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FREE

For Rabbi Ben Freed, journalism and the rabbinate are two similar jobs

Lee Chottiner, editor Jewish Louisville Community newspaper, reprinted with permission.

He 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 of America, has been hired as the next rabbi of Louisville Kentucky's Keneseth Israel Congregation. He starts his new career on July 1.

The tools Freed honed as a reporter will serve him well at his new pulpit.



Rabbi Ben Freed

— 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 Yonatan 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 Keneseth Israel."

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

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

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A few things you need to know about the Israeli government that replaces Benjamin Netanyahu

Ben Sales, originally for the JTA

After 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

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Kol hakavod Rabbi Miriam Geronimus

Gabrielle Pescador, special to the WJN

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



Rabbi Miriam Geronimus

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 was involved in Hillel where she took on

a leadership role in organizing an LGBT 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 encounter 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

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From the Editor

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



Clare Kinberg

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. Make the trip to see them. I rarely have ecstatic

experiences, but viewing these quilts qualifies. 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? ■



Bisa Butler. Southside Sunday Morning, 2018. Private collection. © Bisa Butler. Photo by Margaret Fox.



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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 #FightAntiSemitism, 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 distaste and grief at Israel's actions exist alongside my deep-seated fear for the safety of Jews in Israel and 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 Israeli 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 synonymizing 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.”

Growing up in the Reform movement, I learned that tikkun olam, interfaith partnerships, and investing in future generations were

“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

ways to express my Judaism. So when I find a leader whose Jewish roots motivate him to speak thoughtfully and clearly — not only on Israel/Palestine and antisemitism, but also on climate change, 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 campaign finance so money doesn’t play such a big role in politics, but in the meantime, I’m working hard to bring together progressive Jews early in the race to build a campaign infrastructure that can withstand the opposition.

As a Jewish progressive who rejects the idea that my safety must come at another’s expense, and who believes in the inherently Jewish work of acting to manifest a future in which everyone is safe, I see my values reflected in Congressman Andy Levin’s leadership. In this moment more than ever, his voice is too important to lose. ■



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CAPABLE OF WORKING WITH
YOU REMOTELY

Introducing the Lior Project

Jacob Singer, special to the WJN

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 were important next steps. Too often these issues are minimized, hidden away, ignored, and/or stigmatized. Through the Lior Project, JFS is committed to raising community awareness about mental health issues, 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 KeepSafe. 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 pro-

viding 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 presence on the JFS website, jfsannarbor.org. The Lior Project’s web presence will provide educational content related to suicide and mental health, as well as information about emergency resources. 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 about 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) 436-4249 during daytime business hours to inquire about services.

Jewish legacy giving program secures \$1.2 billion in commitments

Margaret Schreiber, special to the WJN

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 Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF) to preserve vibrant Jewish life for future generations by ensuring the long-term financial health of our local Jewish community organizations. Through 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 in organizational endowments.

Community members participate in virtual legacy giving conference

Recently, Ann Arbor Jewish communal profes-

sionals and lay leaders joined more than 600 colleagues from communities and organizations across North America for the 2021 LIFE & LEGACY/Create a Jewish Legacy Leadership 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 communication. It allowed me to better understand how to conduct effective legacy conversations,” commented attendee Ezra Brown, an intern with Federation and a student of the Jewish Communal Leadership Program 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 focus 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 participation in the LIFE & LEGACY program has provided communities with the roadmap and encouragement to secure planned giving for our Jewish future.”

Greater Ann Arbor’s collective impact: Federation awards its 2021 allocations

Stephanie Glass, special to the WJN

In May 24, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor’s board of directors approved the Federation’s 2021 allocations for local and Israel/Overseas (I/O) organizations. These allocations, funded through the over \$1.4 million raised by the 2021 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 Rebner, 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

This year’s allocations 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 thousands of University of Michigan Jewish students with free Shabbat dinners, connecting them to the restorative ritual of Shabbat. Local allocation support also went toward Chabad’s community programming, which creatively 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 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 Jewry to sup-

port 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 coexistence 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. ■

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 bring together the thousands of 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 Cultural Society, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, 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 highlight Chuck's 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



Jennifer Mendelsohn

da's aunt's children. Frieda wasn't so certain and didn't share Jennifer's excitement. That changed the night of Frieda's first call to her 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 Rozja?" 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 80 years ago 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 for many years and did everything to find his shadow. There is no stone he did not turn — orphanages, boarding schools, the search for relatives. But nowhere were there any clues that led to her rescue."

Tsila did survive, though, and fortunately had had her DNA tested before she died. Tsila's daughter asked Jennifer, who moderates 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@lba80.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

nature walks, and field activities. New this year on Fridays, specialty programming will be provided at the J by guest organizations,

In addition, every week each age group will have a variety of "Wacky Wednesday" activities, which is always a camper favorite. Add-

able to operate with fewer limitations than last summer. Especially heartwarming is that last year's first-time campers, who were un-



Arbor building, but will take daily field trips to the Cedar Lake Nature Center in Chelsea, Michigan. Each camper unit will be bussed to Cedar Lake at least once each week-long session, so that campers can take advantage of the activities offered at Camp Raanana's usual summer home.

Campers will enjoy the beautiful lake through age-appropriate beach play, swimming, fishing, and boating. In addition, campers will be able to participate in archery,

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."

ing and expanding camper favorites in the schedule moves Camp Raanana closer to its pre-pandemic experience.

While camp will continue to maintain appropriate COVID related safety protocols, the updated information from health authorities is encouraging. With increasing vaccination rates and greater understanding of how the virus spreads, and the resulting new CDC, health authority, and licensing guidelines, Camp Raanana will be

able to experience Cedar Lake at all, will have their first opportunity to do so this summer.

For more information about participating in Camp Raanana either as a camper or as staff, please visit camp.jccannarbor.org or contact Nikki Richardson at (734) 971-0990 or nikkirichardson@jccannarbor.org. ■

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 Engage-



ment 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 MI). 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 *The Lion Seeker* (July 28). A variety of fun, new, and meaningful programs will bring our communities together. Register on the BIC website.

Bite Size Shabbat at Burns Park

Saturdays at 11 a.m.

We are excited to partner with the Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan for these gatherings to help Jewish families in Ann Arbor meet each other.

Following the principle of bal tashchit, we are forbidden to waste. Hershey Friedman of Brooklyn College of the City University of New York writes in *The Influence of Jewish Law on Marketing and Business Practices*, "The Talmud (T. Bava Kama 30a) notes that one who wishes to be pious must be extremely scrupulous in matters that may cause harm to others, e.g., in the disposal of glass and thorns." Plastics can easily be seen as the "glass and thorns" of our time.

Of course Ann Arbor accepts plastic bottles and tubs in curbside recycling, and soft plastic bags can be brought to the reuse station and some stores, but many forms of plastic packaging fit neither of those categories.

The BIC Green Team discovered that Terracycle develops options to recycle a wide variety of items which typical recycling will not accept. According to their website, Terracycle "brigades" have engaged more than 200 million people, reducing more than 7.5 billion pounds of waste, earning more than 44 million dollars for charity.

A large number of national brands have partnered with Terracycle's recycling for charity efforts. The Beth Israel Green Team is starting with recycling Simple Truth flexible plastic packaging. Simple Truth is an organic and natural food products line available at Kroger among other stores. Many of these products have a hechsher as well. Of course, when you can buy organic local products with no plastic packaging that is optimal, but if you cannot, this option will let you turn a problem into a blessing.

From July through November, you can bring your "Simple Truth" packaging to Beth Israel on the Second Sunday of the month from 10 a.m. till noon. A vaccinated Green Team member will be outside cheerfully collecting this packaging. Each piece of Simple Truth flexible plastic packaging you bring will earn TerraCycle points, on average 2 points per wrapper. 100 points will yield \$1 for Jewish Family Services. See you on Second Sundays! ■

There will be a short Tot Shabbat-style service at 11 a.m. Older siblings are encouraged to join.

Living Room Lectures — *The Paris Photo*, by Jane S. Gabin

Sunday, July 11, 1 p.m.

Jane S. Gabin presents *The Paris Photo*, which is a work of historical fiction set partly at the end of WWII and partly in recent times, linked by a picture taken in 1945. It is a story of how the traumas of wartime rippled into the present and created a vivid picture of life during the dark days of the Occupation, and also portrays the contemporary city that reveals, almost around every corner, its own scars from the war. Jane S. Gabin is a writer and educator from New York City and now based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She has published several works of nonfiction dealing with literary history. Living Room Lectures is a partnership of Beth Israel Congregation and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. Please register on the Beth Israel website, www.bethisrael-aa.org.

Tisha B'Av Shaharrit

Sunday, July 18, 9:30 a.m.

Join Beth Israel for Tisha B'Av morning services.

BIC Social Action learns anti-racism

Michael Appel, special to the WJN

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 minchah 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 *Caste* 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 Shavuot 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 prosecution of younger offenders for smaller crimes.

Ongoing Initiatives

At the June meeting of the Social Action Committee, UM Professor 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 advance 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 and priorities 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-action-committee-meetings5.html>.

On August 15, the BIC Reads book discussion will be on *The Man Who Lived Underground*, a previously unpublished novel by 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. Its candid portrayal of police brutality made the novel untouchable until now. We invite everyone to read the book and join the discussion, which again will be co-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>. ■

Sunday 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 Arborum. 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 brash 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 they 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 synagogue 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 endearing 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 apocalyptic outbreak. She's amazed the first time she sees lightning bugs 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: "5774? 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 Dina: "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 rabbi to Orthodox Jewish background characters in Marvel's Spider-Man to simulations of 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 U.S. Army and an agent at the fictional U.S. Office of Secret Actions. He is an antifascist 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.'s Jewish background was confirmed by game designer Tom Hall, both on Twitter in 2014 and through revealing his mother's identity in The New Colossus (2017).

Dr. Hal "Otacon" 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 canonically Jewish Dr. Hal Emmerich, a scientific prodigy, weapons developer and lover of anime. Emmerich's identity was confirmed in the Metal Gear Solid Official Mission Handbook (see page 19). Another Metal Gear Solid character, Meryl Silverburgh, a fighter from a military family who serves as right-hand woman to protagonist Solid 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 falls into the Silverburgh category: Many have assumed the Half 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 people in video games without noting how the medium has been weaponized at times to simulate antisemitic violence. This is perhaps most dramatically displayed by the 2002 game Ethnic Cleansing, created by the neo-Nazi organization 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 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 character, 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 final mission 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 literally a rabbi. Rabbi Stone's synagogue is running low on funds when he learns a congregant has passed away, leaving \$10,000 for him. Stone ventures through Manhattan on a journey full of lighthearted and introspective dialogue to determine if it is moral to accept the funds. Bonus points: The game features a cheat sheet of Yiddish translations.

Professor Hershel Layton (The Professor Layton Series, 2007)

The hero of Nintendo's successful Professor Layton series is Hershel, a puzzle-solving British 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 — certainly at the time, and possibly to this day. Ken Levine, the mind behind the game, opened up about its Jewish roots in a 2015 interview and later in 2018.

"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 Gage, 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 parasite." Kalou accuses Phelps of antisemitism and calls him a "goy motherf—er." After the confession, 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 chamber. I'm left feeling he didn't need to use aggressive antisemitism as a tool to gain a confession when he already had ample evidence of guilt.

Gaige the Mechromancer (Borderlands 2, 2012)

Gaige 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 Hanukkah!" a play on the character Roland's line, "It's like Christmas!" The series also features Typhon Deleon, a character who frequently uses Yiddish.

Joel Miller (The Last of Us, 2013)

Yes, that Joel, the treasured smuggler and ultimate father figure protagonist of The Last of Us. While his faith is not discussed in the game as Dina's is in the sequel, many have concluded he at least celebrates Hanukkah from developer Naughty Dog's 2013 holiday card depicting the character in a menorah sweater. Does that mean

Joel is canonically Jewish? Why not!

Nadine Ross (Uncharted: Lost Legacy, 2017)

Another Naughty Dog holiday card treat is Uncharted 4's antagonist turned Uncharted: Lost Legacy's deuteragonist Nadine Ross donning a menorah sweater. Again, does that mean she's canonically Jewish? Why not! Ross is a South African treasure hunter and former mercenary skilled in combat and charismatic leadership.

Robert Zussman (Call of Duty: WWII, 2017)

Zussman is the fiercely loyal sidekick to protagonist Ronald "Red" Daniels. Raised by a German-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: On 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 survived 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."

"I don't believe in good luck," Ellie says.

"I do," Dina responds.

While Jewish representation in video games has a rocky and sparse history, games like BioShock, 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 BioShock, developer Ken Levine's roots drive the inclusion; in Spider-Man, it is Elan Ruskin pushing the character artists to include Orthodox models; and in The Last of Us Part II, writer and director Neil Druckmann's background inspires 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. ■

Minn Rep McCollum introduces bill to condition military aid to Israel

Hannah Davis, special to the WJN

On April 15, Minnesota Representative Betty McCollum introduced a bill in the House of Representatives (HR 2590), called the “Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act.” The bill aims to “promote and protect the human rights of Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation and to ensure that United States taxpayer funds are not used by the government of Israel to support the military detention of Palestinian children, the 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.”

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 taxpayer-funded 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 “Israeli Annexation Non-Recognition 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’s bills haven’t made it out of committee. 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 and use of U.S. aid in the region.

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. IfNotNow, an American Jewish organization advocating for an end to the occupation in Palestine, has also endorsed the bill. Zak Witus, from IfNotNow Detroit, said in a statement, “The Palestinian Children and Families Act embodies the humanitarian Jewish values which Jews across Michigan share. ... We know from leading human rights organizations, including the Israeli NGO B’Tselem, that the Israeli military has in fact illegally detained and abused Palestinian children for years — indeed, decades. We know that the Israeli military routinely demolishes the homes of innocent Palestinian civilians ... I witnessed several Israeli home demolitions myself when I visited the occupied West Bank in January 2020. One day ... the Israeli military razed a shack while an elderly Palestinian man was still inside, sending him to the hospital. He survived, thank God ... [T]hese offenses are being financed in large part using U.S. tax dollars. We in IfNotNow think that supporting this bill is simply the decent thing to do. ... Be they Jewish or gentile, our representatives ought to do the decent thing ...” Other supporters include the National Lawyers Guild and the Movement for Black Lives.

AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobbying group, has opposed the bill, saying it is redundant — that U.S. aid to Israel is already reviewed to ensure the money is used for “legitimate self-defense” and internal security — and that adding conditions to the aid would weaken Israel’s ability to defend itself. Democratic Majority for Israel further states that the aid provided to Israel “cannot legally or practically be used for the rights violations McCollum alleges.”

This current round of legislative interest is an attempt to shift a long-standing policy pattern. Historically, the U.S. has used restrictions on aid to Israel as a diplomatic tool: presidents from Carter to Bush Sr. have blocked or delayed deliveries of military equipment or loans until Israel agreed to participate in peace talks or suspended building of settlements. Presidents since then have moved away from this policy and have separated aid discussions from other diplomatic concerns, but support for this approach may be waning — among voters, at least.

Gallup polling reports that as of this year, 53% of Democrat voters 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 Arab American Institute 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 Israel’s military, security, and missile defense systems in the amount of \$146 billion as of last year, without 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 occupation)? [T]he history of such attempts 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. [S]ettlement 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 without defining consequences 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 supporters seem to be trying to spark conversation more than actual legislative change. HR 2590 has been referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and will likely, as its previous iterations experienced, never make it out of committee. ■

Kol hakavod Rabbi Miriam Geronimus *Continued from page 1*

“help people be seen 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 once she made the decision to make the change and become a rabbi, she didn’t doubt it or regret it.

Geronimus chose to pursue rabbinic studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinic College because of its combined focus on Jewish history, culture, and spirituality. As a longtime spiritual seeker with an academic orientation, she found the rabbinic program that would work for her. She particularly appreciated the RRC’s emphasis on practical rabbinics.

In fulfilling the required internships each year, Geronimus served at several synagogues, a Jewish continuing care retirement community, a campus Hillel, as a hospital chaplain, and 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 appreciated that 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 people in all stages of life in congregational environments.

On her path as rabbi, Geronimus aims to continue to work with people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, a deep value that is behind the creation of her latest venture for ensuring inclusiveness in the Jewish world. During the pandemic, Geronimus became the founding rabbi of the Cleveland Jewish Collective, a new pro-

gressive Jewish community in Cleveland. CJC is committed to “growing a community that reflects and celebrates the diversity of the Jewish people and fellow travelers.” The choice of the word “collective” instead of “congregation” was very intentional as participants are building the community together and are drawn or “collected” from different parts of the Cleveland area.

Having lived in Cleveland three years before starting rabbinic school, Geronimus saw the need for something new and more progressive in the city. She recognized that although Cleveland enjoys a vibrant Jewish community with several amazing Jewish institutions, there are a number of groups of Jews whose needs are not being met and who feel left out, namely millennials, queers, people of color, interfaith families and those with very progressive political views. Such Jews don’t feel that they can fully be themselves when they show up at a synagogue.

Geronimus wants to create a community where people are appreciated for who they really are, where they have a safe space to wrestle with and figure out “how do I want to live in this world,” and given that, “how do I interact within the diversity of the community.” The people who participate in the Cleveland Jewish Collective “want to dig into Black Lives Matters” and “be involved in the larger conversations happening in this country” as a Jewish community. Geronimus wants to create a place that feels like home for people who didn’t feel like they had a Jewish home before, which “has to be done in conversation with all the perspectives in the mix. We are creating as we go.” ■

For Rabbi Ben Freed, journalism and the rabbinate are two similar jobs *Continued from page 1*

stories.

His mother, Eileen Freed, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, and his father, Dr. Gary Freed, a professor of pediatrics (primarily health policy and services research) at the University of Michigan, also founded a day school when the family lived in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

But it was when the Freeds moved to Australia for three years, leaving their son, already on the staff of *The News*, and a roommate — another young Jewish journalist — to live in their house, that Freed’s love for Judaism evolved.

The roommates turned the dwelling into a “Moishe House” of sorts, holding Shabbat dinners and building sukkahs for Ann Arbor’s young Jewish adults.

One night, while the two were cleaning up after a Shabbat dinner, Freed’s friend reflected on how he grew up without much Jewish culture at home, though he did have a bar mitzvah.

Since moving in with Freed, he continued, he now wanted this type of life for himself and wanted to help others experience it.

Freed described that talk as a “light bulb event.” Thereafter, he thought seriously about becoming a rabbi.

Freed is aware that he starts his career at a time when organized religion is declining, and many Jews are finding their spiritual needs

fulfilled in other ways (“on a yoga mat ... in an ashram ... on a mountain”).

Yet he is convinced that Judaism remains equipped to give young and old Jews what they need to live full lives.

“We have this amazing Jewish spirituality that Jews can plug into, and that’s exciting,” he said. “I want people to be able to plug into their traditions — their ancestors’ technology — for what it means to be spiritual.”

But Judaism is not just what happens within the four walls of the synagogue, Freed added. He looks forward to meeting with his colleagues and learning how they can collaborate.

In fact, he said the top item on his “checklist” so far is to get to know the entire community.

It’s not like the soon-to-be cleric doesn’t know what to expect from the rabbinate. He’s already held several rabbinic internships during his years at JTS, in Jerusalem, on college campuses, in Riverdale, New York and Little Rock, Arkansas — that last stint a solo pulpit.

Freed described his time as student rabbi as being “a rabbi with training wheels.” He always had his mentors to fall back on and to bounce ideas off.

“Now,” he said, “I’m ready for the training wheels to come off.” ■

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

brother was deployed.

Ms. Walker's mother, Emmaline — 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

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 grates 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

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, 1955, 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 Ribs Shoulder" as advertised on the marque were similar to what is labeled "Oklahoma Style" barbecue — a combination of Texas



1400 Black of Franklin Avenue in the 1920s

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 WWII 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

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



Zeb's Bar-B-Q in Indianapolis about 1970

2013 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.

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 barbeque 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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LOCAL	Ann Arbor Eruv	\$500	Jewish Community Foundation	\$54,000
	Chabad of Ann Arbor	\$8,000	Jewish Family Services	\$123,165
	Emergency Cash Assist. to Individuals	\$14,000	Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor	\$508,400
	Hebrew Day School	\$114,400	Jewish Summer Camp Scholarships	\$11,000
	Hillel at EMU	\$10,000	Teen Israel Experience Subsidies	\$1,000*
	Hillel at UM	\$8,000	Reserve for Unmet Pledges	\$25,000
	Jewish Community Center	\$191,806	Total Local	\$1,069,271

*Plus \$6,000 rolled over from 2020

OVERSEAS	Birthright Israel	\$9,137
	Ethiopian National Project	\$22,000
	Hand in Hand Schools	\$9,000
	iRep	\$6,250
	JAFI Youth Futures	\$10,000
	JDC Welfare Relief in the FSU	\$45,000

NATIONAL	JFNA Collective Overseas	\$142,778
	Krembo Wings	\$12,000
	Partnership2Gether	\$10,000
	Total Overseas	\$128,250
	Israel Action Network	\$500
	Jewish Council for Public Affairs	\$1,750
	JFNA Fair Share Dues	\$52,475
	Total National	\$54,725

Grand Total 2021 Annual Community Campaign Allocations

\$1,404,161

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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 Rozhinkes 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 control 80 percent of it, is inhabited by nearly 750,000 Palestinians, and Israel controls an area inhabited by approximately 850 Jewish settlers and 2,200 Israeli soldiers.

Hebron Glass and Ceramic is a family-owned business. Today, the factory is run by Hamze Natsheh, 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.

I must acknowledge that Hebron has a special place in my heart. In 1968, just several months after the 1967 war, I volunteered to teach Hebrew to a group of lawyers and teachers in Hebron. I believe that language is central to bring Palestinians and Israelis together. More than forty years later, in 2011, I traveled to Hebron with a group of students from Wayne State University as part of the program “A Journey to Israel and the West Bank.” I had the opportunity to discover how complicated life is in Hebron. A guide from the Israeli NGO, Shovrim Shtika, “Breaking the Silence,” led us into the Palestinian neighborhoods of Hebron. We also visited the Museum of the History of the Jewish Community in Hebron, in Beit Hadassah.

I learned from the store manager on the premises that, since 2018, when the Peace Wall Panel was first introduced, it has been among the most popular items sold in the shop. I bought the last two panels. One is hanging in our home in Ann Arbor, among diverse modern and traditional hamsas we bought in Israel, the West Bank, and Morocco.

I intend to give the second one as a present to my beloved sister, Dalia, whom I have not been able to see for more than a year and a half due to COVID-19. A long time peace-seeker herself, Dalia lives in Tenaflly, a town in New Jersey, known by the many Israelis who live there as The New Tel Aviv. I hope Dalia, a follower and student of the Great Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar, will find the words of the Peace Wall inspiring in her yoga meditation for peace. ■

Participants loved the J’s virtual Israel trip

Clara Silver, special to the WJN

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 in-



Screen capture Flight Graffiti Tour

cluding 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 archeology 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 Herzig 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!”

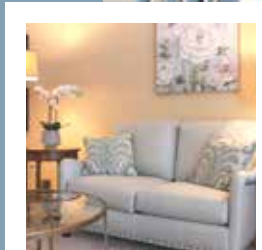
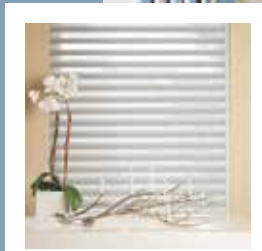
The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor is a dynamic organization with a bold, innovative, inclusive vision for the future, and the spirit of innovation and “what if” inspired by the 2030 Vision guided the planning efforts. The Israel Experience was a program that not only innovated around the 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. ■



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Breaking Bread on a summer's day

Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

Have read about “cultural appropriation” 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, and also rice food 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 Arab to win the Master Chef Israel competition. She went on to organize “A-Sham: The Annual Arab Food Festival in Haifa.” A-Sham, or Ash-Shaam, is Arabic for Levant, the term used to mean the Eastern Mediterranean. It is her hope and belief that social change could be promoted through

shared cuisines. Professional chefs from all over Israel were paired together to collaborate on dishes reflecting old traditions. They told each other stories about their families and the foods they grew up with, and shared their goals for cooking, running restaurants, and maintaining traditions. The documentary *Breaking Bread* introduces us to many of the chefs and their stories.

The film begins with a quote from the famed food writer, explorer, and chef, Anthony Bourdain: “Food may not be the answer to world peace, but it’s a start.” I had the opportunity to preview this film and found myself smiling, nodding in agreement, uplifted ... and hungry. I urge you to watch it.

There is no way I can recreate how chefs 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 grandmothers 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 for Kishek (dried yogurt soup), Taashii (Levantine fish), Mulukhiah (lentils with pasta) or Arayes (little pies made with fish or meat). Here are some recipes that are easy to make in our kitchens.

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 seems to me to use some of the basic foods available in Israel as well as the entire area.

- 1 tbs white wine vinegar (or other vinegar)
- ½ medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 3 ½ oz pitted Medjool dates, quartered lengthwise
- 2 tbs butter, unsalted
- 2 tbs olive oil
- 2 small pitas, torn into small (1½ inch) pieces
- ½ cup whole unsalted almonds, chopped coarsely
- 2 tsp sumac (at our local Middle Eastern markets 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 onion 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 frying 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 olive oil and lemon juice. Taste for seasoning. Serve immediately.

Sfiha

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, instead you could use puff pastry or your own pie dough recipe. It’s not authentic but the whole idea of this column is to share food cultures and maybe make the dish easier and faster to prepare. This should make about 14 small pastries.

- 9 oz ground lamb
- 1 finely chopped onion, about 1 cup
- 2 medium tomatoes, finely chopped, about 1½ cup
- 3 tbs tahini
- 1¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground allspice
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 1 oz finely chopped parsley
- 1 tbs freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 tbs pomegranate molasses

- 1 tbs sumac
- 3 tbs pine nuts
- 2 lemons cut into wedges.

Mix all the ingredients together except the pine nuts and lemon wedges. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Roll out the dough into a 5-inch circle and brush lightly on both sides with olive oil and place the circles on the baking sheet. If you make your own dough let it rise on the baking sheet for about 15 minutes. Use a spoon to spread the topping and sprinkle the pine nuts on top. Cover and let rise another 15 minutes and then bake in the preheated oven for another 15 minutes. Serve with the lemon wedges. You can serve the pies warm or at room temperature.

If you really want to make the dough, here is the recipe. Use 1 ⅔ cups of bread flour, ½ tbs salt, 1½ tsp of active dry yeast, ½ tsp of baking powder and 1 tbs sugar in a large bowl and mix together. Make a well in the center and add ½ cup of sunflower oil, 1 large egg and then ½ cup of warm water. Mix until you need to knead the dough on a work surface for about 3 minutes. The dough should feel elastic, but it may feel wet. Don’t add more flour as it will come together. Brush a little olive oil on the dough, cover it and let it rest for about an hour. When you are ready to add the topping, make about 14 small balls that you will roll into the 5 inch circles.

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 — ⅔ cup**
- 4 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbs pomegranate molasses
- 1 tbs silan (date syrup)
- 1 tbs Dijon mustard
- 1 tbs finely minced shallot
- ⅛ tsp kosher salt
- ⅛ tsp freshly ground pepper

Salad

- 8 oz baby arugula (or kale or other bitter green)
- 1 cup (4 oz) crumbled feta cheese
- 4 large or 6 medium Medjool dates, pitted and halved or quartered
- ⅓ cup chopped toasted pistachios

Put all the ingredients for the dressing in a jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake until creamy.

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.

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 processor 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 1⅓ cups of dried chickpeas. Cover them with about 4 inches 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 ½ cup for decorating the top. The chickpeas can be frozen in packages of 1⅓ cups with a little bit of the water they were cooked in or use 1⅓ cups, without the liquid, and process in the food processor until smooth. Add the garlic, up to 1¾ 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 ¼ 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!!! ■

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

If you want this delectable Jewish pastry, you'll have to go to Cleveland

Sarah Bania-Dobyns, originally appeared in *The Nosh*.

Russian tea biscuits are so much a part of Cleveland's landscape that locals are surprised to learn that these rugelach-like pastries are from their hometown. As a Clevelander, I didn't discover the truth until I moved to several cities and Russian tea biscuits were nowhere to be found, prompting me to do a little digging online. I discovered that the pastry's origin story — a story that feels more like a legend — is connected to the Cleveland Jewish community.

Even though Salon published a lively discussion in 2011 about the origins of Russian tea biscuits, the pastry's full story remains a mystery. How did these mammoth pastries come to Cleveland? Were they called Russian tea biscuits because they were brought to Cleveland by Russian immigrants?

Russian tea biscuits in Cleveland can be traced back to the first half of the 20th century when bakeries proliferated across the city. Many of these bakeries were started by Jewish immigrants from Eastern European countries. Among them were Sherwin's Bakery, Lax and Mandel, Unger's Bakery and Davis Bakery, all of which survived into the 1980s or longer. According to an article in the Cleveland Jewish News, Sherwin's Bakery sold Russian tea biscuits three for a nickel during the Great Depression.

Of these first-generation bakeries, Unger's and Davis are still open, along with many oth-

ers that serve Russian tea biscuits. Just like in the early 20th century, today's bakeries have loyal regulars who insist that their Russian tea biscuits are the best. Ask a Clevelander where they get their Russian tea biscuits and you will hear a



Sarah Bania-Dobyns

story, not just a quick answer.

Russian tea biscuits have even traveled as far as California and Florida. Clevelanders started Bea's Bakery in Los Angeles and 3G's Deli in Delray Beach, Florida, bringing their recipes with them. Rumor has it also that a former Peruvian employee of the Stone Oven Bakery may have taken the pastry back home with her.

But what about their alleged Russian ori-

gins? The fact that the bakeries were started by immigrants from various Eastern European countries muddies the waters. What these iconic Cleveland bakery owners did have in common, however, was that they were all Jewish.

Could it be, then, that Russian tea biscuits should more accurately be called Jewish tea biscuits?

Maybe. Family-owned bakeries started by immigrants had to bring their recipes from somewhere. Countless women's obituaries in the Cleveland Jewish News refer to the Russian tea biscuits they were known for sharing with friends and family.

Many of these women were grandmothers who emigrated from Eastern European countries at around the same time as the first generation of family-owned Cleveland bakeries.

Then again, some stories from home bakers suggest the pastry might still have Russian origins. Two anonymous Cleveland bubbes in their 80s each separately said their family recipes came from Kiev at a time when the Ukraine

was still part of Russia.

Yet Russian immigrant Tatyana 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. Her then-husband took her to Lax and Mandel, where she had her first. She carries on Lax and Mandel's legacy by following their Russian tea biscuit recipe. Her theory?

"Raspberry jam is very Russian," she said, explaining that adding raspberry jam to desserts made them a special treat.

One thing is clear: For generations of Clevelanders, Russian tea biscuits conjure up memories of gathering around family tables, being a regular at a family-owned bakery and sharing the pastries at shiva. 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 Russian tea biscuit eater Jerry Ferstman explained, he always liked rugelach, but Russian tea biscuits were so much better because there was so much more to eat.

Now you, too, can make and savor Russian tea biscuits at home. Get the recipe "The Nosh" website. ■

This Muslim market in Tucson offers kosher food and intercultural dialogue

Nicole 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 the Al Basha Grocery isn't just a place to get kosher meats and hard-to-find ingredients.

"It provides an opportunity for people to see 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 Basha shopper.

Ghufran Almusawi and her husband, Anas Elazrag, both Muslims, opened Al Basha in July 2019 with the intention of creating a "melting pot," Almusawi said.

"Serving kosher in our store was one of the ways that we can bring the communities together," she said. "We just want to offer services to everybody. We want to make everybody feel welcome."

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.'"

Al Basha 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 pretty striking," he said. "They were definitely reaching out a hand."

Davis appreciated the gesture and has been shopping at Al Basha 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 Ba-

sha item is pomegranate molasses, which he described as "a sort of finisher" for meat, giving



Ghufran Almusawi, proprietor of Al Basha Grocery in Tucson, Ariz., speaks with a Jewish customer. Her store sells both kosher and halal products in an effort to create a "melting pot" for Jews and Muslims.

(Michael Zaccaria/Keeping Jewish)

it a "sweet, tangy flavor."

Evelyn Sigafus looks forward to Al Basha'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 chitchat time," 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 Basha after he had a poor shopping experience, Almusawi said. At the time, her husband wasn't convinced existing local markets had what people really needed or that they could make all customers feel comfortable.

Almusawi, an Iraqi American, grew up in Michigan and was already familiar with the grocery business.

"My dad was in the grocery world, and he was always so happy to see his customers and was welcoming," she said. "He didn't really look at a customer as being somebody other than a human that he's providing a service for. He didn't look at race, color, religion,

none of that. And I kind of grew up following that. And fortunately my husband's the same way."

Almusawi said she's seen fewer Jewish customers since the recent violence between Hamas and Israel.

"I just don't think they feel comfortable coming in," she said. "I've had people come in and say, 'How could you do this? How could you sell this right now?' And I'm just like, 'OK, this company [kosher food supplier] in California has nothing to do with it. We're just one business supporting another.'"

The pushback comes from both worlds — some Muslims don't want to support the store

because it supports the Jewish community, and some Jews don't want to support the store because it is owned by Muslims. She tries to focus on the positive responses and those showing support for unity.

"What both religions teach is peace," Almusawi said. "We're welcoming of everybody. We don't want to make anybody feel uncomfortable and anybody is welcome to shop. And if there are any items that are missing that they are looking for, we're always willing to bring it in."

Al Basha is in Yisrael Bernstein's regular shopping rotation. He usually makes an "east side loop" on Fridays gathering food for several Chabad rabbis. He stops at Al Basha, Trader Joe's and Costco. It can take up to six hours, depending on who joins him.

He discovered Al Basha a couple of years ago "on a lark," figuring that if they sold halal food they might also have kosher items, "and sure enough, they did."

Bernstein became friendly with Almusawi, and she began making sure the store carried his favorites: corned beef, pastrami and hot dogs. With his long beard, black hat and long coat, he always feels welcome.

"I really do. It makes my whole Shabbat weekend," said Bernstein, who is a medical doctor.

Almusawi and Elazrag opened their second location last month, also in Tucson. Al Basha is "not going to save the world," said Davis, but it's those little bridge-building exchanges that can.

"We can't just reduce each other to what we see on television," he said. "For all the differences that we might have, maybe we just have more in common. And you get a chance to see that in a really human context — you're shopping for what you're going to put on your family's table."

A version of this story originally ran in the Jewish News of Greater Phoenix. ■

Calendar

July 2021

The Calendar has been updated to reflect events that are happening only online. Always 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 discussion. 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 8:50-9:50 a.m.
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. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.
Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 7

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.
Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.
Passport to Shabbat: South African 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 Frikadelles with Pink Sauce 6 p.m..
Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 8

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 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-Massei
Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 10

Rosh Hodesh Av
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 8:50-9:50 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 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, \$18 fee Noon.
Living Room Lectures — The Paris Photo by Jane S. Gabin: BIC. 1 p.m.
Biblical 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: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.
Passport to Shabbat: Mandala Dot Art: BIC. Join this program, open to people of all ages, to learn about and make South African art! A supplies list will be sent in advance. 7:30 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. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.
Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 14

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p. m.
Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.
Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 15

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 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 on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 17

Havdallah 9:58 p.m.
Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.
Bite Size Shabbat at Burns Park: BIC 11 a.m.
Meditative Tisha B’Av: Pardes Hannah. 9 to 10:30 p.m.
Evening Services for Tisha B’Av: Chabad. 10:15 p.m.

Sunday 18

Tisha B’Av
Tisha B’Av Shaharit: 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. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.
Caregiver Conversations: JFS. Connection, sharing and ideas around caregiver issues as we navigate our lives during these challenging times of Covid-19. Includes educational content, facilitated by a licensed JFS Social Worker. Open to anyone who cares for someone aged 60+. Visit <https://jfsannarbor.org/event/caregiver-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: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.
Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.
Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 22

Sarinka: A Sephardic Holocaust Journey: Tikvah Hadassah welcomes author Linda Cohen, speaking about her book. Register by July 20 at www.hadassahmidwest.org/TikvahSarinka. There is a \$10 event fee. Noon.
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. Zoom. 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 8:50-9:50 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 Arboretum. 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 discussion. 3 p.m.
Passport to Shabbat: South Africa Book Club: BIC. Read The Lion Seeker by Kenneth Bonert before this discussion, then join us to talk about it. In the tradition of the great immigrant sagas, The Lion Seeker brings us Isaac Helger, son of Lithuanian Jewish immigrants, surviving the streets of Johannesburg in the shadow of World War II. 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 207

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

Wednesday 28

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every 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. Eikev
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 8:50-9:50 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 Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org
Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734.445.1910, aarecon.org
Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org
Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com
Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/
Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org
Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org
Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org
Jewish Federation: 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

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
Tot Shabbat Services at 5:45 p.m.

Shira Service at 6:15 p.m.

All of your favorite songs led by TBE's tot team, Cantor Hayut and Rabbi Whinston. Contact cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org for more information.

Weekly Lunch and Learn

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 8:50 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

Guys Night In
Thursday, July 16, at 7 p.m. ■

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 1, 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

Yoshi Silverstein, founder and executive director, Mitsui Collective.

Yoshi is a Chinese-Ashkenazi-American Jew and an educator, coach, speaker, husband, and father. Yoshi was Director of the JOFEE Fellowship at Hazon from its launch through its first four cohorts, catalyzing the growth and leadership of over 60 emerging professionals working across the U.S. and Canada in the realm of Jewish relationship to land, food, culture, climate, and community. He holds over two decades of experience in both Jewish and secular outdoor, food, farming, and environmental education.

Saturday, July 10, 10:30 a.m. Second Saturday Shabbat

This service will be lay-led by Hannah Davis and Etta King Heisler. Please email aarcgillian@gmail.com for the zoom link.

Friday, July 23, 6:30 p.m. Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat

Come connect with community, rest, recharge, rejuvenate. Everyone welcome. This will be a hybrid service broadcast from the JCC grounds. If you would like to attend in-person or online and do not subscribe to our newsletter, please email aarcgillian@gmail.com. ■

Shmita-inspired speaker series

Idelle Hammond-Sass, special to the WJN

The 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 Joffe Fellowship for Hazon working with environmental education, and Jewish relationship to the 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 ■

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.

Rosh Chodesh Circle

Sunday, July 11, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Meditative Tisha B'Av

Saturday, July 17, 9 – 10:30 p.m.

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)
Weekly on Tuesday 8:30 – 9 a.m. ■

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Rabbi Stephen Slater talks a lot about God. He credits his Baptist missionary parents.

Ben Harris, originally written for the JTA

Rabbi Stephen Slater's rabbinate breaks the mold in all sorts of ways. Though he graduated from the unaffiliated Hebrew College Rabbinical School, he identifies with the Conservative movement and is the only one of the suburban Boston school's graduates to join the movement's rabbinic group.

Though Slater came to the rabbinate as the culmination of a decade of spiritual searching, 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 Birmingham synagogue's role in the civil rights struggle and developing close relationships with local Black pastors.

He's also likely the only Jewish clergyman in America whose Baptist missionary parents are fervently praying for his return to Jesus.

"I was a frum Christian before I was a frum Jew," Slater said, using a Yiddish term that roughly means "observant." "It really was a massive transitional moment when I committed to Judaism and dropped my commitment to Christianity."

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 region. He is not the only convert serving as a pulpit rabbi at an American synagogue. Nor is he the only rabbi raised in an observant Christian household.

But Slater may be the only one born into a multigenerational family of missionaries who dedicated years of their lives to bringing people to Jesus — often at great personal sacrifice.

He was raised in Ferkessedougou, a small city in the northern Ivory 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 imbibed the intense religious devotion of his parents, even taking on a practice of constantly confessing his sins.

But Slater was no more successful at ridding his mind of sinful thoughts than he was of persuading 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 reinducted anything quite as bad as 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 for, you know, natural 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 longer accepted the truth of the Christianity.

"I stayed up all night, probably the closest thing to Kierkegaard's dark night of the soul," he said. "Just sort of terrified by realizing that I no longer thought that it was true that Jesus was Messiah and Jesus was God. And what did that mean, if I couldn't be a Christian?"

At first, Slater tried to read himself out of the problem. He devoured 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."

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

they moved to Jerusalem so Slater could pursue a master's degree of his own, in Jewish civilization, at Hebrew University. In Israel, they joined a church and lived for a time in a Palestinian village outside Bethlehem.

But they also immersed themselves in Jewish learning communities. Bethany split her time between working with various NGOs and an intensive course of Jewish study at the Conservative yeshiva. And Slater took a year off from his



Rabbi Stephen and Bethany Slater and their children (Courtesy)

big 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 unambiguous that it should be observed on Saturday. Did God change his mind?

"I was a nudnik," Slater said. "I was annoyingly consistent about 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 his faith in Christianity.

His relentless questioning eventually precipitated a crisis of faith for Bethany as well, who had gone to teach in Africa after graduation. Shorn of the supportive network of her faith community back home, her commitment to Christian dogma collapsed.

"I feel like the best analogy is a breakup," Bethany said. "You've been in a relationship for a while. And you think that you can just kind of count on that person in your life and that they're just going to be there. And then all of a sudden, they're gone. And you just don't know how to think about your life without them in it."

Like Slater had earlier, Bethany sought a path forward through intensive study. After graduating, she moved to England to pursue a master's degree in Jewish studies at Oxford in the hope that understanding how the New Testament had emerged from Judaism might save her Christianity. Over Christmas, Slater came to visit and proposed. The couple made a pact that they would try to figure out their religious quandaries together.

After Bethany finished her degree at Oxford,

degree program to do a fellowship at the Shalom Hartman Institute, the intellectual center whose work focuses on the intersection of Judaism and modernity.

As the Slaters began to get a handle on the spiritual questions that had tormented them for years, they found themselves falling in love with Jewish ritual life — especially the observance of Shabbat, which took Slater back to his family's practice of taking a weekly Sabbath (though that one was on Thursdays).

"We'd been to so many Shabbat tables," Slater said. "We wanted that. We wanted the texture of Shabbat, a real day of stepping back with people."

With their return to the United States drawing closer, the conversion question began to intensify. In Jerusalem, where Judaism is baked into the fabric of living, they had been able to live a kind of vicarious Judaism, spending Shabbat and holidays with friends without formally converting. Back home they would have to make an affirmative commitment to Judaism if they wanted the kind of spiritual and intellectual engagement they had known in Jerusalem.

"So as Bethany and I are talking, it was another decision point," Slater said. "And the question really was do we want to make a commitment and actually be obligated to do Shabbat, or just want to be people that occasionally crash someone else's Shabbat? And that was pretty clear."

In February 2010, the Slaters flew to New York City. Both were highly educated and already practicing Jewish rituals, making the actual conversion ceremony something of a formality. The morning after they landed, they appeared before a rabbinical court overseen by Rabbi Ethan Tucker, the president and rosh yeshiva at Hadar, a celebrated egalitarian Jewish learning institute, and then immersed in the mikvah ritual bath. After 20 minutes they were both Jewish.

The change was difficult for both their families. Spreading Christianity is something of a family business for Slater's family. In addition to his father and grandfather, who between them spent some 50 years overseas doing missionary work, his uncle is a senior pastor at a large Baptist church in Southfield, Michigan.

tist church in Southfield, Michigan.

"Our own devotion to God, and to knowing God through Christ, and believing Christ as our savior and offering his savior to all the world, including all the Jewish people, is still very fervent, and we're committed to that," Slater's father, Dwight, said. "We don't know when and if Stephen and Bethany would come back to that persuasion. But that is our prayer."

After the conversion, the Slaters threw themselves into Jewish life. They moved to Los Angeles so Bethany could enroll in rabbinical school, though she dropped out after a year because she liked the intellectual aspect more than the pastoral one, transferring to a doctoral program in comparative theology at Boston College.

Slater spent a year teaching at a Jewish high school in L.A. and was inclined to pursue a doctorate of his own. But concerned about the financial ramifications of two spouses seeking professorships in the humanities, he began considering other options.

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

Slater enrolled 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 more knowledge than most of our candidates, with a better capacity at reading Jewish classical text than most of our candidates," Leader said. "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 did his homework. And there's a kind of seriousness about that, which is amazing."

Leader said he has tried to convince Slater's father that his son was following in his lineage by fusing his love of God and people as the bearer of a sacred message — thus far unsuccessfully.

"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 study 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 750. In recent years, the Beth-El has sought to highlight its role in the civil rights era with the development of a visitor's center, a project Slater has championed.

In his first year, Slater managed to increase membership by 8% and introduce a slate of new programming. Over the High Holidays, he developed a pandemic-friendly alternative to in-person services, crafting a spiritual walking trail at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens that invited worshippers to follow a path with stations for prayer and reflection. Bethany Slater oversees adult education and the religious school as the synagogue's director of programming and Jewish education.

At Agudas Achim, where he will start this summer, Slater said he repeatedly told his conversion story as part of the interview process and detected no reservations about hiring a rabbi who was not born Jewish. On the contrary, he sensed there was something appealing to the community in having a rabbi who came to Judaism as the result of spiritual searching.

"It's kind of an amazing thing that American Judaism — it's there," Slater said. "It's ready for a rabbi who's a convert, which is no small feat."

Synagogue leaders involved in bringing Slater to Birmingham say the same thing.

Steve Green, who co-chaired the search committee, said the issue was largely irrelevant. Though some older members of the community expressed concern, he said, the vast majority were enthused by Slater's candidacy.

"When I see them on the pulpit, it doesn't even occur to me that they converted because their knowledge of Judaism and of the Torah and the rituals and everything Jewish is deeper than most of the congregants," Green said of the Slaters. "I don't see it as a factor at all. And I don't think that they daven nor do they teach any differently because they converted to Judaism."

For his part, Slater sees the matter somewhat differently. And it can be summed up in one word: God.

Surveys consistently show American Jews are among the most secular religious groups in America. According to the Pew Research Center, other than Buddhist Americans, Jews have the lowest rate of belief in God among American religious groups. Leader said he believes the phenomenon is a product of Jews seeing the abandonment of God as a pathway out of oppression.

"There's a deep subconscious rumbling there," Leader said. "You know, you start talking about God, there's the Jewish thing that says, 'whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, you're gonna put me back in the ghetto. It was getting rid of God that saved me from the ghetto.' It's such a deep thing inside of 21st-century Jews."

Slater doesn't carry that cultural baggage: He talks about God a lot, with no detectable sense of irony or self-consciousness — and it's noticeable. Some years ago a friend told him he has "that thing that Protestant ministers have, but it's Jewish." Slater isn't totally sure what the friend was talking about, but he suspects it's connected to faith.

"This basic sense that it's not about me, or you, it's about God," Slater said. "We're seeking something together. Spiritual seeker, among those paradigms, that would be the right thing to identify. I do a lot of day-to-day stuff, and managerial stuff or whatever, but at bottom that's what drives it."

And Slater is unambiguous that this sensibility isn't something he picked up in rabbinical school but goes back to the lessons he imbibed at the feet of his parents and grandparents, the selflessness they displayed in spending large chunks of their lives overseas in developing nations, often at great personal risk.

"That kind of faith is just solid," Slater said. "On some level, there's no questioning that faith. It does things in the world. It makes things happen that just wouldn't happen. It actually saves people's lives. It structures everything. That was a given."

"So interacting with that, I now know that faith changes everything in terms of how you live your life. The only question for me was how to kind of build out the structure." ■

The vision of the third Holy Temple

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, special to the WJN

There 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



Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

Tisha B'Av will be the next day — Sunday, July 18. The Haftorah that we read on that Shabbat begins with the prophecy of Isaiah called Chazon Yishaiyahu. That's why the Shabbat is also called Shabbat Chazon — the Shabbat of the Vision — the vision of Isaiah — which is, unfortunately, a vision of the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. A great rabbi named Hillel from Paritch brings in the name of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev who gives a deeper interpretation about this Shabbat vision. He says about this vision that God reveals to every Jew a vision of the third Holy Temple in Jerusalem (God willing, may it be built speedily in our days).

This vision Rabbi Levi Yitzchak explains with an analogy. A father made a very expensive 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. The father said he would tailor another one. 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 was also 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 take the suit out of the closet and show it to him in order to remind him and promise 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 release the third suit to the child.

The analog is that God gave to his children, the Jewish People, B'nai Yisroel, the first Holy Temple but, unfortunately, they misbehaved and the Temple was destroyed as a result of their sins. Then God gave the Jewish 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 us 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 improved 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.

However, there is a question to be asked. Who sees this third Temple? If only great, righteous, holy people like tzadikim who have lofty souls can see this vision, what's the point? They don't have to be shown the Temple Vision. They already are behaving properly. The purpose of showing the Vision of the Temple is to awaken in those who have to do teshuvah (repent), those who still need

to improve, that they should improve their ways in order to deserve the third Temple. So those that need to see the Temple as a reminder to improve their ways aren't able to see the Vision. Only the righteous tzadikim actually see the Vision. So what's the point? The ones who need the help can't see it and the ones who don't need the help are able to see it. A similar question is asked in Pirkei Avot. It states that every day there is a voice coming from heaven telling people to repent. The question is, who hears this voice? What is the purpose of this voice coming from heaven urging repentance if those that need to hear the message can't hear it? It's a similar question.

The answer is explained in the teachings of Chasidus — Jewish mysticism — that these voices are heard by everyone. That is, at the soul level, every Jew hears these voices from heaven telling people to repent. That's the reason why, from time to time, we see people get inspired to improve themselves. Where does that inspiration come from? That comes from those announcements, those voices that come from heaven every day. At certain times, certain people are meritorious to be able to tune in to these voices in order to help them to turn back to the ways of God.

This is the answer to the question we asked — what is the purpose of showing the Temple if those that most need to see it don't see it? The answer is that they do see it. The soul gets to see it. And from time to time some people are meritorious to be able to sense, at the conscious level, what the soul is experiencing at the spiritual level. So the great, righteous tzadikim 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. This is the answer to 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 actually have it with the coming of the Moshiach soon in our days! We will get to see the greatness of the Torah. ■

What will we take with us?

Rabbi Robert Levy, special to the WJN

Some time ago, even before COVID, if memory can extend that far back, Temple Beth Emeth engaged a sofer, or scribe, to examine and renew our Sifrei



Rabbi Robert Levy

Torah, our Torah scrolls. The scribe also corrected a fallacy of mine. Previously, I had been taught that one never touched a Torah scroll with one's hand and this was the reason for the use of a yad, or Torah pointer when reading the text. I was taught, and taught others, that the oils on one's fingers would be transferred to the text by touch and pass through the ink

and then lift the letters off the non-porous parchment beneath.

One day I entered the small chapel where the sofer was working. He was going to explain some aspect of this art to me. I don't remember exactly what, maybe because as I watched he placed his hands all over the text without the concern I anticipated. "Not an issue," he explained to my calmly stated, but internally shocked, response. Touch will not hurt the Torah. Still, I keep my non touching practice, though I no longer teach this and keep myself to leading by example.

And here we are, being told to touch again and that the difficult lesson we learned about not touching is no longer required. Okay, but, however, really, are you kidding, maybe tomorrow but not today. Of course, by now (in the reading as opposed to the now of this writing) we have reacclimated ourselves to the presence of others. But I wonder, will a

crowded space ever be free of concern? Will the too loud conversation from the next table in a restaurant be understood not as decibels but as aerosol particles?

When can we embrace with glorious thoughtlessness the human reality as we once did? What is the lasting imprint of this past year and will this permanent reordering of our apprehension be better (as in less colds and flu) or will it isolate us from our natural humanity?

A member of the Beth Emeth community once taught me that the smell of bad breath on Yom Kippur was part of the Holy Day's intimate knowledge of human frailty. Even off Zoom will we ever be the same? ■

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Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to:

Jerry Schafer on the death of his brother, Dr. Nelson Stewart Schafer, May 11.
Uri Lavi on the death of his brother, Avram Shor, June 3.
The family of Evelyn Solgan sister of Ed Kimball, June 6.
The family of Mae Axelrood, mother of Debra Axelrood (Gary Przepiora) and Grandmother of Sophia Kruz (Oliver Uberti), June 15.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazal tovs to:

Clinton Brenner on his Bar Mitzvah, Saturday, May 8
Eliza Herz on her Bat Mitzvah, Saturday May 29
Eileen and Gary Freed on the marriage of their son, Rabbi Ben Freed and Ariane Barrie-Stern.
Rabbi Ben Freed on his ordination as a rabbi from the Jewish Theological Seminary.
Florence and Marvin Gerber on the birth of their first great-granddaughter, Aimee Ella Hosney, daughter of Estee and Ezra Hosney, and granddaughter of Tracy and Sander Gerber.
Cheryl and Mark Good on the birth of their grandson, Finn Matthew, son of Ian and Jess Good and great grandson of Phyllis Werbel.

A few things you need to know about the Israeli government that replaces Benjamin Netanyahu *Continued from page 1*

it held another. Then yet another. Each time, neither Netanyahu nor his opponents gained a majority. There was a brief interlude where the rivals came together to form a coalition to address the pandemic, but that fell apart pretty quickly.

This time around, if Netanyahu's opponents weren't able to team up, Israel would have held a fifth election. Almost no one wanted that to happen, so Netanyahu's rivals decided to put aside their vast differences and form a coalition with one goal: to get rid of him.

The incoming coalition is a testament to how much Israeli politics has become about Netanyahu himself. Three of the parties in the incoming government largely agree with Netanyahu on policy. But they dislike him so much that they'd rather team up with the Israeli left than give him another term in office.

This amounts to a political reset for the Jewish state. To have any real memory of Israel before Netanyahu's current tenure, you'd have to have been born well before the iPhone was released. For more than a decade, Netanyahu's personality and politics have dominated Israel. No longer.

This is the first coalition in Israeli history to include an Arab-Israeli party.

There have been left-right coalitions in Israel before. But to reach a majority of Israel's 120-seat parliament, the Knesset, the anti-Netanyahu alliance is doing something truly unprecedented in Israeli history: It is inviting an independent Arab-Israeli party to join the governing coalition.

That hasn't happened before for a few reasons: Although Arabs make up 20% of Israel's citizenry, Israel's largest political parties, on both the left and right, didn't see Arab parties as legitimate political partners in a Jewish state. Arab parties, likewise, did not want to be seen as granting legitimacy to Jewish governments. And often, the policy differences between Jewish and Arab parties were vast.

But seven decades after Israel was founded,

things have changed. Arab leaders have been more vocal about demanding a say in the way their country is governed. And the ongoing stalemate has given Arab parties a chance to be kingmaker.

Faced with the prospect of losing power last year, Netanyahu (who once attacked the very idea of Arab citizens voting in elections) said he'd be willing to partner with Raam, an Islamist Arab party. That legitimized the idea of including Arabs in Israeli coalitions, and now, Raam is set to join Netanyahu's rivals, and give them the slimmest of majorities.

Arabs have almost always been represented in Israel's parliament. But now, for the first time ever, an Arab party will have an active say in Israel's government.

It is a narrow — and unwieldy — coalition of right and left.

The coalition is unified on the goal of ousting Netanyahu, but it's divided on pretty much everything else. It will contain eight different political parties, an unusually large number even in Israel's famously tumultuous politics. And it will have the smallest possible majority in parliament, so to get anything done, every single member will have to agree.

To reconcile the different factions, the coalition will have two prime ministers: Naftali Bennett, who heads the right-wing Yamina party, will serve for two years and change. Then Yair Lapid, the leader of the centrist Yesh Atid party, will take over for about the same amount of time.

Both of them head historically small parties. Yesh Atid only has 17 seats (as opposed to the 30 held by Netanyahu's Likud party). Yamina will have a paltry six seats. But this unorthodox arrangement is the only way to keep everyone in the coalition happy.

It's unclear how long this coalition will last. Previous ones that were more ideologically coherent have fallen apart quickly.

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 growing 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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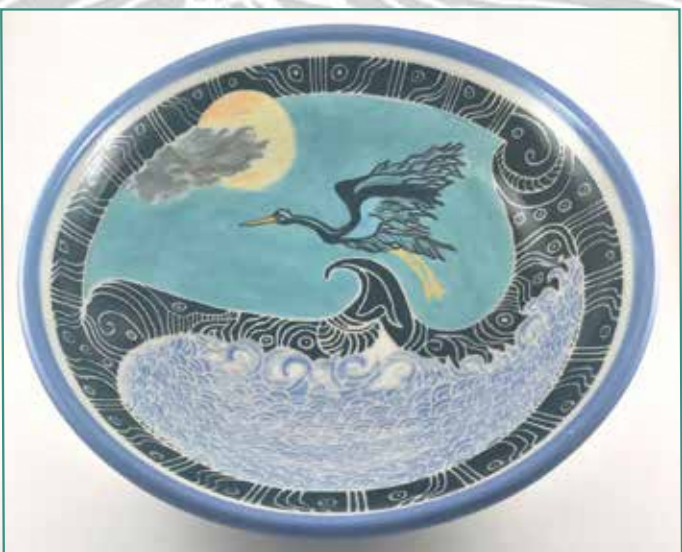
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