name to X, perhaps



■ Keith Grossman

this topic is timely. According to trademark attorney Josh Gerben, there are nearly 900 active U.S. trademarks for the letter X.

I don’t believe I can name 900 people with the name X, though. I can think of Malcolm X, some popes, and a guy I used to know named Xavier, but he preferred to be called X. Anyone younger than 30 reading this is probably yelling at me that there’s Little Nas X (or something like that).

I’m old enough to remember when Prince changed his name, not to a letter like X, but rather to a symbol. He described it as a “Love Symbol,” which was a mashup of the gender symbols for man and woman. It was unpronounceable, so he became known as “The Artist

Formerly Known as Prince.” Years later, he went back to using the name Prince.

Can you imagine having met “The Artist Formerly Known as Prince” at a party and asking for his name, and he says, “Oh, I don’t have one. Just call me (and he squeaks something out in a high pitch).”

How does someone without a name even order a coffee at Starbucks? “Hi, can I get a tall caramel macchiato for, um, you know, the guy in the blue shirt?” And what if they need to fill out a form or sign a legal document? Do they just leave the space blank?

We’ve been using names since the beginning of time to avoid awkward moments like this. Shouldn’t everyone have a name? It’s like the most basic thing about being a person — you get a name. It’s like being born and saying, “Nah, I’m good without one, thanks.”

And you know what’s the worst part? They’re smug about it, like it’s some deep philosophical statement. “Oh, I’m beyond names, man. I’m transcending the petty labels of society.”

Nameless characters are popular in storytelling, though. For example, Ralph Ellison never named his protagonist in “Invisible Man.” Margaret

Atwood took the same approach for her narrator in “Surfacing.”

I read that “using nameless characters can be an effective literary device to convey a sense of mystery, anonymity or lost identity.” Avoiding names can emphasize a character’s role over their personal identity. It can also provide less distraction, so you can focus on the story.

Being unnamed doesn’t mean the character is unmemorable, though.

Charlie Chaplin became a legend of silent films, primarily as a down-on-his-luck tramp with no name. Baby Yoda is really known in the story as “The Child.” On “Friends,” there was a recurring character simply known as Ugly Naked Guy. And, of course, Clint East-

wood famously played “The Man With No Name.”

Although these people had no names, they had nicknames. Even parents are going to call their nameless kid something, like “Tiger” or “Sweetie Pie.”

So, what’s in a name, really? You can walk through life like a blank canvas, and maybe that has some appeal.

The ball is in your court, (other writer who shall remain unnamed).

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# Unlocking the “magic” of the shofar

By Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer

It's the time of year to open ourselves to the call of the shofar. The shofar arouses the divine voice within us, calling us back to our Source. The blast of the Shofar can shatter hearts of stone and wash away layers of complacency. In fact, the name of one of its calls, Shevarim, translates as “shatterer.” The sound penetrates us as few sounds can. It has a mythic quality.

The Baal Shem Tov said, “In the palace of the king, there are many chambers and each one needs a different key. There is one key, one instrument, however, which can open all the doors — the ax. The shofar is an ax. When a person passionately breaks his heart before the Almighty, he can smash any gate in the palace of the King of Kings.”

The Baal Shem Tov teaches us that the shofar is an intuitive way of gaining access to the deepest recesses of our heart, of divine experiential knowledge. Its blast, this wordless sound, speaks



■ Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer

to the heart in a way that logic alone cannot approach.

The Dubno Maggid (1741-1804) offers a parable to answer the question of how we might allow the blast of the shofar to affect our being.

A poor farmer had a wealthy uncle who lived in the city

and who once invited him for a visit. When the poor farmer arrived, he was greeted warmly and led immediately into a large dining hall with a long table.

As they spoke and shared stories about family, the uncle picked up a brass bell and clanged it. Immediately, a troop of servants emerged from

side doors with trays of appetizers. The farmer had never seen such enticing food in his life. The servants returned to the

kitchen and the two relatives continued the conversation. Shortly thereafter, the uncle clanged the bell again and the servants reappeared, taking away the old trays and bringing out new ones with the first course. This pattern continued throughout the evening. With each clang, the poor farmer was more dumbstruck.

When it was time to leave, the farmer

thanked his uncle heartily and made a stop at a local store before rushing home. When he arrived, he woke up his wife and excitedly told her. “You’ll never believe what I did. I spent our last kopek on something you will thank me a million times for buying. Here, look.” And he took

out of his pouch a brass bell just like his uncle’s. “This,” the farmer said, “is a magic bell.” His wife looked at him

as if he was crazy. Undaunted, the man said, “You’ll see, all I have to do is ring it and, immediately, servants will come out and serve us the most exquisite food which we can eat till our hearts content.”

Of course, the servants didn’t appear. The bell possessed no magic. It only worked when used as a signal to servants already waiting in the wings.

So, too, the shofar.

If we are unprepared for the Yamim Noraim, the Days of Awe, then the shofar has as much ability to move us as that farmer’s “magic” bell. For it to work, we need to prepare. The call of the shofar is the call to Teshuva. Teshuva, often poorly translated as “repentance,” literally means “return” and refers to “returning” to our best selves. The shofar reminds us that doing teshuva means remembering who we truly are and who we wish to be, and deepening our awareness of the Divine Presence in the world and in us. 🕯

**... the shofar is an intuitive way of gaining access to the deepest recesses of our heart, of divine experiential knowledge.**

## Rosh Hashana — what are we praying for?

By Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz

The Haftorah of the first day of Rosh Hashana relates the story of Chana, who was childless and came to the Sanctuary to pray. In the merit of her prayers, she was blessed with a son — the prophet Samuel.

Eli, the High Priest, seeing Chana so immersed in prayer and oblivious to her surroundings, suspected her of being intoxicated — not from wine, but from the very act of praying.

“I am not drunk,” Chana explained. “I am pouring out my soul before the L-rd.” Through prayer, Chana’s soul was uniting with G-d.

On Rosh Hashana, we ask G-d to fulfill our needs. Our requests are spiritual and material: We ask Him to bless us with healthy children, long lives and an abundant livelihood.

Rosh Hashana is the day of G-d’s coronation as King, as we say, “Reign over the whole world in Your glory.”

How do we accept G-d’s sovereignty? By nullifying ourselves in His presence. When we are completely nullified before the King, we are unaware of our personal desires, aware only of being in G-d’s Presence.

This presents us with a seeming contradiction. If Rosh Hashana is characterized by an absence of self-perception, how can we simultaneously pray for the fulfillment of our personal requests?



■ Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz

When a Jew prays to G-d on Rosh Hashana, his prayer is an extension of the process of coronation. While, superficially, he may be asking G-d for material blessings, his true intention — whether consciously or subconsciously — is the desire to spread awareness of G-d’s kingship in the world. By praying for material blessing, the

Jew is merely asking for Divine assistance in fulfilling his G-dly mission on Earth.

It was this concept that was unclear to Eli the priest. His contention was that when a Jew prays, there is no room for personal requests; the awareness of being in G-d’s presence should be so intense that it precludes anything else. When Eli saw Chana praying for a child, he mistakenly concluded that she had forgotten G-d’s presence.

Not so, was Chana’s reply. Her longing for a child was not a personal desire, but a wish to fulfill a greater mission in life. This is evident in the vow she made, that if G-d would bless her, the child would be given over for a life of total service of G-d. Chana wasn’t asking G-d to fulfill her personal request; she was praying

for G-d to fulfill His own needs!

So, too, is it with us on Rosh Hashana. Although our petitions are personal in focus, the true essence of our prayer is to unite with G-d. 🕯

**When a Jew prays to G-d on Rosh Hashana, his prayer is an extension of the process of coronation.**

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



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# Return

By Rabbi Nicole Luna

The High Holy Days have looked different in Lee County over the past few years. As a result of Hurricane Irma, COVID-19 and Hurricane Ian, we have had some challenging High Holy Day experiences together.

We celebrated Rosh Hashanah while still recovering from Hurricane Irma in 2017. We celebrated the High Holy Days via Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and many chose to remain on Zoom during the Omicron variant surge in 2021.

Last year, Temple Beth El canceled the second day of Rosh Hashanah services because of Hurricane Ian's imminent landfall. By the time Yom Kippur arrived, some of us were in Lee County without drinkable water or reliable cell service. Some of us were in hotels on the east coast. Some of us were staying with family and friends, wondering how long the arrangement would work. Since Lee County had few working traffic lights, we observed Kol Nidre over Zoom and had a modified Yom Kippur service.



■ Rabbi Nicole Luna

**Each year, our liturgy calls us to return — return to God, return to the sanctuary, return to who we are meant to be.**

Yet, despite these challenges throughout the years, the themes of transformation, repair and hope while standing before God remain the same. Each year, our liturgy calls us to return — return to God, return to the sanctuary, return to who we are meant to be.

This year, God willing, we will return to the sanctuary for a full Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Yet, we will do more than return to the Temple building. We return to living the values that really matter, we return to strengthening relationships with the people we care about, we return to not just feeling but acting upon our gratitude.

The Talmud teaches, “returning home is the hardest thing in the world, for to truly return would mean to bring the Messiah. Returning home is also the easiest thing to do, for it only needs to occur to you to return home, and you have already begun.”

May our return and our new year be full of safety and peace. 🌍

# Let's keep the faith

By Cantor Barry Butensky

As the secular calendar switches to September in a few weeks, I admit that my eye is more trained on the Jewish calendar as it changes next week from the month of Av to the final month of the Jewish calendar year, Elul.

What that means, practically speaking, is that, in about four weeks, the festival of Rosh Hashanah ushers in the new year of 5784. In Jewish tradition, this time of year is one of self-reflection and contemplation as we consider the choices we have made in the past year, how we can improve on them in the year to come and ask forgiveness from those we have wronged.

This time of year also brings about a common response, not only from clergy, to many questions and requests: “Let’s wait until after the holidays.”

To be clear, I am fully aware that this is hardly a unique phenomenon. How often is a question asked in early December met with a response of “Let’s wait until after Christmas” or “Ask me again after January 1?”

But it is worth noting that the “holidays” on the Jewish calendar are no small endeavor. The Jewish new year is literally and figuratively just the beginning as the Jewish fall holiday season lasts for 23 days.

It starts with the new year and is followed by Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, on the 10th day of the year. Day 15 ushers in the Festival of Booths, known as Sukkot, which lasts for seven days. Two more days of festival make up days 22 and 23.

It is exhilarating and exhausting. It also means that saying “Let’s wait until after the holidays” is much more than just waiting a week or two.

As a regular user of this response, I will rise to say that it is often justified in its use. The weeks leading up to the High Holidays and the festivals that follow are the busiest and most pressurized weeks of the Jewish year. The spiritual work of standing before G-d and asking



■ Cantor Barry Butensky

for forgiveness for mistakes we have made in the past year should take precedence over other matters.

Preparations for these moments, both individual and communal, appropriately take priority over other conversations that do need to wait until after the holidays. No doubt clergy of other faiths appropriately say something similar in the days and weeks leading up to Easter or the month of Ramadan.

And yet, it is easy to slip into the mode of using it as an excuse. It becomes easy to avoid a problem by saying “Let’s deal with it after the holidays,” only to find that waiting those weeks only made the issue more complicated and more serious.

This goes beyond the classic waiting to start a diet until after the holidays and is actually the opposite of what this time of year is meant to be about.

Personal matters, family matters, resolution with coworkers, taking the

first step on a journey that will improve your life — these are not meant to ever wait until after the holidays. Self-care and caring for other people start anew every day and waits for no one.

We all, no matter our religion and background, have a responsibility to make sure that those in our community who need assistance get that help as soon as possible. Quite often, those

in need are others, but it also happens that we ourselves are the ones in need of care. Whomever it is, waiting is not an option.

Without question, over the next several weeks “Let’s wait until after the holidays” will be a common phrase to escape my lips. But I invite you to join me in not overusing the phrase. There is much important work to be done in this community and in our world. And, frankly, it cannot wait until after the holidays.

L’shanah tova tikateivu v’tetichateimu ... “A good year, and may you be inscribed and sealed.” 🌍

**The spiritual work of standing before G-d and asking for forgiveness for mistakes we have made in the past year should take precedence over other matters.**

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# The goodness of life

A Rosh Hashanah thought for the New Year 5784

By Rabbi Solomon Agin

It is recorded that, after each day of creation, God conveyed the work and affirmed its goodness and, on the sixth day, God reaffirmed the worthwhileness of the entire universe by declaring, "It is very good." This is the basis for the Jewish conviction that life is worth living and that the world is good. Life is a divine gift to be accepted joyfully.

Judaism alone, among the religions of humankind, urges every person to enjoy the pleasures of the world. The ancient rabbis boldly proclaim, "In the hereafter, every person will be called to account for the earthly pleasures that person rejected."

The rabbis believed that the true way to enjoy God's gifts in the world is to use them with discretion, balance,



■ Rabbi Solomon Agin

**"In the hereafter, every person will be called to account for the earthly pleasures that person rejected."**

pleasure and keen enjoyment. The total abstainer is not the finest example of humanity, even as the drunkard is not the model human being. Too much fasting is just as reprehensible as gluttony. Neglect of the body and its needs is just as regrettable as hypochondria.

We serve God best when we enhance the worthwhileness of life by using with appreciation of God's many gifts. Throughout the ages, Judaism has held firm to the conviction that the world is good, life is worth living and possibilities for happiness are endless.

And God saw everything that God made, and behold, it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

Shanah Tovah – Wishing you a year of health, happiness and contentment. 🌍

# The hand of God

By Rabbi Bruce Diamond

We all experience many strange underlying connections between events and people. On the surface, they might register as odd, even spooky, coincidences that we shrug off and move on. A surface example is when you are thinking about a person that you haven't spoken with in a while and, just then, you hear from them. You might start the conversation with, "You know, I was just thinking about you!" That happens often enough to defy mere coincidence, and it happens to all of us, so you know exactly what I mean.

Of course, this runs a lot deeper than casual phone calls. Underlying connections and relationships between apparently unconnected events and persons that come together and lead to oddly related outcomes remind me of how Einstein described what physicists term "quantum entanglement." "Spooky action at a distance," he disbelievably called it, but it is true.

What scientists are referring to is the behavior of miniscule atomic particles when what happens to one particle instantaneously affects the conditions of another "entangled particle," no matter how far apart, presumably even on the other side of the universe! It has been repeatedly observed but not yet understood, since it defies some seemingly impossible paradoxes.

However, I am not talking about electrons and photons. I am describing us and our lives and the "spooky



■ Rabbi Bruce Diamond

entanglements" that we all experience that likely have little or nothing to do with quantum mechanics — but who can be sure at this primitive stage of our knowledge?

I prefer to call these strange connections surprisingly linking events and people "the hand of God." That is the

term I use to describe what seems to be causing and directing these unexpected and often ironic interrelationships and outcomes that we simply cannot help but notice.

What is more, when we notice these strange and unanticipated connections and give them some thought, we discover that they contain information, can provide deep insights and even wisdom. They inform us about underlying truths that we never realized or chose to ignore about ourselves, others in our lives and the choices we've made. In other words, they contain "Torah" oracle.

I know most of what I am saying sounds a bit abstract and a little heady, so let me put it as simply as I can. I am completely certain there is power that guides each of our lives and can move us to a place of deeper understanding and maturity if we are open to that.

It is that "hand" that we acknowledge on these Days of Awe. 🌍

**... there is power that guides each of our lives and can move us to a place of deeper understanding and maturity if we are open to that.**

## WOMEN'S Giving Circle

### WHAT IS A WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE?

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

- 🌍 A chance to make an impact on the lives of women and children in Israel & Overseas
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### TO JOIN & FOR MORE INFORMATION

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



## VICTIMS & WITNESSES OF ANTISEMITISM

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

Call 239.481.4449 x6



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



BBYO

Naples/Fort Myers

Cayla Schreier, BBYO Southwest Coordinator

We hope you are ready for an exciting fall season because the BBYO teens are ready to jump into the 2023-2024 school year. The teens had a busy summer, with summer camp, extra-curricular activities and summer jobs. Some BBYO teens attended a couple of Naples BBYO Ice Cream Socials at Sub Zero Ice Cream and Yogurt, which creates ice cream in front of customers using liquid nitrogen. The teens were excited to connect over the summer while learning about nitrogen and seeing ice cream creations being made in front of their own eyes.

The teens plan to hold a BBYO Naples kickoff called the Macabeach

September will be a busy month with Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur — the High Holy Days. Our Naples and Fort Myers teens; Naples BBYO Advisor, Ben; myself; and BBYO wish everyone a wonderful, happy, healthy and sweet new year! L'Shana Tova!

What is BBYO?

BBYO is a diverse and inclusive Jewish youth group to encourage Jewish teens to become more immersed and interested in meaningful Jewish activities and programs. This organization accepts Jewish teens attending eighth through twelfth grades of all backgrounds, sexual orientation, gender, race, denominational affiliation or



games on Sunday, Aug.27. They will have volleyball matches, bracelet making and spike ball matches. This event is open to all Jewish teens attending eighth through twelfth grades whether they are a BBYO member or a prospect. Our region, the North Florida Region, is hosting a regional kickoff on Sunday, Sept. 10 at Andretti Indoor Karting and Games in Orlando, Florida. Naples and Fort Myers teens will travel with Tampa teens to this event. They are excited to see their BBYO friends again.

socioeconomic status. BBYO currently reaches over 70,000 teens worldwide with participants in over 60 countries and hundreds of chapters across the United States. Supporting our teenage Jewish community It is extremely important to engage teens post-B'nai Mitzvah age in Jewish activities. Having teens get involved in BBYO and be eager to create and confidently continue their own Jewish community within their Greater Jewish communities is critical to our future.

The BBYO chapter of Naples has entered its 11th year of partnership with Jewish Federation of Greater Naples, Temple Shalom, Chabad of Naples and Beth Tikvah. Each of these organizations provides financial support, volunteers and community involvement opportunities for the BBYO teens. We thank each and every one of our BBYO alum, friends and other supporters for making this a safe and positive environment for the teens of BBYO Naples and Fort Myers. If you know of someone who has a teen who might like to join BBYO Naples or Fort Myers, or someone

who might like to be an advisor to our chapters, please email me, Southwest Coordinator, at [cschreier@bbyo.org](mailto:cschreier@bbyo.org). You can also follow us on Instagram at [Mishpacha\\_BBG](#) and [Negevaza](#). Scholarships to attend BBYO conventions and summer programs are available through both Jewish Federation of Greater Naples and the Temple Shalom Men's Club. For more information regarding scholarships, please contact me. If you are a BBYO alum and would like to be included in our Friends and Alumni of BBYO mailing list, please email us at [mjs0821@aol.com](mailto:mjs0821@aol.com).

Candle lighting times:

September 1: 7:29 p.m.

September 8: 7:21 p.m.

September 15: 7:13 p.m.

September 22: 7:05 p.m.

September 29: 6:58 p.m.



Jewish Federation  
OF LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

JOSEPH HOROWITZ  
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is available through TOP Jewish Foundation of Lee & Charlotte Counties and may be used for travel to Israel to participate in programs that are volunteer or educational in nature.

OUR HOPE

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

THIS GRANT

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

TOP JEWISH FOUNDATION

3 is proud to offer the Stevan & Marilyn Simon Family Scholarship. This scholarship is open to those at least high school age who demonstrate leadership qualities and will be participating in a 2-week or longer program in Israel. A short essay is required.

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**Chabad FGCU**  
**Estero**  
**Rabbi Mendel Gordon**

**W**ould you think that Dubai, an emirate of the United Arab Emirates, is a Jewish destination? I certainly would not have thought it was, but this past summer proved me wrong!

Five of our FGCU students went on an incredible trip they earned by joining and participating in an incredible Jewish learning program called JewishU.

College students are generally pre-occupied with taking courses in their major preparing them for their future careers. But, sometimes forgotten, the most important “subject” for them to study is our holy Torah that will connect them to their soul and teach them about their Jewish identity.

JewishU is a program that offers students the special opportunity to learn Torah, thus learning all about who

they are! JewishU offers many “mini courses” from which to choose, with hours flexible enough to fit any busy college student’s schedule.

Five of our students finished five courses and were able to join 150 other Jewish students from across America for a five-day trip to Dubai.

Dubai is known not just for its stereotypical sand dunes, camel rides and hot desert winds, but also for luxury shopping, ultramodern architecture and extravagant night life. But there is a whole other side. The students picked up an amazing Jewish feeling on this trip there.

“It’s amazing how you can be Jewish anywhere,” shared Nicole from Naples. She was impressed by how Jewish life in Dubai has flourished in the last few years.



(r-l) Preston and Jack (FGCU) and Avin and Matt (ASU) embark on a desert ride

Jack, a sophomore from Melbourne, Florida, said he was impressed by the beautiful synagogue built by the government in Abu Dhabi. He found it impressive to see how well respected the Jews are by both the locals and the government.

Of course, jeeping in the desert as well as going into the Burj Khalifa (the world’s tallest skyscraper) were both unforgettable, but most impressive of all was the amazing Jewish pride with which our students returned.

We owe a huge thank you to Chabad on Campus International for arranging

such an amazing trip for our FGCU students, as well as to our many local friends and supporters who make our students’ Jewish growth possible.

We are gearing up for another incredible year for Jewish life on campus. If you know any Jewish students at FGCU or other Southwest Florida colleges, please reach out to connect them with the local Jewish student community.

For more information or to help make that connection, please reach out to Rabbi Mendel at [Rabbi@chabadfgcu.com](mailto:Rabbi@chabadfgcu.com) or call 239-355-8481.



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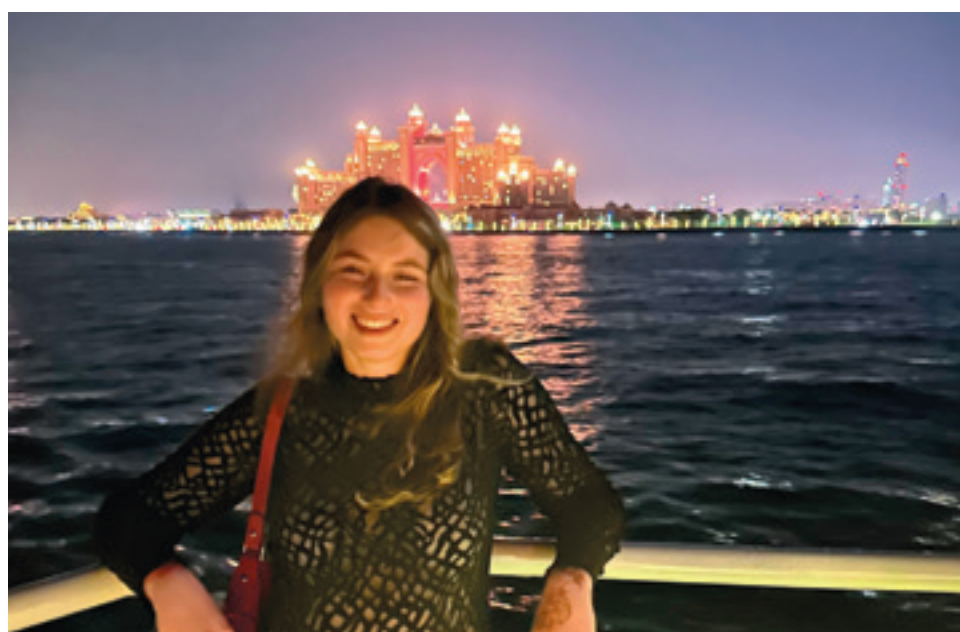
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Julian at the Burj Khalifa



Nicole on the Havdala ferry



**TEMPLE BETH EL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**  
**Fort Myers**  
*Allison Fego, Religious School Coordinator*

Our 2022-2023 school year was super fun this year. Despite Hurricane Ian throwing us for a loop and taking away some of our school weeks, everyone learned a lot and we had some beautiful celebrations during it. We ended the year saying goodbye after our party at Lakes Park, which was filled with good food, water balloons and a delicious dessert truck.

This summer, we have been very busy at our religious school, prepping and making some amazing changes in our classroom. With the help of Joseph, Joshua, Abigail Fego and Hannah Shraiar, we have renovated our classrooms to make them feel new. We all organized, cleaned and painted the classrooms to a beautiful blue color from the yellow it previously was. It truly looks amazing, and we are

excited to see how much more our students thrive now.

As we prepare for the 2023-2024 school year, we are excited to welcome two new teachers to our staff. Brianna Levy is a TBE religious school graduate and is completing college this year. She is excited to join our staff, teaching the Pre-K/Kindergarten class. She is going to be youth and knowledge to the kids joining our school this year.

Helen Baxter is our other new staff member who will be joining our school. Previously, she taught at Temple Judea, and we are excited that she is now going to bring so much knowledge and ideas to us. She will be taking over the first- and second-grade class this year.

Sam Kaufman is back for his second year with us and will be teaching



Religious School students playing Twister at the End of Year Celebration



Classroom 2 (before)



Water balloon fight



Finished classroom 2

the third-fifth graders. Also joining our staff is Hannah Shraiar, who will be a madricha and substitute, when needed. She became a bat mitzvah last year, is excited to help in school events and has graciously taken on creating and managing our new Instagram page @thereligiouschoolfm.

Our school year began on Aug. 13, when we welcomed back all our students and families with our tefilah and a bagel breakfast. After the students went into their classes, our parents gathered to eat and start planning upcoming events to make sure

we have volunteers and enough help for everything.

The first lessons our students will be learning focus on Hakarat Hatov, which is recognizing the good in our lives. They will also start to learn about our upcoming Jewish Holidays for the month of September.

Stay tuned for all the fun things our religious school will be doing in the upcoming months. If you are interested in joining our school, please contact Allison Fego at religious.school@templebethel.com. 🌍



Classroom 1 (before)



Finished classroom 1





## "Mystical New Year: A Rosh Hashanah Magical Celebration!"

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or call 239-481-4449 Ext. 4

### TEMPLE SHALOM

Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands

(941) 625-2116 • [www.templeshalomfl.com](http://www.templeshalomfl.com)

Friday evening, Aug. 4, was a very special time at Temple Shalom. At that special service, Rabbi Agin assumed the title of Rabbi Emeritus after 20 years of rabbinical service to the congregation. Rabbi Agin will continue to serve until his replacement is confirmed.

On Sunday, Aug. 20, the Temple held an Open House brunch for prospective members. Several new members have affiliated, which means positive growth for the Temple and its future.

Selichot Service will be held on Sept. 9 at 6 p.m. Following the service, there will be a "light dairy dinner" at no charge. There will be some Jewish music under the direction of Dr. David Katz. Please call the Temple office if you would like to attend.

Rosh Hashanah Eve Service (Sept. 15) will start at 8 p.m. and, this year, the Erev Shabbat – Friday evening. Shabbat morning Rosh Hashanah service starts at 10 a.m. and will include the sounding of the Shofar. There will be a Rosh Hashanah lunch at the Maple Leaf Country Club following the service. Reservations are required, so call the Temple office.

Erev Yom Kippur will be on Sunday, Sept. 24, starting at 8 p.m. Yom Kippur morning services start at 10 a.m. The afternoon services resume at 3:15 p.m. and will include a special Yizkor booklet. This will be a service different from that which appears in the prayer book. Following the Yom Kippur Service and the sounding of the Shofar, there will be a break-the-fast dinner at the Maple Leaf Country Club. Reservations are required.

Sept. 28 at 4 p.m., we decorate the Sukkah. Help is always welcome, and pizza, soda and dessert will follow.

Friday Service Shabbat Sukkot Services are Sept. 29 at 7:30 p.m., outdoors, if possible. Oneg held indoors.

Sunday, Oct. 8, let us celebrate Simchat Torah at 11 a.m. All are welcome; Oneg to follow.

For information on all, please call the Temple Office at 941-625-2116.

All series are under the direction of Rabbi Emeritus Solomon Agin, DD, BCC, ACPE, AAMFT-Fellow and Dr. David Katz. 🌟

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# Michael Shapiro

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## BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS Sanibel

(773) 251-8862 • [www.batyam.org](http://www.batyam.org)

**H**ot off the press: since writing this article, dates and places have been secured for the High Holy Days. Please see advertisement elsewhere in this edition of L'CHAYIM.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are fast approaching and, this year, we welcome a new rabbi — Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer and his wife, Yaffah. Rabbi Schnitzer recently retired as the leader of Bethesda Jewish Congregation after 21 years.

The ancient holiday rituals ensure we slow down and find meaning, connection and purpose. We have endured the pandemic and the hurricane. Many of us are still displaced, unable to move back into our homes. At the time of writing we, as a congregation, are not sure where we will be observing the High Holidays. We understand that Bat Yam Temple of the Islands will not be available, as we had hoped. Our friends at the Jewish Federation have offered their space and for that we are most grateful.

It feels fitting that, at this point, so many things are unsure, because the essence of Rosh Hashanah is all about possibilities and new beginnings. It is a sweet time, a time of apples and honey, it is the time for the clarion call of the shofar, which jars us out of our stupor and assures us we have the ability to adapt and change. It is the anniversary of creation; on Rosh Hashanah, it is proclaimed, "Today the world is born," and we are inspired to do better, to wipe our slate clean and begin again, to somehow commit to an orderliness in a chaotic world.

The communal Selichot evening, before Rosh Hashanah, begins the atonement tradition for many of us, leading up to Yom Kippur.

On the morning of Rosh Hashanah, Avinu Malkeinu will issue strong from the throats of our resilient congregation.

This soul-wringing, repetitive, familiar melody is an operatic exhortation of this season. It is part of the essential framework of the service. During the morning service, we become focused on the fragility of our lives and those of our loved ones. Attention is given to life and death. The emotion of the Unetaneh Tokef prayer (Who will live and who will die) is strongly felt throughout the congregation.

Bat Yam's Tashlich tradition is a ceremony on a Sanibel beach, where, after a short service by the Rabbi, we toss shells (our sins) into the Gulf. Hurricane Ian has temporarily put a hold on the venue, as the beachside home of our gracious hosts was destroyed and will not be rebuilt in time this year. The tradition is alive and well and we know that we will get together, to perform our ceremony on a body of water still to be decided.

The beautiful Kol Nidre service eases us into Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is the somber Judgment Day when the attention given to life and death during Rosh Hashanah is now magnified. The day is literally a ritual reenactment of your death ... no food, atoning for what you have done wrong in your life, the commitment to correct your weaknesses, to try again but better ... and, above all, to avoid the stern decree; with the plea to be written in The Book of Life.

After an emotionally draining day, the joy is initially muted as we sit down to share the break fast. Soon the aroma of the challah and the sight of a table groaning with chopped liver, chopped herring, strudels and chicken soup revives us and we chorus a hearty "Amen" to the Kiddush toast before we tuck into the most welcome meal.

Wherever we meet, we know it is not about place, but people, so we look forward to the High Holidays, to starting our Jewish year all over again with our strong sense of community. 🌍

## TEMPLE JUDEA Fort Myers

(239) 433-0201 • [www.tjswfl.org](http://www.tjswfl.org)

**J**oin us at Temple Judea as we celebrate the High Holidays!

Rabbi Sack's Intro to Judaism class resumes Oct. 2. The class is a must for anyone interested in conversion to Judaism but is open to all who have an interest in learning. Adult Ed classes will resume after the High Holidays.

Temple Judea Religious School, under the direction of Religious School Coordinator Abbie Grossman, will have classes Sept. 5, 10, 12, 19 and 26. Tot Shabbat will be Sept. 8 at 5 p.m. Join her for music, stories and creativity.

### High Holiday children's programming requires RSVP

- Erev Rosh Hashanah services Sept. 15
- Rosh Hashanah service Sept. 16.
- Sept. 17, Tashlich, 4:30 p.m.
- Kol Nidre service Sept. 24
- Yom Kippur service Sept. 25 and N'ilah/Havdalah 6:45pm.

### High Holiday Services 5784

- Sept. 9, Selichot at 8:30 p.m. with dessert reception, concert by David Mastrangelo and Eric Dochinger at 9 p.m. and Selichot Services at 9:45 p.m.
- Erev Rosh Hashanah congregational service Sept. 15, 7 p.m.
- Rosh Hashanah congregational service Sept. 16, 9:30 a.m.
- Rosh Hashanah congregational service Sept. 17, 9:30 a.m.
- Tashlich home of Leni and Marc Sack, 4:30 p.m.
- Kol Nidre congregational service Sept. 24, 7 p.m.
- Yom Kippur congregational service Sept. 25, 9:30 a.m.; afternoon program, 4:30 p.m.; Minchah and Reading

of Jonah, 5:30 p.m.; N'ilah/Havdalah, 6:45 p.m.; Shofar Blowing, 7:46 p.m.

• Erev Sukkot services Friday, Sept. 29 at 6 p.m. — spaghetti dinner followed by service. RSVP required for dinner.

• Shabbat/Sukkot service on Saturday, Sept. 30 at 9:30 a.m.

For information on Hazak events, please contact the office at 239-433-0201.

Chaverot is looking for members to create activities. Book club will meet again in October. The next book is "Matzah Ball" by Jean Meltzer. Please contact Lynn Talone at talonefm@comcast.com with book suggestions.

Temple Judea continues to accept food donations to the Cadkin Foundation Food Pantry at Jewish Federation. Collection envelopes are near the front door for contactless monetary and gift card contributions, which may be mailed. Please call the office to ensure your contribution has been received.

Temple Judea is conducting in-person services with an online Zoom option. Synagogue members can use the Zoom ID and password as published in our weekly megillah. Nonlocal residents may contact the synagogue for information.

### Regularly scheduled events

- Friday evening Shabbat services preceded by wine and cheese at 6:15 p.m., services at 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday Shabbat services at 9:30 a.m. Kiddush luncheons served every Shabbat. To sponsor, contact JoAnn Lewin.
- Morning minyan every Monday at 9 a.m., followed by discussions with Rabbi Sack at First Watch restaurant on McGregor Blvd.

We'd love to see you. 🌍

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



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## TEMPLE BETH EL Fort Myers

(239) 433-0018 • [www.templebethel.com](http://www.templebethel.com)

Rabbi Luna is home from sabbatical. We missed her and are glad she's back. See our ad for our open house on Sept. 10 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Meet the rabbi and take a tour. RSVP is preferred by email or call the office at 239-433-0018.

Our High Holiday schedule can be found in this issue of *L'CHAYIM*. Please call the office if you need tickets. We welcome renowned Cantor Marshall Portnoy back to the Bima Friday, Sept. 8 at 7:30 p.m. High Holidays begin with our Selichot Dessert Reception and Service on Sept. 9 at 8 p.m. RSVP by email or call the office.

Our High Holiday Memorial Service will be held Sept. 20, 10 a.m. at Temple Beth El's "Garden of Memories" located within Fort Myers Cemetery on Michigan Avenue.

We have a baby naming on Sept. 22. Share your nachas on "Good News" shabbat and wish Karen and Mike Weiss Mazel Tov on the naming of both their grandsons.

Our Yom Kippur services begin with Kol Nidre on Sept. 24 at 7:30 p.m. Wind-ing down the next day's Yom Kippur prayers, join us for the Neilah service at 6:30 p.m. — you're invited to break your fast with us.

Sukkot begins on Sep 29. Come shake the lulav and sniff the aroma of the etrog with us during a noon Lunch & Learn in our Sukkah on Oct. 5.

On Friday, Oct. 6, enjoy a Simchat Torah Dinner at 5:30 p.m., preceding the 6:30 p.m. services, in celebration as we finish reading the Torah to its very last sentence ... and then start again, "Bereshit bara Elohim..."

Our Sisterhood ran a successful online summer Kitchen Shower to restock our kitchen and held its monthly Ladies who Lunch through July and August. Sisterhood will post future dates and locations on our website and public calendar. Food, fun and fellowship — Sisterhood and Temple membership is not required. Make your reservation and enjoy!

Many deserving children are now happily off to school with basic supplies thanks to Sisterhood's Back-to-School Backpack program.

Religious School is back in swing, and our enrollment is growing! Follow us on Instagram @the religiouschoolfm.

Our recurring Temple Beth El programs continue, which include:

- Food donations — nonperishable food items can be dropped off in the temple lobby shopping cart whenever the building is open.

- Saturday morning Torah study — all are welcome at 9 a.m. on Zoom.

- Book club — Sept. 8 at 2:45 p.m. on Zoom. September's book selection is "One Hundred Saturdays" by Michael Frank — a fascinating memoir of Stella Levi. Our October book selection is "The Garment Maker's Daughter" by Hillary Adrienne Stern.

- Tot Shabbat — this kid-friendly service is Sept. 1 and Oct. 6 at 6 p.m. Come for the fellowship, the pizza and the fun. Please RSVP (239-433-0018) to allow us to be sure we have enough food.

- History & Heritage of Our People — will take place the third Tuesday of the month, Sept. 19 and Oct. 17 at 7 p.m. on Zoom,

- Shabbat services — open to all, the services are on Fridays at 7:30 p.m., live in the sanctuary, on Zoom and streaming on Facebook.

- 2-Step Recovery Group — held every Saturday at 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](http://templebethel.com). There's always something happening here, and our members make it happen: Current Events, Coffee & Chat, Theology & Life, Francophone & Hispanophone Groups, Environmental Group, Solo Travelers, Caring and Visitations...

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

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

## CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA Fort Myers

(239) 433-7708 • [www.Chabadswf.org](http://www.Chabadswf.org)

Please join us for our schedule of services in September and October 5784 (2023).

### Shabbat schedule

Friday night: Welcoming the Shabbat Services — September at 7 p.m.; October at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday morning: Kabbalah class at 9 a.m.; Schacharit (Hodu) at 10 a.m.

### High Holiday schedule

- Sunday, Sept. 10 — Selichot services at 1:15 a.m.

- Friday, Sept. 15 — Rosh Hashana evening services at 7 p.m.

- Saturday, Sept. 16 — Rosh Hashana Day 1 Kabbalah/educational service at 9 a.m.; Services at 10 a.m.; children's program from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; evening services at 7 p.m.

- Sunday, Sept. 17 — Rosh Hashana Day 2 Kabbalah/educational service at 9 a.m.; services at 10 a.m.; Shofar Blowing at 11:30 a.m.; children's program from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; evening services at 7 p.m.; Yom Tov ends at 8:04 p.m.

- Sunday, Sept. 24 — Kol Nidre/Yom Kippur services at 7 p.m.; children's program from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

- Monday, Sept. 25 — Regular services at 9 a.m.; Yizkor at 10:45 a.m.; children's program from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; concluding Yom Kippur services at 5:30 p.m.; Break-the-fast meal at 7:55 p.m.

- Friday, Sept. 29 — Sukkot services at 6:45 p.m.

- Saturday, Sept. 30 — Sukkot Day 1 Kabbalah at 9 a.m.; services at 10 a.m.; children's program from 10 a.m. to noon; and evening service at 6:45 p.m.

- Sunday, Oct. 1 — Sukkot Day 2 Kabbalah at 9 a.m.; services at 10 a.m.; children's program from 10 a.m. to noon; and evening service at 6:45 p.m. Havdalah at 7:48 p.m.

- Friday, Oct. 6 — Shmini Atzeret services at 6:45 p.m. Rabbi's birthday party.

- Saturday, Oct. 7 — Sukkot/Shmini Atzeret Kabbalah at 9 a.m.; services at 10 a.m. (Yizkor at 11 a.m.); children's program from 10 a.m. to noon; and services at 6:30 p.m. followed by a Grand Simchat Torah party.

- Sunday, Oct. 8 — Sukkot/Simchat Torah Kabbalah at 9 a.m.; services at 10 a.m.; children's program from 10 a.m. to noon; and services at 6:30 p.m. with Havdalah at 7:41 p.m.

### Shana Tova

Shana Tova, may you all be written in the book of life and a year infused with all blessing for prosperity, health and all that your hearts desires. 🌍

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COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE  
Fort Myers

(239) 247-4556 • [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com)

Our heartfelt condolences go to the family of Wilbert Needleman, who died late June, a month short of age 100. Needleman was a pioneer of our Fort Myers Jewish community.

Ruth Rhoda Stone, 89, died the end of July. A race car driver and early computer engineering programmer, Stone instructed that her large Pogorzelski 19th-century sterling Hanukah menorah be gifted to us.

The “unveiling” for rabbi’s mother, Estelle Diamond (z”l), is at 11 a.m. on Labor Day (Monday, Sept. 4) at the Fort Myers Memorial Gardens. Come honor her memory.

Days of Awe visitation

The Fort Myers Memorial Gardens, 1589 Colonial Boulevard, will host a traditional Days of Awe visitation Sunday, Sept. 17, 5 p.m., at its Gan Shalom. After conducting a brief memorial service, Rabbi Diamond will accompany people who wish to recite qaddish at individual graves.

Visiting scholar talks

The Community Free Synagogue is honored to welcome Sebastian Kenny as a visiting scholar from a prestigious University in England. He will speak on Sept. 13 and Sept. 20, 7 p.m. at the Rabbi’s home. A reception in his honor will follow the first talk. See the story in this edition of L’CHAYIM for details.

Chicken-raising project

The congregation’s support of the Itonko, Uganda Ahavat Yisrael Synagogue’s chicken-raising project has enabled an expansion to over 1,000 new chicks in addition to their now matured 50 layers. The income from the sale of eggs and incubated chicks eventually will enable the congregation to serve a weekly lunch after Shabbat morning worship, put a metal roof on their synagogue structure, build a more sanitary toilet facility and provide anti-malarial mosquito nets.

Donations earmarked for this project will be used to help purchase feed each month for the next five months until the chickens mature into layers. They can be mailed to The Community Free Synagogue, 7210 Falcon Crest Court, Fort Myers, FL 33908. Thanks to the many who have already donated.

Trip to Israel

Interest is very strong in our eighth Israel trip that will depart towards the end of

May 2024 for nine days in Israel followed by a 5-day add-on in Greece, all led by the rabbi. To get information as it becomes available, email [synfree@comcast.net](mailto:synfree@comcast.net). The trip is limited to 35 people and will fill up fast once registration is opened. If you are interested in joining the trip, email [synfree@comcast.net](mailto:synfree@comcast.net).

Sabbath

Free Sabbath eve meals begin at 6:30 p.m. every Friday. They are open to all and free. You are welcome to bring a nondairy dish to share, dessert or a bottle of wine. Worship follows at 7:30 p.m. followed by a social hour.

Sabbath morning Torah Study with the rabbi is from 9:30-11 a.m. each week on Zoom only. The CFS Zoom room is easily accessed through the synagogue’s website at [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com).

High Holidays

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Eve worship begin at 7 p.m. Holiday morning services start at 10 a.m. Yizkor is recited during Yom Kippur morning worship. Yom Kippur study with the rabbi is 4-5:30 p.m., followed by Minhah, Ne’ilah and a free break-the-fast.

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, Sunday, Sept. 17, we gather by the lake in front of the rabbi’s home, 7210 Falcon Crest in the Forest Country Club, at 11 a.m. for a shofar sounding and Tashlikh, followed by the annual rabbi’s open house. All are invited. This is a great event for children, too!

Please note that Days of Awe worship is conducted in the sanctuary on the Unity campus at 11120 Ranchette Road. Weekly gatherings take place in the chapel building at the same location.

Community Free Synagogue is an open synagogue. We do not sell memberships or tickets, charge for any event, solicit donations or have fundraisers. All we do is free and open to all. We are comfortably supported by voluntary donations. Our purpose is prayer, study, mutual support and benevolence in a harmonious setting.

In its 18th year, Rabbi Diamond leads CFS, which is “modern traditional,” observing traditional forms of worship and study while embracing more inclusive contemporary values and ethical standards.

For more information, visit [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com) or email [synfree@comcast.net](mailto:synfree@comcast.net). To speak with the rabbi, call 239-247-4556.

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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.

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# Community Free Synagogue welcomes rising new scholar from England

By Rabbi Bruce Diamond

The CFS is honored to welcome Sebastian Kenny, a visiting scholar from a prestigious University in England, as a guest speaker on Wednesdays, Sept. 13 and 20, starting at 7 p.m., at the Rabbi's home (7210 Falcon Crest Court in the Forest Country Club). A reception in his honor will follow his first talk.

Kenny, a post-graduate "reading" in ancient and classical Greek and Latin literature, has spent the last year studying

with me via Zoom, exploring the many intersections of Jewish and Hellenistic literary cultures from their very earliest roots in the Aegean and Fertile Crescent. His groundbreaking research presently explores surviving literary fragments of Greek tragedies and other literary forms drawing on Jewish pre-biblical themes in the centuries leading up to the Common Era.

His first talk on Sept. 13, titled "Moses Reimagined," will show how

Moses was portrayed in the pagan cultures surrounding Judea in Alexandria and Asia Minor. Much like D.W. Griffith, Cecil B. DeMille and Ridley Scott, the Torah's Moses was literarily transformed and presented in surprising ways following pagan classical conventions they rendered him nearly unrecognizable to the emerging Jewish consciousness.

Kenny's second talk on Sept. 20, "Keeper of Ancient Legacies," will

discuss how so many long-gone great ancient cultures poured themselves into evolving Jewish thought, helping to create the first universal religion, enabling the legacies of those great civilizations to live on through the Jewish people even today.

Both presentations are open to all and will be livestreamed on Zoom as well. Access the CFS Zoom room through the synagogue's website at [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com). 🌐

Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties presents



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

AUG

**31**

**SUSHI SOCIAL  
@ LYNQ  
16230 Summerlin Rd,  
Fort Myers**

6:00-8:00pm

OCT

**10**

**TACO TUESDAY  
@ MONARCAS  
4125 Cleveland Ave,  
Fort Myers**

6:00-8:00pm

DEC

**5**

**GELT & GAMBLING  
@ Seminole Casino  
506 S 1st St,  
Immokalee**

5:00-8:00pm

**To Register: [Jewishfederationlcc.org/calendar](http://Jewishfederationlcc.org/calendar)**

For more information contact: [Danielleb@Jfedlcc.org](mailto:Danielleb@Jfedlcc.org)  
or 239-481-4449 Ext. 4



CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
chavuratshalom@gmail.com

Looking forward to a new Chavurat Shalom season

By Cheryl Fulmer, Ellen Feingold and Marcia Rudin

We hope everyone is having a good summer. Chavurat Shalom members are scattered throughout the country and the world — some for their usual journey to their northern homes this time of year, others enjoying exciting travel, and others still unable to reside in their Southwest Florida homes due to damage from Hurricane Ian. We wish those repairing their homes continuing courage and good luck!

This summer, we are keeping in touch with each other and celebrating our friendships via our Chavurat Shalom Shabbat services every Friday night at 7:30 p.m. as well as our twice-monthly informal “Schmooze” sessions on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, also at 7:30 p.m. Both activities are held via Zoom.

Marcia Rudin hosts the “Schmooze” sessions; Drs. Ellen Feingold and Kathy Zoss organize the Shabbat services, with members helping them, conducting the services, preparing the Torah commentaries and reading and singing the liturgy. If you wish to join us for one of these events, email [Chavuratshalom@gmail.com](mailto:Chavuratshalom@gmail.com) to get more information and to receive the Zoom link.

In spite of our many challenges, we look forward to a new High Holiday season in mid-September, when our wonderful religion promises a renewal of life and hope, even amidst an always challenging world of political turbulence here and in our beloved Israel, uncertain weather and ever-present injury, illness and death of loved ones.

**High Holidays**  
This year, there are three holidays that begin on Friday evenings. Sept. 15 is Erev Rosh Hashanah; Sept. 22 is Shabbat Shuvah; and Sept. 29 is Erev Sukkot.

Chavurat Shalom will hold Friday evening services for those special Shabbatot, led by Dr. Kathy Zoss and filled with traditional prayers and music. We thank Dr. Zoss for her efforts.

Other High Holiday events include an “Introduction to the High Holidays” talk by Rabbi Eve Rudin on Tuesday, Sept. 19 at 7:30 p.m. and a Memorial Service on Sunday, Sept. 24 at 10 a.m. If you wish to attend any of these events, contact us at [Chavuratshalom@gmail.com](mailto:Chavuratshalom@gmail.com).

**Other events**  
As the summer days, weeks and months

move quickly, we look forward to our new Chavurat Shalom season beginning in November. We have changed our days and times. Now all events will occur on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 10 a.m. (Please note all times listed here are Eastern Time.)

Led by Chavurat Shalom members or prominent outside speakers, the Lecture and Discussion sessions will take place on the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of the month at 7:30 p.m. Leading off our new season is a special presentation on Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 7:30 p.m., when Rabbi Danny Schiff will speak on “The Drama in Israel and What it Means for the Future.”

Our informal “Schmooze” sessions will be on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. The third Tuesday of the month is reserved for Chavurat Shalom board meetings.

Other events are planned as follows:

- Dr. Ellen Feingold will lead Torah Talk sessions on the first Saturday of the month at 10 a.m.
- The Len Minsky Current Events discussions will be on the other Saturdays at 10 a.m.
- Our Shabbat Eve services will continue at 7:30 p.m. every Friday throughout the year.

All activities are held via Zoom until we can again gather in person for these and other special events. If you wish to join any of these events, please contact us at [Chavuratshalom@gmail.com](mailto:Chavuratshalom@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom link.

Chavurat Shalom (Fellowship of Peace) is an informal group from every Jewish religious tradition that meets to worship and learn together. People of all faiths and localities are welcome. Chavurat Shalom is not affiliated with any organized movement. The group is community-led. Shabbat services are a blend of English and Hebrew, English readings and poems, Hebrew prayers recited or chanted and meaningful songs.

Join us now via Zoom and lend your voice and thoughts for a Shabbat service, a Tuesday Speakers program or Saturday Torah Talk or Jewish current event by emailing [chavratshalom@gmail.com](mailto:chavratshalom@gmail.com).

For more details about Chavurat Shalom and its activities, check our website at [chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org](http://chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org).





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

# Hadassah news

By Joyce Taub, Collier/Lee Hadassah President

It is important that you know Hadassah's position on Israel's judicial reform legislation. Rhoda Smolow, Hadassah's national president, and Naomi Adler, Hadassah CEO, shared the following with pride, passion and purpose:

"As devoted supporters of the beloved land of Israel and her people for more than a century, Hadassah has continuously expressed its values regarding Zionism, democracy and respect for all. We believe Zionism can best flourish in a democratic Israel that includes checks and balances and inclusive, open-minded dialogue to reach consensus, compromise and mutual understanding. We echo President Herzog's sentiments from his

speech, 'We must find a way to talk to each other no matter how long it takes.'

We must remember that what unites us is more important than what divides us. Hadassah will continue to meet with Israeli and U.S. leaders to voice our concerns and advocate for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship as we remain steadfast in our unwavering commitment to our mission."

In other Hadassah news, Carol Ann Schwartz was elected as the 28th Hadassah national president at the National Assembly Meeting in Chicago last month. Her vision and leadership have helped advance Hadassah's mission in the U.S., Israel and beyond. She is a proud member of a four-generation

Hadassah family and will begin her term Jan. 1. She is currently the chair of the national speakers bureau; a representative to the American Zionist movement; a director of the Hadassah Medical Organization board, having been one of the six national vice presidents; and has held many other positions.

The power of Hadassah Advocacy contributed to broad bipartisan support of our legislative priorities in the 117th Congress. Over 600 advocates met (in person or online) from 46 states resulting in more than 375 congressional cosponsors that supported Hadassah's policy priorities. This includes support of U.S.-Israel medical partnerships, and affirming congressional commitments to address infertility causes, diagnosis, treatment and costs.

Hadassah spoke out against antisemitism, educating and advocating against hate. Hadassah encouraged healthy moves in Every Move Counts, Hadassah's health and wellness program, part of Every Beat Counts, Hadassah's heart health program.

Hadassah is focusing on the future with "Evolve," empowering the next generation of strong women to make an impact on the organization and within their communities; to advocate loudly

for women's issues, combating antisemitism; to support each other and women everywhere; and to build personal connections that will last a lifetime.

### Collier Lee Hadassah upcoming programs

Please join us for Collier Lee Hadassah's upcoming programs:

- Oct. 18, 10:30 a.m. – "Whatever Happened to the Great American Railroad?" is the last of our Expanding Horizons Plus program. Jeff Margolis will enlighten us during brunch at the Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center.

- Nov. 15, 11 a.m. – "Keeping Our Faith" will be a Crafty Women artisans' showcase at the Audubon Country Club. Cantor Azu joins us in an interview with Diane Schwartz. A delicious luncheon is planned.

Hadassah members will always get more information and details in their "Hadassah Happenings." If you are not a member and want more information, please contact me!

As the High Holidays are approaching, I want to wish all of you and your families a wonderful new 5784! May you and all your loved ones be inscribed for a life filled with joy, health and peace!

L' Shana Tova! 🕍

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**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 10:00 am-12:00 pm**  
Pack bags at The Federation.

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Sept. 6, 7, 8, 10  
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## 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 [debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org](mailto:debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org)



JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

(239) 566-1771

# My report on places far and away

By Marina Berkovich, president

In the 1930s, several European Jewish families seeking refuge from Hitler made their way to Barbados. Nidhe Israel Synagogue in Bridgetown, Barbados was rescued and restored by their descendants. The 1654 original was built by the Sephardim who escaped from Europe’s antisemitism, first to Brazil, then to Barbados. That community vanished 200 years later, when antisemitism caught up with them. Current Barbadian Jewish website states, “although we are a Conservative congregation, our community is made up of Reform, Liberal, Conservative and Orthodox members. We are bound by our belief in Judaism ...” They assemble on Fridays. We were there Sunday.



Old Synagogue in Belleville, Bridgetown, Barbados

An Australian Jewish couple we met aboard our cruise ship had visited Casablanca before and led us to its Jewish treasure, hidden away in a tiny medina (market) alley. Would have never found it if not for these angels. We got there early, took and posed for pictures and were observed by many male passersby eyes. One man edged around the Australian male, whispered a barely

audible “shalom,” then moved on without turning back. He was clad in a striped Moroccan garb. I have no idea if he was a Jew or a Jew-friendly Moroccan. One thing I know for certain, people who live in countries that do not persecute their Jewish neighbors are unafraid to be seen talking to Jews.

Ettegui Synagogue is located on Rue Al-Aidi Ali Al-Maaroufi. It’s near the Casablanca port, which is commercial and walking out of its gate takes about 20-25 minutes on dusty roads amid heavy machinery. Most passengers who walked out with us, including some Jews, headed to the mosque. Incidentally, Israelis were not even permitted to disembark in Casablanca. Neither were passengers from 14 other countries.

Father’s Day found us in Belfast, Northern Ireland. On a bus tour, a prerecorded narration mentioned the former Belfast Hebrew Congregation, now Belfast Jewish Community. The entire city of Belfast never fully recovered from its “struggles,” and it pales in comparison to its Republic of Ireland peers Cork and Dublin.

Inside St. George’s Market, nothing caught our attention until a man with payoses and kippah popped into my husband’s view. Jacob de Rothschild, as he wants to be called, is the last openly religious Jew of Belfast. He’s been insulted and beaten and yet he proudly wears his Jewish attributes. A native of Belfast, he has lived in Israel but returned. Marguerite took over the adjacent booth from her Jewish grandmother who was Jacob’s friend. Both are Ashkenazi, descendants of Jews who’d escaped Russian pogroms. Their children, like most Jewish youth of Northern Ireland, left Judaism.

“There are several hundred of us in the country, only about 50 here, no rabbi. Too many antisemites. But Jewish tourists love to take my picture,” Jacob said. We sang a little “Hava



Marguerite, Jacob and Marina at St George's Market in Belfast



Jacob with Marina Berkovich at Belfast St George's Market

Nagila” together, hugged and parted. Jews are less than half of 1% of the present Northern Ireland population. Maybe Hashem brought me there to offer encouragement. You can do it to “contact us” at collectablecurios.co.uk.

### JHSSWF memberships

Join us online at JHSSWF.org or mail us a check. 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.

Members receive announcements, reminders and other wonderful information you would not want to miss. Your generosity helps us continue our work. No amount is too small, and you may donate online, by mail or contact us at office@jhsswf.org.

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.*



Jacob's market stand



Casablanca Synagogue at Medina



## GENERATIONS OF THE SHOAH SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

genshoah@hmcec.org

# Fighting antisemitism

By Shelley Lieb and Ida Margolis

As we prepare to welcome a new year on the Jewish calendar (5784) and consider our past transgressions for Yom Kippur, let us introduce an opportunity to make a difference in our community — Interfaith Alliance of SWFL, a local group that is challenging antisemitism and working to protect our community from bigotry and all forms of hate.

You are familiar with the latest frightening news about the rise of antisemitism. You likely read something about antisemitism nearly every day. Headlines come from a variety of sources such as “The Dark Side of Social Media: How it Fuels Antisemitism” (Brandeis University, May 2022), “Antisemitic incidents on the rise across the U.S., report finds” (PBS, April 2023), and “Why

Has Antisemitism Gained Momentum Again” (AARP, May 2023).

The Anti-Defamation League reported in March 2023 that antisemitic incidents in Florida more than doubled since 2020, and the *SunSentinel* noted that antisemitic incidents surged in Florida, growing more than nationwide (March 2023). News organizations throughout Florida and beyond reported that a “Naples rabbi was harassed outside a school board meeting” (May-June 2023).

Many years ago, there was a commercial on TV that said, “Wishing won’t do it, saving will.” How does that apply to antisemitism? Just reading articles and sending them to your friends doesn’t do anything about reducing antisemitism. You were familiar with the headlines

above, but are you familiar with what your friends are doing, and have you been motivated to act?

GenShoah is often asked to show more films about antisemitism and send more articles about antisemitism. GenShoah could do this, but perhaps reminding GenShoah members what they could do would be more valuable. Nationally, there are organizations committed to combating antisemitism including the ADL, AJC and the World Jewish Congress. Locally, supporting the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center is a great place to start.

A new organization in our area also deserves our attention because of its mission. Its statement of what it is, what it believes and, most importantly, what it plans to do, is “work in partnership with others to protect our communities from bigotry, discrimination, prejudice, racism and all forms of hate against all people regardless of faith, race, gender, creed, sexual orientation or national origin.” This group is the Interfaith Alliance of SWFL which was founded in March 2023 in response to numerous concerns, including recurring “threats to public education and increasing levels of hate-based activity targeting Jews” and other groups. This is a local affiliate of the national Interfaith Alliance, which has a national campaign against antisemitism.

Please read more about this group at [www.interfaithalliance.org/swfl](http://www.interfaithalliance.org/swfl). Once you know more, you may be motivated to attend one of its meetings (in person or via Zoom) and perhaps get involved in planning future events, programs and activities that will make a difference in our community. Write to [swflinterfaith@gmail.com](mailto:swflinterfaith@gmail.com) to get on its mailing list and learn more.

In a guest commentary published in the *Naples Daily News* and the *News-Press*, the Steering Committee of the Interfaith Alliance of SWFL stated, “Eradicating antisemitism is a core component of achieving a more inclusive vision of religious freedom that protects people of all faiths and no faith. All of us can do our part to challenge antisemitism and push back on hate.”

Think globally, act locally and, if not now, when?

## About GenShoah SWFL

GenShoah SWFL is a group for children and descendants of Holocaust survivors and anyone interested in the mission of GenShoah SWFL, which is promotion of Holocaust education and human rights, preservation of history and memories of the Holocaust, connecting the second generation with one another and support of the Holocaust Museum & Janet G. and Harvey D. Cohen Education Center.

Our group is always open to interested people. There are no dues or forms to fill out. If you would like to receive our newsletter and program announcements, just send an email to [liebro@gmail.com](mailto:liebro@gmail.com). And, if you would like to volunteer to help with future programs, please let us know that, too!

Thank you to those who support our mission, read the newsletter, attend GenShoah programs and are members of the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center in Naples. We do encourage membership at the Museum, as we are an affinity organization with it. If you are not already a member of the Museum, please consider joining or making a donation. 🙏



## INDIGENT FUND PACESETTERS

The Federation expresses special gratitude to our Indigent Fund Pacesetters for the example they set for the rest of us.

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Rabbi Yossi & Rivky Labkowski	Lynn & Lory Kirby

## High School Students: Earn CAS Credits!

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

If you are interested, please send the following information to [debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org](mailto:debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org):

Name

Address

Phone #

Age

Grade

School

Preferred volunteer hours

(e.g. 2 - 5PM. Sundays)





**BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS  
REFORM**

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)  
7:00 p.m. Friday (May-Sept)  
Adult Education:  
Saturday, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. (Nov-Apr)  
Jewish Current Events: Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. (Nov-Apr)  
Write: P.O. Box 84, Sanibel, FL 33957

**CHABAD  
OF BONITA SPRINGS/ESTERO  
ORTHODOX**

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

**CHABAD JEWISH CENTER  
OF CAPE CORAL  
ORTHODOX**

1716 Cape Coral Pkwy. W.  
Cape Coral, FL 33914  
Rabbi Yossi Labkowski  
Phone: 239-963-4770  
E-mail: info@chabadcape.com  
Web site: chabadcape.com  
Sunday - Friday 8:00 A.M Shacharit  
Friday Evening 5:30 P.M.  
Saturday Kabbalah Class 9:00 A.M.  
Shabbat Services 9:30 A.M.  
Kiddush Luncheon 12:00 P.M.  
Hebrew School of the Arts Sunday 10:00 A.M - 12:30 P.M  
JLI Classes Monday 7:00 P.M.  
Torah Study Tuesday 7:30 P.M.  
Women's Weekly Class Wednesday 11:30 A.M.

**CHABAD OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY  
ORTHODOX**

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

**CHABAD LUBAVITCH  
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
ORTHODOX**

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

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



www.JewishFederationLCC.org

**COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE  
CONTEMPORARY TRADITIONAL**

11120 Ranchette Road  
Fort Myers, FL 33966  
Rabbi Bruce Diamond  
Phone: 239-247-4556  
E-mail: synfree@comcast.net  
Web site: www.fortmyerssynagogue.com  
Free Friday dinner each week at 6:30 PM  
open to all followed by worship at 7:30 PM  
Weekly Torah Study, Sabbath worship and  
Adult Education visit  
www.fortmyerssynagogue.com for the  
schedule of events and Zoom logon  
Information.  
All events are free and open to all

**SHALOM LIFE CENTER  
TRANS DENOMINATIONAL**

19691 Cypress View Drive  
Fort Myers, FL 339067  
Rabbi Lawrence Dermer  
Phone: 239-218-3433  
E-mail: info@shalomlifecenter.org  
Web site: www.shalomlifecenter.org  
Shabbat Evening Services  
7:30 p.m. (Oct-Apr)  
7:00 p.m. (May-Sept)  
Saturday Torah & Kabbalah Study  
10:00 a.m.

**TEMPLE BETH EL  
REFORM**

16225 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33908  
Rabbi Nicole Luna  
E-mail: rabbiluna@templebethel.com  
Learning Tree Preschool Director: Amy Amon  
Email: learningtreefortmyers@gmail.com  
President: Reina Schlager  
Email: tbeboard@templebethel.com  
Phone: 239-433-0018 • Fax: 239-433-3235  
Office Manager: Karen Kagan  
Email: manager@templebethel.com  
Web site: templebethel.com  
Shabbat services: 7:30 p.m. Friday  
Torah study 9:00 a.m. Saturday  
Religious & Hebrew School:  
9:30 a.m.- Noon Sunday  
Judaica Gift Gallery  
Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism;

**TEMPLE BETH SHALOM  
REFORM**

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

**CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SWFL  
CHAVURA**

20031 Sanibel View Circle unit 202  
Fort Myers, FL 33908  
Chavuratshalom@gmail.com  
www.chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org  
Cheryl Fulmer, President  
Shabbat services - 7:30 p.m. Friday  
Jewish current events - Saturday morning  
Speakers series - Tuesday evening

**TEMPLE JUDEA  
CONSERVATIVE**

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

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

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

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

- AIPAC  
(American Israel Public Affairs Committee):  
Jacki Waksman - 954-653-9053
- AJC (American Jewish Committee):  
Brian Lipton - 941-365-4955
- Anti-Defamation League: 561-988-2900
- B'Nai B'rith International: 941-302-4500
- Chabad Jewish Student Life at FGCU  
Rabbi Mendel Gordon - 347-452-0489  
mendelgordon@gmail.com
- Chevra Kadisha: Taryn Sasser - 617-388-3556
- Generations of the Shoah SWFL: 263-9200
- Hadassah - Collier/Lee Chapter:  
Joyce Toub - 518-330-1559
- Hadassah-Sharon Chapter (Charlotte County):  
Odette Port - 941-505-1409
- Hazak 55+ Chapter:  
Joyce Rosinger - 239-437-1566
- Israel Bonds: Regional Headquarters:  
800-622-8017
- Jewish Community Services:  
239-481-4449
- Jewish National Fund:  
Joshua Mellits, Director, Western Florida  
941-462-1330 ext. 865  
Memorial Tree Planting in Israel  
1-800-542-8733
- Jewish War Veterans:  
Post 400: Commander  
Harvey Charter - 239-246-3151
- Mikvah Bashka of Southwest Florida:  
Nechamie Minkowicz - 239-822-2784





# Shana tova.

Celebrate the High Holidays with recipes you'll love at [publix.com/highholidays](https://publix.com/highholidays).

