Kol hakavod Rabbi Miriam Geronimus
Gabrielle Pescador, special to the WIN

Rabbi Miriam Geronimus, who grew up and lived in Ann Arbor until graduating high school, became a rabbi on May 23 at the 49th commencement ceremony of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College outside Philadelphia. In her early years Geronimus attended the Jewish Cultural Society, the Secular Humanistic Jewish congregation in Ann Arbor which sparked within her a love for Jewish history and culture.

Having been raised in a family with both parents working as professors at the University of Michigan, Geronimus combined her academic orientation and love of the natural world to pursue studies in ecology and evolutionary biology. She took a special interest in the effects of climate change on the coral reefs, which was the subject of her senior thesis at Princeton and led her to explore this relationship more deeply in a PhD program in biology. Her intention was to make a difference in the conservation of coral reefs through her experiments and scholarship, but soon into her graduate work she realized that lab work and focusing on minute details was not for her, and she started to push away from science. At the same time, she was slowly being pulled toward the rabbinate.

As a way of maintaining her strong connection to Judaism on campus, Geronimus took on a leadership role in organizing an LGBT student group. For one event, she invited a lesbian rabbi to share the experience of living as a Jewish queer person committed to Judaism, embracing its richness while navigating and wrestling with its complexities and challenges. Geronimus was deeply moved by the rabbi’s ability to hold space for students who came from diverse backgrounds and points of view, some strongly identified as Jews and others exploring their Jewish roots. Geronimus found it healing to participate in an event in which each individual was seen in their fullness and respected for the way they want to show up in this world, with all their questions, reservations, feelings of disconnection, and deep yearnings.

The experience left Geronimus with a “gut feeling” about the rabbinate. She began to imagine a new path for making a difference outside the sciences, where she could serve him well at his new pulpit.

For Rabbi Ben Freed, journalism and the rabbinate are two similar jobs
Lee Chottiner, editor Jewish Louisville Community newspaper, reprinted with permission.

H e should know; he’s done both.
Freed, 32, spent four years as a general assignment reporter at the Ann Arbor News in Michigan. He also interned at Sports Illustrated in New York in 2011.

“When people ask me why I loved being a journalist, I tell them I love asking questions, telling stories, and helping people understand the world around them,” Freed said.

So when he started thinking about his next move in life, the son of a Federation executive and a physician decided that being a rabbi would represent an extension of what he was already doing.

“The leap from journalist to rabbi didn’t feel that different when I defined it that way,” he said. “It was a slightly different and really exciting and inspiring way to go about doing a lot of those same things that I had been doing as a journalist.”

That was six years ago. Today, Freed, who is ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary as a journalist, reprinted with permission.

“Being a journalist taught me to listen, which is an incredibly important role of a rabbi,” he said. “I think the first thing that we do as rabbis is listen and ask questions.”

Also, telling stories — through a eulogy, a D’var Torah or some other genre — is a cornerstone of a rabbi’s work.

“There is so much that is storytelling,” Freed said.

KI Executive Director Yoel Yussman said Freed is prepared to be a pulpit rabbi from day one, even though he is just now being ordained.

“A lot of times, rabbis right out of rabbinical school need some time to become an experienced rabbi,” Yussman said, “but even from his references everyone said Rabbi Freed is ready on day one to go straight from the gates, which is extremely rare.”

Yussman added that Freed’s spouse, Ariane Barrie-Stern, a drama graduate from The New School in New York, will become KI’s first artist in residence.

“We’re creating that [position] right now,” Yussman said. “She will be working at KI and in the community in terms of teaching those arts and hopefully putting on a theater production at Kneseth Israel.”

Freed said he and Barrie-Stern are excited to work with Yussman and Cantor Sharon Harder.

A fourth-generation Texan, Freed gets his love of Judaism straight from his parents. His earliest memories are of Shabbat dinners, usually with guests, singing, laughing, and sharing

A few things you need to know about the Israeli government that replaces Benjamin Netanyahu
Ben Sales, originally for the JTA

A fter 12 straight years as Israel’s prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu is has lost power — and the government replaced him at the end of June is remarkable in its own right.

Netanyahu’s ouster is a huge deal on its own. Over the past decade-plus, as the country’s longest-serving leader, he has become nearly synonymous with Israel — shaping its foreign and domestic policy as well as its international image, and personally guiding its relationship with the United States.

Over the past two years, his desire to hold onto power — even as he stands trial on corruption charges — along with his opponents’ desire to oust him, drove Israel’s political system into crisis. He has become so personally polarizing that a range of ideological allies turned against him.

Now, Netanyahu’s opponents have succeeded in defeating him. And unless Netanyahu somehow manages to scuttle that, the government they form will itself break boundaries. It will be an unprecedented alliance of political right and left, Jews and Arabs, all dedicated to one goal: ending the Netanyahu era. At the same time, there are ways that, even under new leadership, Israel is unlikely to change.

Here’s what you need to know about Israel’s new government.

Netanyahu is losing power: how we got here.
Israel had been trying and failing to elect a stable government for more than two years. And Netanyahu has come close to losing power before. But this time, it looks like it’s actually happening.

A little background: Netanyahu seemed to have won Israel’s 2019 election, but his former partners deserted him and he couldn’t form a coalition. So Israel held another election. Then
Reopening

In early June my family took a trip to Chicago. I consider this big news! We stayed in a hotel, ate at a restaurant, visited the Art Institute of Chicago, a Frida Khalo exhibit in Glen Ellyn, the field museum, took a boat ride on Lake Michigan, rode buses, and even took Lyft a couple of times. And as part of my research for my “Looking for Rose” stories, I visited Burr Oak Cemetery in Alsip. All of our travel partners were vaccinated and we wore our masks when we were indoors. The venues we visited were crowded; Navy Pier was packed with people. The trip was not without its COVID precautions and anxieties, but overall we were filled with joy to be doing activities that had been postponed for over a year.

This summer, all of our congregations, the JCC, Hillel, and the schools and universities will be making “reopening” plans for the fall, and contingency plans in case the virus surges again. There are so many things to consider: the safety of our most vulnerable individuals, lessons about using technology to expand access, the joys and anxieties of social closeness (is that the converse of social distancing?). Each community, agency and organization will be making complex decisions about in-person, hybrid, and virtual gatherings. The WJN will do our best in the August and September issues to inform you of the breadth of arrangements being made for this year’s High Holidays and beyond.

Back to my Chicago trip, there are two outings I want to report on. The Bisa Butler exhibition of quilts that capture “personal and historical narratives of Black life,” will be at the Art Institute of Chicago until September 6. When I walked into the room that displayed her wall-sized quilt, “Southside Sunday Morning” (based on Russell Lee’s 1941 photo that I had written about in my April installment of Looking for Rose), I practically fell to the floor. The impact of her ability to amplify a cornucopia of emotions contained in vintage photographs is simply awesome. I had a much more sobering experience visiting Burr Oak where, I have recently learned, my Aunt Rose’s husband was buried in 1976. Turns out his grave is unmarked, just like my Aunt Rose’s in Cass County, Michigan. Emmet Till, who was murdered on August 28, 1955 is also buried in Burr Oak. Standing near his memorial gravestone, filled with coins and other mementos left by visitors who simply want to say, “I remember you, Emmet Till,” I could only think, how have we accepted the lynching of Black people for so long? When will we make it stop?


Taken on June 23, 2021 by captured.by.keameera
Andy Levin: The Jewish voice we need

by Hayley Sakwa

Last week, I was speaking with an educator of Jewish teens in Metro Detroit. He described to me the confusion and pain his teens were experiencing during the recent war in Israel/Palestine. As they watched social media force a wedge between #FreePalestine and #StopAntiSemitism, they struggled to understand the facts on the ground, to process their grief, and to respond to pressures to speak up on either side.

This felt all too familiar. As a Jewish teen in suburban Detroit, I was taught that criticism of the State of Israel was a risk to the security of Jews everywhere. When I gained exposure to the realities of Palestinians living under daily threat of violence and displacement in the Occupied Territories, I felt hurt and torn apart. How could my growing knowledge of how high the stakes are when we face an institution that cannot be detangled from racism, Islamophobia, and other systems of oppression?

It is this understanding that moves him to de- fuse his interfaith coalition-building on this issue in Congress. Through this work, Andy reinforces his commitment to a two-state solution, Andy understands that the increasingly aggressive actions of the Israeli government and military against Palestinian people do not make Jews safer, in Israel or abroad. In his statement calling on President Biden to broker a ceasefire, Andy said, “Meaningful progress” to ensure this coexistence will not happen on its own. We must choose to pursue it. If we do not, then we have chosen the status quo, and while the horrors unfolding before our eyes may cease, it will only be a matter of time until they erupt again.

Growing up in the Reform movement, I learned that tikkun olam, interfaith partnerships, and investing in future generations were ways to express my Judaism. So when I find a leader whose Jewish roots motivate him to speak thoughtfully and clearly — not only on a leader whose Jewish roots motivate him to speak thoughtfully and clearly — not only on Israel/Palestine and antisemitism, but also on human rights, labor rights, and human rights worldwide — I’m going to hustle with everything I have to keep him representing us. Thanks to the hard work of Michigan voters overturning gerrymandering, we’re heading into our first election with independently drawn districts this fall. We don’t yet know how these districts will be drawn, but nearly every possible scenario places Andy Levin in a highly competitive election. Ultimately, Andy wants to change the system before it’s too late. He doesn’t want to change the system before it’s too late. He wants to change the system before it’s too late. He wants to change the system before it’s too late.

“We the people do not make Jews safer, in Israel or at home! A few months ago, in a strikingly prescient community conversation about antisemitism and Israel/Palestine, Congressman Andy Levin offered a clear answer: our safety and security are bound together — one cannot exist without the other. He said: “[...] Unless Palestinian human rights are respected, we cannot fight antisemitism.” Andy’s analysis reminds us that antisemitism cannot be detangled from racism, Islamophobia, and other systems of oppression. It is this understanding that moves him to defend Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib from attacks of antisemitism when voicing legitimate criticism of Israel’s occupation, while calling out age-old antisemitic tropes when they do show up in Congress.

Whether channeling his own experiences of antisemitism or his experiences visiting Israel/Palestine over the past 30 years, for Andy, this is deeply personal. It is his wholehearted commitment to creating lasting safety for all people that fuels his interfaith coalition-building on this issue in Congress. Through this work, Andy reminds us all that it is quite possible — and quite crucial — to fight for Jewish safety alongside and through our fight for Palestinian rights.

This past month, we have all been reminded of how high the stakes are when we face an international conversation about Israel/Palestine that doesn’t have a clear analysis of antisemitism. Alongside (and separate from) a growing movement of Palestinians and allies rightfully speaking up against the actions of Israel as a nation-state, we have seen a rising number of individuals using this moment as a reason to attack Jewish people.

While antisemitism will always resurface when the actions of Jewish people are on display, this is not a reason to silence the Palestinian liberation movement by criminalizing antisemitism and criticism of Israel. Instead, Andy reminds us that this is a moment to join the movement for Palestinian rights: to amplify their credible accounts of the trauma Palestinians experience on a daily basis in Israel/Palestine; and to offer an analysis of antisemitism that binds our oppression — and our security — together.

Rooted in his deep commitment to a two-state solution, Andy understands that the increasingly aggressive actions of the Israeli government and military against Palestinian people do not make Jews safer, in Israel or abroad. In his statement calling on President Biden to broker a ceasefire, Andy said, “Meaningful progress” to ensure this coexistence will not happen on its own. We must choose to pursue it. If we do not, then we have chosen the status quo, and while the horrors unfolding before our eyes may cease, it will only be a matter of time until they erupt again. "The national and global rise in antisemitism is not sparing Michigan. Expose it. Talk about it. Stop it! Attacking Jews as a way to express criticism of Israel is antisemitic. Period. It is certainly counterproductive for the movement for Palestinian rights.” -- Congressman Andy Levin, June 2, 2021

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Introducing the Lior Project
Jacob Singer, special to the WIN

In response to a number of deaths by suicide in the Jewish community in recent years, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, Inc. (JFS) is announcing the establishment of a new mental health-centered initiative, the Lior Project. Named after the Hebrew word meaning “my light,” the Lior Project exists for the purpose of shining a light on community well-being. The project is made possible in part through the generosity of the Jewish Women’s Foundation of Metro Detroit.

As an early step in the initiative, JFS convened a suicide task force of advisers from Beth Israel Congregation, Garrett’s Space, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor (JFGAA), and Temple Beth Emeth. The taskforce determined that elevating awareness and facilitating community dialogue about addiction, mental health, and suicide will be essential in reducing stigma, and enabling community members to respond appropriately to those who are struggling.

JFS has already begun taking steps to address suicide awareness in the local community. With the support of Federation, JFS has begun presenting a formal curriculum of highly structured, evidence-based trainings known as safeTALK, where “TALK” stands for Tell, Ask, Listen, and KeepTalking. The safeTALK curriculum emphasizes how to recognize and address signs of mental distress, engage people who might be having thoughts of suicide, and connect them with appropriate resources.

Through the Lior Project, JFS will be providing future safeTALK trainings, including sessions dedicated to Jewish communal professionals and to high school and college students. The rollout of additional trainings is expected to increase the number of trained, suicide-alert professional and lay community members who will be prepared to help. Given the Lior Project’s emphasis on community education, JFS is also planning additional community-wide programs and trainings designed to increase education and awareness while reducing stigma.

Details about Lior Project programs available for community participation in 2021–22 will be released in late summer 2021. In addition, community members will soon be able to access a Lior Project online website www.jsinger@jfsannarbor.org. The Lior Project’s web presence will provide educational content related to suicide and mental health, as well as information about local programs and trainings related to mental health. Also with the Lior Project, JFS plans to implement a focused mental health and suicide awareness campaign for the Jewish community. This will include the development of electronic and print media materials and an increased social media presence. For more information on this initiative, please contact JFS at jsinger@jfsannarbor.org.

RESOURCES
The National Suicide Prevention Help Line at 800-273-TALK (8255) is available 24 hours a day. If you are in crisis or feeling unsafe, please call 911 or proceed to your nearest emergency room. If you are seeking counseling and support, please call Thrive Counseling at (734) 436-4269 during daytime business hours to inquire about services.

Greater Ann Arbor’s collective impact: Federation awards its 2021 allocations
Stephanie Glass, special to the WIN

In May 24, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor’s board of directors approved Federation’s 2021 allocations for local and Israel/Overseas (I/O) organizations. These allocations, funded through the over $1.4 million raised in the 2020 Annual Community Campaign, support local and I/O agencies in countless ways including subsidizing programming and providing crucial infrastructure support. Like the Annual Community Campaign, the Federation’s allocation process is community-led, with recommendations made by an Allocations Committee, comprising community members representing different interests and backgrounds. Chaired by Federation board member Murray Reben, the committee met throughout the year to discuss the application process and community needs, and to determine the final recommendations submitted for Board approval.

Local allocations
The Federation provided nine greater Ann Arbor organizations, including the Federation and Jewish Community Foundation, with funding for the upcoming year. Highlights include providing operating support to Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Services, and Hebrew Day School. Allocations also went toward direct programming including Michigan Hillel’s Shabbat Dinner program, which provides thou- sands of University of Michigan students with free Shabbat dinners, connecting them to the restorative ritual of Shabbat. Local allocation support also went toward Chabad’s community programming, which create-ly worked with pandemic restrictions this past year by bringing celebrations directly to community members through initiatives like “Passover in a Box,” a Purim bus, and much more. Through these local allocations, which direct over a million dollars into the local community, Federation, in partnership with its beneficiary organizations, grows and sustains greater Ann Arbor’s Jewish community and enables it to flourish through programming, initiatives, and social services that help those in need and foster vibrant Jewish life.

Israel/Overseas allocations
The Jewish Federation of North America (JFNA) has long recognized the unique connection and essential need for North American Jews to support and have an active voice in both Israel and Jewish overseas communities. The greater Ann Arbor Jewish community has a long history of ensuring its communal values and voices are reflected through the annual allocations made to Israel/Overseas (I/O) partners. Twenty percent of the 2021 Annual Community Campaign will go toward I/O organizations, helping them accomplish work related to religious pluralism, serving disadvantaged populations, and fostering coherence among Jewish and Arab Israelis. The Israel/Overseas subcommittee, chaired by Federation board member Hanna Goodstein, works closely in selecting I/O organizations representative of these values.

This year’s I/O allocations provided nine organizations with over $280,000 in funding. Organizations include JDC Welfare Relief in the Former Soviet Union, which provides medical care and social support to elderly Jews, and Youth Futures, a national mentorship program that provides holistic support for at-risk children in Israel. A core allocation also went toward critical operating support for the Jewish Agency for Israel, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and World ORT, the three central agencies representing world Jewry’s interests and needs. This funding helps services for vulnerable populations, educational initiatives, the resettling and absorbing of Jews from around the world, and much more.

Collective impact
From the money raised to its distribution, the impact made by Federation is only possible through community support, Rachel Wall, Federation’s Development and Communications Manager, shared that “it’s incredibly inspiring to know hundreds of members of our Jewish community here in Washtenaw County see the value in supporting one another and our community organizations. Whenever someone donates, whether it is $18 or $18,000, it’s clear they care about making this the best possible community for everyone.”

The forthcoming 2020–2021 Community Impact Report will provide a full list of the 2021 allocations. For more information on how you can support the community through a gift, please visit www.jewishannarbor.org/ways-to-give.

Jewish legacy giving program secures $1.2 billion in commitments
Margaret Schreiber, special to the WIN

What could the next generation of Jews in Greater Ann Arbor do with $6.7 million? Thanks to a new legacy giving program, this is something our community will one day be able to find out!

Greater Ann Arbor has secured more than 216 after-lifetime commitments with an estimated value of $6.7 million dollars in future financial gifts to the community since its inception in September 2020. The commitments are a part of a collaboration between the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and the Ann Arbor Old Grinsepound Foundation (HGF) to preserve vibrant Jewish life for future generations by ensuring the long-term financial health of our local Jewish community organizations. Through their LIFE & LEGACY® the Federation in turn partners with local organizations. The program provides coaching, training, and incentive grants to ensure that legacy giving becomes a normal part of the philanthropic culture within these organizations, positively impacting the longevity of the Greater Ann Arbor Jewish community.

In the past 8.5 years, the HGF has helped its 72 partner communities secure more than $30,000 legacy commitments, valued at over $1.2 billion of which $130 million has already been placed into organizational endowments.

Community members participate in virtual legacy giving conference
Recently, Ann Arbor Jewish communal professionals and lay leaders joined more than 600 colleagues from communities and organizations across North America for the 2021 LIFE & LEGACY® Create a Jewish Legacy LeadPact Gathering which was held virtually May 25–27.

The conference was aimed at building new skills, sharing best practices, and gaining new insights and inspiration to move legacy initiatives forward.

“I really enjoyed [acclaimed executive coach] Rae Ringel’s session on presence and being mindful. It helped me better understand how to conduct effective legacy conversations,” commented attendee Ezra Brown, an intern with Federation and a student of the University of Michigan College of LSA. “The session was given at the University of Michigan’s School of Social Work. This presentation also reinforced the broader LIFE & LEGACY® theme that asking for a legacy gift is itself a mitzvah, as the asker is giving the potential donor the opportunity to make a difference in their Jewish community.”

Melissa Sigmond, executive director of Temple Beth Emeth, added, “I attended a fantastic panel group with peers of similar organizations to discuss and share best practices to pursue sources of funding. It was inspiring to hear from colleagues across the country how participating in the LIFE & LEGACY® program has provided communities with the roadmap and encouragement to secure and sustain planned giving for our Jewish future.”

Also in attendance was Stacy Carroll, Director of Advancement & Planned Giving at The University of Michigan Hillel. Stacy reflected, “New to the development area of planned giving, the LIFE & LEGACY® conference was a wonderful experience for me to be part of. I learned a great deal about the numerous ways in which we can help our supporters find the right planned giving vehicle to make their legacy wishes a reality.”

“The Legacy Gathering is an opportunity for us to come together, spend the day learning from professionals and lay leaders across North America working to secure the Jewish future by building organizational endowments through after-lifetime giving,” said Arlene D. Schiff, National Director, LIFE & LEGACY.

“While we wish we had been able to meet in person, we are grateful for the opportunity to provide a forum that was motivating for so many who are committed to ensuring there are strong and vibrant Jewish communities in the U.S. and Canada, that will allow future generations to enjoy our rich Jewish culture and heritage.”

The following organizations are LIFE & LEGACY® participants in Washtenaw County: Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan, Beth Israel Congregation, Chabad House of Ann Arbor, Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies, Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor, Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, Temple Beth Emeth, and University of Michigan Hillel. Please reach out to Margaret Schreiber for more information on the LIFE & LEGACY® program, via phone (734-773-3538) or email (margaret@jewishannarbor.org).
Uniting the fragments of Holocaust survivors' families

By Chuck Newman,

Editor’s Note: In January, Chuck Newman began hosting a biweekly series of "Conversations," presented by the Jewish Cultural Arts and Education department of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. The talk show format of the Zoom presentations highlights Chucks easygoing style and deep curiosity about science, politics, and connections between our local environment and the world.

Recently Jennifer Mendelsohn was my guest on the talk show Conversations, sponsored by the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. Jennifer had a highly successful career as a journalist who has appeared in many newspapers and magazines. Then, a chance remark changed and enriched her life and that of Holocaust survivors and their descendants.

That chance remark was made as Jennifer was riding with her husband's 95-year-old Holocaust survivor grandmother, Frieda. Jennifer asked her grandmother-in-law what she had heard about America in Europe growing up. Frieda replied not much, but that she was told that she had two aunts, whose last names she didn't know, who had moved to America before World War I, and that she had tried and failed to find them years earlier. Hearing this, Jennifer was determined to find those aunts’ descendants, as her gift to her beloved Frieda who had lost her entire extended family, other than a single first cousin and a second cousin in Canada, in the Holocaust.

With two weeks of frenzied effort Jennifer was sure that, amazingly, she had found Frieda's aunts' descendants, other than what she had heard about America in Europe growing up. Frieda replied not much, but that she was told that she had two aunts, whose last names she didn't know, who had moved to America before World War I, and that she had tried and failed to find them years earlier. Hearing this, Jennifer was determined to find those aunts’ descendants, as her gift to her beloved Frieda who had lost her entire extended family, other than a single first cousin and a second cousin in Canada, in the Holocaust.

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Jennifer Mendelsohn,

Jennifer Mendelsohn, 89-year-old cousin Irene while Jennifer and her children strained to hear their conversation on the speakerphone. After an exchange of pleasantries Frieda asked Irene, “Did your mother ever talk about her sister, Chaya Rojatz?” There was a long pause and Irene answered that she was named for Chaya Rosa, Frieda’s mother. That changed everything for Jennifer and Frieda.

Frieda told Jennifer, “I know why I lived so long. So I could see this day,” and Jennifer knew what the rest of her life’s work should be: reuniting Holocaust survivors’ families. Her search for the child Tsila, lost by Yosef and Genia Lang in 1942 during WWII, like other of her searches, didn’t have such a happy ending. In order for their new baby Tsila to survive, her parents needed to transfer her to a nearby monastery. According to Batya Levios, the granddaughter of Yosef and Genia, “At the end of the war, when Grandpa and Grandma went back to pick up the girl, they found out that the convent had just closed. Since then, little Tsila’s traces have actually disappeared.”

“The search for the lost girl has become a family tragedy,” says Batya. “Grandma Genia passed away at the age of 76, after never being able to overcome the great pain she felt all her life. Grandpa Yosef was just haunted by his knowledge that his daughter was alive but that he would never see his child again.”

Tsila did survive, though, and fortunately had her DNA tested before she died. Tsila’s daughter asked Jennifer who moderator of the Facebook group Jewish DNA for Genetic Genealogy and Family Research, to help solve the mystery of Tsila’s life. Though the Langs, too, had passed away, Jennifer was able to match their DNA with Tsila’s, giving the family a sense of closure. When Jennifer received DNA proof that she was right, she screamed, “I was shaking,” she said. “Later that day we told the woman’s daughter that she had two elderly aunts and many cousins eager to meet her. We all wept.”

The sad irony of this story is that Tsila lived the next town over from her birth parents in Israel and they never knew it.

Jennifer finds the reunions she makes possible bittersweet. “They are so wonderful precisely because what these families endured was so unspeakably horrible.”

In explaining why she does what she does, Jennifer shares Oscar Hammerstein’s quote, “As long as there’s one person on Earth who remembers you, it isn’t over,” and says that, “it is our collective responsibility to try to find this information, as an integral part of the process of reclaiming our shattered past from those who sought to annihilate us.”

Some of the viewers of Jennifer’s appearance on Conversations have expressed an interest in establishing a Jewish Genealogy Society chapter in Ann Arbor so they can find their family’s history. If you are interested in learning more about this possibility, contact Chuck Newman at chuck@ba80.com.

Jennifer’s interview on Conversations and other previous shows can be seen at https://jccannarbor.org/event/conversations.

Camp Raanana combines the J and Cedar Lake

Clara Silver, special to the WJN

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor’s Camp Raanana will host campers mainly at its Ann Arbor building, but will take daily field trips to the Cedar Lake Nature Center in Chelsea, Michigan. Each camper unit will be bussed to the Cedar Lake Nature Center in Chelsea, Michigan. Each camper unit will be bussed to the Cedar Lake Nature Center in Chelsea, Michigan. Each camper unit will be bussed to the Cedar Lake Nature Center in Chelsea, Michigan. Each camper unit will be bussed to the Cedar Lake Nature Center in Chelsea, Michigan.

In addition, every week each age group will have a variety of “Wacky Wednesday” activities, which is always a camper favorite. Adding to an already robust schedule. As always, camper activities will include camp sing-a-longs, sports and games, arts and crafts, water play, and much more.

Director of Camp and YOUTH Nikki Richardson said, “We are so excited for another wonderful summer of Camp Raanana! We are thrilled to be going back out to Cedar Lake! We are seeing the highest enrollment since about 2015 and so excited to be able to have our Israeli shlichim back with us.”

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Beth Israel's Green Team turns trash to treasure

By Diane L. Wilson

Begun by former Beth Israel Congregation member Sam Zwetchkenbaum, and for well over a decade, Beth Israel Congregation has used its County Farm Park garden to participate in the Faith and Food program, raising produce for Food Gatherers and Temple Beth Emeth’s Back Door Food Pantry. In addition, Amanda Glucklich, BIC’s Engagement Director, coordinated a grant from Hazon through which the BIC garden has new plastic-free fencing, improved soil, and lovely hay pathways. In 2020, between the BIC garden and a few gardeners running “satellite” gardens with seeds or seedlings from Hazon Detroit, the BIC Green Team raised 400 pounds of food for Food Gatherers. Going from strength to strength, the Green Team looked for another form of tikkun olam to pursue, even in a COVID-constrained moment.

July at Beth Israel Congregation

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes, and events, all virtually. Below is a list of the links to participate in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is now live streaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congregation AA M1). All links will also be available on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org). Please note that passwords are used. Contact the office to get the passwords at office@bethisrael-aa.org.

Passport to Shabbat: South Africa

Get your virtual passports ready and join us as we travel to South Africa during the month of July. Events include a cooking demonstration (July 7), a lesson in Mandala dot art (July 12), and a book discussion of Caste (July 20) with Isabel Wilkerson. The first discussion was in August 2020 using Richard Wright, who considered this his finest work. Written in the early 1940s, it is the eerily contemporary story of Fred Daniels, a Black man framed by police for a double murder he did not commit. His candor portrayed of police brutality made the novel untouchable until now. We invite everyone to read the book and join the discussion, which will again be facilitated by Spalter and Pickell. Interested participants can learn more and register at: https://www.bethisrael-aa.org/event/bic-reads-the-man-who-lived-underground.html.

BIC Social Action learns anti-racism

Michael Appel, special to the WIN

In June 2020, Beth Israel Congregation (BIC), like so many organizations in our country, acknowledged in a message from the rabbis, staff, and lay leadership to the Congregation that “we are obligated to ensure that the lives and welfare of all of our brothers and sisters are safeguarded; specifically, we must actively condemn and eliminate brutality and unjust treatment against all people of color.” Rabbi Nadav Caine, in that message to the Congregation, wrote: “Each week, we’ve connected Torah to the injustices against victims of racist structures in our society, remembering victims by name. Our need to bring Torah to ourselves and to America has never been more interconnected.” And on a Friday mincha service in June 2020, BIC added a minute of silence for George Floyd and other victims of police brutality and asked participants in the Zoom minyan to place a lit candle in their screen as a sign of respect for the lives lost.

Since then, BIC has worked to fulfill that commitment. In recent months, these initiatives have been found in our services and religious observances, in the work and priorities of our congregational programming, and in the activities of our Social Action Committee (SAC).

In December, Dr. Lisa Jackson, chair of the Ann Arbor Police Oversight Commission, spoke about her work to the SAC and returned in January at an event sponsored by the SAC to speak to the broader Congregation. She described the history of bringing civilian oversight to Ann Arbor’s Police Department. She emphasized the continuing importance of citizen involvement with the work of the Oversight Commission.

In March, the SAC sponsored its second BIC Reads book discussion, this time focused on Just Mercy by Isabel Wilkerson. The first discussion was in August 2020 using How to be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi. The SAC has structured these discussions with facilitation by two talented Detroit-area discussion leaders, Molli Spalter and Isaac Pickell.

In May, Beth Israel sponsored a showing of the film Walking while Black: L.O.V.E. Is The Answer, together with the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and the Washtenaw Sheriff’s Office. This film by A.J. Ali offers an honest and often intense discussion of the relationships between police and communities of color and calls for a commitment to “bridging the gap between peace officers and the rest of the community.” Amanda Glucklich, BIC’s Director of Engagement and Programming, organized and moderated a follow-up discussion that included the film’s director and producer, A.J. Ali, and Derek Jackson representing the Washtenaw County Sheriff’s Office.

Also in May, together with other Michigan congregations, BIC listened to newly-elected Washtenaw County Prosecutor Eli Savit on Shavuot. Savit ran on a campaign promising criminal justice reform and since his successful election has quickly introduced a variety of policy changes. His study session on Savit considered similarities in how the early Rabbis approached the enforcement of problematic biblical commandments to current initiatives to introduce restorative justice alternatives or to avoid the often discriminatory practices of younger offenders for smaller crimes.

Ongoing Initiatives

At the June meeting of the Social Action Committee, UM Professor Emeritus Emeritus Larry Root shared with us the local work of Friends of Restorative Justice. This effort, in coordination with the courts and the Dispute Resolution Center, is working to establish a Restorative Justice Center as a viable alternative to criminal justice prosecutions in Washtenaw County. Members of the SAC also reported on an initiative of the Michigan Center for Youth Justice to establish “Youth Justice Advocacy Hubs” that will lead in providing support for the Center’s efforts to advocate for policies and practices that promote more equitable solutions for children, youth and young adults involved with Michigan’s criminal justice system. At its July 11 meeting, the SAC intends to make plans prioritized for the coming year’s work. If you are interested, please join us. A link is available through the BIC calendar at https://www.bethisrael-aa.org/event/green-team-social-ac-

Shabbat Stroll for Adults (focus 55+)

Sunday, July 25, 10:30 a.m.

Get to know longtime and new members of the community by taking a stroll around the Arbor return. Register on the Beth Israel website.

Kabbalat Shabbat at County Farm Park

Friday, July 30, 5:30 p.m.

We encourage everyone to bring a picnic to enjoy (or purchase a meal in advance from the BIC kitchen). You can also explore the BIC garden plot, community gardens and walking trails. Full details or meal purchase on the Beth Israel website.

Theology Book Club — Online

Wednesdays, 8 p.m.

Beth Israel Congregation’s Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English. Contact Paul Shifrin at (248) 514-7276 for more information.

Online Services

Evening Minyan

Sunday at 5:00 p.m.
Monday–Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Friday Evening Services

Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services

Saturday at 9:30 a.m.
A brief history of Jewish video game characters

Mimi Halpern, originally appeared on Alma

The Last of Us Part II is a heart-wrenching story of revenge and loss set in a post-apocalyptic America. Released in 2020, the game quickly became the most awarded of all time. While playing through its 25 hours of content, players encounter brush violence — there are Molotov cocktails and mutated monsters — but the adventure shines brightest in its quiet moments, when the humanity of the characters emerges from the ominous setting.

One highlight for me can be found in a chapter with Dina, the Jewish girlfriend of protagonist Ellie Williams. Dina joins Ellie in her quest for revenge that propels The Last of Us Part II, and early on her venture through abandoned storefronts in search of gasoline to open a gate. The quest takes them to a location I found to be an unexpected delight: an abandoned synagogue.

With light flooding through the stained-glass windows and overgrown greenery unifying the synagouge with its surroundings, the setting doesn’t feel out of place from the game. Rather it serves as a safe haven after exploring areas crawling with zombies.

“Hey Ellie, this place is a synagogue,” Dina warmly remarks upon their entrance.

One of the most enduring aspects to the original The Last of Us game was a 14-year-old Ellie questioning her father figure, Joel, on aspects of life before the apocalypse outbreak. She’s always been a lighting-up bug and speaks of college like a foreign concept — but approaches all these unfamiliar ideas with genuine curiosity. The Ellie in the sequel is hardened, but her young, quizzical self peeks through as she inquires about her partner’s faith: “7774 Are we in the future?” Dina jokes in reply, “No, doofus, that’s a Hebrew calendar.”

The moment that hit closest to home was one line from Ellie, “Shivah, 2006” — For the new year my sister used to give me an apple dipped in honey. Though they are living in an apocalyptic world overrun by zombies, Dina’s Jewishness feels so real. The apples-and-honey line in particular made me realize I had never seen a Jewish character in a video game that I could relate to before now.

While Dina says she wouldn’t describe herself as a believer, she explains that her faith is a source of comfort and a way to deal with grief. Unlike many past depictions of Jewish people in games, Dina is not reduced to her religion. Dina’s Jewishness is a piece of her background that aids in understanding her perspective as the story progresses.

Inspired by Dina, I did a deep dive into video game history to catalog the good, the bad and the questionable representation found in the medium. From a cult classic indie game centering on a rabbis to Orthodox Jewish background characters, looking to simulating antisemitic violence developed by hate groups, here’s a timeline spanning from 1992 to the present day.

William “B.J.” Blazkowicz (Wolfenstein, 1992)

B.J. is the central protagonist of the Wolfenstein series: the son of Polish immigrants, a World War II sergeant in the Army and an agent at the fictional U.S. Office of Secret Actions. He is an anti-Semite who aims to take down the Nazi regime: “I’ve got kids on the way, and I’ll be damned if I’m gonna raise them in a world run by these Nazi assholes.” The game is a bloody first-person shooter with likely the most prominent Jewish protagonist in video game history.

B.J. Jewish background and a commando name Tom Hal, both on Twitter in 2014 and through revealing his mother’s identity in The New Colossus (2017).

Dr. Hal “Otacan” Emmerich (Metal Gear Solid, 1998)

Metal Gear Solid is an acclaimed game by Hideo Kojima that helped to popularize stealth gameplay and cinematic cutscenes. It features the ca-tone Jewish Dr. Hal Emmerich, a scientific prodigy, weapons developer and lover of anime. Emmerich’s identity was confirmed in the Met-al Gear Solid: Official Mission Handbook (see page 19). Another Metal Gear Solid character, Merly Silverburg, a fighter from a military family who serves as right-hand woman to pro-tagonist Snake, is thought to be Jewish by many due to her name. However, her faith has never been stated and, unlike Emmerich, her nationality in the handbook is listed simply as “American” rather than “American/Jewish.”

Gordon Freeman (Half Life, 1998)

Freeman flies into the Silverburg category: Many have assumed the Hall Life Hero’s Jewish background based on his name. Freeman, a theoretical physicist, is joined by several other characters, including Dr. Kleiner and Judith Mossman, whose names may also indicate Jewish backgrounds as they stand against a fascist empire called Combine. While these characters’ faiths are not confirmed, the possibility adds interesting depth to the narrative.

Jewish Enemies (Ethnic Cleansing, 2002)

I couldn’t cover the scope of depictions of Jewish protagonists and video game villains without noting how the medium has been weaponized at times to simu-late antisemitic violence. This is perhaps most dramatically played by the 2002 game Ethnic Cleansing, created by the neo-Nazification National Alliance, which is … exactly what it sounds like. It is essentially a reverse Wolfenstein game where rather than fighting the Nazis, you are the Nazi. For obvious reasons this falls into the straight-up bad representation (if you can even call it that category).

Ken Rosenberg, Johnny Klebitz, Isaac Roth and Mori Green (Grand Theft Auto, 2002–)

The bestselling Grand Theft Auto Auto series, known for its gaudiness and open world accomplishments, features a handful of Jewish characters. Rosenberg is a central character in both Vice City and San Andreas, a lawyer with ties to an Italian-American mob. Klebitz, another recurring char-acter, is the leader of an outlaw motorcycle gang who rides a signature blue and white bike meant to reference the Israeli flag. Roth and Green are members of a Jewish mob who trade diamonds. “Spoiler alert” Some controversy arose as two of the series protagonists kill Roth, Green and their fellow diamond dealers. The finale reveals where the player kills Roth sees him described as a “curly haired leech” and requires that the player murder members of the Jewish mob.

Rabbi Russell Stone (The Shivah, 2006)

The most obviously Jewish game on this list is The Shivah, an indie point and click title with branching dialogue where the protagonist is lit-tle a rabbi. Rabbi Stone’s syncopated yam-yam low on funds when he10 for him. Stone ventures through Manhattan on a journey full of lighted hearts and introspective dialogue to de- termine if it is moral to accept the funds. Bonus points: The game features a check sheet of Yid-dish translations.

Professor Hershel Layton (The Professor Layton Series, 2007)

The hero of Nintendo’s successful Professor Layton series is Hershel, a puzzle-solving Brit-ish Jewish archaeologist. OK, his religion isn’t discussed in the game, but the Hebrew origins of his name and his choice of hat have led many to draw the conclusion.

Andrew Ryan, J.S. Steinman, Brigid Tenenbaum, Mariska Lutz, Sander Cohen and more! (BioShock, 2007)

BioShock is a first-person shooter where you play as Jack, a survivor of a plane crash who stumbles upon an underwater city in 1960. It features the most Jewish cast in gaming — cer-tainly at the time, and possibly to this day. Ken Levine, the mind behind the game, opened up about (The Jewish roots in a 2015 interview and later stated that he’d get rid of them in the sequel.

“I don’t think I was conscious of how Jewish it was until afterwards,” he said, explaining that much of the representation was a byproduct of his childhood experiences.

Edgar Kalou (LA Noire, 2011)

The protagonist is Detective Cole Phelps of the Los Angeles Police Department in 1947. The player acts as Phelps while solving a variety of cases. “Spoiler alert” One centers on Edgar Kalou, a jewelry store owner who kills Everett Gege, an antisemite who worked to take down his business. While questioning Kalou, Phelps gets a confession by making antisemitic remarks, saying “You’re going to the gas chamber, Edgar,” and calling him a “left-wing-leaning par-tisan.”

Kalou accuses Phelps of antisemitism and calls him a “goy motherf—er.” After the confes-sion, Phelps says, “I respect your beliefs and the right to hold them,” which rings hollow after he threatens to send a Jewish man to the gas cham-bers. I’m left feeling he didn’t need to use aggres-sive antisemitism as a tool to gain a confession when he already had ample evidence of guilt.

Gage the Mechromancer (Borderlands 2, 2012)

Gage is a playable character in the Borderlands series, a rebellious blogger and scientist whose signature skill is summoning Deathtrap, a robot she created to defend her. She sometimes open chests while exclaiming “It’s like Hanuk-kah!”

Brigid Tenenbaum, Mariska Lutz, and Sander Cohen are the Nelson family in Chicago, Zussman faces unique struggles in battle due to his identity as he is captured by German soldiers.

Zussman is the fiercely loyal sidekick to protagon-ist Ronald “Red” Daniels. Raised by a Ger-man-Jewish family in Chicago, Zussman faces unique struggles in battle due to his identity as he is captured by German soldiers.

Jewish NPCs (non-player characters) (Marvel’s Spider-Man, 2018)

I am indeed including the Jewish background characters in Spider-Man because of this lovely attention to detail. Saturdays, the Orthodox Jewish character models are not seen at work because they are observing the Sabbath, Elan Ruskin, a programmer at Insomniac Games, tweeted, “I spent months bugging the character art lead to create Orthodox models just so that I could implement this.” From gaming Jews everywhere, thank you, Elan Ruskin. Sometimes it’s the little things. Also worth mentioning, while swinging around the 2020 follow-up game, Spider-Man: Miles Morales, NPCs will shout out holiday greetings that include “Happy Hanukkah!” — I lit up upon hearing it for the first time.

Dina (The Last of Us Part II, 2020)

This all takes us back to Dina, perhaps the most fleshed-out direct Jewish representation in a AAA game.

“I like coming from a long line of survivors,” Dina proudly states, explaining her family sur-vived the Inquisition and the Holocaust, and that she now carries their legacy as she fights to survive. Her Judaism is brought up naturally and connects to the story in a meaningful way. Throughout the game Dina wears a bracelet with a hamsa charm that she ultimately gives to Ellie, saying “It’s for good luck.”


While Jewish representation in video games has a rocky and sparse history, games like Bio-Shock, Marvel’s Spider-Man and The Last of Us Part II have demonstrated differing ways to effectively include the faith on large and small scales. The common thread in these games is having a seat at the table. In the case of Bio-Shock, developer Ken Levine’s roots drive the inclusion; in Spider-Man, it is Elan Ruskin pushing the character artists to include Ortho-do$x models; and in The Last of Us Part II, writer and director Neil Druckmann’s background in- spires the inclusion.

As the video game industry grows to be more inclusive behind the scenes, we can expect games increasingly representative of nuanced and complex characters from all walks of life.
O n April 15, Minnesota Representative Betty McCollum introduced legislation (HR 2590), called the “Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act.” The bill aims to stop U.S. aid from funding the military’s unlawful seizure, appropriation, and destruction of Palestinian property and forcible transfer of civilians in the West Bank, or further annexation of Palestinian land in violation of international law. “We are creating as we go. ” McCollum stated in a press release that “U.S. assistance intended for Israel’s security must never be used to violate the human rights of Palestinian children, demolish the homes of Palestinian families, or to permanently annex Palestinian lands … Peace can only be achieved by respecting human rights, especially the rights of children, and this includes the U.S. taking responsibility for how U.S. aid is used by recipient countries, Israel included. Congress must stop ignoring the unjust and blatantly cruel mistreatment of Palestinian children and families living under Israeli military occupation.” Representative McCollum and other Congress members have introduced similar legislation in the past: in August 2020, McCollum introduced the “Israel Annexation Non-Recog- nition Act,” which would prevent the U.S. from recognizing or providing aid to any area of the West Bank annexed by the Israeli government; she introduced a similar bill in 2017. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) introduced an amendment to the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act that would prohibit funds in the bill to be used toward the annexation of the West Bank. None of the bills or amendments received any votes — McCollum has not given up hope on getting legislation on this issue passed. In addition, Democrats in Congress have written to past Secretaries of State as well as Israeli leaders expressing their concern over Israeli annexation of the West Bank. McCollum and other U.S. legislators have had their views ignored by the Israeli government. The most recent bill has support from a number of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian organizations, and human rights organizations. A press release from J Street, “the political home of pro-Israel, pro-peace Americans,” asks for a “fundamental reset” of U.S. policy with restrictions on end uses of equipment bought with U.S. aid. In The New York Times, an American Jewish organization advocate wrote an op-ed for the New York Times on how to “stop Israel’s war on Palestinians.” The New York Times has endorsed the bill, Zak Wittus, from In The New Times, said it was “one of the few attempts to halt Israeli military violence.” The bill has additional endorsements, including from the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, “now is the time to halt Israel’s war on Palestinians.” 

The most recent bill is likely to have support from many Democrat voters who support putting more pressure on Israel to make necessary compromises in the conflict, up from 33% in 2008; only 17% of Republicans support it, however. In addition, the American Institute for Public Opinion reports that 51% of those polled support restricting aid to Israel if it continues to build settlements in the West Bank. Kira Berman, a community member in Ann Arbor, submitted a statement to WJN, saying she is “sickened … over all the recent violence and especially the injustices perpetrated by the Israeli government … U.S. taxpayers have funded Isra- el’s military, security, and missile defense systems in the amount of $4.6 billion as of last year, with- out any real restrictions … I support HR 2590, but it is only a tiny step and has no real chance to pass. … Nicholas Kristof wrote that, ‘A basic principle of peacebuilding is to stop committing war crimes.’ I would add that the U.S. should stop funding such war crimes immediately. … I must ask if any country has a right to try to create an ethnically or religiously homogeneous nation state (the aim of settlements and evictions and building more) and whether any attempt of such acts has been filled with tragedy and atrocity, for Jews and many, many others.”

While the idea of conditioning U.S. aid to Israel has growing support amongst voters, this change is not reflected in Congress. McCollum’s bill has only 25 cosponsors in the House, all Democrats. Community member Bernie Banet reflects on these hurdles, saying that, “Israel and the U.S. should be working to end the occupation of the West Bank; rather than hardening it with de facto annexations. [T]he settlement expansion, demolitions, forcible transfer are not in Israel’s long- term security interest. Sincere efforts to share the space and to cooperate for mutual advantage are a better approach. Israel still has existential security challenges. … U.S. support of Israel’s military defenses should therefore continue.” This bill is an attempt to send a message that the U.S. does not support a hostile and perpetual occupation of the West Bank. … It would ‘prohibit’ certain uses of U.S. military aid, with no defining conse- quences for violating the prohibitions. … It will not be passed by Congress. I believe that without [a bill] the Biden administration and a new Israeli government can work with the Palestinians … to end the occupation … While the introduction of such a bill is currently a dead-end, its support- ers seem to be trying to spark conversation more than actual legislative change. HR 2590 has been referred to the House Committee on Foreign Aff airs and will likely, as its previous iterations expe- rienced, never make it out of committee.

Kol hakavod Rabbi Miriam Geronimus “help people see and figure out how to be seen in the messy world.” She did not make the decision to leave the sciences immediately but spent a year of hard discernment regarding her academic identity. But by the time she made the deci- sion to make the change and become a rabbi, she didn’t doubt or regret it.

Geronimus chose to pursue rabbinic studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinic College because of its academic orientation, she found the rabbinic program very intentional as participants are building the community together, in a variety of settings — with 4th graders, college students, colleagues and learning how they can collabo- rate on the staff of the college for three years, leaving their son, already held several rabbinic internships dur- ing his years at JTS, in Jerusalem, on college campuses, in congregational environments. On her path as rabbi, Geronimus aims to continue to work with people of all ages and di- verse backgrounds, a deep value that is behind her work as a Hebrew school teacher. The relationships that developed from these experiences were particularly enriching and meaningful and allowed her to “journey with individuals in their Jewishness and their lives in general.” She also prayed that her opportunities in her internships she had the opportunity to work with people of all ages and in a variety of settings — with 4th graders, college students, elderly people, and women in all stages of life in con- gregational environments.

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Looking for Rose: Zeb’s Bar-B-Q
Clare Kinberg, 19th installment of a series

I’m writing a story about my father’s sister, an Ashkenazi Jewish woman who married, in the 1930s, an African American man from Oklahoma. They made a life together for nearly twenty years. While I’m writing this story, the atmosphere around me is growing taut between the fist-hold of exposed racism and antisemitism and the counter efforts to reckon with these terrible systems that shape our human world. The news cycle keeps reminding me that Jews and non-Jews are still fighting in the land of Israel/Palestine, it has been one year since George Floyd was murdered by police officers in Minneapolis, and 100 years since a white mob in Tulsa, Oklahoma, burned Black Wall Street to the ground. Reminders and reckoning tensing the air.

The early years Aunt Rose lived on the shore of Paradise Lake were the same years as the Nazi implementation of the Final Solution, the landing of the Allied troops in Normandy and the dropping of nuclear bombs on Japan bringing an end to World War II, the founding of Israel and the dispossession of non-Jews in Palestine. It was also the era of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

The stories I tell of Aunt Rose and Mr. Arnwine — and of myself and my family — all take place in the light and shadows cast by these histories.

My new friend Ruth Anderson Walker who remembers Mr. Arnwine and Aunt Rose was born in Vandalia in 1930. Ms. Walker has written about experiencing W.W.II as a teenager in high school in the rural Michigan town where my Aunt Rose, estranged from her large family in St. Louis, also lived. The war in Europe affected everyone, Ms. Walker wrote. Even in tiny out-of-the-way Vandalia, rationing and blackouts after dark were carefully observed in support of the war effort. Though Aunt Rose and Ms. Walker, the youngest of ten children, were almost a generation apart in age, both had brothers who had registered to serve in the military. Rose’s baby brother Leonard was sent to the South Pacific; the war ended before Ms. Walker’s brother was deployed.

The smells and sounds of the 1920s and 1930s are evoked as Ms. Walker tells me her story. “Aunt Rose’s mother, Etma — married at 16 in 1904 — was the same age as Rose’s mother, who also married young and had a large family. Though she was widowed in 1925, Rose’s mother was known in the neighborhood as someone who was always cooking and would readily feed a hungry neighborhood kid. Trying to get a fuller picture of Aunt Rose, I pepper Ms. Walker with questions. “What do you remember about Rose Arnwine?” I implore, “Anything at all will help me get a sense of who she was.”

“She cooked,” Ms. Walker told me. “She traded recipes with her friends. And she helped Zeb run the barbecue business.”

When Ruth Walker told me Mr. Arnwine and Aunt Rose sold barbecue in Vandalia. I developed a revised “how did Rose and Mr. Arnwine meet” scenario. Based on my own life as an activist on the left, I had wanted them to have met at a St. Louis Unemployment Council rally organized by the Workers Alliance, as I described in an earlier chapter. Though most of the interracial couples from the 1930s that I’d read about had met through Communist Party and related organizing, that story doesn’t fit well with anything else in my family history. Something more grounded in the lives of striving small business owners could be closer to the truth. I’ll never know for sure.

The only person in the Kinberg family able to offer employment, my Great Uncle Jack opened a hardware store on Franklin Ave in 1921 and didn’t shut its doors until a fire in November of 1965. My father worked at Kinberg Hardware, his sister Rose might have worked there, or another shop nearby. Uncle Jack helped my father’s family after 1925 when his brother Joe died and left seven children with their mother who didn’t speak English and could not read or write.

Perhaps sometime in the 1930s, Rose was behind the counter when Mr. Arnwine came in to look at some hardware for a barbecue pit.

In this scenario, Mr. Arnwine is already the entrepreneur I know he later became. As he looks around the store, he’s thinking and planning. One of the few things he’s carried with him from Muskogee, Oklahoma is the family barbecue sauce recipe. If he could just set up somewhere, he’d be in business. When he comes into Kinberg Hardware, Rose can tell he has a plan in mind. He’s looking to the future, he’s not looking back. Rose is immediately drawn to Mr. Arnwine and his plans, tangible, possible. Maybe he talks Uncle Jack into selling him a barrel and some grapes on time, so he has to come in every so often and make payments. Rose and he get to talking over the next few months. His plan is working. Before too long, they leave for Chicago with ideas about cooking and selling barbecue.

In the 1940s, southern style barbecue businesses were opening all over the Black neighborhoods in Chicago. Argia B. Collins and his five entrepreneurial brothers operated successful rib joints across Chicago’s southside where their specialty was a spicy mambo sauce. “Inspired by his southern roots, Collins crafted his own tantalizing new sauce — sweet, tangy, savory, sublime!” “D.C. mambo sauce” is also the term for a tangy, spicy sauce that many Washington, D.C., locals consider to be the flavor of their city. But as a headline about the settlement of a trademark case describes it, the mambo sauce “is the taste of D.C., but in the eyes of the law its home is Chicago.”

Mr. Arnwine also had a mambo sauce, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a partner in my Aunt Rose whose family tradition was to find something to sell and make a go of it.

Along with a move to Michigan, perhaps Aunt Rose and Mr. Arnwine developed a plan for a southern-style barbecue restaurant in the up and coming Black resort area on Paradise Lake, an irresistibly tantalizing idea. Ms. Walker told me while Zeb did the meats and deliveries, Rose cooked too. And she kept the books. “She was his guiding light,” Ms. Walker said. “She ran the business.”

Since I doubt barbecue was in the cooking repertoire, Rose learned from her immigrant Romanian Jewish mother, I begin to wonder about the merger of Mr. Arnwine and Aunt Rose’s cooking styles. Oh what I would give to be able to see a menu from “Zeb’s Bar-B-Q” in Vandalia, 1935, and to watch Rose and Mr. Arnwine as they cooked together at home and delivered fresh meals in the loudly painted car that advertised “Zeb’s Bar-B-Q” across its sides.

After my Aunt Rose and Mr. Arnwine divorced in 1957, he opened a barbecue joint in South Bend, Indiana, just south of the Michigan border, and then in 1967 he opened “Zeb’s Bar-B-Q” on 38th and Keystone in Indianapolis. In 1967, Mr. Arnwine told a reporter from the Indianapolis Recorder, the city’s Black newspaper (founded in 1895 and still publishing), that his new restaurant would specialize in a sauce made from a recipe that had been in his family for 80 years. “Mr. Arnwine has been offered big money for the formula, but he refuses to sell,” the article states. The secret recipe for Zeb’s “Original Mambo Sauce” is still an Internet topic of nostalgic discussion by old timers from Indianapolis. I gather from descriptions of Zeb’s Bar-B-Q that his “Haitian Ham Rib Shoulder” as advertised on the menu was similar to what is labeled “Oklahoma Style” barbecue — a combination of Texas style slow cooked, fall-off-the-bone meat with a Kansas style sweet, tangy sauce.

Now, when I think about Aunt Rose in Vandalia, I feel transported to their kitchen, the smell of smoking barbecue from the yard drifting in amid the steam of boiling potatoes and simmering sweet, spicy sauce. Vandalia might have been a refuge from the daily pressures and indignities of racism, and the kitchen a covert within the covert. But sometimes the steam meeting the taut, electric air heralds a storm about to come raging in.
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Thank you to the many people who made this possible!

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Reserve for Unmet Pledges $25,000
Total Local $1,069,271

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Birthright Israel $9,137
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帮你理解文档内容：.....
Handcrafted art by Hebron Palestinian artisans available in Ann Arbor

By Shifra Epstein

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, it had taken my partner Miriam and me more than sixteen months to venture into downtown Ann Arbor on a Saturday night. During our first venture in on May 10, we enjoyed the closure to traffic of the downtown streets, which made strolling very pleasant. The first shop we visited was my favorite one in Ann Arbor, Ten Thousand Villages. Ten Thousand Villages is a nonprofit, fair trade retailer with more than 80 stores in North America. According to the company website, "Ten Thousand Villages blossomed into a global fair trade movement providing sustainable economic opportunities for artisans in developing countries by creating a viable marketplace for their products in North America."

More than 300 fair trade and specialty shops carry select Ten Thousand Villages products. The stores sell jewelry, home decor, sculptures, and all sorts of unique gifts from a wide variety of developing countries. Befitting a liberal city, Ten Thousand Villages was opened in Ann Arbor in 2004 and is still going strong.

When we entered the shop, we found several clients already there, all still wearing masks as was required by the poster from the State of Michigan on the door. Our visit corresponded with the recent ceasefire declared by the Israelis and the Palestinians. I was surprised to hear Jewish music, including Hava Nagila (Let’s Be Joyful) in Hebrew and Rosh Hashana mit Mandlen (Raisins and Almonds) in Yiddish. I was disappointed that no Palestinian music was played during the visit.

Two objects attracted my attention. The first was Peace Wall Art, a kind of good luck charm, and the second was a decorative mezuzah, a doorpost amulet used to protect Jewish homes. The Peace Wall Art and the mezuzah shared the display area with objects made in Peru. On the cards attached to the Peace Wall Art and the mezuzah, their provenance was identified as Hebron Glass and Ceramics located the city of Hebron. Near the Peace Wall Art and mezuzah were glass objects made in Hebron.

Hebron, Al-Halil in Arabic, is a Palestinian city with a long history, located in the southern part of the West Bank, 30 km south of Jerusalem. Today, it is a divided city — the Palestinian Authority controls 80 percent of it, is inhabited by nearly 750,000 Palestinians, and Israel controls an area inhabited by approximately 450 Jewish settlers and 2,200 Israeli soldiers.

Hebron Glass and Ceramic is a family-owned business. Today, the factory is run by Hamze Natshatsh, the youngest member of the founding family. The Peace Wall Art is a relatively small object, 6 by 3 inches. A large modern peace sign adorns the top. Under the peace sign is an English text which reads, “It [peace] does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart.” On the left and right sides, peace is written in Hebrew, Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Chinese and Assamese (the language of Bangladesh). Reading the text on the Peace Wall Art while Israeli and Jewish music was playing in the background was a surreal moment for me. Still, I thought, how true are the words, though how hard they are to follow.

Participants loved the J’s virtual Israel trip

By Clara Silver, special to the JIN

The Israel Experience: Don’t Leave Home to Visit was a one-of-a-kind, innovative program driven by the 2030 Vision of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. It brought together the best elements of a group travel opportunity with the best elements of online programming. The interactive "trip" to Israel was a week long, underwritten by the D. Dan and Betty Kahn Foundation. An additional 34 sponsorships and donations helped to raise funds that will help move the J to embrace its 2030 Vision. Participants were immersed in Israeli culture, and as fate would have it, Israel’s current geopolitical conflict, via 16 live sessions and 28 on-your-own/DIY activities.

A dedicated group of volunteers helped plan the experience as well as raise funds to support it. The J also collaborated with Journeys International, a locally based international adventure tour organizer, to create an experience that was simultaneously immersive and independent. This allowed participants to customize the journey to fit their schedules. Planned the same way as an on-the-ground trip, each day included several live Zoom sessions with a professional tour guide and many guest presenters. Most of those were recorded for later viewing by those unable to attend at the time. Also provided were additional videos, articles, and experiential activity kits for participants to do on their own time, grouped according to each day’s theme. For example, the Jerusalem day included live sessions on “Jerusalem Through the Ages” and “Israel’s History in Music,” as well as independent activities including video walking tours of the Old City and City of David, a Padlet.com virtual Western Wall for the traditional prayer notes, and a hands-on archaeology kit made up of a puzzle hidden throughout kinetic sand.

Planning committee member and participant Leslie Bash shared that “It was a wonderful program — very well done and very educational … the attendees were extremely pleased and thoroughly enjoyed meeting the guides and participating in the lectures and the ‘hands on’ activities. The program was especially important because it was happening during the current chaos that Israel is facing.” Participant Phyllis Herzog said, “I want to thank the [planning] committee for the excellent virtual Israel Experience that you created, developed, and gave to the Ann Arbor community. I was so impressed and pleased to have participated. You included so many interesting and relevant perspectives of life in Israel which gave us a very well-rounded understanding.

A participant who was unable to join most of the sessions live, Margaret Schreiber, said “It was apparent that a tremendous amount of thought and care went into the Israel [Experience]. My family enjoyed our flight bag with all the fun items and activities! In particular, my daughter loved the Dead Sea mud mask, and my husband loved the wine! I was very appreciative of our tour guide in Israel taking time to talk to us as he was sitting in his bomb shelter with his family, discussing the situation in Israel. Thank you to everyone who planned this incredible virtual trip!”

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor is a dynamic organization with a bold, innovative, inclusive vision for the future, and the spirit of innovation and “what if” inspired by the 2030 Vision guided the planning efforts. The Israel Experience was a program that not only innovated around the pandemic, but also inspired participants to see that the J was going to Israel in a new way. They wanted to go where the J was going. For more information about the 2030 Vision or to participate in building the future of the Ann Arbor JCC, visit jccannarbor.org/about or reach out to the leadership of the Ann Arbor JCC, listed at jccannarbor.org/about/our-staff.
**Breaking Bread on a summer’s day**

Lonne Sussman, special to the WIN

H ave read about “cultural appro-
priation” for some years and how claiming someone else’s traditions can be an insult or an injustice. I know well that food has deep, even spiritual meaning when it comes from a family or cultural tradition. Food traditions can be shared by someone who comes from the culture, but not claimed by someone who doesn’t, and I am grateful to those who have shared so that I can learn the traditions of others. Learning the endless ways different food traditions have used “the basics” endlessly fascinates me. After all, almost everywhere on earth there is a dish of meat or potatoes, or vegetables stuffed into dough and fried or baked or boiled. Everywhere in the world there are people grilling meats, chicken, fish or vegetables. Rice is a staple in areas where it can be grown and there are other grains that have been the basis of food cultures for as long as there have been humans. Enslaved Africans brought rice cultivation to the Carolinas as one of the first foods to be raised, and rice traditions that became basic to southern American food culture. Recognizing roots heals injustice.

Now let’s look at the Middle East. Let’s look at the cuisines of Israel and surrounding nations. In 2014, Dr. Nof Atamna-Ismael, a microbiologist and mother of three from Baqa al-Gharbiya, became the first Muslim Arabic woman to win the Master Chef Israel competition. She went on to organize “A- Shamm: The Annual Arab Food Festival in Jerusalem, one to Jewish parents and one for Arabs, the term used to mean the Eastern Mediterranean. It is her hope and belief that social change could be promoted through food traditions of the Levant, I thought that this recipe by Adeena Sussman would be a nice addition. It is also easy to find these ingredients in Ann Arbor. It is similar to the recipe in Jerusalem but I’m always looking for more fresh salad ideas.**

**Dressing — ½ cup**

1 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 tbs pomegranate molasses
1 tbs silan (date syrup)
2 large or 6 medium Medjool dates, pitted, or 1 cup of date syrup
2 tbs finely minced shallot
1 tbs finely minced mint
½ tsp cayenne pepper
1 tsp honey
1 tsp freshly ground pepper

**Salad**

8 oz baby arugula (or kale or other bitter green)
1 cup (4 oz) crumbled feta cheese
8 oz or 6 medium Medjool dates, pitted and halved or quartered
1 cup chopped toasted pistachios

Put all the ingredients for the dressing in a jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake until emulsified. Preheat the broiler. Place the arugula on a serving platter and then scatter small pieces of the feta cheese on top. Place the dates on a foil-lined baking sheet and broil just until the edges start to char and caramelize, 2-3 minutes. Scatter the dates on top of the salad and then add the pistachios. Drizzle the dressing over everything. You may not need all of the dressing.

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**Baby Spinach Salad with Dates and Almonds**

from Jerusalem, by Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi

These two have been partners for a long time. They both were born and raised in Jerusalem, one to Jewish parents and one to Arab parents. They are well known chefs who use their backgrounds, pay respects to their traditions, and then spin off into new territory. This recipe is one of the basics found in Israel as well as the entire area.

1 tbs white wine vinegar (or other vinaig) ½ medium red onion, thinly sliced ¾ cup pitted Medjool dates, quartered lengthwise 2 tbs butter, unsalted 2 tbs olive oil 2 small pitas, torn into small (½ inch) pieces ½ cup whole unsalted almonds, chopped coarsely 2 tsp sumac (at our local Middle Eastern market, or make it yourself — you can find the recipe online) ½ tsp chili flakes (not for me) 5 oz baby spinach leaves 2 tbs freshly squeezed lemon juice Salt, to taste

Put the dates in a small bowl with the vinegar and a little salt. Use your hands to mix the ingredients very well and leave it to marinate for about 20 minutes. Drain off the residual vinegar. Meanwhile, heat the butter and half of the olive oil in a medium sized, dry pan over medium heat. Add the pita pieces and the almonds and cook for 4-6 minutes, continually stirring until the pita is crunchy and golden. Remove from the heat and then add in the sumac, chili flakes and a little pinch of salt. Set aside to cool and then fill a bowl with the spinach and the pita mix and then add the dates, red onions, and the remaining oil and lemon juice. Taste for seasoning. Serve immediately.

**Sfha**

This is one of the most popular dishes in Palestinian cuisine. It is a small, open-faced meat pie, usually made with ground lamb. I’m not including how the dough is made, just add the pita pieces and the almonds and cook for 4-6 minutes, continually stirring until the pita is crunchy and golden. Remove from the heat and then add in the sumac, chili flakes and a little pinch of salt. Set aside to cool and then fill a bowl with the spinach and the pita mix and then add the dates, red onions, and the remaining oil and lemon juice. Taste for seasoning. Serve immediately.

For our July 2021 issue, we paired two truck drivers with their food traditions. This recipe seems to me to use the shared cuisines. Professional chefs from all over Israel were paired together to abo-

rate on dishes reflecting old traditions. They told each other about their families and the foods they grew up with, and shared their goals for cooking, running restaurants, and living in professional kitchens created the works of art that disappeared into people’s mouths, but the basics of the dishes came from how the chefs grew up, what their mothers or fathers or grandfathers made in their homes. Some of the dishes, like hummus, are well known, but others are not. Some are very basic recipes, and some are more complicated or take more time than we typically use to create a meal. We are lucky to have access to the recipes from the internet or cookbooks specializing in specific areas of the Middle East. For more information, please research recipes from the Levant.

**Hummus**

Of course, you all know how to make a simple hummus. It takes less than 5 minutes if you are using canned chickpeas. Open the can, drain and rinse (or not, there is flavor in the liquid), and put in the food proces-
sor with some salt, garlic (however much you like), tahini (however much you like), and freshly squeezed lemon juice. Place on plate or bowl and drizzle some olive oil on top. It’s really simple, but, if you would like some other ideas about hummus, read on.

Start with 1⅛ cups of dried chickpeas. Cook them with about 4 inches of water or more of water and let soak in the refrigerator for 24 hours. Drain, place in medium pot and cover them with about 6 cups of water and 1 tsp baking powder. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to a simmer skimming off the foam. It may take up to 45 minutes to fully cook them but check at about 20 minutes and scoop out ⅛ cup for decorating the top. The chickpeas can be frozen in packages of 1⅛ cups with a little bit of the water they were cooked in or use ⅛ cup, without the liquid, and process in the food processor until smooth. Add the garlic, up to 1¼ cup of tahini and up to 1 cup of ice water for a very smooth hummus. Starting with dried chickpeas kicks up the taste significantly.

• Spice up some chopped beef or lamb with allspice, cinnamon, or sumac or garlic or a combination of the spices you like, sauté the meat, and serve on top of the hummus.

• Add a lemon sauce, this one from Jerusalem. Use 4 tbs freshly squeezed lemon juice, 2 tbs white wine vinegar, chop a little bit of parsley, 1 green chili finely chopped, and 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped. Place everything in a bowl with about ⅛ tsp of salt and mix thoroughly. Drizzle on top of the hummus.

• Add about 1 tsp of turmeric to the food processor for a golden color.

• Use parsley or zaatar to add color and flavor to the top of the hummus.

• Serve with fresh vegetables for dipping or topping.

• Add your own ideas to the basic hummus recipe. One of the restaurants featured in the film serves hummus in about 60 different ways!!!

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**Arugula Salad with Dates, Feta, and Pistachios**

from Sababa by Adeena Sussman

6 servings

Since the Haifa Food Festival was about sharing recipes, traditions, and the food traditions of the Levant, I thought that this recipe by Adeena Sussman would be a nice addition. It is also easy to find these ingredients in Ann Arbor. It is similar to the recipe in Jerusalem but I’m always looking for more fresh salad ideas.

Dressing — ½ cup

4 tbs extra virgin olive oil
2 tbs pomegranate molasses
1 tbs silan (date syrup)
2 tbs finely minced shallot
1 tbs finely minced mint
½ tsp cayenne pepper
1 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp freshly ground pepper

Salad

8 oz baby arugula (or kale or other bitter green)
1 cup (4 oz) crumbled feta cheese
8 oz or 6 medium Medjool dates, pitted and halved or quartered
1 cup chopped toasted pistachios

Put all the ingredients for the dressing in a jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake until emulsified. Preheat the broiler. Place the arugula on a serving platter and then scatter small pieces of the feta cheese on top. Place the dates on a foil-lined baking sheet and broil just until the edges start to char and caramelize, 2-3 minutes. Scatter the dates on top of the salad and then add the pistachios. Drizzle the dressing over everything. You may not need all of the dressing.

Breaking Bread, a documentary about a Haifa food festival, is being shown this summer at the Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival. The showing is virtual at the Michigan Theater from Saturday, 7/10, 11 p.m. to Tuesday, 7/13, 8 p.m.

1903 words, 1 pic of Breaking Bread movie
This Muslim market in Tucson offers kosher food and intercultural dialogue

Nicoles Raz, originally written for the Jewish News of Greater Phoenix via JTA

Tucked between a dance school and a ‘60s retro lounge on a quiet street in Tucson, Arizona, sits a small Middle Eastern and African foods store. But at the Al Basra Grocery isn’t just a place to get kosher meats and hard-to-find ingredients.

“It provides an opportunity for people to serve each other as real people and have a normal interaction with people who ordinarily might not interact in their day-to-day lives,” said Jesse Davis, a regular Al Basra shopper.

Ghufran Almusawi and her husband, Anas Elazrag, both Muslims, opened Al Basra in July 2019 with the intention of creating a “melting pot,” Almusawi said. “Serving kosher in our store was one of the reasons why we decided to open it,” she said.

Almusawi regularly witnesses dialogue between the Muslim and Jewish shoppers.

“I see a lot of customers interacting with each other, especially if they have questions,” she said. “Sometimes the customers will jump in and answer as a way of them showing, ‘Hey, we accept you, you’re welcome here.’”

El Azrag caught Davis’ eye before it even opened, with its big sign advertising halal and kosher foods.

“A halal, kosher store — somebody who’s actually trying to reach out to both markets and both communities? That’s the only person Elazrag that said, ‘They were definitely reaching out a hand.’

Davis appreciated the gesture and has been shopping at Al Basra about three times a month since it opened.

“They’re super friendly and helpful,” he said. “He’ll often get recommendations on products and spices to use in recipes. His favorite Al Basra item is pomegranate molasses, which he described as “a sort of finisher” for meat, giving it a “sweet, tangy flavor.”

Evelyn Sigafus looks forward to Al Basra’s tea selection when she goes a few times a year for kosher deli meats and holiday food ingredients. Sigafus appreciates the store’s efforts both to meet the need for kosher foods and foster dialogue and relationships between the Jewish and Muslim communities.

“One time I was in there and the woman there did not have other customers, so we had a wonderful conversation about kosher products, keeping kosher, halal, what I personally do, and how I cope and how she copes, and we had a wonderful little chat,” Sigafus said. Sigafus said that kind of person-to-person conversation is beneficial, no matter how much exposure somebody has already had to different cultures.

Elazrag, a doctor, came to Tucson in 2008 from Sudan. He decided to open Al Basra after he had a poor shopping experience. Almusawi explained that her husband wasn’t convinced to buy Russian tea biscuits in his 80s each separately said their family recipes came from Kiev at a time when the Ukraine was still part of Russia.

Yet Russian immigrant Tatjana Rehn, one of the owners of the Stone Oven Bakery, said she never encountered Russian tea biscuits until she immigrated to Cleveland in the 1970s.

“Raspberry jam is very Russian,” she said, explaining that adding raspberry jam to dessert makes them special treat.

One thing is clear: For generations of Clevelanders, Russian tea biscuits conjure up memories of gathering around family tables, being a Russian specialty.

One former Davis Bakery regular now has Russian tea biscuits shipped to her and her family in California. Her eyes glistened as she described opening a package of Russian tea biscuits after losing her father.

There’s no doubt these pastries loom large in people’s memories — and yes, it’s partly because Russian tea biscuits are so large. As Cleveland regional tea biscuit expert Merri Friman explained, he always liked rugelach, but Russian tea biscuits were so much more interesting because they were much more elaborate.

Now you, too, can make and savor Russian tea biscuits at home. Get the recipe “The Nosh’” website.
Sunday 11
Rosh Hodesh Av Circle. Pardes Hannah. 7 p.m.
Tanya-Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. 11 a.m.
Creating Environmental Justice. Shmita series. AARC: Register at ekarfarm.org. 6:30 p.m. Noon. Living Room Lectures — The Paris Photo by Jane S. Gabin: BIC. 1 p.m.
Bibliical Book Club: TBE: Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 3 p.m.
Monday 12
Adult B’nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.
Women’s Torah Study: BIC. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.
Tuesday 13
Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.
Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.
Tea and Torah on Tuesday—Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.
Wednesday 14
Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Ev- ery Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.
 Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 3 p.m.
Thursday 15
Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads dis- cussion. 11 a.m.
Guys Night In: TBE Brotherhood. 7 p.m.
Love at the Center: Pardes Hannah. 7:30 p.m.
Talmud-Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.
Friday 16
Candle Lighting 8:51 p.m. Devarim
Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets Fridays on an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.
Saturday 17
Havdallah 10:03 p.m.
Rosh Hodesh Av Online Minyan: Pardes Hannah. 9 a.m.
Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:30 a.m.
Second Saturday Shabbat Morning Service: AARC. Lay led in July: 10:30 a.m. to noon
Bite Size Shabbat at Burns Park: BIC 11 a.m.
Sunday 18
Tisha B’Av
Tisha B’Av Shabharit: BIC 9:30 a.m.
Tisha B’Av Services: Chabad. 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.
Monday 19
Adult B’nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.
Women’s Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.
Tuesday 20
Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.
Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.
Caregiver Conversations: JFS. Connection, shar- ing and ideas around caregiver issues as we navigate our lives during these challenging times of Covid-19. Include educational con- tent, facilitated by a licensed JFS Social Worker. Open to anyone who cares for a loved one. 601-Visit https://jfsannarbor.org/event/care- giver-conversations-5/ 3 to 4:30 p.m.
Tea and Torah on Tuesday—for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.
Wednesday 21
Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Ev- ery Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.
 Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 3 p.m.
Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.
Thursday 22
Love at the Center: Pardes Hannah. 7:30 p.m.
Talmud-Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.
Friday 23
Candle Lighting 8:45 p.m. Va’etchanan
Lunch and Learn: TBE. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.
Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat: AARC. Hybrid, outside at the JCC and online. 6:30 p.m.
Saturday 24
Havdallah 9:51 p.m.
Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:30-9:30 a.m.
Bite Size Shabbat at Burns Park: BIC 11 a.m.
Sunday 25
Sunday Stroll for Adults (focus 55+): BIC. Get to know longtime and new members of the community by taking a stroll around the Ar- boretum. Register on the Beth Israel website. 10:30 a.m.
Tanya-Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. 11 a.m.
Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads dis- cussion. 3 p.m.
Passport to Shabbat: South Africa Food Demo: BIC. Chef Martin Glucklich and his daughter, Amanda, will teach participants about how to make two South African dishes: Artichoke Dip and Salmon Frickadelles with Pink Sauce 6 p.m.
Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.
Monday 26
Adult B’nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.
Women’s Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.
Tuesday 27
Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.
Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.
Tea and Torah on Tuesday—for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.
Wednesday 28
Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Ev- ery Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.
 Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.
Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.
Thursday 29
Love at the Center: Pardes Hannah. 7:30 p.m.
Talmud-Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.
Friday 30
Candle Lighting 8:38 p.m. Eikerv
Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.
Kabbalat Shabbat at County Farm Park: BIC. We encourage everyone to bring a picnic to enjoy (or purchase a meal in advance from the BIC kitchen.) You can also explore the BIC garden plot, community gardens and walking trails. Full details or meal purchase on the Beth Israel website. 5:30 p.m.
Kabbalat Shabbat: Pardes Hannah. 6:30 p.m.
Saturday 31
Havdallah 9:42 p.m.
Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:30 a.m.
Bite Size Shabbat at Burns Park: BIC 11 a.m.
Phone numbers, websites and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:
Ann Arbor Orthodontics Minyan (AAM): 429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org
Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congreg- ation (AARC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-445-1910, aarecon.org
Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Wach- enaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org
Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com
Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., Isr.umich. edu/ judaic
Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org
Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hol- low Drive, 734-975-9872, jccannarbor.org
Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org
Jewish Federation of: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org
Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761- 5324, pardeshannah.org
Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org
UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org

July 2021
The calendar has been updated to reflect events that are happening only online. Al- ways check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here. For prayer services, check congregation websites.

Thursday 1
Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads dis- cussion. 11 a.m.
Love at the Center: Pardes Hannah. 7:30 p.m.
Talmud-Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 2
Candle Lighting 8:57 p.m. Pinchas
Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 3
Havdallah 10:07 p.m.
Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:30 a.m.
Second Saturday Shabbat Morning Service: AARC. Lay led in July: 10:30 a.m. to noon
Bite Size Shabbat at Burns Park: BIC 11 a.m.

Sunday 4
Tanya-Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. 11 a.m.
Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 3 p.m.

Monday 5
Adult B’nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.
Women’s Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 6
Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.
Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.
Tea and Torah on Tuesday—for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 7
Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Ev- ery Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.
Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 3 p.m.
Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 8
Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads dis- cussion. 11 a.m.
Passport to Shabbat: Culture Connection – South Africa: BIC. A pre-Shabbat gathering to learn about Jews in different places around the globe as a part of our Passport to Shabbat series. 5:30 p.m.
Love at the Center: Pardes Hannah. 7:30 p.m.
Talmud-Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 9
Candle Lighting 8:55 p.m. Matot-Masei
Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.
**Community**

**TBE Events in July**

All events and services are virtual. Go to the Temple Beth Emeth website for the Zoom links and more information.

**Families with Young Children Tot Shabbat**

- Fridays at noon
- Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Sessions are open to the entire community. Feel free to bring your lunch.

**Shabbat morning Torah study**

- Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.
- Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston.

**Saturday Shabbat service**

- Saturdays at 10 a.m.

**Daily morning blessings**

- Daily at 9:15 a.m.
- Join Rabbi Whinston each morning via Zoom for a short morning blessing.

**Daily afternoon blessings**

- Mondays through Thursdays at 3 p.m.
- Join Cantor Hayut each afternoon via Zoom for a short afternoon blessing.

**Adult B’nai mitzvah classes**

- Mondays at 6 p.m.
- Join Cantor Regina Hayut for an hour for either an afternoon session or an evening session. To join the class, or for more information, contact Cantor Hayut.

**Women’s Torah study**

Mondays at 7 p.m.

An in-depth study and lively discussion of the week’s Torah portion led by Cantor Regina Hayut. The group will explore various passages from the portion, looking at several translations and commentaries.

**Twenty-five-minute mindfulness with Jewish spiritual director Linda Greene**

Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.

Zoom room opens at 8:15 a.m. for optional check-in. Blessing and intention setting 8:30–8:35 a.m. Meditate 8:35–9 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

**Talmud Tuesdays with Rabbi Alter**

- Tuesdays at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.
- Join Rabbi Alter to learn about the history of Rabbinical literature and some tremendous texts from Talmud!

**Weekly Mahj**

See contact info on TBE website

Weekly on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

**Meditation with Claire Weiner**

- Wednesdays at 5 p.m.
- Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session

**Dayenu Circle — Climate Action Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, July 28, at 7:8:30 p.m.

**Biblical Book Club with Cantor Hayut**

- Thursdays at 11 a.m. CANCELLED: July 22 and July 29
- Sundays at 3 p.m. CANCELLED: July 18th

For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

**Back Door Food Pantry**

Thursdays, 4 to 7 p.m.

**TBE Brotherhood**

Gays Night In
- Thursday, July 16, at 7 p.m.

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**Pardes Hannah Events in July**

Pardes Hannah is gradually reopening to in-person events. During the transition, some events will take place in Zoom and some will be in-person. Please check our website (https://pardeshannah.org/) for the latest information, including Zoom links, on these or any of our ongoing services, rituals, circles, and teachings or call Renee Robbins at 734-904-5459.

**Kabbalat Shabbat**

Friday, July 30, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

**Love at the Center**

- Weekly on Thursday 7:30 – 8 p.m.
- Twenty-five Minute Mindfulness w/ Linda Greene, Jewish Spiritual Director (Co-sponsored with Temple Beth Emeth)

**Rosh Chodesh Circle**

Sunday, July 11, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

**Meditative Tisha B’Av**

Saturday, July 17, 9 – 10:30 p.m.

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**AARC events in July**

The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation is holding all of its events online. For more information about services or events or to receive Zoom links, please email aarcgillian@gmail.com. Visit the AARC website at aarecon.org.

**Creating Environmental Justice**

Sunday, July 11, noon – 1 p.m.

Suggested donation $18 per session. Registration required.

Registration link: www.ekarfarm.org/land-justice-sign-up

Link to the speaker series: www.ekarfarm.org/shmita-events

Candi CdeBaca, member of the Denver City Council, 9th District.

CdeBaca is a proud fifth-generation native of northeast Denver, Colorado, and a graduate of Manual High School and the University of Denver. Raised by a single mother and grandparents, Candi understands the importance of tight-knit communities and stepping up for neighbors in need. Candi is also the first LGBTQ Latina and first Democratic Socialist to serve on Denver City Council. She is a fierce advocate for justice and against the criminalization of poverty, environmental racism, and the displacement of Denver’s black and brown communities.

**Shmita-inspired speaker series**

Idelle Hammond-Sass, special to the WJN

T he last in this series of powerful virtual presentations will be held on July 11 at noon. “Creating Environmental Justice” will feature two speakers. Yoshi Silverstein, founder and executive director of the Mitsui Collective, is Jewish-Chinese-American and was director of the Joffee Fellowship for Hazon working with environmental education, and Jewish relationship to land, food, culture, and community. He will be joined by Candi CdeBaca, the first Democratic Socialist elected to Denver City Council, and a fierce advocate for environmental justice and against environmental racism.

Since February, this inspiring series of virtual panels has been held to begin preparation for the next Shmita year which begins in September 2021. Shmita refers to the biblical seven-year cycle of rest and renewal, and release of debt and other obligations which culminates in the Jubilee (Yovel) in the 50th year.

The organizers are Ekar Farm, a Jewish Urban Farm in Denver Colorado. The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation and Jewish Alliance for Food, Land and Justice invites the community to join Washtenaw locals after the final presentation to imagine how we might observe the Shmita year together as a community, for learning and for community activities and action.

For information, registration and to watch recordings of previous panels, go to www.ekarfarm.org. Contact Carole Caplan-Sosin at caplan.carole@gmail.com.
Rabbi Stephen Slater talks a lot about God. He credits his Baptist missionary parents.

Rabbis Corner

Ben Harris, originally written for the JTA

Though Stephen Slater grew up on a family-owned cattle business in Southfield, Michigan, he was still wrestling with such questions when he arrived at Hillsdale College, a conservative school in Michigan, where he met Bethany Boyd, another child of a missionary family.

"He was dressed like a missionary kid," Bethany said. "Like, the dude had tennis shoes that the soles were separated from the front of the top of the shoe so they would flop because he just didn't spend money on stuff. And he had hand-me-down jeans. All of his clothes were too big for him because he had such long arms. His mom would just have to buy him like really big shirts to fit his long arms."

In late-night hangouts, Slater would hammer Bethany and his friends about how God could have made an eternal promise to the Jewish people only to then anoint Christians as his chosen people. Or about how eating pork was somehow permissible when it was clearly prohibited in the Hebrew Bible. Or how Sunday could be the Sabbath when the Bible was so big and ambiguous that it should be observed on Saturday.

"Did God change his mind?"

SLATER said. "I was annoyed by that. And that really drove me. I was bothering other people because it bothered me."

Slater had an intuition that the answer lay deep in the past, in understanding how Christianity emerged from Judaism. And that if he could square that circle, maybe he could restore something of the truth of Christian doctrine.

"I never relearned anything quite so bad as a young man evangelical guilt," Slater said. "That is some toxic nastiness. The amount of guilt that we carried around as young evangelical men — like self loathing, you know, national sexual urges."

He was raised in Ferndale, a small city in the northern Ivey Coast where his physician father ran a Baptist missionary hospital that his own father had reestablished in the early 1960s. A bookish child more at home reading than on the sports field, Slater imbued the intense religious devotion of his parents, even taking on a dedicated years of their lives to bringing people to God.

This summer, Slater will assume the pulpit of Agudas Achim in a suburb of Columbus, Ohio, a 140-year-old synagogue that is the oldest in the city.

"I have no idea."

"I realized I wanted to work with people," Slater said. "And I wanted to work primarily — like not in research necessarily — that I wanted to work on spiritual stuff. And so the rabbinate suggested itself."

Slater entered at Hebrew College, a non-denominational rabbinical school with a reputation for prioritizing the spiritual aspects of the rabbinate. Rabbi Ebn Leader, Slater's mentor at Hebrew College, said his unique background was an asset rather than an obstacle.

"He came in with a classical training, in classical philosophy and such, and a sophisticated way of thinking. He came in with the deep connection to Israel. Like, he's a Jew by birth. And there's a kind of seriousness about that, which is amazing."

Slater led the project and convinced Slater's father that his son was following in his lineage by marrying a love of God and people as the bearer of a sacred message — rather than an obstacle.

"The sense that to be out there in the middle of nowhere, bringing the word of God to people as a way to serve God — I mean, he's down in Alabama. Leader said, "That may not be West Africa, but for a lot of our students, it might as well be."

After his ordination in 2018, Slater headed to Birmingham, a 150-year-old community with about 6,300 Jews, according to a 2016 by the Birmingham Jewish Federation. There he assumed the pulpit of Temple Beth-El, the only Conservative synagogue among the four synagogues in a city of 212,000 people. Like many Conservative shuls, Beth-El had long been in decline, its membership down to 400 from a high of 1,800.

"I wanted to work on spiritual stuff. And so the rabbinate suggested itself."

"He has thrown himself into interfaith and social justice work at the Alabama synagogue he has led for the past three years, spearheading the growth of a visitor’s center highlighting the institution’s role in the civil rights struggle and developing close relationships with local Black pastors.

"It is very meaningful to him, and it is a big part of who he is."

"Did God change his mind?"

"No idea."

"We wanted that. We wanted the texture of Shabbat, a real day of stepping back with people."

"I realized I wanted to work with people," Slater said. "And I wanted to work primarily — like not in research necessarily — that I wanted to work on spiritual stuff. And so the rabbinate suggested itself."

But Slater was no more successful at ridding his mind of sinful thoughts than he was of per- sduring himself of the truth of Christian doctrine. At 17, he had a crisis of faith that led him to a deep exploration of Torah and ultimately to Judaism itself.

"I never relearned anything quite so bad as a young man evangelical guilt," Slater said. "That is some toxic nastiness. The amount of guilt that we carried around as young evangelical men — like self loathing, you know, national sexual urges."

The transition would take about a decade. There were years of study of early Jewish history, joining Jewish communities in England and Jerusalem, learning Hebrew and engaging deeply with ancient Jewish texts.

But it all began at a boarding school in West Africa with Slater’s horrifying realization that he had no idea what would become of his soul if he ever passed his parents’ bookshelf. He went to other missionaries and read their books, too, trying to figure out how to restore his faith.

"It went miserably," Slater said. "You have no idea."

Rabbi Stephen Slater and Bethany Slater and their children (Courtesy)

Rabbis Corner
T
here is a tradition in Judaism that on the Shabbat before Tisha B’Av we all are granted a vision of the third Holy Temple. The portion of Devarim — the words that Moses spoke to the Jewish people just before his passing — is always read on the Shabbat before Tisha B’Av — the ninth of the Hebrew month of Av. This year, the Shabbat before Tisha B’Av will fall on July 17 and Tisha B’Av will be the next day — Sunday, July 18.

The Haftorah that we read on that Shabbat begins with the prophecy of Isa-iah called Chazon Ishiyahu. That’s why the Shab- bat begins with the story of Shabbat Chazon.

This vision Rabbi Levi Yitzchak explains with an analogy. A father made a very expen-sive suit for his son. He gave it to his son and told him to wear it and enjoy it but take good care of it. Unfortunately, since he was a young boy he was running around and fell and he tore his suit. He came running to his father with his suit torn to pieces and begged his father for another suit. His father told him to go see the tailor. He hired the tailor to make a duplicate of that very nice, very expensive suit. He then gave the second suit to his son. But children being what they are, it wasn’t long before the second suit also was ruined. The son went back to his father and confessed his embarrassment and regret for ruining the second suit. So the father realized that the child was not yet mature enough to appreciate an expensive suit. He told his child that he would make him a third suit, but this time he wasn’t going to give it to him to wear because he didn’t want it to be ruined again. And he told the child that, from time to time, on special, auspicious occasions he would dress him in the third suit, close the closet and show it to him in order to remind him and promis-e him that once he shows that he is mature enough to know how to treat a suit, the suit will be given to him. But until then the father said he will keep possession of the suit in the closet. So the father would continue, from time to time, to help the child to develop and improve his ways. When the father feels that the child’s behavior is mature enough to be able to treat the suit properly, then he will re-lease the third suit to the child.

The analogy is that God gave to his chil-dren, the Jewish People, a first Holy Temple but, unfortunately, they misbehaved and the Temple was destroyed as a result of their sins. Then God gave the Jew-ish People a second Holy Temple. Again, they misbehaved and caused it to be destroyed.

Then God said that He had a third Temple for us but He was not going to give it to us just yet. Only once a year will He show it to remind us that there is a Temple that we are going to have, but not until we improve our ways. Once God sees that we have im-proved our ways sufficiently — then He will give us the third Holy Temple.

This is the way Rabbi Yitzchak explained the name of this Shabbat called the Shabbat of Vision. The Vision is that everyone gets to see the third temple in order to remind us to improve our ways. Once we have done that, sufficiently, God will give us the third Temple.

In order, however, there is a question to be asked. Who sees this third Temple? If only great, righteous people like tzaddikim who have lofty souls can see this vision, what’s the point? They don’t have to be shown the T emple with our souls but we should actu-ally see our souls. The question is, who sees this third T emple? If only great, righteous people like tzaddikim see it all the time because they are in tune with what their souls are experiencing. Ordinary people only get inspired from time to time. That’s the an-swering the question regarding the purpose of showing the third temple.

God willing, we should not only see the Temple with our souls but we should actu-ally have it with the coming of the Moshiach soon in our days! Id get to see the great-ness of the Torah.
A few things you need to know about the Israeli government that replaces Benjamin Netanyahu

Continued from page 1

The next prime minister, Naftali Bennett, will be the first religious Zionist to lead Israel.

But no matter how long he serves, Naftali Bennett will earn the distinction of being the politician who replaced Netanyahu. He’s a staunch right-winger, often further to the right than Netanyahu, who opposes Palestinian statehood, supports West Bank settlement expansion and has vowed to pursue a hawkish defense policy. He will also be the first religious Israeli prime minister. Netanyahu has become a reliable ally of the haredi, or ultra-Orthodox, parties, but personally he is secular, just like all of his predecessors. Bennett identifies as Orthodox and wears a kippah. His ascent is a sign of the growth, and influence, of religious Zionists in a state founded by secular Jewish socialists.

Bennett will also be the first Israeli prime minister born of American parents. Like Netanyahu, he speaks fluent, basically natural English. When he worked in the tech world, before entering politics, he spent time living in New York.

The conflict in Israel and Gaza came close to quashing this coalition — and also may have encouraged it.

Before fighting broke out between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, the same coalition appeared to be coming together. But the conflict in Gaza, and interethnic clashes in Israel, threatened to derail it.

Party leaders did not negotiate as rockets were flying. Mansour Abbas, the leader of the Raam party, froze talks with Lapid. Bennett said that he would no longer partner with the alliance of Netanyahu opponents.

Then, soon after the sides reached a ceasefire, everyone seemed to return to where they had been before the fighting started. Bennett wrote a long Facebook post bashing Netanyahu. Abbas renewed negotiations. Lapid began signing coalition agreements with other parties. It may be that the fighting, after almost stopping this coalition in its tracks, ended up giving it even greater urgency.

The government will not include any haredi, or ultra-Orthodox, parties. But it will still be mostly Ashkenazi and male.

There are a lot of ways Israel’s incoming government will be different. There are also plenty of ways it will be the same.

Like every prime minister not named Golda Meir, the next leader of Israel will be an Ashkenazi Jewish man. And in certain ways, the government will be less diverse than previous ones. Although it will include an unprecedented number of parties, all but one of those parties is led by a man. None of the parties are led by Mizrahi Jews, or Jews of Middle Eastern descent.

And none of the parties are haredi, after six years in which haredi parties were given control of Israel’s religious affairs. On the one hand, that means this government could reform Israel’s religious policies, perhaps reducing funding to haredi institutions, requiring haredi men to enter Israel’s mandatory military draft, or liberalizing Israel’s Jewish conversion and marriage systems, which are controlled by the haredi Chief Rabbinate.

On the other hand, the coalition is so narrow and fragmented that it may be hard to pass any major legislation.

Don’t expect any big moves on Israeli-Palestinian peace.

On that note, don’t expect this to be the government that makes peace with the Palestinians. Bennett opposes Palestinian statehood, as do other members of the coalition. Likewise, the left-wing and Arab parties will likely block any attempt to annex parts of the West Bank.

Other governments have come in with policy platforms or an ideological program. Because this one came together to oust Netanyahu and end a political crisis, it will have accomplished its goal the moment it gets sworn in. What happens next is anyone’s guess.
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