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JEWISH NEWS

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FREE

Three JCC book festival events moderated by Frankel Center faculty

Kelsey Robinette Keeves, special to the WJN

The 2020 Ann Arbor Jewish Book Festival will be held online, with most events free and open to the public. The annual festival celebrating Jewish authors is organized by the Jewish Community Center of Ann Arbor and is supported by the Jewish Federation of Ann Arbor. Go to book.jccannarbor.org to see the full list of events throughout November and December. Three of this year's events will be moderated by faculty of the University of Michigan's Frankel Center for Judaic Studies.

Honey on the Page

Julian Levinson, Samuel Shetzer Associate Professor of American Jewish Studies, will host an event with Miriam Udel on Sunday, Dec. 13, at 11 a.m. Udel is an associate professor in German studies at the Tam Institute of Jewish Studies at Emory University. She will be discussing *Honey on the Page: A Treasure of Yiddish Children's*



Literature, an unprecedented treasury of Yiddish children's stories and poems with original illustrations.

Honey on the Page holds nearly 50 stories and poems for children, translated from the original Yiddish. Arranged thematically, the book takes readers from Jewish holidays and history to folktales and fables, from stories of humanistic ethics to multi-generational family sagas. Featuring many works appearing in English for the

first time and written by both prominent and lesser-known authors, this anthology spans the Yiddish-speaking globe — drawing from materials published in Eastern Europe, New York, and Latin America from the 1910s and interwar period up through the 1970s. With its vast scope, *Honey on the Page* offers a cornucopia of delights to families, individuals, and educators seeking literature that speaks to Jewish children about their religious, cultural, and ethical heritage.

Family Papers: A Sephardic Journey Through the Twentieth Century

On Dec. 15 at 7 p.m., assistant professor Devi Mays will join author Sarah Stein as she presents *Family Papers: A Sephardic Journey Through the Twentieth Century*. The 2019 release was named one of the best books of the year by *The Economist*, won *New York Times Book Review* Editors' Choice, and was a National Jewish Book Award finalist.

Sarah Stein is the Sady and Ludwig Kahn Director of the Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies and holds the Viterbi Family Chair in Mediterranean Jewish Studies at UCLA. She is the author or editor of several books, including *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews, and the Ottoman Twentieth Century* and *Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of Global Commerce*. She is the recipient of the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature, three National Endowment for the Humanities



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From llamas to a Jewish superhero, these 8 children's books bring new characters into the Hanukkah story

Penny Schwartz, originally from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Move over, Maccabees. This season's crop of seven new Hanukkah books for kids puts the spotlight on new heroes, from playful llamas to brave and kind knights on horseback.

An eighth book, "Honey on the Page," that shines light on Yiddish children's stories in new translation, makes a perfect family gift.

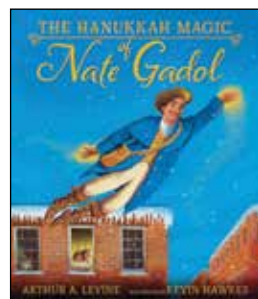
Among this year's highlights is Arthur A. Levine's "The Hanukkah Magic of Nate Gadol," a superhero story that comes to life with Kevin Hawkes' sparkling illustrations.

Over the years, as a leading children's book editor, scores of Hanukkah books crossed Levine's desk, but many were retellings of the same story. "Only a few writers ... were telling imaginary tales that took Hanukkah as a jumping-off point," he wrote in an email.

Nate Gadol is the kind of story he longed for, that enhances the cherished Hanukkah traditions with an aura of magic.

This year, as the COVID-19 pandemic prevents families from celebrating

Hanukkah with large festive gatherings, round up the cousins on Zoom, light the menorah, nibble on sufganiyot and share in the joy of a new book.

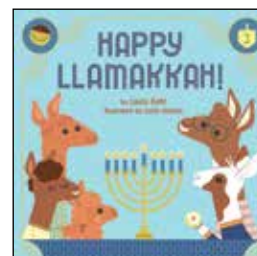


"The
Hanukkah
Magic of Nate
Gadol"

Arthur A. Levine;
illustrated by
Kevin Hawkes
Candlewick
Press; ages 5-8

Just when the world needs a dose of magic, along comes Nate Gadol, a Jewish mythical superhero who sparks joy for those in need. In Levine's warm-hearted tale, embellished with Hawkes' glorious art, the larger-than-life Nate Gadol swoops in to brighten the lives of the Glaser family, poor but kind new immigrants. In the cold winter of 1881 in their urban American

apartment, the Glasers stretch what they have to help their neighbors, the O'Malleys. When Hanukkah and Christmas coincide, Nate and Santa help each other out and surprise both families with gifts. The hero's name is a play on the phrase represented with the four letters on the dreidel, Nes Gadol Haya Sham ("A great miracle happened there").

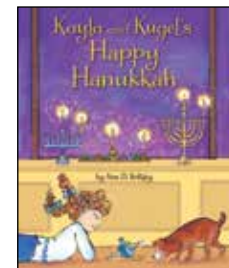


"Happy
Llamakka!"

Laura Gehl;
illustrated by
Lydia Nichols
Abrams
Applesseed;
ages 3-5

How does a family of llamas celebrate Hanukkah? With Llamakka!, of course! Laura Gehl's tender rhyming verse is perfect for cozying up with the endearing little llamas as they light the Hanukkah menorah, play dreidel and build a snow-

llama. Lydia Nichols' cheerful illustrations brighten the pages.



"Kayla and
Kugel's Happy
Hanukkah"

Ann D. Koffsky
Apples & Honey
Press;
ages 3-8

The happy pair of Kayla and her rambunctious dog Kugel are back in Ann Koffsky's latest title in the delightful series. As Kayla gets ready to celebrate Hanukkah, she and Kugel are searching for the family's Hanukkah box. In Koffsky's clear verse, the spunky Kayla explains the origins and traditions of the holiday to Kugel. Koffsky's color-rich, lively illustrations, including many of the mischievous Kugel, are sure to spark smiles.

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From the Editor

This is a month of celebrating books! The JCC Jewish book festival, Hanukkah books, book reviews, book talks. My favorite use of Facebook: lists of books my friends are reading (and also TV series they are watching). Remember not so long ago, we had a president who would recommend books? Look up those lists President Obama compiled; there are some really good books there. Most surprising book fact I learned this week: Stacey Abrams is also a romance novelist, under the name Selena Montgomery.

I'm very excited that the Jewish Book Festival is hosting Sarah Abraceva Stein on Dec. 15. Sarah grew up in Eugene, a good friend of my niece. Both Sarah and my niece were raised in mixed families, one Sephardi/Mizrahi parent and one Ashkenazi parent, which opens up the world of Judaic learning and practice in such beautiful ways. Here I'd also like to point out the interesting articles on Yiddish (page 5), and North African Jewish traditions (page 7). Also in this issue of the WJN is a follow up to the article Michael Appel and Carol Levin did on the World Jewish Congress, see page 22.



Clare Kinberg

The Hebrew month of Kislev, Nov. 17 to Dec. 15 this year, is said to be a time of sleeping, dreaming, rainbows, and transforming: my best wishes that your Hanukkah include a good dose of all of those! ■

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The Ann Arbor JCC's article from November, which the WJN titled, "Ann Arbor JCC innovations and improvements," was edited in a way that created inaccuracies which I believe require clarification. The board of directors and executive team came face to face in March with the first of many pandemic related decisions, but the edits confused this with an actual meeting. The edits also created ambiguity around what we identified as our greatest challenge, which in the unedited version was simply put: building community when it was unsafe to be together.

The decision to cancel programs mid-March was not due to moving them online as the edits imply. Rather, in person programs were canceled out of respect for people's health and safety. After Governor Whitmer issued the stay home orders (shortly after our decision to cancel in person programs) and we knew that in person programs could not resume for some time, we then re-envisioned programs for online.

The edits also suggest that the leadership struggled to move programs online. This is inaccurate in two ways. First, every staff member at every level of the organization contributed to the effort, not only organizational leadership. Everyone affiliated with the J did incredible work, and the edits erase the contributions of those not considered part of the leadership. Reimagining an entire organization takes the entire organization. Second, of course there were challenges, as with any major paradigm shift, but the rephrasing to "struggled" makes the wrong statement. The J rose to the challenge by embracing the opportunity to find new and creative ways to serve our mission in a landscape that presented its own limitations, and we did so successfully.

Thank you for this opportunity to clarify the facts.

Clara Silver
Director of Operations, Ann Arbor JCC

Portugal has naturalized 23,000 applicants under Jewish law of return

Cnaan Liphshiz, originally written for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Portugal has granted citizenship to about 23,000 people who applied under a 2015 law granting citizenship to descendants of Sephardic Jews.

That figure means that the government has thus far approved about 30% of the roughly 76,000 applications submitted since 2015. Officials did not say how many applications were declined.

About 25,000 of applications were submitted in 2019 alone, many of which have not yet been processed.

The figures were released in a statement on Oct. 22 from the Washington, D.C.-based Sephardic Heritage International organization.

Both Portugal and Spain passed laws in 2015 granting citizenship to the descendants of Sephardic Jews, measures both governments said were intended to atone for the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula during the Inquisition.

The window for the Spanish law was supposed to close last year, but has been extended until further notice. The Portuguese law is open-ended. In both countries, the task of vetting applications has been handed over to local Jewish organizations.

Domingos Fezas Vital, the Portuguese ambassador to the United States, said in an online video conference co-hosted by Sephardic Heritage International on Oct. 22 that the Inquisition was a mistake. The region "subjected itself to what we would call today, a form of brain drain," he said. ■



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Extra copies of the *Washtenaw Jewish News* are available at locations throughout Washtenaw County.

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Kate Tremel and Friends

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Virtual Event
LIVE December 5-6,
12-4 pm

Thru Dec. 20
BoothCentral.com

for more information janet@janetkelman.com

Community

Three JCC book festival events moderated by Frankel Center faculty

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Fellowships, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and two National Jewish Book Awards.

In her newest book, *Family Papers*, Stein uses the Levy family's correspondence to tell their history. For centuries, the bustling port city of Salonica was home to the sprawling Levy family. As leading publishers and editors, they helped chronicle modernity as it was experienced by Sephardic Jews

eradicating whole branches of the family tree.

I Want You To Know We're Still Here: A Post-Holocaust Memoir

Sol Drachler Professor of Social Work and director of the Jewish Communal Leadership Program, Karla Goldman, will moderate an event with author Esther Safran Foer on Dec. 17 at 1 p.m., presenting Foer's book, *I Want You To Know We're Still Here: A Post-Holocaust Memoir*. Esther Safran Foer is a writer and the former Executive Director of Sixth & I Synagogue in Washington, DC.

After learning that her father had a previous wife and daughter, both killed during the Holocaust, Foer travels to Ukraine to learn about them, and about how her father survived during the war. Her memoir is the poignant and deeply moving story not



Devi Mays



Karla Goldman



Julian Levinson

across the Ottoman Empire. The wars of the 20th century, however, redrew the borders around the Levys, in the process transforming the Levys from Ottomans to Greeks. Family members soon moved across boundaries and hemispheres, stretching the familial diaspora from Greece to Western Europe, Israel, Brazil, and India. In time, the Holocaust nearly eviscerated the clan,

only of her journey, but of four generations living in the shadow of the Holocaust. They are four generations of survivors, storytellers, and memory keepers, determined not just to keep the past alive but to imbue the present with life. ■

Post-election activism with Bend the Arc

By Adina Lopatin

Driving through rural Northfield Township the day after Michigan was called for Joe Biden, my son Isaak and I noticed that some of the political signs we often see on our way to his play group had come down. I told Isaak that Biden had won Michigan, and he said, with relief, "Someone who shares the bad germ can't be president!"

This was typical wisdom from Isaak, who, like other COVID-19-era five-year-olds, understands germs, masking, and social distancing. From preschool, he knows that keeping each other safe is one of our most important responsibilities. He couldn't believe it when I told him that a grownup — the president! — wasn't keeping people safe. He intuitively understands the Talmudic idea that when someone destroys a life, it is as if they destroy the whole world, and when someone saves a life, it is as if they save the whole world.

I think of that piece of mishnah whenever Isaak expresses horror about the president's failure to mask; I thought of it too as I spent hours on Thursday afternoons up to the election making phone calls to voters through Michigan

Democrats and Bend the Arc, a movement of progressive Jews across the country to rise up against anti-Black racism, dismantle white supremacy, and build a more just society.

As is typical with phone-banking, many of my calls were wrong numbers, hang-ups, or (understandably) refusals to talk from beleaguered swing state residents. Often my mind went dark: This isn't making any difference, this isn't worth my time, and I should get some work done, or at least make dinner. But I kept telling myself: If I help even one person to vote for Biden-Harris today, it'll be worth it. If I get at least one vote, it's as if I've saved the election.

This may have been a grandiose way to think about phone-banking, but it helped; it kept me dialing through all those Thursdays, and even more shifts in the weeks before Election Day. As I swung from desperation to grandiosity, I reminded myself of the hasid who carried a piece of paper in each pocket. One read, "I am dust and ashes," and the other, "For me the world was created."

Continued on page 10

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EMU hosts Sketch and Sip for Hanukkah

Martin B. Shichtman, special to the WJN

Looking for that special virtual place where you can draw, develop new skills, and enjoy a delicious beverage? During Sketch and Sip, at 7 p.m. on Dec. 9, Meg Adler will taste and talk about a new wine while you sip whatever is extravagant to you in your own home. Then we all sketch together, step by step. This Sketch and Sip will focus on the story of Hanukkah, with an opportunity to create digital Hanukkah cards that you can send to loved ones or keep as a reminder of all you've learned!

Meg Adler founded her illustration company, Letters, Aligned, in 2014, starting with very simple lettering projects; since then, it has morphed into an important Oakland, Calif., mission-led community. Currently, she also works as assistant director of Jewish life and learning at Camp Tawonga and lives with her family (wife, two cats, parents, and their dog).

Admission to this Zoom presentation is free and open to all (including children), but you must register to attend. Registration can be found at: tinyurl.com/emulecture5.

This presentation is co-sponsored by Hillel at Eastern Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University Campus Life,



Meg Adler

the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. The Center for Jewish Studies would also like to offer a special thank you to sponsors Harlene and Henry Appelman.

If you have any questions, please contact Marty Shichtman at jewish.studies@emich.edu. ■

Broadway takes the stage for Washtenaw County

Jamie Meyers, special to the WJN

The lights of Broadway will shine in Washtenaw County on Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. Thomas Laub, a Tony-nominated producer for Slave Play, is leading a star-studded lineup of Broadway talent for a special one-of-a-kind performance dedicated to raising money for Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County.

Laub, a North Carolina native, says Ann Arbor is where he “became a full person,”

humanizing perspective,” said Ahlers. “I hope that kids out there will see us in a way that shows performing is for everyone. I didn’t always have that, so I understand how important it is for young people to see being an artist is an attainable goal.”

“You will never have another chance to watch these performers set up their phone and perform a song for you from their living room and also share what Ann Arbor means



crediting the University of Michigan’s musical theater program and the extraordinary arts community in Washtenaw County. He was quick to say yes when asked to organize a show that would raise funds to support the increasing needs of the community due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Ann Arbor community was so supportive and so nurturing to a young artist,” said Laub, adding that recruiting performers, most of whom have connections to U-M as alumni or faculty, was easy.

“I didn’t have to text anybody twice,” he said. “I told them it was a fundraising effort to help people in Washtenaw County. They all said yes. There are so many amazing folks who had such a formative experience at Michigan that they want to give back to the community that built them up. They want to show that they will be there for Michigan.”

Ben Ahlers, recent star of NBC’s *The Village*, will be a familiar face to many people at Pioneer High School, where he volunteered as a theater director and in other roles to support student artists while he was a student at U-M. He said stepping up to help Washtenaw County was an easy decision, especially as the arts are on hold in many ways. He will perform the Louis Armstrong classic “What a Wonderful World.”

“I wanted to focus on being grateful and giving love and light,” said Ahlers. “Sometimes it feels like the world is against us, but I think it is important to keep trying and contributing.”

Laub and Ahlers agree that the JFS performance, which will feature artists performing from their own homes, will be a memorable event.

“I definitely think it will bring a

to them,” said Laub. “It is both as simple and as wonderful as it gets. This whole thing is a love letter to Ann Arbor and the people that live here.”

Broadway on a Mission replaces JFS’s annual fundraiser, which was cancelled due to COVID-19. Funds raised will help JFS programs that are facing unprecedented demand, such as the specialty food pantry, which has increased grocery and meal services, including deliveries to vulnerable community members. At the start of the pandemic, JFS quickly adapted services by modifying counseling appointments to telehealth and increasing phone reassurance calls to socially isolated community members, also welcoming more than 50 refugees to Washtenaw County. This is in addition to meeting increased demand for virtual English classes, caregiver support, and other social services.

“This event is a miracle of art and kindness,” said Anya Abramzon, executive director of JFS. “It will help our programs address the critical needs of our clients, many of whom are reaching out to us for the first time. We are deeply grateful that as we gear up for many more months of addressing those needs, we are receiving such a wonderful gift from the artists. They are sharing their talent with us and providing a tremendous boost of energy, positivity, and emotional support for our community.”

The event, *Broadway on a Mission: A Virtual Benefit for JFS Covid Relief*, will take place Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$100. Call 734-237-6403 with questions, and see the full lineup of performers and buy tickets at jfsannarbor.org/broadway. ■

Federation panel features experts on COVID-19 vaccines

Rachel Wall, special to the WJN

On Nov. 8, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor presented its annual Maimonides Society program. This year’s event, Race to the COVID-19 Vaccine, featured three experts in their fields: Dr. Allison Weinmann is an infectious disease physician leading clinical vaccine trials at Henry Ford Health Systems, Dr. Adam Luring, is an associate professor at University of Michigan with advanced medical training in infectious diseases and virology and co-director of U-M’s new Center for Infectious Disease Threats, and Dr. Jonathan Warsh, is chief of staff for the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

The panelists offered a thoughtful overview of transmission of COVID-19, development of vaccines, and public health concerns relating to management of the disease’s spread. The panelists alternated answering questions directly from moderator Dr. Jonathan Trobe, chair of the Maimonides Society, and from the audience. Each expert brought a unique perspective to the conversation, and their areas of expertise complemented one another. Luring described the scientific basis for various types of vaccines and their mechanisms, followed by a discussion from Weinmann on who is being included — and excluded — from clinical vaccine trials at Henry Ford. Warsh supplied broader context for how Michigan’s current health precautions might be affected by the availability of a vaccine.

Reinforcing Warsh’s assertions that from the State of Michigan’s perspective, social distancing and masks are not likely to disappear immediately once there’s a reliable vaccine, Luring cautioned, “There’s a tendency to look for the big magic bullet, but this is small ball.”

According to the panelists, containing this disease requires a multifaceted approach, and it could be a matter of years, not months, before life returns to normal. Such a prolonged crisis is taking its toll, especially on health care workers, and Warsh said the state is seeing “extraordinary levels of burnout and mental health problems” in that population. Weinmann added that working with physicians, nurses, and patients “has been a really humbling experience.”

The audience was rapt throughout the program. As the end of its scheduled 90 minutes neared, questions poured into the Zoom chat. The majority of the more than 120 attendees stayed past the advertised end time as the conversation continued.

The Maimonides Society is an association connecting Jewish medical professionals in greater Ann Arbor through events and networking. Named for Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, also known as Maimonides, the society welcomes physicians, dentists, and other medical professionals. To learn more about the Society, contact Federation’s communications and development manager, Rachel Wall, at rachel@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3533. ■

Shmuesn zumish: Yidish Tish goes virtual

By Elliot H. Gertel

Vos hert zikh?” — “What’s up?” — is one of many ways one can start up a conversation in Yiddish. For over three decades, Ann Arborites who are advocates of Yiddish language and culture have met in a variety of venues for shmuesn (chatting) and/or leyenen (reading) in mame-loshn, literally the “mother tongue,” one of many names for the Yiddish language. This is the story of the khasene, or “marriage” of two such groups — that shared some of the same members — to form what is the Yidish Tish, the combined collective, for this couple had one bond in common, a passion for Yiddish.

There were other Yiddish cultural societies in Ann Arbor that predate these two groups. Some of these may go back over 40 years, and at least one — a reading group at the University of Michigan’s Frankel Center for Judaic Studies — is contemporaneous to the two discussed here. The focus of this article, however, will be on those that are now the current Ann Arbor Yidish Tish.

In 1997, following a suggestion by her daughter Shoshke-Rayzl Juni, Rae Juni founded a Friends of Yiddish group, which met on Friday afternoons at her home in Ann Arbor, mainly to read Yiddish literature. Sometimes, they convened once a month in the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County. Such a reading group is known as a leyenkrayz. This particular collective had a series of different names, including Weekly

Yiddish Reading Group, JCC Yiddish Group, and Yiddish Literature Circle, among others. A number of years after its founding, the leyenkrayz relocated to the JCC permanently.

In 2002, Hungarian native Vera Szabó, the Yiddish lecturer at the University of Michigan from 2001 to 2010, started a Yiddish conversational group, which originally met at casual restaurants near Central Campus one afternoon a week. The group, which is known as Yidish Tish (literally “Yiddish Table”) — a fitting name as we gathered around a lunch table to shmues and nosh — soon settled into a permanent home in the various food courts of the Michigan League, which changed name, shape, design, and format over the years.

From the outset, Yidish Tish was open to the students, faculty, and staff of the University of Michigan as well as community members and visitors from near and far. People of all backgrounds, ages, and levels of proficiency, from native speakers to those who come just to listen, and everything in-between, have always been welcome at our

table. There we discuss a variety of topics, from different Yiddish dialects and sub-dialects to literature, travel, life in Ann Arbor and abroad, our activities, other interests, and more. The aim is to improve the fluency — especially vocabulary — of participants. The most dedicated members, the regulars, were from the Ann Arbor area and primarily not associated with U-M.

Early on, I became the facilitator for Yidish Tish, and when I retired from my position as the Irving M. Hermelin Curator of Judaica at U-M at the end of 2018, Yidish Tish moved by popular demand. For the first time in 17 years, we were no longer on the U-M campus. The group shifted to the Ann Arbor JCC in February 2019; this move was accomplished with the help of Lily Ladin, an inaugural member of both the reading and conversational groups, who made the arrangements with the JCC. At this point, Yidish Tish merged with the leyenkrayz and split its time evenly between conversation and reading while keeping the name Yidish Tish.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic,

we dispersed to shelter in place. Our last in-person session was on March 11 of this year. Lily Ladin, following up on a request from Shoshke-Rayzl Juni and Clare Kinberg, editor and publisher of *Washtenaw Jewish News*, was instrumental in getting me to explore going virtual, which we finally did in June; since then, we’ve been meeting every Wednesday afternoon. We’ve had participants from Ann Arbor, Oakland County, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Bethesda, Md., London, Berkeley, Calif., and Seattle. Most are now regular attendees.

We most recently completed the novel *Motl Peyse dem khazns (Motl the Cantor’s Son)*, by the celebrated Yiddish author and humorist Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916). The book relates the rollicking (mis)adventures of a family that wandered from Kasrilevke (Pauper Town), their fictitious Eastern European shtetl, across Europe until finally reaching New York to seek a better life, as so many other immigrants have done. The saga is related through the voice of Motl, a spirited, mischievous eight-year-old. We’ve just begun reading *Der kuntsn-makher fun Lublin (The Magician of Lublin)*, a novel by Nobel laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer (1904-1991), the story of Yasha Mazur, a sort of Eastern European Houdini.

For more information or to join Tish on Zoom, please contact me at egertel@umich.edu. You may just find out about some of the responses to “Vos hert zikh,” or perhaps you can teach us some new ones. ■



Motl Peyse dem khazns / Yerushalayim: Hotsa’at sefarim ‘a. sh. Y.L. Magnes, ha-Universitah ha-‘Ivrit, 757 [1997]

Threads of Yiddishland

By Ollie Elkus

Now more than ever, we’re digging letters out of the attic, both literal and figurative ones. Isolation is forced reflection, so it’s only natural if quarantine has us thinking of the past. As a translator of Yiddish, I’m always thinking of the past. But beyond that, some of us have had more time than usual to contemplate the metaphysical, asking who we are and where we come from. Others of us have dealt in the plain physical, schlepping boxes around, dusting off photo albums, having finally had a chance to dig through those unexamined family keepsakes that clutter the many caverns of our homes.

Recently it was my pleasure to receive a relic of such excavation. It was a letter dated June 14, 1939, which told the story of Breyndl, our protagonist, who was, nebekh, very sick. In her Russian-inflected Yiddish, she told of her harrowing journey from Horodok to Pinsk by parakhod (Russian for steamship) and from Pinsk to a sanitarium in Otwock. After her sons Noah and Velv spent every last cent they had, she turned to her brother in Detroit, in the form of this letter, asking that he “not forget his dear older sister” and “save her from the brink of death.”

Tragically, Breyndl never could have anticipated the German invasion of Poland, which would begin a mere two months, two weeks, and four days from the date of that letter. Such micro-histories as these are casually tucked away, just as this one was, in attics and basements the country over, waiting to be translated in order for their stories to be told.

Now, you could say this is nothing particular to Yiddish, and that loads of immigrant families must have letters tucked away in German, and Arabic, and Mandarin, and Italian, and French,

and so on. You’d be right, but also very wrong. Perhaps I’m biased, but I think Yiddish is special. You see, the Germans left behind German in Germany, and the Italians left behind Italian in Italy, and the Jews left behind Yiddish in . . . well, I suppose we just left it behind, then, didn’t we?

The point here is that Yiddish didn’t have the infrastructure that most other languages have. There was no nation to protect it, nor an organization to define it. Due to this predicament, the Yidisher Vishshaftlekher Institut, known by its acronym YIVO, was established in Wilno, Lithuania, in 1925 to standardize and preserve the Yiddish language. Mostly due to the fact that this standardization favored the minority northern Litvakish dialect of Yiddish, it was embraced by some, but as you can imagine, not by all. As the saying goes, “two Jews, three opinions.” But YIVO standardization eventually became more widespread, and today YIVO serves as the de facto authority on the Yiddish language in the absence of a Yiddish state.

But a movement for standardization in the 1920s is quite late, considering written Yiddish dates back to the 13th century. This means Yiddish was a language based on local conventions for 700 years before the YIVO

standard went widespread in published Yiddish in the 1940s, becoming gradually more common in handwritten Yiddish in the decades subsequent. To add insult to injury, although Yiddish uses the Hebrew alphabet, the cursive script found in Yiddish letters written in the 19th and 20th centuries is not the same script employed by writers of modern or ancient Hebrew. You can imagine such idiosyncracies make the translation of handwritten, personal letters written in Yiddish much more difficult. But all that’s worthwhile is hard, and the peculiarity of Yiddish merely serves to make its translation all the more important.

Among these peculiarities are Yiddish localisms, words used by Yiddish speakers in some areas of Europe but not in others. Breyndl’s Yiddish had elements of Russian, but of course that wouldn’t be the case for a Yiddish speaker in Romania. Localisms are an intrinsic part of the language we find in these letters, and due to the lack of infrastructure for the language, sometimes these letters are all we have. So when a letter degrades, it’s sad enough that a story is lost, but, as is the case with Yiddish, a piece of the language, a piece of our culture, is lost as well.

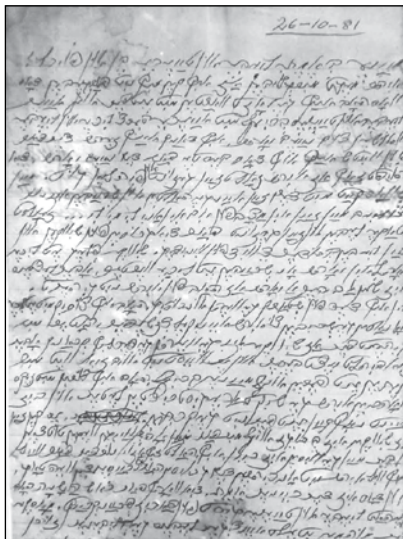
So how did we get here? Well, since the golden age of secular Yiddish culture in the 1920s,

assimilation has moved quickly, exponentially, even. Jews who made the decision not to raise their children in Yiddish have lived to see the Yiddish world unravel, some with subsequent remorse or deep regret. In this way, I found learning Yiddish could be a frustrating task. There was even a sort of indignation about it. Everything about Yiddish still felt so familiar and so natural to me, yet at the same time I could feel it slipping away.

So to grab hold of it before it’s too far gone, I rummage through poetry and collections of short stories, trying to weave together the threads of Yiddishland to create the fullest portrait of this evasive place, like rummaging through old letters in the attic, trying to piece together family history. I do this because I believe if we understand Yiddish, we understand our past, and, without exaggeration, we understand ourselves. And that’s what interests us about these old family keepsakes, is it not? It’s a connection to the past that forms a larger sense of self, a self that begins not with our birth but with everything that came before us, which happens to include bubbe’s music box and zayde’s rubber ducky, and that’s why we hold on to them, even if we don’t display them on the mantle.

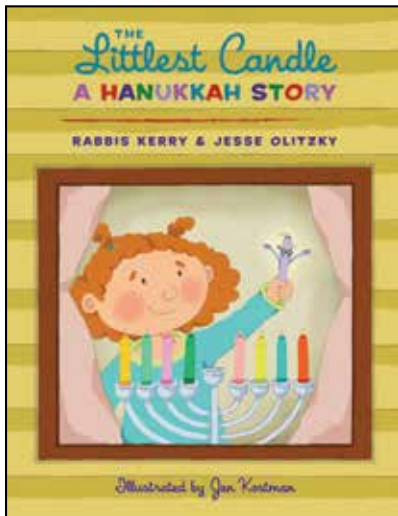
And in the case that it’s not a music box, or a rubber ducky, and it happens to be a Yiddish letter, or a postcard, or perhaps a newspaper clipping, I do hope you’ll drop me a line. ■

Ollie Elkus is a Yiddish translator currently under fellowship with the Yiddish Book Center. Ollie likes to bake bread, play drums, and drink tea. For translation requests he can be reached through his website ohelkustranslations.com or by contacting him directly at ollieelkus@gmail.com.



Community

Continued from page 1



"The Littlest Candle: A Hanukkah Story"

Rabbis Kerry and Jesse Olitzky; illustrated by Jen Kostman

Kalaniot Books; ages 4-8

On the eve of Hanukkah, a box of colorful candles tucked away in a drawer comes to life in this sweet story. While the big candles bicker about who will be chosen to light the first candle on the menorah, the wise candle notices that it's the littlest, Flicker, who is always helping others. When Flicker is chosen as the shamash, or the helper, the small purplish candle humbly shines in the highest place on the menorah. The book pairs noted Jewish educator Rabbi Kerry Olitzky with his son, Rabbi Jesse Olitzky. Jen Kostman's cartoon-style illustrations are as colorful as the bright boxes of Hanukkah candles.

"The Eight Knights of Hanukkah"

Leslie Kimmelman; illustrated by Galia Bernstein

Holiday House; ages 3-8

Hark! In this playful tale, Lady Sadie challenges her eight young knights to save their kingdom's Hanukkah celebration from a dragon who's wreaking havoc on the villagers. She sends them out trotting on horseback to make things right with kind deeds and bravery. Kids will chuckle when Sir Isabella and Sir Rugelach discover that behind the dragon's plume of smoke is a young creature

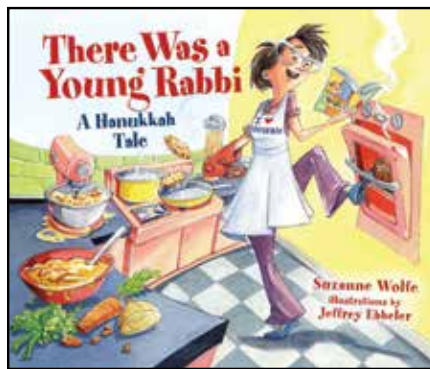


who joins them in the grand Hanukkah celebration. Leslie Kimmelman and Galia Bernstein have created a lively, off-beat story that tickles the funny bone. (Added bonus: the cast of characters are very diverse.)

"There Was a Young Rabbi: A Hanukkah Tale"

Suzanne Wolf; illustrated by Jeffrey Ebbeler

Kar-Ben; ages 4-8

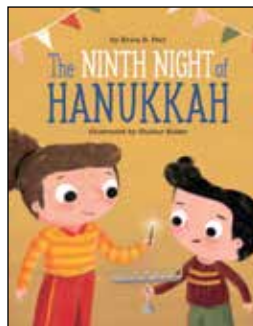


In this playful, rhyming story, Hanukkah meets "There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly." On the first night of Hanukkah a rabbi reads from the Torah and lights the menorah. Each night, she adds something new — cooking applesauce, playing dreidel with her family and enjoying chocolate coins. Young kids will join the chorus in this rollicking read-aloud.

"The Ninth Night of Hanukkah"

Erica S. Perl; illustrated by Shahar Kober

Sterling Children's Books; ages 3-8



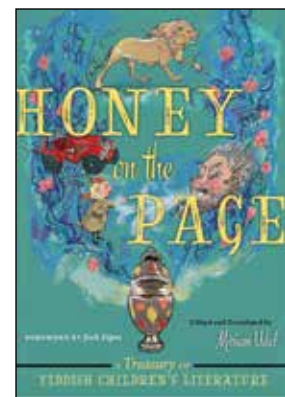
Oy vey. When Max and Rachel move into a new apartment on the first night of Hanukkah, their special Hanukkah box is nowhere to be found. The inventive siblings

craft their own menorah and knock on the door of a neighbor who comes to the rescue with birthday candles. For eight nights, a multicultural array of neighbors helps the kids improvise — a hoola hoop transforms into a perfect dreidel, for instance. As the holiday ends, Max and Rachel invite their new friends to a Hanukkah celebration. Israeli illustrator Shahar Kober's animated illustrations add to the humor.

"Honey on the Page: A Treasury of Yiddish Children's Literature"

Edited and translated by Miriam Udel

New York University Press (ages 10-adult)



Miriam Udel, a scholar of German and Jewish studies at Emory University, has gifted the world with a treasure of a book that introduces readers of all ages to the wealth of little-known Jewish children's

stories by more than 25 early 20th century Yiddish writers, including Sholem Asch, Zina Rabinowitz and Mordkhe Spektor. The rich anthology, perfect for reading aloud, is a keeper to return to over the years. ■

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Jewish women from North Africa have an awesome feminist Hanukkah tradition

Rishe Groner, originally published in Alma, syndicated by JTA

When it comes to celebrating Hanukkah, you probably think about lighting the menorah, playing dreidel (or maybe not, does anyone actually play dreidel?) and eating so many latkes that your stomach burns in sweet agony.

But did you know that there's a special Hanukkah tradition — Eid Al Bnat (The Festival of Daughters, in Judeo-Arabic) or Chag HaBanot (in Hebrew) — that women and girls from North Africa's Jewish communities have been celebrating for centuries?

In Jerusalem last year, I joined a group of women of Middle Eastern and North African backgrounds who gather regularly to study their heritage with an organization called Arevot, and we held an inspiring Eid Al Bnat celebration, with a focus on how to bring it back into our own communities.

It's a beautiful tradition that more people should know about, so let me break it down:

Origins of the holiday

Celebrated on the Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) of Tevet (one of the Hebrew months where Hanukkah takes place) in communities in North Africa and elsewhere, particularly the islands of Djerba and Tunis in Tunisia, Algeria, Salonika in Greece and Kushta (Istanbul) in Turkey, this day is filled with historic connections to powerful Jewish women. The festival takes the form of ceremonial gatherings featuring symbolic rituals, delicious treats and traditional songs, all focusing on bringing together generations of mothers, daughters, aunts, sisters and the extended community.

The stories of Hanukkah and the ladies therein are often retold only as the story of Judith, the brave widow who fake-seduced the Greek-Syrian general Holofernes, fed him salty cheese and got him drunk on wine, then calmly beheaded him. The soldiers freaked out, the Maccabees won the battle and the rest is quite literally history.

But there's another, lesser known story of a brave woman not named except as "the daughter of the Hasmonean, Yohanan the High Priest," who lived in Judea (AKA modern day Israel) during the time of the Maccabees. Among the anti-Jewish edicts of the time, the invading governor insisted on sleeping with every virgin woman the night before her marriage, and this carried on for almost four years. On the night of the high priest's daughter's marriage, as she was about to be carted off to the governor's chamber for the night, she uncovered her hair, ripped open her clothes, and exposed herself to all.

Amid cries of "send her off to be burned!" she turned to the crowd and said something along the lines of, "Are you kidding me? You think this is me being exposed — before my brothers and friends — but it doesn't bother you that I'm about to be exposed before this foreign invading governor, sacrificing me to him?"

Her brothers, the Maccabees and Co., realized it was time to go off and kill the ruling governor. She got herself fancy and had herself escorted with dancers and musicians straight to the governor's palace. Seeing the priestly family all caught up in this pseudo-wedding, the egomaniac governor let them right in, imagining they were handing off their daughter with voluntary joy. They uti-

lized the opportunity to behead him and all his servants, which eventually helped bring the Maccabees to victory. The power of this woman's vulnerability, honesty, and using her voice at just the right time is a fascinating tradition that we celebrate on this night.

is meaningful to you and that women can sing together. After that, the women traditionally recite a blessing of "Mi Shebeirach Imoteinu," or, "May the One who blessed our Mothers bless us." It's a refreshing change from the often male-gendered liturgy, and

time, it's up to the moms and aunts to cheer, bless, and generally love up these young girls as newcomers to the women's circle. It's also traditional to prepare foods together, like the North African favorite sfenj — think jelly doughnuts meet churros drizzled with honey — or honey cakes and cookies, or a potluck dinner. Mishloach manot — gifting packages of food and treats — is also part of the Eid Al Bnat tradition, so the Jewish mom Tupperware buffet is a must at this party!

The power of women's circles

Since this festival is based on the stories of Judith and the daughter of Yohanan the Hasmonean, it's important to tell, read or act out their stories, reflecting on the power of women. It's also a good time to share the history of the holiday, passing on wisdom from generation to generation and sharing the customs across different cultures.

Women's groups have a natural intimacy, so it's fun to play with the format and find ways to connect. In Jerusalem, we played a game that asked each woman to share a tip or a gift with another, which included everything from womb meditations to honeybee secrets to how to cope with mourning a loved one. You can share poetry, songs or just the best thing your mother ever taught you.

Whether you share stories, get vulnerable, cook up a storm, or dance the night away, this night is for us all to celebrate the power of the ladies in our lives, and the bonds that keep us strong in the face of struggle. ■



A child watching Hanukkah candles.

PHOTO CAPTION: GETTY IMAGES

How to celebrate

Like every tradition that gets passed down from generation to generation, there's always a new flourish or nuance between how your grandma did it and how my aunt likes to do it.

In some communities, women visited the synagogue (not a thing that was usually done!) and kissed the Torah scrolls and were blessed by the rabbi; in others they cooked and baked a festive meal together, and then celebrated all night. Sweet traditional foods were prepared and gifted in baskets to mothers, daughters, or mothers-in-law, prayers were shared, and songs were sung. Overall, though, the key components always include lighting the Hanukkah candles, lots of music and dancing, and the opportunity to create intimacy and community with women.

A song or piyyut often begins the night, followed by lighting the Hanukkah candles. Piyyutim are liturgical poems written in Hebrew that are sung in incredibly complicated and deeply moving Arabic maqam (a system of melodic modes). For those of us without the ability to improvise our way through epic Hebrew poetry, you can pick out a song that



The North African sfenj

PHOTO CAPTION: GETTY IMAGES

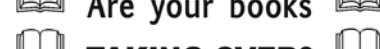
a cool opportunity to improvise your own prayer and gratitude for the women who came before us.

Next comes the chance to go around and get to know everyone, so pull out your best summer camp ice-breakers and find creative ways to put everyone at ease. It's beautiful to encourage every woman to name their mothers and grandmothers as well, lighting a candle for each one in the center of the table, bringing our personal histories into the circle.

A communal bat mitzvah

One awesome tradition is the presentation of the bat mitzvah girls of the year — consider it our very own debutante ball, but this

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Looking for Rose: Franklin Avenue

Clare Kinberg, 12th installment in a series

My family's experience in St. Louis correlated with a well-worn American urban narrative of Jewish neighborhoods becoming Black neighborhoods when the Jews moved out. And the corollary history of Jewish family-owned stores staying in the old neighborhoods long after the owners had moved also describes my family's story. My father's sister Rose was an exception; her life did not follow this storyline. When she left St. Louis in the late 1930s, she moved into a segregated Black neighborhood in Chicago with her African American husband and ended up living her life on the shore of a small lake in a rural Black community in southwest Michigan.

I dream of entering my aunt Rose's body during the crucial years before she met her second husband, Mr. Arnwine. She'd married young and had a child, but by 1931, she'd divorced her first husband Eddie, her son Joey was with her mother, and she was figuring out how to live independently. I imagine her at 23 years old, on the outs with the family, and about to step across racial and religious divides.

I see her on her way downtown to work, or looking for work, and as she exits the streetcar on Franklin Avenue, she finds herself in the midst of an event that launched a powerful wave of civil rights activity in St. Louis. Picketers are walking in a wide circle in front of the new Woolworth's five-and-dime, but they're also in front of the fish store and the dry goods store nearby.

In 1931, when the multinational corporation F. W. Woolworth's five-and-dime opened its sixth store in St. Louis, it was immediately picketed by an ad hoc group of African Americans who were fed up with retail stores in their neighborhoods that did not hire Black salesclerks.

This particular Woolworth's at 2612 Franklin Avenue was surrounded by shops owned and operated by Jewish families who had lived nearby, but had recently moved a few miles west of their stores. Brasch Furniture, Zorensky Bros ("Home

of Good Clothes, Hats, Furnishings and Shoes"), and Louis Gelb's fish store were among the new Woolworth's neighbors. Franklin Avenue was lined with dusty two- and three-story brick storefronts extending eastward to 14th Street, where my great-uncle Jack's Kinberg Hardware stood. Across the street from the hardware store was the Globe Theater, which, along with talkies, still advertised vaudeville shows.

Franklin Avenue formed the southern edge of what a decade earlier, in the early 1920s, had been described as the Jewish ghetto, a few dozen blocks of Eastern European immigrant families hemmed in by "No Jews need apply" signs in the apartments further north and south of the city's center.

Each federal census shows my family's westward migration, measured in city blocks. From 10th Street (that is, 10 blocks from the Mississippi River) in 1910, to 18th Street in 1920. When my grandfather Joe Kinberg died in 1927, his family had moved another 30 blocks west, and by 1930 they had moved to the city's western edge.

The 1930 census shows my aunt Rose still lived with her mother and five living siblings and worked as a salesclerk in dry goods. By 1932, though, she was living separately, about a block away from the rest of her family.

Black attorney David Grant describes the decision to picket the new Woolworth's in an oral history. "In 1931, Woolworth's Dime Store was putting up a store they built in the 2600 block on the south side of the street of Franklin Avenue. They proposed to open that store without a single

black clerk. It was then that we got this ad hoc group together . . . called the 'Neighborhood Improvement' or some such thing. *The St. Louis Argus* printed 50,000 handbills for us free, with which we circularized the entire area. . . . We went to management and asked them to hire some black clerks, and they said they had black janitors in white stores, so why did we have a right to complain? And our answer was, You have black janitors there because it's probably to your economic advantage. And we're gonna picket. Which we did. We maintained a picket out there and finally — it was early summer — they put one black woman in the doorway, selling ice cream cones. And finally, the economic picket, which was the first economic picket in St. Louis, was successful, and they hired two or three clerks inside the store.

"Well, following the success of that, the Colored Clerks' Circle . . . began then to attack all the stores up and down Easton Avenue and then later around '32, '33, they branched out. The CCC were quite successful in their efforts at opening employment opportunities in the stores in the black ghettos that were operating without any black help, usually family stores."

Though David Grant's oral history doesn't say this, many of those family stores were owned by Jews like my uncle Jack and almost all of my father's friends and neighbors. The St. Louis Jewish newspapers of the era — there were at least two — occasionally mention conditions for negroes and civil rights, but in the early 1930s

the pages were becoming increasingly filled with alarm over the rise of Hitler in Germany. While the Colored Clerks' Circle was picketing with "Don't Buy Where you Can't Work" signs in St. Louis, storm troopers across Germany had set up "Don't buy from Jews" pickets blocking access to (the falsely alleged to be Jewish-owned) Woolworth's stores, as well as to stores actually owned by Jews.

In this cauldron of pressure heated by widespread unemployment, racism, and antisemitism, my father put his head down, worked in the family hardware store, and then stepped into his father's junk-dealing business. I don't think he ever had a friend outside of the Ashkenazi Jewish community. At the same time, his sister Rose jumped out of one community and into another.

Aunt Rose died in 1982 on my 27th birthday, and I was never in her presence. Though I dream of it, I can't enter Rose's body or see through her eyes. Yet vestiges of the Franklin Avenue she knew have stalked me. For instance, in 1991 I was working part time as a clerk in a storefront parcel packaging and mailing service in the Queen Anne neighborhood in north Seattle. The owner, a young Jewish woman, wanted to hire an additional clerk and among the applicants was a Black University of Washington student. The owner took me aside to confide in me that although the student was the best candidate, she was worried her store's customers weren't "ready" to be served by a Black clerk. As a fellow Jew, she trusted I would understand what she perceived as a predicament. I was appalled and outraged.

My aunt Rose was long gone by then; I'll never be able to ask her about the Colored Clerks' Circle or Franklin Avenue. Yet I know that she did negotiate her life and loves, as do I, during years of persistent racism and extreme social upheaval, which, like today, seem to present either a fall into the abyss of fascism or a threshold to human cooperation. ■



Why do we care?

Borders and Belonging (Palgrave Macmillan) By Mira Sucharov. Dustin Atlas, review originally published in the Canadian Jewish Record

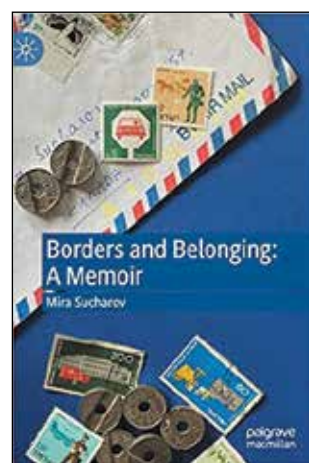
Mira Sucharov's *Borders and Belonging* is an intimate memoir of formation, something of a "Portrait of a Political Scientist as a Young Woman." A contemporary work, its trajectory is nonlinear: hopping from year to year, we see intimate flashes of feelings, events, and relationships; there is no sense at the book's end that the process is complete or that the insecurities that propelled the story have been resolved. This, along with the book's intimacy, is one of its many strengths.

Sucharov, a political science professor at Carleton University, fearlessly arms the ungenerous reader. I myself would not be capable of writing with such transparency, and left the book respecting her bravery.

However, bravery is not the main reason the book is valuable. There are, after all, many unflinching memoirs. The book is valuable because of the way it tackles a difficult question: How much of a person's political position is owed to their ideals, and how much to their pathologies? The position in question here is, as one might expect, the issue of Israel and Palestine.

This issue, which inflames arguments, ruins

parties, and deadens critical thought, is the book's breadcrumb trail: The shifting of



be familiar to many. What is less familiar is how candid Sucharov is about her own psychological investments, and how they inform her politics and thinking. Where less honest writers claim to be fighting for justice, or perhaps loyalty, or some other transcendental virtue, Sucharov's memoir reveals a tangle of insecurities,

humiliations, sexual desire, hypochondria, panic, allergies, and a need for affirmation.

And through it all, Facebook, relentlessly amplifying these insecurities, trivializing them while intensifying them. The book's art is in neither reducing her politics to these pathologies, nor separating them cleanly, acting as if they have nothing to do with one another.

So, while *Borders and Belonging* may not have a specific answer, it does develop the question: How much of our politics is owed to coping with being a human being — something that is never easy, no matter how generous life has been — and how much is owed to reasoning or disinterested ethical commitment? The book shifts between argument and psychology, unwilling to give either the final say.

Sigmund Freud features as a character in the background, but not in a heavy-handed way. If anything, he offers comic relief: The

young Sucharov intones his words without understanding them; the teenage Sucharov anxiously talks about his Jewishness to a security guard. The same goes for the narrator's many political arguments: They are serious, but Sucharov shows us how a passing insecurity or flirtation can disarm the most strident case. Rather than decide between the two, the book gently asks the question — is this a matter of justice, or just a way of coping? — and then performs the answer. To use a cliché, Sucharov shows us an answer, but does not tell us one.

This is a brave book, and will be of interest to anyone looking to delve into an anthropology of academia, wants a collection of snapshots from Canadian Jewish life, or has spent too long trying to honestly discern why we care about the causes we care about.

Dr. Dustin Atlas is the director of Jewish studies and an assistant professor in the School of Religion at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont. He specializes in contemporary Jewish thought, identity, and aesthetics, especially works that concern fragility, imperfection, and non-human creatures.



Sucharov's position is well detailed, and the arguments found along the way will

And the winner is . . .

Ali Reingold, special to the WJN

As the curious Hebrew Day School first and second graders quickly took their seats, they were eager to learn what new lesson awaited them. Their teacher, Janice Lieberman, dimmed the lights, turned on her computer, and clicked the first slide of a presentation. The words “Social Studies, Learning About People” were suddenly projected on the screen. And with that, they began their journey into learning about local politics.

Beginning with topics such as geography, culture, and history, the students spent several days in late October studying the structures of elections and local government. They discussed local leaders, learning who they are, what they do, and how they are chosen. The children gained an understanding of the structures of democracy including campaigning, voting, and holding primary and general elections.

To further their understanding of these processes, their learning diverged down two related paths — a conversation with a local elected official and the creation of their own election. In a non-pandemic year, the students would have traveled to City Hall to meet with the mayor of Ann Arbor and learn about the function of its City Council. Adjusting to the times, Morah Janice arranged to bring the mayor to the students, via Zoom.

At the end of October, Mayor Christopher Taylor of Ann Arbor took time to Zoom with

the first and second graders. Peppered with questions both professional and personal, the conversation began with some background



from the mayor. Over the course of the morning, he kindly fielded student questions such as “What did you do on City Council?” “What’s your biggest challenge being the mayor?” and “If you could have three wishes for Ann Arbor, what would they be?” Having the unique opportunity to have direct conversations with a local elected official was the next step in solidifying the students’ understanding of their studies.

The culminating activity connected to their learning was an election. First and

second graders campaigned on behalf of some of their favorite authors to determine whose books would be the focus of their

read-a-loud time in the coming weeks. After some intense campaigning, Dr. Seuss and Eric Kimmel both advanced from the class primary elections to the general elections, during which both in-person voting and absentee ballots were available. Ultimately, after all of the votes were counted, Dr. Seuss won the first-grade election and Eric Kimmel won in second grade. But the real winners were the students. Even though, for some, the elections’ outcomes were not what they had hoped for, the students were accepting of

the results, and respectful and kind to friends who had different preferences.

Creating opportunities for real-world



experiences helps solidify and illuminate the lessons that are being taught in the classroom. Empowering students to ask questions of local leaders and simulate their very own election makes learning relevant and impactful.

Ali Reingold is the director of admissions and marketing at Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor. For more information about the school or to inquire about the application process, please contact Ali at admissions@hdsaa.org or visit hdsaa.org. ■

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Wild geese, mountains, rivers: AARC enriches services with poetry

Emily Eisbruch, special to the WJN

What could be better than poetic verse and vivid imagery to elevate and move our spirits? The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC) features beautiful and thought-provoking poetry in worship services led by Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner. Here's a chat with Rabbi Ora about the role of poetry in Jewish services.

Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner

Emily: Rabbi Ora, what inspired your interest in incorporating poetry into Jewish services?

Rabbi Ora: I grew up attending a Conservative shul in Toronto where Shabbat prayers were usually sung with the same melodies and there was rarely any deviation from the strict keva (order of service). When I moved to Philadelphia in 2011 to attend the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, I joined Fringes, a chavurah co-founded by feminist activist poet Elliott batTzedek. Fringes services feature a mix of traditional liturgy and contemporary poetry. I learned from davening with Fringes that poems can shake up our expectations of what prayer looks and feels like.

Emily: What do you see as the role of poetry in

worship services?

Rabbi Ora: Poems crack open our hearts when we're feeling broken, or tired, or fearful, or numb. Poems offer an "Aha!" moment; they help us feel seen and less alone. Good poetry reminds us that there is beauty in the world — beauty that we've witnessed, and beauty that others have witnessed and bring to us in a gift of words. Poetry is remedy, balm, revolution, or reminder of how interconnected we all are.

Emily: What does poetry provide that the siddur does not?

Rabbi Ora: The siddur is full of gorgeous poetry! The psalms and the prophets are featured widely in our Shabbat siddur, and are profound and powerful poetry. But there are two real challenges to appreciating the poetry of the prayerbook. One, services are usually in Hebrew, and most North American Jews aren't fluent Hebrew speakers. This means that a lot of the beauty of the language gets lost. And two, any poem that gets repeated again and again will lose a lot of its vividness. Bringing new poetry into services cuts through the lulling effect of repetition. Poetry — if it's good, if it gets us, and we get it — says, "Wake up! Pay attention!"

Emily: How does poetry compare to music and song in services?

Rabbi Ora: Poetry is an invitation to awaken to what's holy in the world and in ourselves. It's

a chance to see things in a new light or to feel seen. For these reasons, I think of poetry as more of an individual experience — though I do love that moment when, just after our congregation finishes reading a new poem out loud, you can hear a collective murmur of "Wow" and "Yes." Singing together is more about the collective experience, feeling the sound of many voices resonating in the room or in our bodies.

Emily: What are your favorite sources for poetry to use in services?

Rabbi Ora: Poetryfoundation.org and poets.org are consistently great online sources. Lately I've been enjoying drawing from the book *Poetry of Presence: An Anthology of Mindfulness Poems*, edited by Phyllis Cole-Dai and Ruby R. Wilson.

Emily: Who/what are some of your favorite poets and favorite poems?

Rabbi Ora: Consistent favorites are Adrienne Rich, Yehuda Amichai, Ada Limon, Ross Gay, Carl Phillips, Mary Oliver, and for services in particular, Rumi and Rainer Maria Rilke. Mary Oliver's "Wild Geese" is an antidote to the harshness and shaming that lives in some aspects of our Jewish tradition, our world, and ourselves.

To learn more about the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation and see for

yourself how poetry is used to enrich the services, visit aarecon.org, or contact Gillian Jackson at aarcgillian@gmail.com or Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner at rabbiaarecon.org.

Wild Geese

Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again. Whoever you are, no matter
how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting —
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

TBE Events December 2020

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.

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

Women of TBE Historical Novel Reading Group

Monday, Dec. 14, at 12:30 p.m.
The WTBE Reading Group meets on the second Monday of each month. Contact Molly Lindner at burnham@umich.edu.

WTBE Cooks Monday meals

Mondays, Dec. 7 and 21, at 3:30 p.m.

Adult B'nei-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, Dec. 7, 21, and 28, 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 8:35–9:00 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emeritus Annie Rose

Tuesday, Dec. 8, at 7:30 p.m. and Thursday, Dec. 10, at noon

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!

Meditation with Claire Weiner

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

Wednesday evening Torah study

Wednesdays at 7 p.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston.

WTBE Virtual Happy Hour

Dec. 13 and 30 at 5:30 p.m.
Join WTBE's virtual Happy Hour to catch up and schmooze.

Adult education with Rabbi Whinston

Course Paused
Utilizing the Shalom Hartman Institute Curriculum. Together and Apart: The Future of Jewish Peoplehood.

Biblical Book Club with Cantor Hayut

Thursdays at 11 a.m.
Sundays at 3 p.m.
For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

WTBE community wellness events

Stress and the Immune System
Tuesday, Dec. 1, at 7:30–9 p.m.

Introduction to Jewish Meditation

Tuesday, Dec. 8, at 7:30 p.m.

Weekly Lunch & Learn

Fridays at noon

Continued from page 3

Now that the election is over, I'm still swinging between exhilaration and desperation. Exhilaration: Biden won! The first Black, South Asian, and woman vice-president! We flipped Michigan and Pennsylvania! Stacey Abrams' amazing work registering voters in Georgia! Desperation: White supremacy is still very much alive. Record-breaking numbers of Americans voted this year, and just under half chose Trump, despite or because of his commitment to white supremacy. Even before Trump, white supremacy has been the norm in our country, so "back to normal" is unsafe.

I don't yet know what my post-election activism is going to look like, but I am encouraged and hopeful to be exploring ways to grow my activism and model it for my kids

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.

Havdalah from the Whinston Home

Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston and his family for a short prayer marking the end of Shabbat.

Kol HaLev rehearsal and meeting

Sundays at 7 p.m.
For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut. ■

through Ann Arbor's chapter of Bend the Arc, a group of local Jewish families interested in pursuing social justice through Jewish values, education, and activism in solidarity with communities of color.

If you're interested in discussing what Bend the Arc's post-election social justice activism might look like, join an open conversation on Dec. 8 at 7 p.m.

For the little ones in your life, join award-winning storyteller (and retired Ann Arbor District Library Story Lady) Laura Pershin Raynor for folktales and family stories about Hanukkah, a holiday of activism in our own people's history, on Sunday, Dec. 13. To RSVP and for Zoom links, write to bendthearc.a2@gmail.com. ■

Beth Israel December Events

Illuminate!

Saturday, December 12, at 6:30 p.m.

Come one, come all! One of the biggest Hanukkah events in Ann Arbor, Illuminate, has been re-imagined as a drive-thru! Drive up and get in line at Beth Israel Congregation to see fire performers, Hanukkah lights, the biggest dreidel in Ann Arbor, and more! Register online for our planning purposes. Drive on up December 12 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Interested in sponsoring to keep this event and others like it free? Contact Amanda at engage@bethisrael-aa.org.

Gerhard Loewenberg Memorial Lecture: Professor Matthew Shugart Tuesday, December 15, at 6:45 p.m.

Professor of political science Matthew Shugart will present on contemporary issues influenced by the legendary political work of Gerhard Loewenberg, father of Beth Israel Congregation president Professor Deborah Ball, on the occasion of his first *yahrzeit*.

Monthly Lego Contest

Sunday, December 6, at 4 p.m.

Build a menorah or a replica of the temple that the Maccabees fought for and won. Compete against other Lego architects and win a prize if you're the group favorite. For children grades K through 6.

Tot Shabbat with the Caine Family Friday, December 11, at 5:30 p.m.

Join Rav Nadav, Lynne, Merav, and Ziva for Kabbalat Tot Shabbat by Zoom! Bring in Shabbat with music, dancing, candle lighting, and kiddush. Invite your friends! If you're new to the program and haven't received your special Tot Shabbat bag, contact Sam at szielinski@bethisrael-aa.org.

Family Game Night

Sunday, December 20, at 5 p.m.

A mix of trivia, games, and activities hosted by Amanda Glucklich. For families with children in grades K through 5.

Open Stage Night

Wednesday, December 23, at 8 p.m.

Share a short story, personal writing, poetry, or a few jokes with a live Zoom room audience.

Mystery Reader

Sunday, December 27, at 11 a.m.

Join us for stories read by a special Mystery reader! Who will it be this month? For children ages 5 and under.

Theology Book Club

Wednesdays at 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.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin

Mondays at 3:30 p.m.

Rabbi Dobrusin will be facilitating a Talmud class online on Monday afternoons from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. While we will read the Hebrew/Aramaic text, translations are available, and all discussions will be in English. All are welcome to join regardless of the level of your familiarity with Hebrew. Check the online calendar for specific dates.

Pirkei Avot: Teachings of the Sages

Thursdays at 5 p.m.

Rabbi Dobrusin will facilitate Zoom discussions of the classic Rabbinic text: Pirkei Avot. While the title is usually translated as "Teachings of the Sages," a more interesting translation is "Chapters of Fundamental Principles." Pirke Avot consists of short rabbinic statements concerning ethics, faith, and interpersonal relationships. Reading Pirkei Avot helps us focus on the values and principles that guide our lives. We will study the text in English, referring occasionally to the Hebrew. The text can be found in the Shabbat morning Sim Shalom siddur.

Online Services

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes, and events. Below is a list of the links to participate in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is now livestreaming 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.

Evening Minyan

Sundays at 5:00 p.m.
Mondays–Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

Friday Evening Services

Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6:00 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services

Saturday at 9:30 a.m. ■

Gerhard Loewenberg Memorial Lecture

Special to the WJN

Professor of political science Matthew Shugart will present on contemporary issues influenced by the legendary political work of Gerhard Loewenberg, father of Beth Israel Congregation president Professor Deborah Loewenberg Ball, on the occasion of Gerhard Loewenberg's first *yahrzeit*. The virtual lecture will be Dec. 15 at 6:45 p.m.

Gerhard "Jerry" Loewenberg was a political scientist and a world-renowned expert on legislatures. Loewenberg taught at Mount Holyoke College (1953-1969) and at the University of Iowa (1969-2003), where he served twice as chair of the political science department and dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Jerry founded the Comparative Legislative Research Center and the academic journal *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. He was an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

A leading authority on the German Bundestag and legislative politics more generally, Loewenberg played a foundational role in creating the field of legislative studies, including comparing the causes and consequences of different legislative procedures across countries. He published numerous books and articles and founded the Comparative Legislative Research Center. His personal integrity, kindness, and optimism inspired scores of colleagues, hundreds of graduate students, and thousands of undergraduates.

Loewenberg was born in Berlin and emigrated to New York to escape Nazi Germany with his parents and sister in 1936. He graduated from Bronx High School of Science and attended Cornell University, where he earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in government. He married Ina Perlstein in 1950. Loewenberg was a longtime member of Temple Judah in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, including serving on the synagogue board. He was a relentless optimist, and all who knew him are imagining what he would say to us about the tumultuous events of the 11 months since his death last December.

The lecture will be presented by Matthew Shugart, an American political scientist at the University of California, Davis. Influenced by Gerhard Loewenberg's work, Shugart specializes in electoral systems, party systems, and the design of political institutions. His research focuses on how the details of political institutions affect the quality of democratic governance. His primary focus is on comparative political institutions. His work on the American electoral system is influential, and he has extended his analysis to the political system of Israel, where he is an affiliated professor at the University of Haifa. He is also a proud Jew by choice, an actively observant Conservative Jew (who wears a kippah publicly), and a close friend of Rabbi Caine at Beth Israel Congregation. Shugart's forthcoming book is dedicated to Gerhard Loewenberg. ■

Hatmadah BBYO #126

By Laura Simon

Bnai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO) is a global teen-run organization that aims to strengthen Jewish identity. BBYO chapters are meant to be safe spaces where Jewish teens in eighth through 12th grades can come together and bond. In the Michigan Region there are 13 BBYO chapters — 12 are in the West Bloomfield area, and one is based in Ann Arbor. The Ann Arbor chapter, formed in 2016, is named Hatmadah, which means "persistence" in Hebrew.

Hatmadah's teen founders wanted something locally based and focused on building connections among Jewish teens in the Greater Ann Arbor area. When starting the chapter, they wanted it to be special and different from others. They had the goals of inclusivity, diversity, and gender inclusion in mind when creating Hatmadah.

Living in Ann Arbor, a city with a small Jewish community, the Hatmadah founders decided to create a BBYO chapter inclusive of all genders, rather than separate Alephs (male) and BBGs (female) chapters. This really makes Hatmadah feel like a family. Having both boys and girls in Hatmadah can present difficulties, such as having to have separate sleepovers and more gender-neutral events, but it also has many benefits that make our chapter stronger.

Pre-COVID-19, Hatmadah had a wide

variety of events and gatherings. We always try to get members' feedback to make events the best they can be and to make sure we're following our intentions of inclusivity and diversity. We also use our members' feedback to create events that include different interests and skill levels. We enjoy having athletic competitions, as well as movie nights and painting parties.

One event our chapter really enjoys is Maccabiah competitions. Last year, pre-pandemic, we had a Maccabiah-themed kickoff that was extraordinarily successful. Everyone was split into teams and competed in a relay race, Jew-perdy, and TikTok dance-off, among other games. We also had s'mores, a slushie machine, and lots of yummy snacks. The night was a blast, and we can't wait to have another Maccabiah competition when it is safe to do so.

Since the pandemic began, BBYO has been running virtual programs over Zoom. It's unfortunate that the pandemic happened; however, we're making the best of it. At first, we didn't know if people would come to virtual events or if they would be fun. In fact, it was hard to adapt to Zoom and make it feel welcoming. But now everyone loves our virtual events and looks forward to them. With each event, more people participate, which makes us very happy. We love to meet new prospects (teens interested in joining BBYO). Some virtual events that our

s'ganit (event planner), Avivah Mitchel, has planned this year include a virtual Maccabiah, virtual Shabbat cookie making, a rockin' rosh party and many more.

When COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed, in-person events will slowly start again. All precautions are being taken to make sure everyone is being safe. We were able to hold an in-person chapter meeting in November to discuss our upcoming events and regional and international opportunities, as well as hang out and play games. It was fantastic to see everyone in person after not being together for almost nine months. As we are slowly allowed to start holding in-person events, we continue to hold virtual events. So no matter what precautions you're currently taking, we have an event that you'll be able to attend.

Since the pandemic we have continued to look for Jewish teens in eighth through 12th grade in the Ann Arbor area to join Hatmadah. If you or anyone you know is interested in coming to an event and possibly joining, please contact me. My name is Laura Simon, and I'm the n'siah (president) of Hatmadah BBYO Number 126. Please email me at lulusimonj@gmail.com if you have any questions about Hatmadah or want the Zoom link for our next event. ■



Presented by the
Jewish Community Center
of Greater Ann Arbor

2020 ANN ARBOR JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

NOVEMBER 30, 2020 – DECEMBER 22, 2020



All events are open to the public and will be held online via Zoom. Registration is required for each event. Visit book.jccannarbor.org for individual events and registration links. Ann Arbor JCC members can log in to their online accounts to register.

This year, featured authors' books will be available for purchase via festival partner, Literati Bookstore. Visit literatibookstore.com for information and online orders.

— OPENING NIGHT —
MON • 11/30 • 8 pm • Alan Zweibel
Laugh Lines: My Life Helping Funny People Be Funnier



WED • 12/2 • 11 am • Howard Blum*
Night of the Assassins: The Untold Story of Hitler's Plot to Kill FDR, Churchill, and Stalin

THU • 12/3 • 1:30 pm • Dan Peres*
As Needed for Pain: A memoir of addiction

THU • 12/3 • 4 pm • Jason Rosenthal*
My Wife Said You May Want to Marry Me: A Memoir

FRI • 12/4 • 11 am • Raffi Berg*
Red Sea Spies: True Story of the Mossad's Fake Diving Resort

FRI • 12/4 • 2:30 pm • Jonathan Kaufman*
The Last King of Shanghai: The Rival Jewish Dynasties That Helped Create Modern China

SAT • 12/5 • 7 pm • Tovah Feldshuh
*Lilyville: Mother, Daughter, and Other Roles I've Played**

MON • 12/7 • 2:30 pm • Danielle Renov
Peas Love & Carrots: The Cookbook

WED • 12/9 • 1:30 pm • Maurice Samuels
The Betrayal of the Duchess: The Scandal That Unmade the Bourbon Monarchy and Made France Modern

— LOCAL AUTHORS —
THU • 12/10 • 7 pm • Andrei Markovits, Kenneth Garner
The Boundaries of Pluralism: The World of the University of Michigan's Jewish Students from 1897 - 1945



SAT • 12/12 • 8 pm • Liel Leibovitz, Stephanie Butnick, Mark Oppenheimer
The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia: From Abraham to Zabar's and Everything in Between

SUN • 12/13 • 11 am • Miriam Udel
Honey on the Page: A Treasure of Yiddish Children's Literature

12/13 • 7 pm • David Schoenbaum
The Lives of Isaac Stern

MON • 12/14 • 1 pm • Myla Goldberg
Feast Your Eyes: A Novel (Paperback edition)

MON • 12/14 • 4 pm • Eshkol Nevo
The Last Interview: A Novel

TUE • 12/15 • 1 pm • David Hopen
The Orchard

TUE • 12/15 • 7 pm • Sarah Stein
Family Papers: A Sephardic Journey Through the Twentieth Century

— SPONSOR NIGHT —
WED • 12/16
6:30 Pre-Glow (for sponsors \$180 +)
7 pm Steven Levy Facebook:
The Inside Story (open to all)



THU • 12/17 • 1 pm • Esther Safran Foer
I Want You To Know We're Still Here: A Post-Holocaust Memoir

THU • 12/17 • 8 pm • Jonathan Sarna
Cosella Wayne: Or, Will and Destiny

MON • 12/21 • 1 pm • Cleo Stiller
Modern Manhood: Conversations About the Complicated World of Being a Good Man Today

MON 12/21 • 7 pm • Andrew Blauner
The Peanut Papers: Writers and Cartoonists on Charlie Brown, Snoopy & the Gang, and the Meaning of Life

TUE 12/22 • 1 pm • Uri Adoni
The Unstoppable Startup: Mastering Israel's Secret Rules of Chutzpah

*PARTNERSHIP EVENT PRESENTED BY THE DETROIT JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL.

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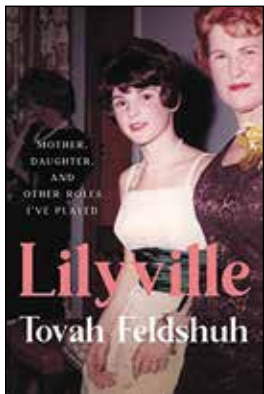
Book Festival highlights additional authors

Clara Silver, special to the WJN

The Jewish Book Festival of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor has added several exciting December events to the lineup of outstanding authors and entertainers.

Tovah Feldshuh

Newly added, on Saturday, Dec. 5, at 7 p.m., is Broadway star and author Tovah Feldshuh

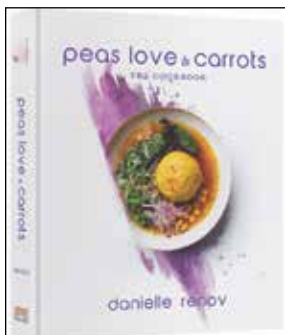


speaking about her memoir, *Lilyville: Mother, Daughter, and Other Roles I've Played*. The story is as much about the changing roles and expectations of women during the 20th and 21st centuries

as it is about the relationships between this mother and daughter, and Feldshuh's search for approval.

Danielle Renov

On Monday, Dec. 7, at 2:30 p.m., blogger,



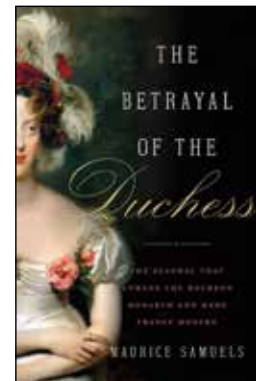
internet influencer, and now author Danielle Renov will present her book, *peas, love, & carrots*. The book is filled with 360 recipes

of all Jewish persuasions and occasions, Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Middle Eastern, weekday, and Shabbat. Renov and her food are both the product of the many cultures

into which she was born and in which she continues to live.

Maurice Samuels

On Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 1:30 p.m., the Betty Jane Anlyan professor of French and founder of the Program for the Study of Antisemitism at Yale University, Maurice Samuels,



presents his book, *The Betrayal of the Duchess: The Scandal That Unmade the Bourbon Monarchy and Made France Modern*. This book chronicles the harrowing true history of the Duchess of Berry. Exiled from France in 1830 as the Bourbon monarchy was ousted in yet another revolution, she launched a civil war to reclaim the throne for her son. Her quest might have succeeded but for a charming but volatile convert from Judaism, Simon Deutz. His act of personal betrayal set France on a course to birth modern antisemitism.

David Hopen

On Tuesday, Dec. 15, at 1 p.m., David Hopen presents his debut novel, *The Orchard*. In this



commanding and poignant coming-of-age story, we meet a devout Jewish high

school student from Brooklyn whose move to a wealthy suburb of Miami, and subsequent plunge into the secularized world, threatens everything he knows of himself.

Sarah Abrevaya Stein

On Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 7 p.m., Dr. Sarah Abrevaya Stein, the Sady and Ludwig Kahn Director of the Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies at UCLA, presents her book, *Family Papers: A Sephardic Journey Through the Twentieth Century*. This compelling book weaves the tale of one family across centuries and the globe with Sephardi and world history. Using the largest private collection of correspondence saved by the family in Rio and other research, Stein discovered the triumphs and tragedies, in one case intentionally excised by the family, of a Sephardi family living life while the world continuously changes around them. This program will be moderated by University of Michigan Frankel Center for Judaic Studies Assistant Professor Devi Mays.

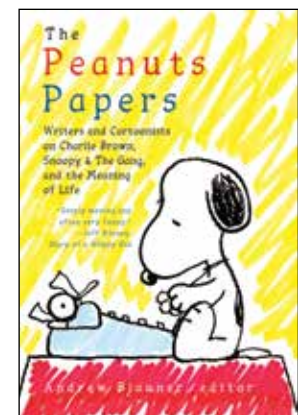
Esther Safran Foer

On Thursday, Dec. 17, at 1 p.m., Esther Safran Foer presents her memoir, *I Want You to Know We're Still Here: A Post-Holocaust Memoir*, a poignant story not only of Foer's journey to fill in the gaps of her family history, but of four generations living in the shadow of the Holocaust. Sol Drachler Professor of Social Work and director of the Jewish Communal Leadership Program at the University of Michigan, Karla Goldman, will moderate this event.

Andrew Blauner

On Monday, Dec. 21, at 7 p.m., Andrew Blauner presents a collection of essays and more, *The Peanuts Papers: Writers and Cartoonists on Charlie Brown, Snoopy & the Gang, and the Meaning of Life*, which he edited. He gathered writers and artists to

reflect on the deeper truths of Charles M. Schulz's long running iconic Peanuts comic strip. The comic strip spanned over 50 years and generated everything from animated television specials to an off-Broadway musical that revived to Broadway. The



characters continue to resonate with millions of fans of all ages, and invite us to consider what it means to be human.

The 2020 Ann Arbor Jewish Book Festival is

made possible by the generous financial support of individuals and organizations. Individuals who donate at \$180 or above may choose to partake of special sponsor night events on Wednesday, Dec. 16. A choice of a fish or vegetarian meal will be available for pick-up with advance reservation. In addition, there will be an exclusive online Hanukkah gathering at 6:30 p.m., prior to the 7 p.m. author presentation by Steven Levy, author of *Facebook: The Inside Story*.

The complete schedule and descriptions of all 23 events and 26 authors of the festival are available online at book.jccannarbor.org. Advanced registration is required for most of the festival events in order to be provided with the Zoom link, and is noted in each event's description. For questions or more information, or to discuss becoming a festival supporter, please contact Noemi Herzig, director of Jewish cultural arts and education for the Ann Arbor JCC, at noemiherzig@jccannarbor.org. ■

Broadway star Tovah Feldshuh plays a new role: author

Clara Silver, special to the WJN

Tovah Feldshuh, four-time Tony-nominated Broadway star and television actor, joins the lineup for the online 2020 Ann Arbor Jewish Book Festival on Saturday, Dec. 5, at 7 p.m., in partnership with the Detroit Jewish Book Fair. The festivals are presented by the Greater Ann Arbor and Metropolitan Detroit Jewish Community Centers, respectively. Feldshuh will be discussing her new memoir, *Lilyville: Mother, Daughter, and Other Roles I've Played*.

Feldshuh's book, to be published in April 2021, is a heartwarming and funny memoir of a mother and daughter whose narrative reflects American cultural changes and the world's shifting expectations of women. From the publisher's description: "From Golda to Ginsberg, Yentl to Mama Rose, Tallulah to the Queen of Mean, Feldshuh has always played powerful women who are not afraid to sit at the table with the big boys and rule their world. But offstage, Tovah struggled to fulfill the one role she never auditioned for



Tovah Feldshuh

— Lily Feldshuh's only daughter."

In this insightful, compelling, often hilarious, and always illuminating memoir, Feldshuh shares the highs and lows of a remarkable career that has spanned five decades and the lessons she's learned — often the hard way — about how to live a life in the spotlight, strive for excellence, and still get along with your mother. Through this evolving relationship, we see how expectations for women changed through the lens of a daughter performing her heart out to gain her mother's approval and a mother becoming liberated from the confining roles of wife and mother to become her full self.

Feldshuh is an American actress, singer, and playwright, and has been a Broadway, film, and television star for more than five decades, earning multiple Tony and Emmy Award nominations. She's appeared in many films, including *A Walk on the Moon*, *She's Funny That Way*, *Kissing Jessica Stein*, and *The Walking Dead*. Her Broadway career has

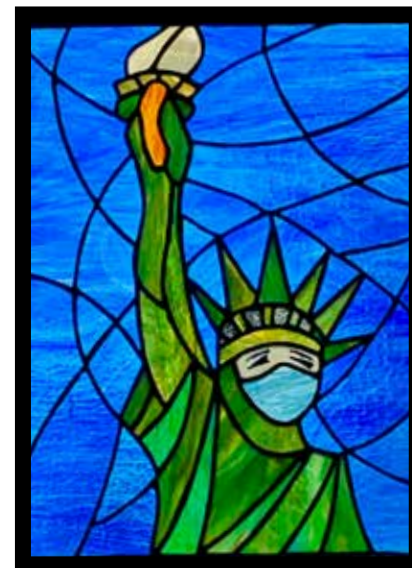
been extensive, including roles in *Cyrano*, starring Christopher Plummer, *Yentl* (her breakout role), *Lend me a Tenor*, and *Golda's Balcony*. She's appeared in multiple cabarets and one-woman plays. *Golda's Balcony* is likely her most famous role, and was the longest-running one-woman show in Broadway history, turned into a film in 2019.

Visit book.jccannarbor.org to explore the full schedule of all 23 events and 26 authors of the festival, presented by the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. Advanced registration is required for most of the festival events in order to be provided with the Zoom link and is noted in each event's description. For questions or more information, or to discuss becoming a festival supporter, please contact Noemi Herzig, director of Jewish cultural arts and education for the Ann Arbor JCC, at noemiherzig@jccannarbor.org. ■



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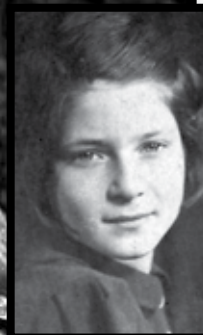


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Planning for a Safe Return

While we still don't know at this time what is going to happen in the summer of 2021 – we are continuing to plan and work towards the hope of producing a MainStage Season. The Festival is truly blessed by the generosity shown by our community. We are deeply grateful for your support while we navigate this challenge and look forward to sharing live theatre with you soon. To stay updated or make a donation, visit us at www.michiganshakespearefestival.com



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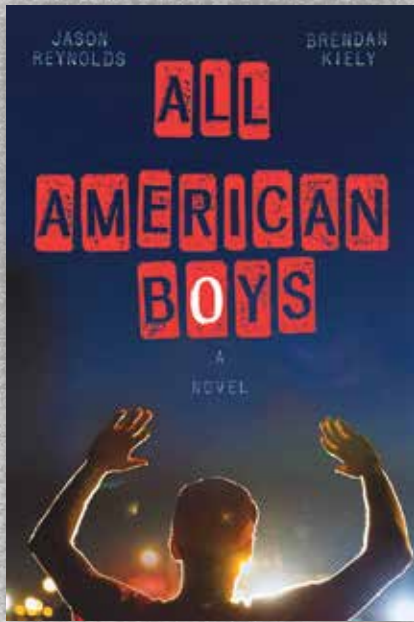
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Pots and Pans

Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

This December marks Ron's and my 50th anniversary of marriage! How that happened in a blink of an eye is anyone's guess. We'd thought of several ideas to celebrate this milestone, but most of them included travel, and that didn't happen. But it did start me thinking about cooking. Let me explain.

It started with a bit of a disaster in the kitchen. I wanted to make a special cake for my sister-in-law, Chris, for her birthday. It involved almonds and oranges. The oranges are boiled in water until they turn to mush and then pureed to add to the batter for substance and flavor. Somewhere along the line I stopped paying close attention to the boiling oranges until I smelled them burning. The pot was irredeemable, but the cake was delicious.



The burnt two-and-a-half-quart pot was part of a Revere Ware set we received



soup pot from the Farberware that we used for meat dishes (a longer story, please don't

when we got married and had used since then for dairy meals. Over the years, other members of this set have met their demise. One, the big soup pot, was accidentally thrown into the recycling bin (back when we had bins, not large cans). That was a disaster, as I had already done the same thing with my

think less of me).

I don't know what happened to the one-quart saucepan. It's simply disappeared, but the small frying pan is still in use. There was one more pot disaster from the Farberware set that involved trying to make maple syrup (but instead, we got an ingot). Don't ask; just know that many pots need to be carefully watched when they're boiling on a stove. Anyhow, 50 years of constant use seems to be a reasonable lifespan for pots and pans.

Here are some recipes using pots, the larger ones for soups and the smaller ones for, well, you'll figure it out. I have one more thought about kitchenware. Use a cast iron pan for making latkes. It's the best way to fry them up without spending a few days cleaning your other frying pan.

Harira (Spiced Moroccan Vegetable Soup with Chickpeas, Cilantro, and Lemon)

King Solomon's Table, Joan Nathan

This soup is parve, but feel free to add chicken or beef. It serves eight to 10, but who's serving that many people now? So freeze it in smaller portions and have it for several meals. A few weeks ago, Joan Nathan, the renowned cookbook writer and expert on Jewish food, was interviewed by the editor of Moment on Zoom. A group of friends in Ann Arbor watched this together, and we shared regular messages about the program. We all thought it was a great recipe. Joan — I feel like I can call her that, as her books are prominently featured in my cookbook collection — reminds us that this is a recipe also used by Muslims to break the fast on Ramadan. Use your big soup pot.

- 4 tbs olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced (about 2 cups)
- 3 stalks celery, diced (about 1½ cups)
- 3 carrots, peeled and cut into rounds
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½-1 tsp harissa or dried red chili flakes
- Salt to taste
- 1 bunch parsley, chopped (about 1½ cups)
- 1 bunch cilantro (skip if you want, or add more parsley), chopped
- 1 15-ounce can of crushed tomatoes, or 2 cups tomato sauce
- 7 cups vegetable or chicken stock, or water
- 1 cup dried chickpeas, soaked overnight and then cooked, or 1 15-ounce can, drained
- 1 cup green lentils, or you can use whole farro, barley, or wheat berries
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2 tbs all-purpose flour
- 1 large egg
- Juice of 2 lemons (about ¼ cup)

Sautee the onion, celery, and carrots in the olive oil until the onion is translucent and begins to brown, about five to 10 minutes. Add the turmeric, cumin, harissa or chili flakes, one teaspoon salt, one cup of parsley, one cup cilantro (if using), tomatoes, and the stock. Add the drained chickpeas, and simmer uncovered about 25 minutes. Then add the lentils or other whole grains. If you're using canned chickpeas, there's no need to

simmer for the first 25 minutes; just add these with the lentils. You'll need about 20 more minutes of simmering until the lentils are cooked, or more time for other whole grains. Finally, whisk together the flour, egg, and lemon juice into two cups of water. Stir into the soup and simmer about five more minutes. Serve with more sprinkled parsley and/or cilantro.

Moqueca (Brazilian Fish Stew)

Simply Recipes, Elise Bauer

This is one version of this Brazilian national dish, but not necessarily a typical Jewish dish. Some add seafood, or carrots and other root vegetables, but I'm sure the Jews of Brazil made this dish with the local kosher fish. You don't really need your big soup pot, but use your large Dutch oven or similar size pot. I first ate this delicious, easy soup/stew at a friend's cousin's house. She makes a larger amount and freezes it, but I just made it for two, and we ate the whole thing. Feel free to add more spices or less. Use a firm fish, like cod, black cod, or halibut (but some use tilapia or even salmon). This serves four.

- 1½-2 pounds fresh fish fillet, cut into portions of about 1-2 inches.
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 tbs lime juice or lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- ¼ cup green onions
- 1 chopped pepper, or ½ of a red pepper and ½ of a green pepper
- 2 cups chopped tomatoes or about 8 ounces of canned chopped tomatoes
- 1 tbs sweet paprika
- 1 pinch red pepper flakes
- 1 bunch cilantro or parsley
- 1 14-ounce can of full-fat coconut milk

Marinate the fish in a bowl with the minced garlic and lime or lemon juice, salt, and pepper, and toss to cover all the pieces of fish. Coat the bottom of your pot or large, deep pan with about two tablespoons olive oil, and add the chopped onions to soften for a few minutes. Then add the chopped peppers, and sprinkle with the paprika and red pepper flakes, and at least one teaspoon of salt and pepper to taste. Cook for a few more minutes until the pepper starts to soften. Next, add the tomatoes and green onions. Bring to a simmer, and cook uncovered for five minutes. Stir in the cilantro

or parsley. Remove about half the vegetables and save in a small bowl. Spread the remaining vegetables across the bottom of the pot as a bed for the fish pieces that you place on top of them. Sprinkle with more salt and pepper to taste. Then add back the rest of the vegetables to cover the fish. Pour the coconut milk over the top of the fish and the vegetables. Bring the heat up to a simmer, then reduce the heat, covered, for about 15 minutes. Feel free to add more spice or lime or lemon juice. Serve with rice or bread to soak up the liquid.

Orange Cake, or Gâteau à l'Orange

The Book of Jewish Food, Claudia Roden

This cake can serve up to 12 people, or two to four over the course of two days. It's a Judeo-Spanish cake, similar to other cakes found in Spain or around that region. The result is very moist, almost like a pudding. It's easy to make, but please watch the pot you boil the oranges in (see story above).

- 2 oranges
- 6 eggs
- 1½ cups sugar
- 2 tbs orange-blossom water
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1½ cups almond flour, or coarsely ground blanched almonds

Wash the oranges, and boil them whole for one-and-a-half hours, or until they are very soft. Remember to check the water in the pot. Beat the eggs with the sugar, and then add the orange blossom water, baking powder, and almond flour or ground almonds. Cut open the oranges (remember to let them cool so you don't burn yourself), discard the peels, and puree in a food processor or blender. Mix thoroughly with the egg/almond mixture, and pour into a nine-inch oiled cake pan dusted with flour or matzo meal, preferably a pan with a removable base (another mistake on my part). Bake in pre-heated 375-degree oven for an hour or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Gretchenes Latkes (Buckwheat Onion Pancakes)

Quiches, Kugels, and Couscous, Joan Nathan

This recipe is from Joan's cookbook highlighting French Jewish cooking. She writes that this recipe comes from the Alsace

region of France and must be from the time before potatoes, a New World food item, came to the Old World. I'm calling them "Old World Latkes." This recipe makes eight latkes.

- 1 cup buckwheat flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups grated onions (about 2 medium onions)
- Vegetable oil for frying
- Sour cream or applesauce for garnish

Stir the flour, salt, and baking powder together in a small bowl. Beat in the eggs, mixing well. Then stir in the onions. Use a nonstick frying pan (I'd use the cast iron skillet) and add a film of oil. Ladle about two tablespoons of the flour mixture into the pan, and heat until golden, then flip and cook the second side.

Green Chile Relleno Latkes (New World Latkes)

King Solomon's Table, Joan Nathan

This recipe was given to Joan by a friend whose great-nephew made it up. He had a school assignment to write about New Mexico history and culture, but he combined that with his favorite food, chile rellenos, and then added a Jewish tradition for Hanukkah.

Make your normal potato latkes, but here's the New Mexico topping:

- 12 whole green chilies like poblano or Anaheim (or a milder pepper)
- 12 ounces white cheddar cheese, sliced into 12 short pieces

Roast the peppers in a 375-degree oven on a baking sheet lined with foil. Roast for about 40 minutes to an hour, flipping them every 20 minutes or so until they are blackened. Let cool and remove the stem and skins. Cut a slit the full length of the pepper, and carefully remove the seeds. Put a piece of cheese inside each chili. Once the potato latkes are browned on one side, gently lay a stuffed chili on the top of each latke, and then carefully flip it over. Fry for a few more minutes, until the second side of the latke is golden brown and the cheese inside the pepper is melted. Drain on paper towel with the latke side down, and serve immediately. Sour cream seems appropriate, but so does red chili sauce or zhug, the Yemenite hot sauce. ■

Power of Community features 'Ann Arbor boy' Gene Sperling

Rachel Wall, special to the WJN

On Sunday, Oct. 18, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor held its annual major gifts event, "From West Ann Arbor to the West Wing," featuring

They expressed gratitude for how at home they have felt in a wide range of Jewish organizations in town and affirmed their commitment to tzedakah through the Federation's 2021 Annual

Campaign supports local organizations, including the Jewish Community Center and Jewish Family Services. The remaining 20% is dedicated to helping Federation's Israel

with Sperling, who, among other work, founded the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution. In addition to serving as director of the National Economic Council



Event Chairs Tamar Springer and Steve Stancroff



Gene Sperling



Jennifer Lewis



JFNA Campaign Chair David Brown

under Presidents Clinton and Obama, Sperling was a consultant on the television show *The West Wing*. He engaged attendees with entertaining anecdotes about working with former President Obama and about meeting his wife on his first day on the show's set. "The real

renowned economist and Ann Arbor native Gene Sperling.

As with so many in recent months, this year's event was held on Zoom instead of in person. To make the evening feel festive, Federation staff and members of the Board hand-delivered personalized event bags to attendees, which included appetizers for noshing and a copy of Sperling's most recent book, *Economic Dignity*.

Federation's board president, Randy Milgrom, and Annual Campaign Chair Babette Levy Daskin welcomed the over 150 attendees and thanked the group for their vital contributions to the previous year's Annual Community Campaign. A significant portion of the funds raised for the recently ended 2020 campaign came from major donors, those who generously give \$5,000 or more to enrich Jewish life in Greater Ann Arbor, Israel, and around the world.

Following a look back on 2020, Tamar Springer and Steve Stancroff, event chairs, kicked off the evening's theme of Ann Arbor pride by sharing their personal journey in Jewish Ann Arbor, spanning more than three decades.

Community Campaign. "Our Jewish community in Ann Arbor is varied and diverse, but also close and interconnected," Springer remarked. Added Stancroff, "If there was ever a time for us to ensure that we maintain the strength and vibrancy of our Jewish community, it is now."

On behalf of Federation, Board President Milgrom lauded the couple as "exceedingly thoughtful and generous" and said he was "so honored that they agreed to serve [as event chairs]." His appreciation was echoed by Federation's executive director, Eileen Freed, who thanked Springer and Stancroff for their leadership and generosity.

Each year, the major gifts event serves as both a thank you to Federation's major donors and as a kickoff to the Annual Community Campaign, the primary fundraising vehicle for enriching Jewish life in Greater Ann Arbor. Throughout the next seven months, Federation will actively fundraise for the 2021 Annual Community Campaign. These efforts culminate in June, when the funds raised are allocated to Federation's partner agencies, both locally and overseas. Eighty percent of the Annual Community

Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

With philanthropy in mind, attendees at the event heard from the national campaign chair for Jewish Federations of North America, David Brown. A key player on the national level, Brown leads fund development strategy for Federations across the country. He invited participants to share their hopes and dreams for the future of Jewish community in Greater Ann Arbor and reminded the group that they were not there "just to raise money for the sake of raising money, [but] to meet the needs of your community, take care of world Jewry, and to ensure there is flourishing Jewish life in Ann Arbor."

Following an interactive presentation from Brown, the program moved to its featured speaker, Gene Sperling. Sperling was in conversation with Jennifer Lewis, longtime member of the Ann Arbor Jewish community, and a professor of mathematics education at Wayne State University. Lewis recently served as executive director of educator excellence in Detroit Public Schools. Her professional history provided a foundation for conversation

and overseas partners, including the Jewish

West Wing was the best thing to happen to my professional life, and the fake West Wing was the best thing to happen to my personal life," he said.

The conversation also touched on Sperling's latest book, in which he frames the concept of economic dignity, which, he asserts, allows all people to participate fully in the greatest joys of life and work fulfillment without economic deprivation, domination, or humiliation. "It's not just about putting food on the table, but about having the option to be at the table."

Sperling was raised in a Jewish family in Ann Arbor that had a strong commitment to serving those in need. With a parallel to the work of the Jewish Federation, Sperling drew on Jews' centuries of persecution as a minority to explain his personal values and what motivates his work. "We were never taught being Jewish meant you have to help only Jewish people. What it meant to be Jewish was to be a champion of anyone at any time."

To learn more about the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor or donate to the 2021 Annual Community Campaign, visit jewishannarbor.org, or contact Rachel Wall at rachel@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3533. ■

Acclaimed chef Michael Solomonov to return for Hanukkah celebration

Rachel Wall, special to the WJN

Following an extremely successful event featuring James Beard Award-winning Chef Michael Solomonov in September of this year, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor will welcome the Philadelphia-based chef back to town with another virtual event on the evening of Dec. 8.

Just before Rosh Hashanah, Federation hosted Chef Solomonov for an entertaining cooking demonstration in appreciation of all donors to the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's 2020 Annual Community Campaign. Solomonov, head chef at Israeli restaurant Zahav, offered a demonstration of three recipes for participants to try at home in advance of

the fall holiday: kale, apple, walnut, and sumac-onion tabbouleh; honey-glazed chicken; and honey cake with apple confit.

Solomonov's appearance was a collaboration between the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and 32 other Jewish Federations across the country. While a program like this one would have been cost prohibitive to the Ann Arbor community if held in person, digital platforms have provided increased opportunity for community engagement over the last several months. More than 200 local community members registered for the Zoom night of appreciation.

To add some local flavor, Federation held a private celebration before the cooking

demonstration, open to all who contributed to the 2020 Annual Community Campaign in Greater Ann Arbor. The Happy Half-Hour utilized Zoom's Breakout Rooms function to allow participants to congregate in small groups. The groups were randomly assigned, so attendees connected with both old friends and members of the community they didn't previously know. Many who participated found themselves wanting more than the allotted 10 minutes to share what they appreciated about the local Ann Arbor area community and enjoy one another's company.

The December event with Chef Solomonov will feature Hanukkah-themed dishes including classic potato latkes and an olive oil

poached salmon with artichokes and arugula. It will be open to and in appreciation of donors to the 2021 Annual Community Campaign, which kicked off in October. In the spring of 2021, as Passover approaches, Solomonov will complete this three-part series for Federation. As in September, the Greater Ann Arbor community will have the opportunity to gather for a local appreciation at each of the next two events.

For more information or to register for the event, visit jewishannarbor.org or contact Federation's communications and development manager, Rachel Wall, at rachel@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3533. ■

This Chanukah, light the way for future generations



Photo courtesy of Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor



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Hanukkah: Winning the war against the Greeks

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, special to the WJN

We are getting ready for the holiday of Hanukkah. God willing, that will occur on Thursday night, Dec. 10 — for eight nights. There are two aspects we celebrate. One is the victory in the war against the Greeks by the descendants of the priests (Chashmonaim) in which God blessed us with the ability to overcome our enemies. The second



Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

aspect is the miracle of the oil. After the war, they wanted to start lighting the menorah in the Holy Temple. They only found enough sanctified oil for one day. But, miraculously, it burned for eight days — the amount of time required to sanctify a new batch of oil.

These are the two main themes we celebrate during the holiday of Hanukkah.

There's a question of Jewish law asked about this war that the Chashmonaim waged against the Greeks. Was it so obvious that they were allowed to engage in a war like that? They knew, to start with, that they were the minority, they were weak, and in front of them were the strong and great multitude of Greeks that they had to fight. So as far as manpower or firepower there was no doubt that the Chashmonaim, according to the laws of nature, would be unable to win this war, because they were so outnumbered both quantitatively — as far as the number of priests involved in the war — and also as far as the strength that they had — they had much less than the Greeks. So therefore, according to the Jewish law, there's a question as to how they were allowed to engage in a war like this when there was no hope or anticipation of a victory relative

to those they were fighting.

If one wants to give a simple answer, one can say there's a rule that in a time of a crisis, when you have a nation that's trying to hurt the Jewish people and take away from them their religion and practices, then one is allowed to do whatever they have to do to defend themselves, because if you are going to allow persecutors to overpower us, then we will lose whatever we have. Therefore, one could suggest here that the Greeks wanted very much to wipe out the Jewish religion and to uproot the Torah and the mitzvahs from the Jewish people. So in a situation in which you have an enemy that's trying to get rid of the Jews, there's an obligation on every Jew to do whatever they can to defend Judaism — even if they know that there's a good chance that they will, unfortunately, lose their life. So, under a circumstance like that, one is allowed to put themselves in danger. In a situation in which they're being threatened with taking away the Torah and mitzvahs, one is obligated to give up their life. In other circumstances we know there's only three principal laws that one has to give up their life for Judaism. The other mitzvahs, you don't have to give up your life. But if there's an enemy that intends to uproot Judaism from the Jewish people, then there's an obligation to give up one's life. So this is the answer to why the Chashmonaim were able to engage in a war knowing they were the minority and weaker.

However, this statement does not totally answer the question satisfactorily. Because even if a person will follow the rule that when a nation wants to uproot a certain law from the Torah, from the Jewish people, one is allowed to give up their life — that's only for that particular mitzvah that persecutors want to take away from the Jewish people — but there's no obligation to engage in a war against a government that is much greater in quality and

quantity — especially a war for which we know that according to the rules of nature, there's no way the Jews can overpower this big army. So the question still remains — on what basis did the Chashmonaim give up their lives and engage in a war against such a great majority and with such a good chance of failure?

The answer to this question is another question. Their rights were so special to the Chashmonaim that they were willing to give up their lives even though they weren't obligated to do so, and even though they didn't know the result of engaging in this war. This is a self-sacrifice that is beyond all limitations. There are certain sacrifices that one makes, but then says, "This is as far as we can go — we can't go any further." That's one level of self-sacrifice. The other level, which was the level of the Chashmonaim, was without any calculations. It was determined that they had to defend the Jewish people, and whatever it took to defend the Jewish people, they were willing to do. This is what's so special about the Chashmonaim, that they were so dedicated to God that they didn't make any calculations — if they did, they would conclude that they could not win. There was no question; they felt they had to defend Judaism because the Greeks wanted to take it away from them.

So the answer to the question is, as we look in the prayers we say when we light the candles, that these are the candles that used to be lit by the Kohanim. Similarly, when the Rambam, Maimonides, wrote about who won the war, he didn't write that the Jewish people won the war. He wrote that the High Priests, the kohanim, were those who won the war. They were the ones that God empowered to save the Jewish people from our enemies. Why is it so important for us to know that this was done through the Priests and the descendants of the Priests — the High

Priests? Why do we need to know that? The answer is that this is the reason why they were able to wage this war. They were considered great people. Maimonides says that normally a person is not allowed to give up their life to defend an ordinary mitzvah, but if the person is a great person and a God-fearing Jew and goes beyond the minimum requirements of Jewish Law — when they see that the situation can threaten Judaism, they are allowed to — and even are supposed to — go out and wage a war against any threat. It doesn't matter what kind of mitzvah is being threatened. It could be a simple mitzvah, and these great people are still obligated to defend Torah and mitzvahs at any cost.

So the Chashmonaim were at this level of greatness and were allowed to give up their lives with no limitations — not taking anything into consideration — simply doing the right thing that needed to be done. Since the Chashmonaim went beyond all limitations, they made no calculations, and therefore, they were so meritorious that God performed miracles for them that were beyond any normal limitations of the laws of nature. They had such a great success that this small minority was able to overpower the great armies of the Greeks. And also, that they merited this miracle of the oil, that we mentioned earlier, that lasted for eight days. This miraculous oil had the seal of the High Priest, again showing how the Priests were dedicated to God to the extent that they were willing to give up their lives for God, and therefore, God gave them, in turn, this great miracle in which the oil lasted eight days.

So, God willing, we should also be dedicated to our heritage, to our tradition, and when we go beyond the norm, God will go beyond the norm and give us all great things beyond the norm.

Happy Hanukkah! ■

Eight for eight

Rabbi Jared Anstandig, special to the WJN

If I were to ask you why we celebrate Hanukkah for eight days, you may give me the following answer: After removing the Greeks from the Holy Temple, the ancient



Rabbi Jared Anstandig

Maccabees went to light the Temple's menorah. Unfortunately, they found only one cruse of olive oil with enough oil to last one day. Miraculously, the oil lasted eight days instead of one, which was precisely enough time for the Maccabees to procure more oil. In commemoration of the miracle of the oil, we light candles for eight nights.

While this is a beautiful story, there remains a question so obvious that many people miss it. Rabbi Yosef Karo (16th century), in a work titled Beit Yosef, notes the following problem: If the story is correct that there was already sufficient oil for one day, then the miracle of the oil lasted seven days, not eight. The first day was not miraculous. So, Rabbi Karo wonders, why do we celebrate for eight nights instead of seven? Since the

question was first posed, there have been hundreds of answers offered by various individuals. Below, I provide only eight answers, one for each night of the holiday. I hope you use these as a springboard for your own answers this Hanukkah!

One: The Maccabees divided the oil they found into eight equal parts, using only one eighth of the oil each night. Each night the oil miraculously burned for a full 24 hours. Thus, the miracle indeed lasted a total of eight days. (Rabbi Yosef Karo, 16th-century Spain)

Two: One day of Hanukkah commemorates the fact that the Maccabees discovered olive oil to begin with. The subsequent seven days commemorate the seven-day miracle of the oil (Rabbi Menachem Meiri, 13th-century Provence).

Three: The miracle of the oil lasted only seven days. The eighth day we celebrate commemorates the Maccabean military victory over the Greeks (Rabbi Hezekiah da Silva, 17th-century Jerusalem).

Four: After defeating the Greeks, the Maccabees found the Temple in Jerusalem in shambles. While they renovated the Temple, the Maccabees constructed a makeshift

menorah in the outdoor courtyard. Despite inclement winter weather, the wicks stayed lit for eight days until the Menorah was reset indoors. The miracle we commemorate is that the menorah's lights withstood the wind for eight days (Rabbi Moses Sofer, 18th-century Hungary)

Five: Our understanding of the story is incorrect. It's not that there was only enough oil for one day and it lasted eight. Really, there was not enough oil for even one day, and still, it lasted for eight. So each night was a miracle, including day one (Rabbi Acha Gaon, 8th-century Babylonia)

Six: The miracle of the oil lasted only seven days. But how would we have commemorated it? By lighting a candelabra with seven branches? The Menorah in the Temple in Jerusalem had seven branches, and the Torah prohibits making models of the Temple's vessels for personal use (Exodus 20:20). Accordingly, the ancient Jews decided to commemorate the miracle with an eight-armed candelabra, which in turn led to the holiday being celebrated for eight days instead of the more logical seven days (Rabbi Shaul Nathanson, 19th-century

Poland).

Seven: The Maccabees had become ritually impure during their war against the Greeks. Accordingly, they were barred from touching the sacred Menorah in the Temple. As an alternative, the Maccabees constructed an earthenware menorah, impervious to ritual impurity but also more absorbent. The cruse of oil that the Maccabees found was sufficient for one day of light in the golden Menorah, not enough for even one day of light in this porous earthenware menorah. Nonetheless, the oil miraculously burned for eight days (Rabbi Shmuel Eidels, 16th-century Poland)

Eight: Due to the war with the Greeks, the Maccabees were unable to celebrate the eight-day holiday of Sukkot in its proper time. In order to compensate, they celebrated a makeup Sukkot after the war, which in turn led to the eight-day holiday we know today as Hanukkah (Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein, 19th-century Lithuania).

May this year's candles bring meaningful light to our lives and to the world. Happy Hanukkah! ■

Controversy and record participation reflect renewed US Jewish interest in Zionist Congress

Larry Luxner, originally written from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

A virus forced the World Zionist Congress to go virtual for the first time since its founding in 1897.

But that didn't stop the October gathering, held once every five years, from being any less crucial — or less contentious — for the future of Israel and the Jewish people.

Nor did it dampen enthusiasm for the event among the American delegation, which hailed from 28 states plus Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., after an election last winter that saw record voter participation. Of the 750 delegates to the 38th World Zionist Congress, which held its virtual meeting Oct. 20-22, roughly one-third were from the United States.

"The work of Zionism — supporting Israel and connecting world Jewry to our national homeland — must continue despite the global pandemic," said Richard Heide-man, president of the American Zionist Movement, which organized the U.S. delegation and last winter's election. "This crisis has, however, given us a special opportunity to enable more delegates and alternates than ever before to participate in a World Zionist Congress."

More than 123,000 American Jews from all 50 states voted in the Zionist elections that concluded in March — more than double the number that participated in the previous vote, in 2015. In all, 15 slates comprised of nearly 1,800 candidates vied for 152 American seats in the Congress, with the number of delegates per slate apportioned using a formula devised by the American Zionist Movement. The votes represented the highest number cast since open Zionist elections were adopted in the American Jewish community 30 years ago.

The high rate of participation may be a sign of the growing importance with which American Jews view the World Zionist Congress, which determines the leadership of the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Jewish National Fund-Keren Kayemet LeIsrael and Keren Hayesod.

Together, these four institutions allocate roughly \$1 billion annually.

"In broad terms, this is the parliament of the Jewish people. It's the world's most democratic gathering of the Jewish community," said Kenneth Bob, president of Ameinu and head of the Hatikvah slate, which represents 11 different progressive Jewish organizations, including the National Council for Jewish Women, the New Israel Fund and J Street. "Even with Zoom, it's still very participatory."

In fact, the three-day virtual conference included some unusually intense wrangling among the delegations. Right-wing and Orthodox parties, which represented a majority at the Congress, surprised many with a bid to install their own picks in key leadership positions at international Zionist institutions rather than agreeing to consensus choices, which had been the custom at past conferences. Such a move would have neutralized any potential power of the left-wing parties.

Pesach Lerner, the New York rabbi who heads Eretz HaKodesh, an Orthodox party that was part of that right-wing effort, said the move was justified because of the political positions leftist groups have taken.

"When President Trump moved the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, these movements came out against it," he said. "My people travel to Israel, they buy apartments in Israel, and they send their kids to learn in Israel. We're anti-BDS, we're pro-Israel and we lobby on behalf of those who fight for Israel in Washington."

Sheila Katz, the NCJW's chief executive and a first-time delegate on the Hatikvah slate, bristled at the attempt to silence the voices of groups like hers.

"The whole reason I was excited about this was to live out Herzl's vision that there would be diverse views. But I didn't run for this congress just to have my power taken away," said Katz, 37. "The key issue of this conference has really emerged around pluralism and who gets to have this power."

At the same time, Katz said of the U.S. delegation, "It's very exciting to see so many younger people at the table. They're infusing a lot of energy into this process, and the AZM has done an excellent job in working to diversify the type of people who show up at this Congress."

In the end, the effort to limit the influence of the left-wing parties failed. A compromise was reached after delegates to the Congress from certain centrist delegations, who traditionally don't cast votes because they are appointed rather than elected, threatened to break with precedent and vote against the right-wing parties unless they agreed to some concessions.

Some on the right, such as the Zionist Organization of America, hailed the outcome as a victory.

"The center-right wing bloc, of which ZOA Coalition is a substantial and vital part, prevailed in the World Zionist Congress elections earlier this year, and thus was entitled to prevail in allocation of National Institution positions," said Morton Klein, ZOA's national president.

Groups on the left nonetheless also expressed satisfaction.

"While the new agreement gives power to one side of the political spectrum, we remain confident that the changes preserve the national and pluralistic character of our Zionist Institutions," MERCAZ USA, which with 18 delegates represents Conservative Judaism within the Zionist movement, said in a statement. "MERCAZ, the Masorti/Conservative Movement, along with a coalition of Zionist parties in Israel and the Reform Movement, and the support of the Zionist organizations (Hadassah, B'nai B'rith International, Macabi World Union, WIZO and NAAMAT/USA), succeeded in blocking a divisive agreement and reached an agreement incorporating significant changes, which ensures checks and balances and inclusion of all the Jewish People in the leadership of our Zionist Institutions."

For Sarrae Crane, the executive director of MERCAZ USA, this was her sixth World Zionist Congress — and, of course, her first virtual one.

"It's so much better than nothing, but it's not the same as being in a hall with people and talking with delegations from around the world," she said. "That's really missing."

Religious pluralism in Israel is top of mind for Crane.

"We're a halachic movement and we believe there's more than one legitimate way to be Jewish, yet in Israel there's a chief rabbi who doesn't recognize us," she said. "We want them to recognize our rabbis as rabbis and our conversions as conversions, and allow olim [new immigrants] who have been converted by Conservative rabbis. We're a very strong believer in pluralism — and we want to work with the other groups to create a more pluralistic, welcoming Jewish community."

Ultimately, said Herbert Block, the executive director of the American Zionist Movement, the passions that ran high at last week's gathering bode well for American Zionism.

"This unique World Zionist Congress session that just ended saw intense involvement by a broad and diverse array of Zionist groups from America," Block said. "We expect this active involvement in promoting Zionism will continue — in a spirit of unity and a commitment to respectful dialogue."

As for the next World Zionist Congress, Block said he hopes for "Next year in Jerusalem — in person!" (A global conference in Israel to make up for the deferral of this year's in-person congress is being planned for late 2021 or early 2022.) ■

This article was sponsored by and produced in partnership with the American Zionist Movement, which works across a broad ideological, political and religious spectrum linking the American Jewish community together in support of Israel, Zionism and the Jewish people. This article was produced by JTA's native content team.

LIFE & LEGACY update

Margaret Schreiber, special to the WJN

Thile 2020 has brought many unpleasant surprises, one of the silver linings is that the Jewish community of Greater Ann Arbor began participation in LIFE & LEGACY®, through the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. This established program, which has already surpassed \$1 billion in after-lifetime commitments in the eight years since its inception, seeks to ensure that organizations within the local Jewish community work together so that legacy giving becomes normalized in Jewish philanthropic culture. The national LIFE & LEGACY team brings their expertise to the Ann Arbor community through an assigned adviser, and in addition makes available webinars and speakers from across North America to provide further learning opportunities.

LIFE & LEGACY is run through the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and coordinated by local Federation staff member Margaret Schreiber. The program is funded by the planned giving arm of Federation, the Jewish Community Foundation. Ann

Arbor's Jewish Community Foundation holds endowment funds and donor-advised funds, with management and investment services provided by the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Pittsburgh. Local representatives from the Jewish community sit on Ann Arbor's Jewish Community Foundation Committee, where the Foundation holds endowment funds for most Ann Arbor Jewish communal groups participating in LIFE & LEGACY. The Jewish Community Foundation and the Grinspoon Foundation work together to provide crucial incentive grants to local participating organizations. For example, each participating organization that secures 18 commitments in the first year of the program receives a \$5,000 grant with a third paid by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, and two thirds from the Jewish Community Foundation.

Legacy gifts are one way to provide sustainable financial resources in the Jewish

community. Who would have predicted 20 years ago that in 2020, the community in Ann Arbor would be impacted so greatly by a pandemic? Imagine if our local organizations had funds that were already accrued because of past endowment investments. These funds would take a significant burden off of future generations, and we would be true guardians of b'nei ha'atid (children of the future). The arrival of COVID-19 and the way it has impacted the non-profit Jewish community teaches us that when money is left to Jewish organizations through unrestricted endowment funds, future generations will have money earned through the investments to help fulfill their needs.

Susan R. Fisher, the current Ann Arbor Jewish Community Foundation chairperson, recently made commitments by submitting a letter of intent to provide legacy gifts to several local organizations. Susan says making a legacy gift is important to her because "leaving legacy gifts addresses my desire to have a lasting impact on the organizations which ensure that

Ann Arbor will continue to have a vibrant and growing Jewish Community for years to come."

Local community organizations participating in the program are: the Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan, Beth Israel Congregation, Chabad House of Ann Arbor, the Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies, Hebrew Day School, the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Cultural Society, Jewish Family Services, Federation, Temple Beth Emeth, and University of Michigan Hillel. These groups have started conversations with their loyal members about making legacy gifts and are on the way to meeting the benchmarks set out by the LIFE & LEGACY the program. All team members are invited to participate in national trainings organized by LIFE & LEGACY.

To learn more about LIFE & LEGACY, contact Margaret Schreiber at 734-773-3538 or margaret@jewishannarbor.org. ■

Financial assistance for teens travelling to Israel

Jessica Weil, special to the WJN

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is pleased to announce the availability of two sources of financial assistance for teens travelling to Israel: the Susan L. Lichter Memorial Endowed Israel Scholarship and Federation's Subsidies for Teen Travel to Israel. While public health precautions currently limit international travel, Federation is opening opportunities for financial assistance at this time with hopes that students will be able to travel later in 2021. Local high school students interested in applying for the scholarship and/or the subsidy should visit jewishannarbor.org or contact Jessica Weil at jessica@jewishannarbor.org.

Susan L. Lichter Memorial Endowed Israel Scholarship

The Susan L. Lichter Memorial Endowed Israel Scholarship Fund provides two \$2,500 scholarships annually for Ann Arbor area high school students to participate in peer group Israel experiences such as semester, summer, or gap year programs. Paul and Carolyn Lichter established the fund in memory of their daughter, who had a deep connection to Israel.

The scholarship application includes the submission of an essay in which students are asked to share how this trip would grow their connection to Israel and the Jewish community and how it would enhance engagement in the Jewish community at home and abroad. A scholarship committee determines the scholarship award winners. Applications for the Susan L. Lichter Memorial Endowed Israel Scholarship must be received in the Federation office by March 5, 2021, and awards will be determined by April 9, 2021. Winning essays will be published in the WJN and on the Federation website.

Federation Subsidies for Teen Travel to Israel

The Jewish Federation believes in the value of Israel experiences for teenagers in developing Jewish identity and offers subsidies for teens participating in approved, organized peer trips to Israel. Subsidies are provided for summer, semester, and year programs, including gap year programs. These subsidies are only available to students who have not yet entered college. The amount of the subsidy varies based on the number of applicants each year. The maximum any one individual will receive is \$1,000. Individuals may receive this subsidy only one time. Subsidy recipients will be asked to share their experiences during and/or after their trip. Applications for Israel subsidies must be received in the Federation office by March 5, 2021, and notification of subsidies will be made by April 9, 2021. Applications received after the deadline will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis if funds are still available.

Eligible Programs

Eligible programs for both the Susan L. Lichter Memorial Endowed Israel Scholarship and the Federation subsidies must be at least four weeks in length and organized by an approved provider, such as those under the auspices of Jewish youth movements, denominational movements of Judaism, MASA gap year programs, Israeli university teen summer programs, or high school study programs. Scholarships and subsidies are not awarded for family or individual travel and will be paid directly to the programs in which the selected students participate. ■

FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE, WHO DO ISRAELIS DEPEND ON? THEY DEPEND ON YOU.



Magen David Adom is Israel's official ambulance, blood-services, and disaster-relief organization. MDA has been on the front lines in the fight against coronavirus while also contending with terrorist attacks, car accidents, and other threats to Israeli lives.

But Magen David Adom is not government-funded. Its 25,000 EMTs and paramedics, most of them volunteers, rely on support from people like you for the supplies and equipment they need to perform their lifesaving work.

There are many ways to support Israel, but none that has a greater impact on its people than a gift to Magen David Adom. Your support isn't just changing lives — it's literally saving them.

**Support Magen David Adom
at afmda.org/chanukah**



Saving lives. It's in our blood.

afmda.org

Calendar

December 2020

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.

Tuesday 1

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.

Stranger Still: Translating Contemporary Poetry from Israel/Palestine with Vaan Nguyen and Adriana X. Jacobs: Frankel Institute Event Series. Advance Registration Required: <https://forms.gle/Z6WRkCB974Hz8EbA>. 12 p.m.

Stress and the Immune System: WTBE Community Wellness Event. 7:30 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday—for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 2

Book Fest. Howard Blum. 11 a.m.

Yidish tish Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group. Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language and culture, no matter what level of proficiency, regardless of age. All manner of topics covered with an effort to improve participants' Yiddish speaking and reading skills, especially vocabulary. Everyone is welcome to join in at any time, or to just listen. For more information, please e-mail Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu at least one day before scheduled meeting day. 2 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion 7 p.m.

Secrets of the Bible: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online. 8 p.m.

Thursday 3

Book Fest: Dan Peres. 1:30 p. m.

Book Fest: Jason Rosenthal. 4 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 4,

Vayishlach, Candle Lighting 4:44 p.m.

Book Fest: Raffi Berg. 11 a.m.

Best Fest: Jonathan Kaufman. 2:30 p.m.

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 5

Havdallah 5:49 p. m.

Book Fest: Tovah Feldshuh. 7 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Sunday 6

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.

Lego Contest: BIC. 4 p.m.

Broadway on a Mission: JFS. 7 p.m, virtual doors open at 6:45.

Monday 7

Book Fest: Danielle Renov. 2:30 p.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

WTBE Cooks. 3:30 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. Zoom.. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 8

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.

Post-Election Social Justice Activism: Bend the Arc. 7 p.m.

Chef Solomonov: Fed. 7:30 p.m.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Annie Rose: TBE. *To Begin Again: The Journey Toward Comfort, Strength, and Faith in Difficult Times* by Rabbi Naomi Levy. 7:30p.m.

WTBE Community Wellness Event. Intro to Jewish Meditation. 7:30 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday—for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m. *See first Tuesday of month.*

Wednesday 9

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 .p. m

Book Fest: Maurice Samuels. 1:30 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion 7 p.m.

Sip and Sketch with Meg Adler: EMU. 7 p.m.

Secrets of the Bible: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 10

1st Chanukah Candle 5:49 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Annie Rose: TBE. *To Begin Again: The Journey Toward Comfort, Strength, and Faith in Difficult Times* by Rabbi Naomi Levy. Noon.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5p.m.

Book Fest: Andrei Markovits and Kenneth Garner (Local Authors Night). 7 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 11

Candle Lighting 4:44 p.m. 2 Chanukah Vayeshev

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 12

Havdallah 5:50 p.m. 3 Chanukah

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Ta Shma Come and Learn: AARC. 10 a.m.

Illuminate: BIC Drive thru Chanukah lights. 6:30 p.m.

Book Fest: Leibovitz, Butnick And Oppenheimer. 8 p.m.

Sunday 13

4 Chanukah Candle

Book Fest: Miriam Udel. 11 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.

Chanukah Storytime with Laura Raynor: Bend the Arc. 4 p.m.

WTBE Virtual Happy Hour. 5:30 p. m.

Book Fest: David Schoenbaum. 7 p.m.

Monday 14

5 Chanukah Candle

Historical Novel Reading Group: WTBE. Anthony Doer, *All the Light We Cannot See*. Contact Molly Lindner, burnham@umich.edu. 12:30 p.m.

Book Fest: Myla Goldberg. 1 p.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

Book Fest: Eshkol Nevo. 4 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. Zoom.. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 15

6 Chanukah Candle

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.

Book Fest: David Hopen. 1 p.m.

Loewenberg Memorial Lecture: BIC. Professor Matthew Shugart. 6:45 p.m.

Book Fest: Sarah Abrevaya Stein. 7 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday—for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 16

7 Chanukah Candle Rosh Chodesh Tevet

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p. m

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Book Fest: Steven Levy. 7 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion 7 p.m.

Rosh Chodesh Circle: Pardes Hannah. 7 p.m.

Secrets of the Bible: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 17

8 Chanukah Candle

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Book Fest: Esther Safran Foer. 1 p.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5p.m.

Book Fest: Jonathan Sarna. 8 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 18,

Candle Lighting 4:46 p.m. Miketz

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 19

Havdallah 5:52 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Sunday 20

Zohar Study: Pardes Hannah. 11 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.

Family Game Night: BIC. 5 p.m.

Monday 21

Book Fest: Cleo Stiller. 1 p.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

WTBE Cooks. 3:30 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Book Fest: Andrew Blauner. 7 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. Zoom.. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 22

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.

Book Fest: Uri Adoni. 1 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday—for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 23

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p. m

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion 7 p.m.

Secrets of the Bible: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Open Stage Night: BIC. 8 p.m.

Thursday 24

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 25

Candle Lighting 4:50 p.m. Vayigash

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 26

Havdallah 5:56 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Sunday 27

Mystery Reader: BIC. 11 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.

Monday 28

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. Zoom.. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m

Tuesday 29

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 30

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p. m

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

WTBE Virtual Happy Hour. 5:30 p. m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion 7 p.m.

Secrets of the Bible: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 31

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.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, michigan-hillel.org

David Shneer, beloved professor of Jewish studies, dies at 48

Ben Harris, originally from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

In a packed conference room at a downtown Boston hotel in 2015, David Shneer, a Jewish studies professor at the University of Colorado, stood before his colleagues in the Association for Jewish Studies and began belting out Yiddish cabaret songs.

Dressed in black with a red tie and bowler hat, Shneer and his collaborator, Bay Area singer Jewlia Eisenberg, were doing their

mentorship and guidance. And he had that rare ability to make complex ideas understandable to a general audience.

"We recognized immediately that he had a gift," said Aaron Lansky, the founder of the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, where Shneer ran a summer Yiddish program for several years. "He knew how to explain things that a broader audience can understand. The students loved him. You get those reviews at the end, and they were just off the charts."

Shneer's death on Nov. 4 prompted an outpouring of online remembrances. The word "mensch" came up repeatedly.

"He was always kind and generous, but not in a boring way," said Eisenberg, who met Shneer as an undergraduate at the University of California,

Berkeley, when the two were working on the school's student travel guide. "It was never boring with him. It wasn't like a goody two-shoes or something. It was just his disposition to be that way. And that's different than most people. He wasn't trying to be brilliant, generous, compassionate. He wasn't trying to do any of that. He just was that."

The author Douglas Rushkoff met Shneer in 2003 when Rushkoff came to Denver while touring for his book "Nothing Sacred," which argues that the modern Jewish fixation on recruiting lapsed Jews to the fold is a bastardization of Judaism's fundamental principles.

"I remember David not completely agreeing with my take, but being thrilled to discuss it, nonetheless," Rushkoff told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "He was practicing the next evolution of Jewish argumentation — an unconditional quality of love and respect and fun served as the foundation. And that created the safety to make any discussion possible."

In 2016, Eisenberg and Shneer were in Pennsylvania for a performance on the day that Donald Trump upset Hillary Clinton to win the presidential election. Jaldati's anti-fascist music suddenly took on a shockingly contemporary resonance.

"He did this stuff in an academic context, but he also did this just around town because he believed in the anti-fascist value," Eisenberg said. "And that's not a small thing. Look at the country. Half of the country does not believe in anti-fascist values."

She added: "He's not like all dressed in black with a balaclava on his face, but he was down for the revolution."

Shneer received his doctorate from Berkeley in 2001 and joined the faculty at the University of Colorado Boulder in 2008. He leaves behind a husband, Gregg Drinkwater, who also taught Jewish studies at UC Boulder, and a daughter, Sasha, whom he co-parented with Rabbi Caryn Aviv. ■



University of Colorado professor David Shneer died on Nov. 4, 2020.

PHOTO CAPTION: COURTESY OF GREGG DRINKWATER

first performance of "Art is My Weapon," a collection of songs from the repertoire of Lin Jaldati, a Jewish singer born Rebekka Brilleslijper in the Netherlands who survived the Holocaust to become an unlikely diva of Yiddish music in communist East Germany.

The pair would go on to perform Jaldati's music at synagogues and universities across the country, with Shneer narrating the singer's incredible life story to rapt audiences. But those who were there for that first performance remember Shneer entrancing a room of academics unaccustomed to seeing one of their own present their research findings in musical form.

"My memory of it was the room was packed," said Josh Lambert, a professor of English and Jewish studies at Wellesley College. "There's not a lot of scholars I can point to with that kind of energy, with that kind of bridging the gap between serious, rigorous scholarly work and the kind of generic warm and creative expression of all that."

Shneer, who died last week at 48 following a decade-long battle with brain cancer, was by all accounts an unconventional academic.

His scholarly pursuits were focused largely on Russian Jewish history, but he had a particular interest in the arts and visual culture, cultivating a raft of young artists, some with radical tendencies. His 2011 book, "Through Soviet Jewish Eyes," was a National Jewish Book Award finalist that examined the Jewish influences on two dozen Soviet Jewish photographers. His latest book, "Grief: The Biography of a Holocaust Photograph," describes how an iconic 1942 photo of an old woman grieving over a body felled in battle became emblematic of Soviet aesthetics and the formation of Holocaust memory.

Shneer was an activist, too, canvassing for Democratic presidential candidates in swing states and co-founding Jewish Mosaic, the Jewish LGBTQ organization that later merged with Keshet, where he served on the board. He was unusually solicitous of younger scholars, taking time to provide

Jonathan Sacks, former UK chief rabbi and Jewish 'intellectual giant,' dies at 72

Ben Harris, Cnaan Liphshiz, Gabe Friedman, originally from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the former chief rabbi of the United Kingdom whose extensive writings and frequent media appearances commanded a global following among Jews and non-Jews alike, has died.

Sacks died Saturday morning Nov. 7 at age 72, his Twitter account announced. He was in the midst of a third bout of cancer, which he had announced in October.

setting event in British Jewish life.

Corbyn was replaced in April by centrist Keir Starmer, who has apologized for how anti-Semitism was allowed to flourish in Labour's ranks under Corbyn. Starmer, who is married to a Jewish woman, expressed his condolences to "the entire Jewish world" in a tweet on Saturday.

"He was a towering intellect whose eloquence, insights and kindness reached well beyond the Jewish community. I have no doubt that his legacy will live on for many generations," Starmer wrote.

Sacks was also vocal in his opposition to the forces that lead to anti-Semitism on the far left and the far right, as he wrote in a JTA op-ed in January.

"Anti-Semitism has little to do with Jews — they are its object, not its cause — and everything to do with dysfunction in the communities that harbor it," he wrote.

In 2017, in a widely circulated YouTube video, Sacks called anti-Zionism a new form

of anti-Semitism, arguing that it denies Jews the "right to exist collectively with the same rights as everyone else."

The video was based on a 2016 speech Sacks delivered in Brussels, which is widely seen as having paved the way to Britain's adoption later that year of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of anti-Semitism.

But the video went far beyond political and academic circles, and became symbolic of Sacks' ability to reach mainstream audiences. Rachel Riley, a famous British Jewish game show television host, last year shared the video, telling her over 600,000 Twitter followers that it is "the best explanation of antisemitism I've seen."

Sacks branched out beyond religious and Jewish cultural thought as well. In 2017 he delivered a Ted Talk about "facing the future without fear" and what he called a "fateful moment" in Western history after the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president, citing Thomas Paine and anthropologists to make an argument about returning a culture of togetherness.

Born in London in 1948, Sacks studied at Cambridge University. While a student there in the 60s, he visited Rabbi Menachem Schneerson — the spiritual leader who is credited with turning the Hasidic Chabad-Lubavitch movement into a powerful organizing force of Jewry around the world — in New York City. Sacks credits that meeting with inspiring him to get involved with Jewish studies, as he detailed in a series of videos for Chabad.org in 2011.

He became the rabbi of the Golders Green synagogue in London's most Orthodox neighborhood in the late 70s and then rabbi of the Marble Arch synagogue in central London.

The U.K. Board of Deputies of British Jews President Marie van der Zyl also released a statement.

"Rabbi Sacks was a giant of both the Jewish community and wider society. His astounding intellect and courageous moral voice were a blessing to all who encountered him in person, in writing or in broadcast," van der Zyl said.

Sacks is survived by his wife Elaine, three children and several grandchildren. ■



Jonathan Sacks seen as the chief rabbi of the United Kingdom, circa 2000.

PHOTO CAPTION: JOHN DOWNING/GETTY IMAGES

Sacks was among the world's leading exponents of Orthodox Judaism for a global audience. In his 22 years as chief rabbi, he emerged as the most visible Jewish leader in the United Kingdom and one of the European continent's leading Jewish voices, offering Jewish wisdom to the masses through a regular segment he produced for the BBC. He had a close relationship with former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who called Sacks "an intellectual giant" and presented him with a lifetime achievement award in 2018.

Sacks was also an immensely prolific author, addressing pressing social and political issues in a succession of well received books. His popular commentary on the prayer book, published by Koren, helped to dethrone the more traditional Artscroll Siddur as the preeminent prayer book in American Modern Orthodox synagogues.

Sacks was normally averse to mixing religion and politics, something he discussed, along with his latest book, "Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times," and an array of other hot-button topics with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in August.

"When anger erupts in a body politic, there is quite often a justified cause. But then the political domain has got to take that anger and deal with it very fast," he told JTA's opinion editor Laura Adkins. "Because anger exposes the problem but never delivers the solution."

But he did take public stances on two topics that were often ensnared with European politics: Israel and anti-Semitism.

Sacks spoke out publicly as Britain's Labour Party was engulfed in an anti-Semitism scandal under its previous leader Jeremy Corbyn, calling Corbyn an anti-Semite.

"We have an anti-Semite as the leader of the Labour Party and her majesty's opposition. That is why Jews feel so threatened by Mr. Corbyn and those who support him," Sacks said in 2018 during an interview with the New Statesman.

That judgement paved the way for the current British Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis to harshly condemn the Labour Party, a precedent-

Obituaries

Hillary Handwerger, 73, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, died after sunset on 30 October 2020. Beloved wife of 51 years of Kenneth Handwerger. Cherished mother of Lee (Keri Vander Werff) and Jill (Dr. Stephen) Leenay. Loving Grandma of Simon Handwerger, Sophia Leenay, and Ann Leenay (Bilal Khan). Adored sister



of Wendy (Rabbi Stuart) Ettinger, Trudy (Scott) Farrell, Laurie (David) Lerner, Ronnie (James) Buchanan, and Jeffrey (Melanie Sacks) Miller. Fondly remembered by many friends and colleagues.

Hillary was the oldest of six children born to Samuel and Charlotte Miller. She was a voracious reader, and her love of books set the stage for her ultimate career as a business librarian. Her love of animals led her to graduating with a secondary teaching degree in biological and

related sciences. For the last 13 years she worked as a self-employed website designer. It was the perfect job that allowed her to combine her artistic skills with her information organization and retrieval skills.

Hillary was a dedicated member of Women of Temple Beth Emeth (formerly Sisterhood). She served as President multiple times, and Programming Chairperson multiple times. She initiated many special programs and services for the membership. Hillary also served on the National Board of the Women of Reform Judaism, and the District Board where she was Program Chair, Webmaster, and published the newsletter. She was extremely proud of her work with these organizations, stating in her own words, "WRJ gives me voice, direction, an extended family, outlet for social responsibility, and so much more. We are a people, stronger together!"

Maida Sue Portnoy, 80, of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, died on October 19, 2020. She is survived by her children and their spouses, Rachel Portnoy and Adam Eichner,

and Eddy Portnoy and Mira Blushtein. She



is also survived by her grandchildren, Kobi and Jonah Eichner, and Ben and Luli Portnoy. She really loved those damn kids. She was the wife of the late Robert G. Portnoy, the daughter of the late Arnold E. Frank and the

late Edith Selker Frank, and the sister of the late Richard S. Frank. Active for many years in Jewish communal affairs, Maida was the first female president of Junior Division and spent many years working for the Detroit Jewish Book Fair and the Detroit Jewish Music Festival. She also had a mid-life career as a journalist and wrote hundreds of articles for The Oakland Press, Michigan Woman, Monthly Detroit, and The Detroit Jewish News, among others. Obituaries ■

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Simchas and Sorrows

Mazal tov to

Haran and Nikki Rashes and Laurie Lichter on the marriage of their daughter, Ilana Rashes to Jeremy Levy. Ilana is also the granddaughter of Paul and Carolyn Lichter.
Cheryl and Mark Good on the marriage of their son, Alan Good to Hannah Tout. Alan is also the grandson of Phyllis Werbel.
Elaine and Barry Margolis on the marriage of their daughter, Erin Margolis to Dan Tochen.
Joshua and Julie Goldman on the birth of their daughter, Rebecca Trudy Goldman, sister of Jason Phillip.

Condolences to

Joshua Botkin on the death of his father, Eli Botkin, October 30.
Alan Fligel on the death of his sister, Lillian Brown, October 30.
The family of Bruce Hern, husband of Susan, brother of Robert, father of Samuel and Olivia, Oct 20.
The family of Chuck Scott, brother of Deborah Katz, uncle of Rachel Katz (Aaron Struminger) and Naomi Katz, Oct. 20.
The family of Seymour Soverinsky, father of Mark Soverinsky and father-in-law of Betsy Mark, Oct. 22.

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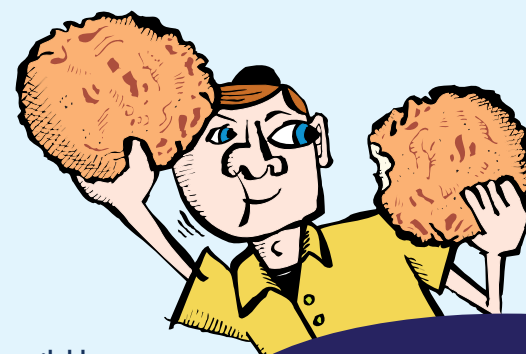
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During this holiday season, and as COVID-19 continues to impact our community, please know JFS is here for you.

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