

In this issue...



**TBE Origin
Story:
The Bernsteins**

page 10



**Book
Reviews**

page 19



**Bronx
Treasure
Trove**

page 21

Washtenaw Jewish News
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JEWISH NEWS

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Tai Chi Kirtan rabbi coming to Illuminate

by Rabbi Nadav Caine, Beth Israel Congregation

What impediments do so many Jews have to accessing the heart and spirit of Jewish tradition? The ones I hear the most are: "I can't pray in, or even read, Hebrew." "I don't believe in a God up in the sky." "I can understand an intellectual relationship with Jewish tradition, but feeling connected to God while I pray? What's that?"

The first time Rabbi Andrew Hahn led me in prayer, in 2010, it took those assembled in the room less than five minutes to overcome these obstacles.

As we sat, no prayerbooks in sight, he played his harmonium in a simple, mesmerizing melody, as he called out a phrase or line of Hebrew liturgy, and we'd chant it right back — a "Simon Says" that even a child could do. Didn't get it the first time? No problem and no pressure: he would repeat it several times until everyone in the room got it. Didn't know what it meant? No worries, at some point a translation was shared and we repeated it back. Already familiar with He-

brew and hoping to be challenged? Suddenly the line of prayer would replace the familiar



brew and hoping to be challenged? Suddenly the line of prayer would replace the familiar name of God with one of the mystical names of God, and the entire group was now having a Jewish mystical experience. Not sure how to put aside your ego and feel the prayer? Just

let yourself flow into the group experience. It strangely reminded me of collectively finish-



ing verses for Jerry Garcia at Grateful Dead shows years ago. Did I just do that? Did we just do that?

"What is wonderful about the kind of

chanting we do is that it touches all individuals on their level, according to the mood they are, what breakthrough they may need, etc. Very few words are necessary, so that no expertise is required. I like to say that the call-and-response form and the time taken to delve deeply allows for a certain kind of what I like to call 'direct connect,' whether this be with the Divine, with one's innermost self, and/or with the community assembled. It is a form of 'easy meditation': it just happens. What is needed in the moment gets fulfilled. No one feels under any pressure to find anything."

These are words of Rabbi Andrew Hahn, "Reb Drew," known around the world as the "Kirtan Rabbi," as he explained to me his work this past week.

Reb Drew is a classically-trained musician who crosses Jewish denominational boundaries: he holds a PhD in Jewish Thought from the Jewish Theological Seminary (Conservative) and re-

continued to page 8

Youth activists in Egypt for climate change conference

By Hazon Detroit staff

In early November, 10 Jewish college student leaders traveled to COP27, the United Nations Climate Change Conference taking place in Egypt. These leaders are among the founders of Hazon's Jewish Youth Climate Movement (JYCM), and they are now JYCM College Fellows. Naomi Parr, a University of Michigan student and Jewish Youth Climate Movement (JYCM) College Fellow, is a member of the delegation. The delegation, accompanied by Hazon CEO Jakir Manela and JYCM director Liana Rothman, traveled to Israel and then Egypt for a week-long trip with Israeli peer climate activists.

Founded in 2019, the Jewish Youth Climate Movement (JYCM) is Hazon's Gen Z-led movement dedicated to combating climate change and environmental injustice through a Jewish lens. Liana Rothman, JYCM Director, describes the fast growth of the movement: "After much dreaming and countless informational meetings, the idea for a national, youth-led, Jewish climate justice movement was born, with the realization



Naomi Parr

that nothing like this existed, and believing in the powers of youth climate leadership through a Jewish lens. Knowing we wanted

it to be truly teen-led, built, and run, my co-founder Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein and I cast out a wide net, and interviewed and assembled the first JYCM national leadership board of 25 middle and high schoolers across the country who would build this movement."

JYCM's goal is to make collective action towards climate justice a central, defining feature of what it means to be Jewish by empowering Jewish youth to lead the fight for a sustainable and equitable world for all.

Naomi Parr is a JYCM College Fellow and a first year at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and one of the members of the delegation. "The weight of these issues, in part because of their amplification on social media, can leave my generation feeling hopeless," writes Naomi. "The Jewish Youth Climate Movement has acted as an antidote to this feeling; it is a lifeline to an empowering, united, active community. In addition to the myriad of outside educational experiences that I have been privileged to take part in, I also have the opportunity to learn from and be inspired by my peers in JYCM. The relationships and role models I have found

within the organization fills me with hope and momentum to act for a better world."


Leading up to and during COP27, Hazon aimed to catalyze its work moving forward by elevating youth voices and creating connections between North American and global Jewish youth climate activists. As a movement of young Jews, focused on liberation and equity and wellness for the planet and people, JYCM spent two days before COP27 at the Arava Institute, where they expressed solidarity with Palestinian, Jordanian, and Israeli climate activists in our movement for climate justice for all communities. Then, they traveled to COP and joined the confluence of ideas and activists that occurs at these renowned international proceedings. The participants are excited and inspired. Naomi writes: "I am beyond excited to have the opportunity to attend COP27. I cannot imagine a more meaningful way to learn about a global crisis, then to hear the perspectives of those from around the globe. From news stories alone, I am inspired by the action of other countries against climate change. To hear

continued to page 24

Advertisers



Advertisers

Alex Milshteyn, Realto.....	3
Ann Arbor District Library.....	15
Ann Arbor Rec & Ed.....	15
Art on Adare.....	14
Bank of Ann Arbor.....	16
Bivouac.....	13
Catholic Social Services, Senior Resource Center.....	27
Country Valley Farm.....	2
Giraffe Design Build.....	26
Guild of Artists and Artisans.....	12
Hurwitz-Greene Real Estate	16
Jewish Federation.....	15, 16, 17
Lake Forest Golf Club.....	16
Leora Rubin, Reinhart Realtors....	12
Modern Mechanical.....	8
NOMA Real Estate Services....	17
Pam Sjo, The Reinhart Company....	13
Penny Seats Theatre.....	14
Purple Rose Theatre Company.....	2
Star Trax Events.....	28
UM Gilbert and Sullivan Society....	17
Wolverine Tax & Financial.....	3
Women of TBE.....	12
Zingerman's.....	14

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From the Editor

Another winter has begun in Washtenaw. I'm a newcomer here because I moved to Michigan only 19 years ago. My grandparents' families moved to the American Midwest just over 100 years ago. I learned not long ago that



Clare Kinberg

the peoples indigenous to the Great Lakes region have been living here for at least 10,000 years.

Non-indigenous people here who are aware of this history have begun to open our gatherings with a "land acknowledgement." As I look out on the morning snow, this feels right to me and so I've adapted the land acknowledgement posted on the Washtenaw Community College website to open this issue of the Washtenaw Jewish News.

As the publisher of the Washtenaw Jewish News, I humbly acknowledge that the land that is home to my community is the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of diverse native peoples. The taking of this land was formalized, in a

process alien to native cultures, by the Treaty of Detroit in 1807, with the Anishinaabe, including the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi, and with the Wyandot. Many other native peoples lived on this land at different times including the Fox, Sauk, Shawnee, Kickapoo, Miami, Muskogean, and Cherokee.

All who live here have benefited from the use of this land where we work and study, and from its life, beauty, and spirit. We recognize our responsibility to understand and care for this land, and we honor, with our deepest gratitude, the native people who have stewarded it for generations.

Acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. But let this step be an opening to greater public consciousness of Native history, sovereignty and cultural rights, and a step toward equitable relationship and reconciliation.

As a Jewish community whose identity and spirituality has grown in the soil of exile — from Eden, from Jerusalem, from the Empires and nation states of Europe, Asia, and Africa — I hope we will deepen our exploration and understanding of what it means to live here, on this land.

Perhaps the meaning of our sojourn here has taken a clarifying turn as we watch with dismay and heartbreak our people's return to our homeland in the Levant taking relentless and decisive steps away from "equitable relationship and reconciliation." This is not easy stuff, and there are no pat answers, but I am grateful for the community who are on this path of tikkun.

My best wishes to you that our Chanukah lights bring joy, warmth, connection, and maybe a wee bit of wisdom as we head into 2023. ■

JEWISH NEWS

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Phone numbers, websites and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annar-borminyan.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., isa.umich.edu/judaic/

Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jc-cannarbor.org

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org

Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org

Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org

Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org

UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org

In this issue...

Advertisers.....	2
Calendar.....	22
Kosher Cuisine.....	18
Obituaries.....	25
Simchas and Sorrows.....	25

Introducing Koleinu: The Partnership Minyan of Ann Arbor

Lisa P. Bernstein, special to the WJN

Spirited, spiritual, traditional, and participatory. These are a few words to describe Koleinu, Ann Arbor's new Partnership Minyan. Voices unite with beautiful melodies as the Shabbat prayers are recited. Rachel Jacobson, one of the leaders of the minyan, described the experience saying, "The lay-led, songful davening [praying] with a full liturgy and a room full of people who are all there to daven is really special."



What started as a small group last Simchat Torah began meeting more regularly in the spring, gathering for Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma'ariv. It has now grown to bring together over 50 participants for monthly Friday night and Saturday morning services.

Koleinu enhances the Shabbat worship opportunities available in Ann Arbor. Jacobson continued, "I am shomer Shabbat and egalitarian, and there is not a Jewish institution in Ann Arbor that makes it easy to be both of those things at the same time." The leaders of Koleinu emphasize that they have great respect for the existing congregations, and that they support the important positions these institutions have in the community. Many of those who attend Koleinu are members of one or more of the local synagogues and choose to attend services at their home congregations on the Shabbatot Koleinu does not meet.

The grassroots minyan is being shaped and completely led by participants. The leadership of the group is still developing, as is its organization. Volunteers select a location, bring prayer books, provide food for kiddush, and lead the services and children's activities. Participants also contribute toward costs, including rental space, babysitting, and kiddush.

An important goal for the group is to

have the maximum ritual participation for all gender identities under parameters that work for people with a range of halachic observance. The group has been following guidelines that partnership minyanim in other cities have adopted. This means that people of all genders are invited to read Torah and haftarah, have aliyot, give divrei Torah, and lead Psukei D'zimra, Hallel, the Torah service, and Kabbalat Shabbat.

Men are invited to lead Shacharit, Musaf, and Ma'ariv. There is a conscious effort made to ensure that at least 10 men and 10 women are present for all parts of davening that require a minyan. During services, there are separate sections for men and women, as well as space where people of different genders mix. Shoshanna Wechter, an Ann Arbor native, explains, "As a trans woman, I find davening in a space with a mekhitze [divider] to be gender affirming. I appreciate being in a space that feels trans inclusive and progressive, while the davening itself is traditional, including reading the entire Torah portion. I love the grassroots energy of Koleinu and am looking forward to seeing it grow."

Participants come from different stages of life. Rachel Brustein, added, "I'm really excited that there's a lay-led minyan with heimishe [warm and homey] vibes in our community, and I love that this minyan has given me the opportunity to meet people outside of grad school and the university bubble." Young families appreciate Tot Shabbat and Mini Minyan, each of which recently attracted 15–20 children with prayers, songs, and a parasha quiz for the older children. a graduate student in the Jewish Communal Leadership Program at the U-M School of Social Work Koleinu welcomes community members to the minyan. The minyan has met within the eruv (community Shabbat boundary) on Friday nights or Saturday mornings, in participants' homes, or the Ann Arbor Senior Center. Koleinu plans to meet on the second Shabbat morning and third Friday night of December and January. Contact KoleinuAnnArbor@gmail.com for times and locations. ■

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Crowdfunding for Eden Gardens Enrichment Center matching MEDC grant

An old brick house will be transformed into a community learning center in the Eden Gardens Community on the East Side of Detroit through the anticipated success of a crowdfunding campaign, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), and local nonprofit Eden Gardens Community Association announced today. The campaign is being offered through the Michigan-based crowdfunding platform Patronicity.

If the campaign reaches its crowdfunding goal of \$50,000 by January 1, the project will win a matching grant with funds made possible by MEDC's Public Spaces Community Places program. For project details and to donate, please visit patronicity.com/learning.

"Grassroots-level initiatives like the Eden Gardens Enrichment Center that enrich the lives of residents of all ages are the cornerstone of community redevelopment," said MEDC Executive Vice President of Economic Development Incentives Michele Wildman. "We are pleased to support and provide resources for this project to do just that, through our Public Spaces Community Places program."

The Eden Gardens Community Association (EGCA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of youth in their neighborhood. It has been a joint project of the Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue and the Eden Gardens Community Association.

This campaign will provide the funding needed to finish transforming a two-story house next door to EGCA's community gardens community into a learning center. The center will



host various youth programs throughout the year. Each day the learning center will be filled with children learning reading, math, writing, and science.

During the last few years of the pandemic, children have fallen behind in science, reading, math, and social interaction. Teachers are also overwhelmed and need the help and support of the community for children to catch up on their skills. The Eden Garden Enrichment Center will help close those gaps and provide a community space

for youth and mentors to gather and spend time.

The funding from this campaign will allow Eden Gardens to complete the community rooms build out for yoga, math, counseling, and science,

who lack the skills needed to prepare themselves to be successful in life," said Karen Knox, Eden Gardens Executive Director.

Public Spaces Community Places is a collaborative effort of the MEDC, the Michigan Municipal League, and Patronicity, in which local residents can use crowdfunding to be part of the development of strategic projects in their communities and be backed with a matching grant from MEDC. Communities, nonprofits, and other business entities can apply at <https://patronicity.com/puremichigan>.

"The Michigan Municipal League is a firm believer in the importance of building community wealth," said Dan Gilmartin, CEO and Executive Director of the League. "This community learning center will enrich the community for generations to come, which is what community wealth building is all about."

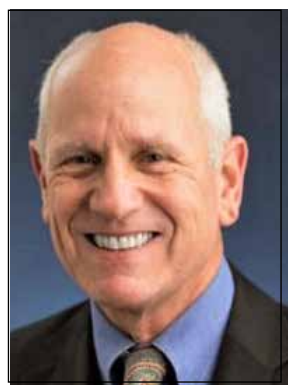
The Public Spaces Community Places initiative started in 2014 with MEDC providing matched funding of up to \$50,000 for community improvement projects throughout Michigan. As of September 30, 2022, MEDC has provided more than \$10.7 million in matching grants. Since the launch of the program, 328 projects have been successful in reaching their goal, with \$12.3 million raised from 58,468 individual donors. Communities have a 97% success rate in achieving their goals and earning our matching funds. ■

The origin of matter with Tim Chupp

The Jewish Cultural Society's Second Friday Schmooze series invites the community to hear physicist Tim Chupp speak on the origin of matter on December 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Maas Lounge of the Jewish Community Center.

Tim Chupp is a Professor of Physics and Biomedical Engineering at the University of Michigan. According to the *New York Times*, a recent widely publicized result of measurements in which Chupp's University of Michigan physics group participated "suggests that there are forms of matter and energy vital to the nature and evolution of the cosmos that are not yet known to science."

Tim Chupp was born in Berkeley, California, and lived in Seattle, New Hampshire, and



of bicycles, clocks, cars, radios, and much more to take apart or repair. Chupp is an experimental physicist who spends as much time as possible

Munich before university and grad school. Raised in a family of scientists, he was exposed to big questions about nature from an early age, and he was provided with a playground in the lab building apparatus to probe forces on atoms and nuclei. He is devoted to bringing physics to as broad an audience as possible and has been engaged in organizing Saturday Morning Physics and teaching Everyday Physics — the physics of things we encounter every day. Chupp and Martine Perreault have lived in Ann Arbor for 30 years and all three of their children have been bat mitzvah or bar mitzvah in the JCS community.

According to Chupp, much — but not all — of what we observe in the universe can be explained by two mathematically detailed descriptions of 1) the smallest pieces of matter and the forces between them, and 2) the evolution of the universe from a hot-dense beginning (the Big Bang). Explaining the origin and abundance

of all the elements from which everything is composed is an intellectual triumph that brings these two descriptions together.

But why there is any matter at all remains a mystery: If equal amounts of matter and antimatter were present at the start, they would have annihilated, leaving nothing to make stars, planets, and eventually life. Andrei Sakharov provided a recipe that requires forces and possibly particles not yet discovered that may leave hints that we can observe in the laboratory. "We'll discuss the successes and challenges to a scientific explanation of the genesis of matter and how we are working towards resolving the mysteries." ■

HDS to honor founder Marlene Gitelman

By Lauren Katz

In January 2023, the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor (HDS) will host an event in honor of the founding Head of School, Marlene Gitelman z"l, who passed away in January 2022. Marlene and Zvi Gitelman were instrumental in founding HDS in the 1970s. Marlene served as Head of School for 18 years and established the school as a pillar of the Ann Arbor Jewish Community.

After almost a half century, HDS continues to serve as a highly valued institution in this community. Rabbi Will Keller, HDS's current Head of School, said, "We strive to nurture capable, confident, and values-driven global citizens whose impact on the world is shaped by their Jewish identity. We accomplish this mission through the collaboration, care, and creativity of our incredible team of educators who meet students where they are and enable them to thrive in a myriad of ways."

"I'm just amazed at the quality and excellence of the school. It's everything we [the founders] could have imagined and hoped for and much more," said Marvin Gerber, one of the founders of HDS.



The HDS Board of Directors, faculty and staff, current and alumni families, and the broader Jewish community of Ann Arbor are immensely grateful to the small but dedicated group of founders,

including Marlene, who acted on a powerful vision that lives on today.

The event will take place on January 15, 2023, from 11 a.m.–1 p.m., and will include brunch, speeches honoring Marlene, and a musical performance by Adam Kahana, an HDS alumnus who is a professional musician. All of the founding families of HDS will be honored with a new plaque that will be unveiled at the event.

HDS Board President, Samantha Hendren, said, "It is my sincere hope that this event will bring together all of the HDS community, past and present. We are inviting current families, alumni families, current and past teachers and staff, and our many community supporters."

Community members who wish to attend can RSVP by emailing office@hdsaa.org or by contacting the HDS office by phone (734) 971-4633. ■

AARC events in December

For more information about services or events or to receive Zoom links, please email: aarcgillian@gmail.com. Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation website: aarecon.org

Second Saturday Morning Shabbat Service

December 10, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

This is a hybrid Shabbat Service led by members of the congregation at the JCC. Everyone is welcome! Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event.

AARC Book Group

December 4, 4–5:30 p.m. on Zoom.

We will be reading two graphic novels by Liana Finck: *Let There Be Light* and *A Bintel Brief*. Please email Greg Saltzman for more information: gsaltzman@albion.edu.

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat

December 23, 6:30 p.m.

In person at the JCC and on Zoom. This is a hybrid service led by members of the congregation. ■

Local Jewish leaders attend GA in Chicago

By Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor Staff

Nine leaders from the greater Ann Arbor Jewish community joined more than 1,200 other Jewish communal leaders from across the country at the Jewish Federations of North America's (JFNA) three-day General Assembly (GA), held in Chicago, Illinois, from October 30–November 1.

First held 90 years ago, the GA is considered by many to be the most consequential annual gathering of the North American Jewish leadership community. Its mission is to bring together Jewish leaders of diverse backgrounds in a space that fosters productive dialogue and debate — and this year, following a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the spirit of community and belonging, and of a yearning for connection, was palpable.

The contingent representing the greater Ann Arbor Jewish community included: Eileen Freed, Federation Executive Director; McKenzie Katz, Federation Community Relations Manager; Paige Swanson, Federation Development Associate; Ariella Hoffman-Peterson, Jewish Young Professionals Co-President; Debra Chopp, Federation Co-Vice President; Joshua Sukenic, Federation Annual Community Campaign Chair; Ellen Abramson, Jewish Family Services President; and past Federation presidents Steve Aronson and Randy Milgrom.

The GA's theme this year focused on fashioning responses to the many geopolitical challenges and global events currently im-

pacting the Jewish community, and to help set a shared Jewish communal agenda for the year



Left to right, Ariella Hoffman-Peterson, Ellen Abramson, Eileen Freed, Randy Milgrom, Paige Swanson, McKenzie Katz

ahead to meet those challenges, and to identify the opportunities they present for building

flourishing Jewish communities. GA attendees heard from a diverse array of expert voices on these most critical issues facing the North American Jewish community, including the urgency of Jewish communal security; Jewish Federations' and others' responses to the Ukraine crisis and the uncertainties that lie ahead for Jews in Ukraine and Russia; and new initiatives and partnerships to combat the virulent rise in antisemitism.

Global figures, activists, public officials, and other communal leaders also addressed the assembly, including such notables as: Israeli President Isaac Herzog; U.S. Ambassador to Germany Amy Gutmann; Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Herzog; journalist and news anchor Andrea Mitchell; Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism Ambassador Dr. Deborah Lipstadt; and philosopher and author and filmmaker Bernard Henry Levy, among many others.

"The array of experts at every plenary, and in every breakout session, was very impressive," said Federation's immediate past president, Randy Milgrom. "I learned so much about so many issues throughout the course of this assembly. But just as inspiring — and affirming — was how much could be gleaned from our counterparts in Jewish communities from all across the country. No matter how different we might be in terms of size and demographics, the similarities among us were that much more apparent — with the greatest commonality being the passion and dedication and sincerity on display among professional and lay leaders alike."

During the opening plenary of the General Assembly, JFNA Board Chair Julie Platt announced that since the launch of LiveSecure last year, the number of Jewish communities in North America that have security programs has increased by 42%. LiveSecure is a \$130 million investment in Jewish communal security that aims to protect every single Jewish community in the U.S. and Canada through a grant issued by Jewish Federations of North America, with matching funds raised by the local Federation. The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor has been working with LiveSecure for several years now and has already raised funds and hopes to continue to raise additional monies eligible to be matched by this JFNA grant this year to further strengthen our security efforts.

On a more celebratory note, a special reception was held to mark both the 60th anniversary of National Young Leadership Cabinet and the 50th anniversary of Lions of Judah, which represent models of leadership for the Jewish world.

There was also a great deal of discussion — both formally and informally — about how to better engage our younger generations to more fully participate in Jewish communal life. Unfortunately, youthful participants at the GA

seemed to be outnumbered by those who are more seasoned — though the Ann Arbor delegation certainly did its part, not only including younger Federation staff members McKenzie Katz and Paige Swanson but also Jewish Young Professional lay leader Ariella Hoffman-Peterson.

"As the GA began, I was energized and joyful to be learning from notable speakers who do amazing work to build, sustain, and nourish Jewish communities," Hoffman-Peterson said. "However, it challenged me, too. Heavy discussions about rising antisemitism started to drain me, the concern that the living generations of Jews hold very different perspectives on Israel, identity, and politics felt irreparable, and many emotions ran high during a debate about whether we should derive our Jewish values primarily from text and tradition or from modern values that we self-define as part of our Jewish practices. But when a local Chicago pastor led us in singing a soulful *Hatikvah* ..., I remembered why it is so important that we gather to both celebrate our joys and address our worries about our Jewish communities and the world today. Attending the GA renewed my sense of purpose as a young Jewish lay leader to be present and participate in the building, sustaining, and nourishment of the Jewish community."

Federation Executive Director Eileen Freed echoed the power of gathering at the GA. "The GA is an opportunity for leaders from all different kinds of Jewish communities to come together to learn and share with one another," Freed said. "It is a reminder of the strength of this international network, and the impact we can have when we work not just as individuals or even one local Jewish community, but as a global collective."

At the closing ceremony, JFNA Chief Executive Officer Eric Fingerhut was pleased to announce that during the course of the GA, several members of the leadership of various major Jewish organizations had been meeting with representatives of the financial ratings powerhouse Morningstar — and that they were able to come to an agreement on a new set of commitments regarding anti-Israel bias in its ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) ratings. The agreement during the GA was the culmination of months of deliberations between the parties.

"We are living in complex times when antisemitic incidents are increasing at an alarming rate, anti-Israel rhetoric is rampant, millions of people are displaced by war, and our communities are overwhelmed by a mental health crisis," said JFNA Board Chair Julie Platt. "These extreme challenges we face require bold solutions and broad collaborations, so that we can effectively strengthen our communities and ensure that they are safe, compassionate, inclusive, and vibrant. The General Assembly is a unique opportunity that comes around once per year for our communal leaders to come together to tackle these complex challenges, discuss practical steps towards building flourishing Jewish communities, and return to our communities invigorated to implement these strategies."

To learn more about the Jewish Federation's work in the Ann Arbor area, visit JewishAnnArbor.org. ■

Israel's Deputy Consul General in Ann Arbor

On November 14 and 15, Deputy Consul General Dr. Daniel Aschheim, at the Consulate General of Israel to the Midwest, visited Ann Arbor for meetings with the local community.

During his visit, Dr. Aschheim met with a group of local political leaders over lunch to address current prospects for peace and issues related to antisemitism, anti-Zionism and legitimate criticism of Israel.

Later that same day, Dr. Aschheim led an interactive Happy Hour discussion for wom-

en, centering women in Israeli innovation and entrepreneurship.

The following morning, he met with local business leaders over breakfast at Zingerman's Roadhouse for a round table discussion focusing on Israel's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

To learn more about future Israel & Overseas programming in Washtenaw County, contact Federation's Israel & Overseas Manager Liora Rosen at liora@jewishannarbor.org or visit JewishAnnArbor.org. ■



Back row (L-R): Laurie Leflein, Levana Aronson, Dr. Daniel Aschheim, Susan Rebner, Erica Markovitz, Robin Axelrod, Leora Rubin, Robyn Schmier, Babette Levy Daskin, Sue Adler, Esther Jakar, Liora Rosen, Jenny Lewis, Joan Lowenstein

Front row (L-R): Cantor Regina Hayut, Marci Sukenic, McKenzie Katz, Melissa Hauptman

Watching the Israeli election exit results with Donniel Hartman and Yossi Klein Halevi

Bernie Banet, special to the WJN

On November 1, I watched a web-cast on which Donniel Hartman and Yossi Klein Halevi of the Shalom Hartman Institute heard and responded to the Israeli exit poll results. For me, a Jewish American Democrat, the experience evoked election night 2016 here in the U.S., when Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton, for its implications about the future. This time, however, the result was not really a surprise.

Yossi Klein Halevi and Donniel Hartman, two long-time interpreters of Israel for Americans, seemed devastated by the loss that their side, the coalition led by Prime Minister Yair Lapid, seemed to be experiencing. Their grief could not be soothed by the fact that we were watching reports of exit poll results and not actual vote tallies, and even these had not yet projected an exact pie chart of party seats in the Knesset or determined which parties had exceeded the percentage threshold of 3.25% of the vote required for being represented in that parliament. The reports indicated that the coalition led by Benjamin Netanyahu looked to have achieved a winning coalition by attaining an extremely thin majority of the 120 seats, but a coalition that could potentially be stable.

A key element of the Netanyahu coalition that will likely return him to power in this fifth election in three years would be the Religious Zionism slate that combined the Jewish Power (Otzma Yehudit) party of Itamar Ben-Gvir and the Yamina party of Bezalel Smotrich, both leaders considered extreme right wingers by the two commentators from Shalom Hartman Institute and many others. The Religious Zionists had been united at Netanyahu's urging in order to allow them to be fully represented under the threshold rule, but their electoral support was now

surging, turning the new Religious Zionist Party from a fringe player into the third largest Israeli party in the election projections. This was inconceivable a year ago.

Smotrich is hostile to Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, LGBTQ people. He advocates for

depth of fear, anger, and distrust that exists among the Israeli electorate, which is in that respect sadly parallel to our own citizenry of this era. We were told that 64% of Israelis now identify as of the Right. The successor of the broad left-right Jewish-Arab anti-Ne-

Yossi Klein Halevi sees a fundamental conflict of two narratives among Israeli Jewish voters. One, on the Right, there are citizens who feel that the existence of the Jewish state of Israel is endangered by internal and external enemies. They see Israeli Arabs as a Fifth Column posing a threat to the state. Some resent secular Israelis as hostile to Jewish religious laws and practices that should be honored, even mandated, in Israel.

On the other hand, citizens on the center and what remains of the left sense a profound threat to Israel as a multi-ethnic democracy. They perceive in their political opponents dangerous Jewish ethno-nationalists and theocrats. In the rise of leaders such as Ben-Gvir and Smotrich and in Jewish anger at the participation of the Islamist Arab/Palestinian Ra'am Party in the Bennett-Lapid governing coalition, those opposed to the Likud-led coalition see racism and fascism. According to Halevi, one important factor driving support for right wing parties is the shock of violent uprisings in 2021 by Israeli Arabs, although Netanyahu was still prime minister at that time.

Some of the core political issues that could drive policy changes under a new government, according to Halevi and Hartman, are attempts to curtail the power of Israel's Supreme Court, which has used judicial review to protect minorities, and changes in policy in relation to the West Bank settlements. Whatever the specifics of structural or policy changes, Hartman said he perceived the coming regime change as "a break in our vision, our future." ■



Jewish religious law to be the law of the land. Ben-Gvir was explicitly a Kahanist (former member of Kach and Kahane Chai), seen as a Jewish supremacist, hostile to Israeli Arabs, and anti-democratic. Halevi felt that Ben-Gvir and Smotrich are motivated by theology and are therefore unable to become moderate or tolerant if they gain power.

I found the commentary of the two veteran observers helped me to understand the

Netanyahu governing coalition under Naftali Bennett, and since June under Prime Minister Lapid, has apparently been unable to perpetuate itself. It has apparently failed to unite enough Israelis to reject Netanyahu, still seen by his supporters as the King of Israel. Long-serving as prime minister over multiple terms, Netanyahu is seen as a Trump ally and dismissive of liberal American Jews. He is currently being tried for corruption.

Palestinian/Jewish women's group, Zeitouna, tells Rep. Dingell Shadi Khoury's story

Dear Representative Dingell
We are members of a now 20-year-old women's Palestinian/Jewish dialogue group in Ann Arbor named Zeitouna (olive in Arabic). We are writing to you on behalf of our group, under a wave of sadness and anger, having received the letter below from a cousin of one of the members of our group. The letter describes the brutal arrest and beating of her 16-year-old grandson by a group of Israeli soldiers who broke into the family home in the early morning.

An article about this incident appeared in the Israeli paper *Haaretz* on October 22.

October 18, 2022

Dear Friends

In the early hours of this morning the Israeli occupation forces, consisting of a troop of around 12 persons consisting of army and secret service, stormed my son's house after breaking the gate at the entrance of the compound in which we all live, so as to arrest his younger son Shadi Khoury, a 16-year-old child, a student at the Quakers Friends School in Ramallah. They beat him until he was bleeding all over the room and along the path on the way out of the house dragging him barefoot and blindfolded

not allowing the parents to see where the blood was coming from. Shadi was taken to the interrogation section in the police compound called "the Russian compound." Shadi, a child, is being "interrogated" without the presence of his parents or a lawyer, a tactic used systematically to terrorize children into submission, and ultimately using their own words to incriminate them.

Shadi is a case among so many Palestinian children that are being harassed, tortured, and imprisoned for no reason other than being a Palestinian seeking to live in dignity and freedom in their own country.

As an 89-year-old grandmother who has lived through the Nakba, the 1967 war, the first and second intifadas, I continue to ask you my friends: "Until when will this grave injustice go on?" Because you care for human rights, and the rights of children, I am asking you to take action now and contact your parliament or congress representative, to put an end to these grave injustices especially against our children as well as our whole population living under a brutal military occupation. **Shadi should not be sleeping in a prison cell. He is a child and should be home with his family.**

As we write this, we learned that his first appearance in court has been postponed numerous times and he has not been charged with any crime.

Beatings and arrests are meant to terrorize Palestinian families in a continuing Nakba. American families who have friends and relatives there on both sides of the conflict are being traumatized as well. Young Israeli soldiers are being taught to hate and kill.

We know that our own country is in the midst of similar divisions leading to acts of violence and terrorism. It would be hypocritical to call out a foreign country without acknowledging our own behavior. But ignoring this or minimizing it either here or abroad makes us complicit.

All of us feel anguish because no one is listening to what the occupation in Israel/Palestine really looks like.

As Zeitouna, we know that both peoples love the land and deserve to live in peace as full citizens. There will never be peace until people are willing to learn that they can refuse to be enemies. We know that neither Zeitouna nor you can change things solely by our voices, but maybe you could use your voice to call attention to what is really occurring on a daily basis under occupation, as we follow the reports from abroad. We respectfully ask that you share this life story with

your colleagues.

Zeitouna came together with the goal of "refusing to be enemies" and have become sisters using the skills of dialogue. Several years into the group a film called *Refusing To Be Enemies: The Zeitouna Story* was made. <https://refusingtobeenemies.org>

The many showings and speaking opportunities we've had have convinced us of the power of Dialogue to cross the divides that have made us consider others our enemies. We continue to speak about the power of dialogue to learn from each other and build relationships no matter what the conflict. This work is our ongoing activism.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and consider our request. We could not be silent.

Sincerely,

The Zeitounas
Wadad Abed
Leonore Gerstein
Randa Ajlouny
Tahani Othman
Diane Blumson
Huda Karaman-Rosen
Irene Butter
Grace Stevick
Deborah Field
Laurie White ■

Unpacking Kanye and Kyrie: Condemn antisemitic acts, but don't destroy Black men

Robin Washington, the Forward

This story originally appeared in the Forward. To get the Forward's free email newsletters delivered to your inbox, go to forward.com/newsletter-signup.

What exactly was antisemitic about the tweets and statements of Kanye West (now known as Ye) and Kyrie Irving earlier this fall? Despite being antisemitic in tone, did any of these statements contain some degree of truth? How appropriate was the reaction against both Black men? And could the Jewish reaction to antisemitism by Black celebrities have unintentional consequences to relations be-

Lewis Gordon, the founder of the Center for Afro-Jewish Studies at Temple University who now heads the philosophy department at the University of Connecticut, told me. "It's false to state that claiming there were Black Jews in Africa is antisemitic, because there were Black Jews in Africa. It would be like saying, 'there were Black Muslim slaves in Africa' is Islamophobia."

Black African Jews existed in antiquity, and the Diaspora created European Jewry as well. Both identities can be, and are, real.

3. The film "Hebrews to Negroes: Wake Up Black America" promoted by Kyrie Irving is antisemitic in its Holocaust denial alone. I haven't watched it, so I will take on faith the claims from those who have that it states the Holocaust never happened. How far it takes the "real Jews" argument above, I don't know. What makes little sense is why Irving had to tweet about it at all — just as what

could possibly have been his urgent need to earlier declare to his millions of basketball fans that the world is flat.

4. It's inappropriate to label the claim "European Jews are impostors" as a universal belief of "Black Hebrew Israelites" because ...

5. The term "Black Hebrew Israelite" is a conflation of many different groups who believe and practice many different things. The term generally refers to descendants of newly emancipated African Americans who rejected the Christianity of their former slaveholders. Some claimed Jewish lineage, and some embraced Judaic practices without converting halachically.

But not all groups lumped under the term today all share the same practices and beliefs. Chicago's Beth Shalom B'Nai Zaken congregation describes itself as "Conservadox" and is regularly visited by mainstream Jews. Its rabbi, Capers Funnye, is halachically Jewish, though he was ordained under Israelite auspices. His congregation has no connection or resemblance to the Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge, known for confronting white Jews about their legitimacy on the streets of New York.

In a backgrounder on its website, the Anti-Defamation League makes this distinction upfront, stating "Black Hebrew Israelites are not the same as Black Jews or Jews of color" (a different issue that to my dismay, still has to be explained), and that "Not all Black Hebrew Israelite organizations are antisemitic

or extremists." But the section goes on to group all of them together, saying "Black Hebrew Israelites believe that they are the true Israelites and that the Twelve Tribes of Israel are people of color." Not all do. As with any religion, belief and practices — such as animal sacrifices by ancient Hebrews — change over time.

"There is, in fact, no such thing as a Black Hebrew Israelite, or at least any one thing, and the phrase is not an accurate descriptor in an historical sense," Bruce Haynes, a sociology professor at the University of California and the author of "The Soul of Judaism: Jews of African Descent in America," wrote in the Forward earlier this year. "As used today, the term is largely a conflation of many different groups that hold wildly different beliefs."

6. Groups labeled as Black Hebrew Israelites are not the only religious bodies outside of rabbinic Judaism who claim a descendancy from Biblical Israel. The Book of Mormon, upon which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is based, is Joseph Smith's divinely inspired, but unproven, account of ancient Hebraic people who settled in the Americas a millennium before Columbus. Mormons do not call Jews impostors, but they do call non-Mormons Gentiles, including Jews.

7. There have been Black people condemning Kanye and Kyrie. Of particular note is that it took Charles Barkley to get NBA head Adam Silver to act on suspending Irving. Joining the outrage are commentators from LeBron James and Jemele Hill. But West and Irving also have their defenders, and nuancing it further, some back Kyrie but not Kanye. That's especially true given West's alliance with Donald Trump and his anti-Black statements and actions, including his "white lives matter" fashion stunt immediately preceding the current controversy. Many Blacks say that should have sparked the same outrage as his antisemitic tweets.

There is no one universal Black opinion. Yet ...

8. Many Black people are also troubled by the public condemnation of Black men, regardless of how badly they have behaved. OK, millions of African Americans will accept that O.J. murdered Nicole and Ron Goldman (or was held legally responsible for their deaths) and that Bill Cosby raped white women (or was convicted of doing so before the evidence was tossed). But many Black people have long felt that media and white society as a whole revel in the downfall of Black men, particularly the most successful among them. Forcing Irving to apologize publicly, no matter how deserved, felt to many like extracting a pound of flesh in a slave pen.

I would add, however, that sentiment is cooler toward West, who has consistently denigrated the Black community with antics as harmful to Blacks as his "death con" threat is to Jews.

9. Kanye and Kyrie brought their troubles on themselves. Maybe I'm in the wrong crowd, but I don't know anyone who woke up, when this escapade began, dying to read what Kanye or Kyrie thought about Jews. I can't explain Irving's motivations, except that maybe he failed to notice nobody ever got a job from a tweet, but plenty of people have lost them. With Kanye, I suspect the real reason behind his behavior is to get attention (he was and is still part of the Kardashian clan). If so, it worked.

10. Jewish organizations' mobilization against antisemitic acts is effective in the short term. But will it really change anything? Robin DiAngelo dissects America's failure-to-communicate on racism as white people and Black people seeing racism two different ways. Whites, she maintains, define racism as bad acts by bad people, such as saying the N-word or putting a noose on a coworker's desk. Black people certainly recognize those behaviors as racist. But they also see institutional racism, such as Black youth being tailed in store aisles or banks denying loans to Black doctors, as equally harmful. Most whites, DiAngelo says, are oblivious to that.

To DiAngelo's thesis I would add the corollary: Mainstream Jewish organizations are excellent at responding to individual bad acts of antisemitism. They are less effective at dismantling antisemitism institutionally, or at least publicly. There are endless individual bad acts of antisemitism, and responding to them all is as effective as plugging an ocean — or more to the point, attempting to silence social media. Responding disproportionately to those by Black people may seem to yield short-term victories, but it risks alienating erstwhile allies who certainly know racism when they see it, and have a pretty good idea about antisemitism as well.

11. I haven't covered every nuance here because it would be impossible to do so. Yet it is crucial to avoid generalizations, beginning with the erroneous assumption that normative Judaism is white, and that questions challenging that, particularly those made by Black people, are inherently antisemitic. As I have long stated, to say "Blacks and Jews" is a misnomer: The two groups are not mutually exclusive. They weren't in antiquity, when Black Jews traveled along Africa's trade routes, nor today, when everyone should know at least one Black Jew.

Robin Washington, an acclaimed veteran journalist based in Minnesota, is the Forward's Editor-at-Large. A longtime senior editor, columnist, radio host and documentarian across mainstream and ethnic media, he was one of the founders of the Alliance of Black Jews and an early pioneer of the term "Jew of color" more than two decades ago. Contact him at rwashington@forward.com or follow him on Twitter @robinbirk. ■



Robin Washington

tween Black gentiles and white Jews?

There have been several attempts to unpack the events of the past few weeks and the reactions to them. Here is mine. I've numbered them like a legal briefing, though I have no intention of appearing in any courtroom.

1. Kanye's original tweet was antisemitic. Threatening to go "death con 3" against any group of people is unambiguously hate speech.

2. But Kanye's reference to African Jews in antiquity needs to be unpacked because it may not have been antisemitic, at least initially. It's offensive to state that Black Africans are the real Jews and that European Jews are impostors. But that's not what West said in his initial tweet.

He stated, "The funny thing is I actually can't be antisemitic because black people are actually Jew *also*." Parsing Ye may be a fool's errand, but by "also" — italics mine — he could have meant "Blacks are Black, and they also are Jews," or "Blacks are Jews, along with European Jews." Although that remark immediately sparked outrage, he did not then state that European Jews are not Jews.

West aside, it's not offensive to assert that there were Black African Jews caught up in the slave trade because the statement is true. Of the estimated 12.5 million Africans shipped to the New World during the height of the slave trade, there unquestionably were Jews among them, if only a small minority. Centuries of Jews and Muslims commingled along trade routes deep into the continent,

Community



Renewal movement, Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, while also exploring Kirtan chanting in its Sanskrit form. His initial skepticism about both Renewal and Kirtan evolved into a realization: “The part of Judaism that always grabbed me, besides the ideas, was the music and Shabbos and the singing around the table. So I thought, ‘Wow, this would be amazing in Hebrew.’”

At a Kirtan Rabbi event, the room becomes filled with singing, dancing, and exalted communal feeling. Rabbi Irwin Kula says, “Kirtan Rabbi defines a new genre of music and prayer ... that transports, elevates, uplifts, enlightens, inspires, and centers. It is at once traditional and innovative and creative and deep and alive.”

Like so many of Reb Drew's and my generation, we saw in Eastern thought concepts and tools that bring out the mystical Jewish tradition — and es-

pecially a non-dualist approach to God and the world — that Jews have difficulty accepting when presented in Jewish texts. When I teach concepts of God and the world embraced by generations of our Sages, Jews often reject them suspiciously as, “Well that's not what I learned in Hebrew School.” But when I teach courses on Judaism and Buddhism, showing them how similar concepts and paradigms are at work, they open up.

Similarly, Reb Drew makes use of Tai Chi and of Kirtan Chant to connect audiences directly to Jewish liturgy, concepts, and connection. I asked him why he thinks his approach speaks to people today in a way that feels especially relevant.

“Especially after COVID, I emphasize the communal connection. People are longing to feel part of a greater whole. People also eschew expertise as a prerequisite for finding connection. Kirtan makes everything very simple, yet deep at the same time. Whatever I have learned, whatever academic degrees and rabbinic study I have under my belt — all of this comes through, often without my having to make it explicit or explain much.”

Reb Drew has been featured on the Judaism Unbound podcast (episode 134) as well as numerous publications from Jewish to Yoga-focused.

“In traveling the world as the Kirtan Rabbi, I have arguably been on the outer edges of *kiruv* (bringing Jews closer to Judaism). I have been where those self-described ‘Jews on their parents’ side’ have flocked to find meaning elsewhere. I have sought to show that we can offer, out of the riches of Jewish wisdom — and through the vibrational power of the Hebrew language — a kind of *ve-chai bahem*, a ‘vitality of living’ that can stand side-by-side with other, seemingly ‘cooler’ (and baggage-free) world practices. As Rabbi Sid Schwarz says in his lead essay to *Jewish Megatrends*, ‘if you show Jews how Judaism can offer a glimpse of a life of sacred purpose, they will come in droves.’”

Beth Israel is thrilled to have Reb Drew in residence for the weekend of December 16 through 18 leading up to the first night of Chanukah. The entire community is invited to join us for Reb Drew's participation all weekend, including a Tai-Chi Shabbat experience, and especially the Kirtan Rabbi concert experience, which is the headlining event of Illuminate, our fourth annual community-wide Chanukah celebration, on Sunday, December 18, with a party and menorah lighting at 5 p.m. followed by the concert at 6 p.m. ■

ceived rabbinic ordination from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Reform). But after completing his education, Reb Drew did not go into a conventional pulpit or academic position. Instead, he began studying with the founder of the Jewish

Beth Israel events in December

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

Tot Shabbat

Saturday, December 3 and 17, at 10:30 a.m. Tot Shabbat continues throughout the winter. Join us for a playful morning of Jewish songs, games, and stories. Challah and grape juice kiddush included. For kids ages 1 to 6, but all are welcome to join.

Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday, December 9, at 6 p.m. Join us for a monthly Musical Kabbalat Shabbat led by Rabbi Aura Ahuvia in the Main Sanctuary and on Zoom.

Illuminate

Sunday, December 18, at 5 p.m. Beth Israel invites all to join us for the fourth annual Chanukah celebration, Illuminate. The evening begins with a Chanukah party

complete with games, crafts for kids, refreshments, and of course, the lighting of the giant menorah. After the menorah is lit, we are pleased to welcome Rabbi Abraham Hahn who will lead us in his unique mix of traditional Jewish liturgy and the call-and-response chant from India, called Kirtan. Watch for more details soon!

Theology Book Club - Online

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.

In Person and Online Services

Evening Minyan – virtual only
Sunday at 5 p.m.
Monday–Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Friday Evening Services – in person and virtual

Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services – In person and virtual

Saturday at 9:30 a.m. ■

Irene Butter's 92nd birthday fundraiser

Earlier this fall, Generations After, Temple Beth Emeth's group of Holocaust survivors and descendants, established the Irene Butter Fund for Holocaust and Human Rights Education. The fund, housed at the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Ann Arbor, will support educational programming about the Holocaust, with a focus on how its lessons can address modern-day challenges of “oth-

be enemies” and “Never a bystander” to donate to the Fund (the suggested amount is \$92 or more). Donations can be made by check (please write “Irene Butter Fund” in the memo line) payable to the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Ann Arbor, Attn.: Robert Deschaine, 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, Ann Arbor 48108, by stock transfer (www.jewishannarbor.org/ways-to-give) or online at bit.ly/butterfund.



ering” and disregard for human rights. For more about the Fund, see the full-length article in the October Washtenaw Jewish News.

In honor of Irene's 92nd birthday on December 11, we invite all who share her vision of “All people are kin,” “Refusing to

Irene wrote: “Every individual can make a difference, and it is our human duty to speak out against oppression and persecution wherever it exists...[as] all people are our kin. And isn't that what we all are aiming for?” ■

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JFS navigates providing safety net for seniors

By Sarah Schneider Hong, Chief Program Officer at JF

Despite the relative prosperity of Washtenaw County, the need for older adult safety net services is accelerating and is expected to remain exceedingly high for years to come. Many factors drive a greater dependence on community services including increased life expectancy, a declining caregiver population, families living at great distances, and the cost of goods and services and



housing increasing beyond the reach of those living with fixed incomes. Seniors living below poverty level constitute 14.3% of older adults in Washtenaw County and arguably have the most uphill battle.

Even those with adequate means are vulnerable to major challenges and transitions requiring professional support including but not

limited to changes in mobility, decline in cognitive function, social isolation, home modifications to age in place, managing chronic illness, and so much more. As one sage septuagenarian recently put it, “Aging is not for sissies.”

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (JFS) has been providing senior services for almost 30 years and more recently under the auspices of our Washtenaw Integrated Senior Experience (WISE) program, which provides seniors holistic services including transportation, counseling, care management (solution-focused professional assistance to navigate resources and adversity), caregiver support, enrichment programming, and nutrition services like Meals on Wheels, Senior Café, and Specialty Food Pantry. For many in the community, these services are already their lifeline to safety and stability. For others, there is peace of mind knowing that while they may not need WISE services yet, we will be there when they do.

Unfortunately, sustaining these services has become increasingly difficult in the current funding environment. Keen observers of local news are aware of radical changes to the funding of the county's safety net services. Briefly put, access to key dollars providing a bedrock of multi-year funding is under duress as resource allocation has been reorganized. At the same time, grant and foundation funding targets have become increasingly narrow, with most centering innovation over safety net. How critical human services, and certainly those for seniors, will be sustainably funded remains unclear and the matter of who bears responsibility to ensure their longevity can feel like the classic game of “hot potato.”

JFS remains staunchly committed to addressing the community's need for senior services. Guided by the Jewish principle of *chesed*, or loving kindness, WISE programs and services are designed to help community members age with independence and dignity. JFS is innovating in this space in the context of the moment's many challenges. The emerging WISE Center at JFS, a welcoming, holistic environment for geriatric services and enrichment programming for seniors, is one such innovation. Among other things, the WISE Center will contain specialized spaces for memory support services, classrooms, and a fully appointed commercial kitchen. The Center will support JFS's vision of “assisted living without walls” to help community members continue to live independently as long as possible while enjoying ready access to comprehensive services and resources. To date, funds for construction of the WISE center have been raised from private donations, foundations, and federal project grant funding. Unsurprisingly, COVID-related delays and inflation have greatly added to costs.

WISE Choice is a fee-for-service care management program offering those with the means to pay for expert professional support access to a personal care manager to help them plan for the future and navigate change and adversity. Revenue generated from the program is then reinvested to subsidize care management for low income community members receiving safety net support. WISE at the J offers a lively afternoon of social programming and enrichment (such as mahjong, film screenings, games, concerts, virtual museum tours, and educational presentations), preceded by a nutritious

kosher style lunch, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The 12-week Mind Sharpener class offers an evidence-informed “brain workout” to support cognitive health, while an eight-week Matter of Balance class tackles fall prevention. Additional opportunities for kinship are enabled by group programming such as the Caregiver Conversations support group, Aging Solo group, and a newly launched Bereavement Group.

Those eager to play their part in supporting seniors and upholding the community safety net can assist in many ways. JFS is conducting ongoing fundraising for the WISE Center and is grateful for financial contributions from the community. Those keen to volunteer will find meaningful opportunities ranging from providing phone reassurance to meal delivery to helping design and deliver social programming. Those in positions of influence are encouraged to reach out to family foundations, funders of all kinds, and business partners to link them with JFS for potential pathways to grant-making, corporate sponsorships, and more. Politically minded and social-justice inspired individuals can stay informed, lend their voice, and advocate with local elected officials to increase support for senior services sector with safety net funding and by (finally) placing a senior millage on upcoming ballots.

There is no doubt that caring for the aged with dignity and treating them with the respect their wisdom and life's contributions merit is a shared privilege and duty. JFS is proud to be part of a Jewish community sharing this vision and ready to help. Please visit jfsannarbor.org and wisemich.org for more information. ■

One Candle for Tzedakah returns!

By Drew Coel, Marketing and Program Associate at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor

After a three-year hiatus, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor is proud to bring back One



Candle for Tzedakah on Wednesday, December 21, from 5:30–7 p.m. For one night of Hanukkah, families and community members come together to give to those in need.

This year, the Ann Arbor JCC will partner with The Bottomless Toy Chest, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing toys,

crafts, and interactive activities to hospitalized pediatric oncology patients. Through generous donations made by the public, The Bottomless Toy Chest engages and empowers children undergoing cancer treatment. Please join us by bringing a new toy in original packaging to the event. If you can't join us for the event, boxes will be in the lobby leading up to the program to collect toys. The Bottomless Toy Chest is looking for interactive toys that can occupy patients' time while undergoing treatments. Examples of toys include but are not limited to: rattles, sound and sight toys (0–12 months), craft kits, action figures, and Legos. Please remember all toys must be new and in their original packaging.

One Candle for Tzedakah kicks off at 5:30 p.m. with a pizza dinner, edible dreidel making, gift wrapping, and fun crafts! At 6:15, the JCC will welcome local magician and comedian Jonathon LaChance, as seen on the accredited television program *Penn & Teller: Fool Us!* This hilarious magic show is sure to be fun for the whole family!

The cost of One Candle for Tzedakah is \$5 for anyone under the age of five, and \$10 for anyone over the age of five. To register or to learn more about this event, please visit jccannarbor.org.

We hope to see you at One Candle for Tzedakah! ■

JFS resettlement staff move mountains

By Mira Sussman, Resource Development Manager, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County

On Friday, October 21, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County staff was informed by a few Afghan clients that their asylum hearings were scheduled. The first hearing would be on Wednesday, October 26.

All of the nearly 300 Afghans that JFS helped to resettle in the past year will have to apply for asylum in order to legally stay in the United States. Over the summer, JFS helped these clients to assemble the necessary asylum petition documents. The agency partnered with HIAS, as well as the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) and volunteer attorneys, to ensure that each individual in a family had legal representation and that their applications were filed correctly. Each application could include hundreds of pages of supporting documentation.

As of mid-November, the closest immigration court that hears asylum petitions is located in Chicago. There are plans to establish a mobile court that will set up chambers in Michigan, but for the coming weeks or months the Afghan families must travel to Chicago with every child, stay overnight, get to their asylum hearing, and return to Michigan.

Immediately JFS caseworkers sprang into action. They assessed client needs, booked hotel rooms and train tickets, figured out

transportation, and recruited appropriate, in-person local interpreters to accompany the families into court. Staff ensured that all children had car seats and that schools had been informed of the children's absences. The need for volunteers was evaluated, and screened volunteers from Jewish Family and Children Services/HIAS in Chicago were contacted.

So far, eight families have been scheduled for hearings in Chicago, including eight children. One client arrived at JFS and informed staff that his hearing would be the following day.

It is unclear exactly when these asylum cases will start being scheduled in Michigan, but for the meantime, JFS is making sure that each client has what they need for this trip to Chicago.

Ensuring that clients had all of their needs assessed and met in such a tight timeframe was nothing short of miraculous. Staff, especially Cynthia Dieck, Bridget Clough, Shrina Eadeh, Shadin Atiyeh, Betre Getahun, Frezer Measso, Anistasiia Krauze, Zuleyka Uria, and Mahdijeh Jafari deserve enormous accolades for their efforts. ■

A Temple Beth Emeth origin story: Jesse Bernstein

By Zachary J. Bernstein

"So, dad," I say.

"Yes, my son," he responds.

This exchange feels right out of Genesis. However, rather than ask him "Where's the ram for the sacrifice," I ask, "How did you come to Temple Beth Emeth?"

On Tuesday November 1, 2022, around eight o'clock, my dad Jesse Bernstein and I sit in the cushy chairs in my living room. I want to know how the Bernsteins came to Temple Beth Emeth. I know some of our origin story, but I want to know more and share what I know, beginning with his arrival at TBE.

"I was dating a woman who was converting," he begins. "She was a Midwest farmer's daughter from Bellaire, Michigan, and had decided she wanted to be Jewish. So, she somehow got to Temple Beth Emeth and Bruce Warshaw, our rabbi, who was very outgoing and very bright, and was tutoring her, and working with her for her conversion. And we started dating, and I started going to Temple Beth Emeth and met Bruce."

Before I can digest this information, we need to back up a bit.

"Where did you come from?" I ask.

"I came from the New York area. I went to college at New Paltz where I was marginally involved in Hillel, which was a marginal organization at that time. It wasn't very active. But I grew up in a Conservative synagogue, and that's where my bar mitzvah occurred. I was very well versed in religious tradition, although my family was not very ritualistically oriented. Is that a good way to say it?" he asks. Joking that he has lack of education and linguistic prowess, he likes to ask my sister and me if he said something smart.

"That was good," I assure him.

"Yes. The men all worked in stores that they owned or worked in, so nobody went to services Friday or Saturday except me. And I just wound up going. As a kid in Brooklyn, when I was six, seven, and eight — I went to Saturday morning services, and then when we were in Queens, I went to the Conservative synagogue every Friday night for services."

"By yourself?"

"Yeah. No, I had a friend, George Cooper,

and we would go. But I would go to services. And went to Hebrew school, three days a week and then confirmation class after that, after my bar mitzvah. And then went off to college and there wasn't a lot of traditional Jewish stuff. I tried to get Hillel going, but it didn't really take off.

"I came out here and in the two years I was in [graduate] school did not have much religious



activity until I started dating this woman who was converting and I met Bruce and Temple Beth Emeth. I realized that philosophically I was a Reform Jew because I did not accept the whole concept of the Bible as the — God's law — it always felt so confused when I read it or tried to read it that it had to be written by people, because if God handed it down, it would have made a lot more sense, would have been tighter."

Mr. Illiterate, as he occasionally calls himself, thinks the Torah needs some more editorial work.

"I mean, okay," he continues, "so, I always struggled with it, but I got, and I appreciated the traditions and enjoyed those. And I got back in touch with someone I knew from college, and she was more observant than I had been. But we were both from the same stock. We both came from Conservative synagogues, and I had now become part of Temple Beth Emeth."

His acquaintance from college is my mom Lenore, by the way.

"And so, you were a member?" I ask.

"I was, and then I met Paul Vanek who was

involved with the board, and was, I think, one of the initial members of TBE in '67 and Paul asked me to be on the board. So, he got me involved in it. And then Lenore and I got married, and she moved to Ann Arbor. And initially she was not very comfortable with the synagogue. Because I had been on the board and was now involved with the organization, she was very gracious to continue. And we had talked about joining Beth Israel, but over time, she got more comfortable with the concept [of being part of a Reform congregation] and realized we could do what we wanted, and it wasn't as prescribed or as critical."

Incredible! If it weren't for the farmer's daughter from Bellaire, Michigan, this story may have been a Beth Israel Congregation origin story. However, as is common with Bernsteins, my dad turns our attention to food to make his point.

"We chose to keep kosher from day one because both of our homes were kosher, which was one of the few elements of Judaism that I grew up with ... a kosher house. So, we kept kosher, and we belonged to Beth Emeth, and over time, Lenore got more comfortable with the organization with, with the [Reform] practice."

As a Bernstein, I feel quite natural keeping a kosher home. Being Jewish by doing Jewish is one of our love languages. Food is another. The offspring of the marriage of these two languages is our Reform kosher home.

Years ago, Rabbi Bob Levy told me that my family was the only Reform family that kept kosher at home that he knew. At that time, I thought he was joking. Bob repeated this fact to my fiancée Ashley during a meeting in preparation for our wedding. Ashley was less than thrilled, especially since she and I continue this Bernstein tradition and keep a kosher home. But I digress ...

"So, when did, what year did you join?" I ask.

"I must have joined in '70 and became a member before we got married, so in '70 and '71 I got involved, was on the board, and then Lenore and I got married in December of '71. She moved out to Michigan [from New York]. And we've stayed with the temple."

"So, there was a very interesting situation that occurred. I don't know if you want this, but four

days after we got married, Lenore's father died. And my mother didn't know who to contact in Ann Arbor because we were driving back from New York with a trailer full of stuff. And he had died on Wednesday morning, and we arrived in Ann Arbor on Wednesday. My mother thought to call the temple and spoke to the rabbi, and he knew my friends, and so they set everything up to get us back to New York as quickly as possible to be with Lenore's family, and we parked her car and the trailer in his driveway for two weeks." He pauses. "And my friend, Ruth Shelkun, drove us to the airport and picked us up when we came back."

"So, was mom a member?" I ask.

"She was a member because we got married."

"She didn't spend a lot of time in Ann Arbor, right?" I ask.

"She'd just visit, so she didn't even live in Ann Arbor yet," he says.

"And yet the community was already —"

"Yeah, it was there, and it was very, very difficult to have your father die four days after he oversaw your wedding ..." he says.

"And while you're moving away from home."

"And, and just amazing. So, it was incredibly difficult," he says in a smaller voice, as if to someone else.

"We participated in Beth Emeth, and people were as good as can be, but it's still a horrible situation. It was very difficult, but then she became more and more comfortable with the temple. So then in '79, when you were born, your bris was at the temple ..."

"I've heard ..."

"... with most of the congregation in attendance, which we have on video," he says with pride.

"I know. Great. I'm glad you converted it from the eight-millimeter to the, yeah, VHS."

"Sounds. We had sound, so it was great." He is so happy to have a visual and aural record of this event in the old Social Hall of TBE.

"You got the sounds. Great." I, too, am absolutely beaming with joy at this fact.

"So, um, I think that was, in part, a turning point," he says.

A turning point, to say the least. While looking back at 52 years at TBE, he smiles. ■

Birthright Israel to scale back again, slashing number of free trips by up to a third

Andrew Lapin, originally for the JTA

Birthright Israel is drastically cutting back on the number of free trips it plans to offer to Jewish young adults, scaling back its operations by up to a third, the organization announced in mid November.

The cuts come amid what the organization said is a mix of financial pressures, chiefly inflation and heightened travel expenses in a post-COVID world. It plans to make added appeals to its top donors but still expects to heavily reduce its Israel trips in 2023 to as few as 23,500 participants, down from 35,000 this year and 45,000 annually pre-pandemic.

"The significant cost increases of our program mean that we will not be able to accommodate as many applicants in the coming years," Birthright CEO Gidi Mark said in a statement provided to the Jewish

Telegraphic Agency.

However, Birthright's own fundraising has not been affected. A Birthright spokesperson told JTA that the organization actually expects its funding to increase from 2022 to 2023, but that the growth won't be enough to compensate for the rise in expenses and inflation.

The group has shown other signs lately of scaled-back operations for its free 10-day trips to Israel for Jewish young adults. Earlier this year Birthright said it would lower the maximum age of participation back to 26, after five years of allowing Jews aged 27 to 32 to enroll. The group's leadership said at the time that the increased age limit was backfiring by convincing younger Jews to keep delaying their trips. Birthright also merged with Onward Israel, another Israel travel program for young adults, during the pandemic.

The program was founded in 1999 as a means of encouraging greater Israel engagement among younger generations of Jews, and studies commissioned in the two decades since have shown that Jews who participated in Birthright trips were more likely than peers who applied but did not go to marry somebody Jewish and to feel a deeper connection to Israel. One such study was released last week.

"Without a major immediate increase in fundraising, we will be hard-pressed to have the positive effect we've had on many individuals," Mark said.

The Birthright Israel Foundation, its fundraising arm, is making a large appeal to donors this year for increased funding. Though it receives large portions of its estimated \$150 million annual budget from the Israeli government and large donors such as the Adelson Family Foundation,

the foundation's CEO, Izzy Tapoohi, said it is "a myth" that "just a few large donors" fund Birthright.

It's been a difficult period for several of Birthright's most stalwart funders, from various legal troubles for founder Michael Steinhardt to potential sanctions for Russian Jewish philanthropists in the wake of Russia's war with Ukraine. Young American Jews have also indicated in demographic studies that they feel less culturally and politically connected to Israel than previous generations, and the group IfNotNow, which aims to end American Jewish support for Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, urged a boycott and other protests of Birthright.

Israel's recent election that propelled a far-right bloc into government is widely seen as likely to drive a further wedge between Israel and many young American Jews. ■

Fourth annual TBE School Camp Retreat

By Rabbi Daniel K. Alter, Temple Beth Emeth Director of Education

In the midst of Sukkot, Temple Beth Emeth's Terri A. Ginsburg Religious & Hebrew School hosted its fourth annual School Camp Retreat. Nineteen of their third to sixth graders traveled to Howell Nature Center for a mini Jewish summer camp experience. They celebrated Shabbat, climbed a tower, competed in Maccabiah (color contests), showed off their skills in a talent show, and most importantly, grew together as a community of learners and as Jews.

"Our Camp Retreat was a real community builder," said Emily Alter, TBE's Shabbat School Coordinator. "It was so nice to see our kids from four different grades living, learning, and having fun together!"

The weekend began with a surprise. TBE had chartered a bus to take everyone up to Howell Nature Center. They expected a Greyhound-style bus, something with plenty of room for all the participants and all their clothes, sleeping bags, and other gear. What arrived was ... a little different. It was a party bus, complete with neon flashing lights, inward facing seats, and a giant television in the back!

"We made it work. Our staff packed everything in as best we could, and we took off! The kids loved it!" shared Emily, who accompanied the kids on the party bus.

In addition to many of the "traditional" Jewish summer camp activities listed above, TBE also took advantage of their chosen camp site. Howell Nature Center sits on 230 acres of woods and wetlands, and it hosts a variety of comprehensive educational and recreational opportunities for all ages. One favorite among the TBE students is



the Wild

Wonders Wildlife Park, a collection of injured local wildlife that Howell Nature Center rehabilitates and cares for: owls, foxes, deer, birds, and creatures of all kinds. Students are fascinated to see these animals up close, and they look forward to seeing their favorites each year.

When asked what inspires these camp retreat, activities, TBE's Director of Education, Rabbi Daniel Alter, shared the following:

"Jewish overnight camps had a profound influence on me," he said. "And my first experience was at a retreat just like this. Going on that retreat back in 1995 encouraged me to give Jewish summer camp a try. I want to give our kids the same opportunities to discover the magic of Jewish camping."

"For many of our kids," shared Rabbi Josh Whinston, "especially following the COVID-19 quarantine, the Camp Retreat is their first weekend away from their parents. We take great care to create an environment where all our kids feel safe to push themselves and have new experiences."

"Our students are so supportive of one another," shared Cantor Regina Hayut. "They cheered each other on as much as, if not more, at the climbing wall as in the Maccabiah!"

TBE congregant Elaine Yeglic also participated in the weekend, serving as the camp nurse for the first time. "It was a wonderful weekend," she shared. "I think what struck me the most was the kindness all the kids showed to one another ... They touched my heart ..."

TBE is already planning to return to Howell Nature Center next October for the fifth annual School Camp Retreat! ■

TBE events in December

Events and services are both in-person and/or virtual. Please see www.templebethemeth.org for full details, locations information, and links.

Tot Shabbat Service & Dinner

Fridays at 5:45 p.m. Cancelled 12/23 and 12/30

Join Rabbi Whinston and Cantor Hayut to celebrate Shabbat with fun activities, stories, songs, and age-appropriate learning for children ages 0-5.

Shabbat Service

Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Shabbat service - will be online-only 12/24

Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Daily at 9:15 a.m.

Join Rabbi Whinston each morning for a short service of song, poetry, and meditation.

Daily afternoon blessings

Mondays through Thursdays at 3 p.m. Cancelled 12/12-12/15

Join Cantor Hayut each afternoon for an intimate short service.

Women's Torah study

Mondays at 7:30 p.m. Cancelled 12/12 and 12/26

Join Cantor Hayut in an in-depth study and lively discussion of the week's Torah portion. This year, the group will focus on exploring

passages that have informed rituals of modern Jewish life.

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

Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.

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

Talmud Tuesdays with Rabbi Alter

Tuesdays at 11 a.m. or 8 p.m.

Both meetings discuss the same material. Join Rabbi Alter to discover the Talmud, the formative collection of stories and discussions that defined the post-Temple Judaism that continues today! Together, explore the foundations of our contemporary Jewish ethics, beliefs, and practices, as well as some tremendous tales about our ancient rabbis! Join anytime! All materials are provided*. (*It is recommended that you read *If All the Seas Were Ink* by Ilana Kurshan, but it's not required or expected.)

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club with Cantor Hayut

Thursdays at 11 a.m. Cancelled 12/15

Join Cantor Hayut to read and discuss books of Jewish interest a few chapters at a time. This year, the book group will be reading primarily, although not exclusively, works by Israeli authors. For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

Back Door Food Pantry

Thursdays, 4-7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner

Thursdays at 5 p.m. Cancelled 12/1 and 12/29
Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session

Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Whinston

Fridays at 12 p.m.

Bring your lunch and learn with Rabbi Whinston during this informal and social gathering. We explore different ideas throughout the year with participants guiding our subjects. Join us under the tent at TBE.

Shabbat morning Torah study

Saturdays at 8:50 a.m. Online-only 12/24

Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose

Thursday, December 8, at 12 p.m. and Tuesday, December 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Elementary Shabbat Service & Dinner

Friday, December 9, at 5:45 p.m.

Join Rabbi Whinston and Cantor Hayut to celebrate Shabbat with fun activities, stories, songs, and age appropriate learning for children ages 5-10. Registration requested.

Reducing Your Carbon Footprint: Heating and Cooling

Wednesday, December 14, at 7:30 p.m.

Part of a series of free Zoom workshops. Details and registration at www.climateheros-tories.com. Speakers: "Status of conversion to renewable power generation in MI," Brian Rich, Consumers Energy; "Options for Household Electrification," Matt Grocoff, THRIVE Collaborative; "Testimonials on geothermal and other household electrification system usage," Ed Lynn, First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of AA & Matt Grocoff, THRIVE Collaborative; workshop Host: Bill Parkus, Temple Beth Emeth.

Aging Solo

Thursday, December 15, at 4 p.m.

Join us for discussion, support, and snacks at the Jewish Community Center.

Bereavement Group

Tuesday, December 20, at 4 p.m.

For women who have lost a life partner.

Chanukah Candle Lighting

December 18-25, nightly at 7 p.m.

Join Rabbi Josh and Cantor Regina for a brief gathering to light the giant Hanukkah lights in front of Temple Beth Emeth, 2309 Packard, Ann Arbor. Enjoy the Festival of Lights with friends, songs, and treats to help brighten and sweeten the holiday. We will be out there every night, regardless of the weather. Registration is requested. ■



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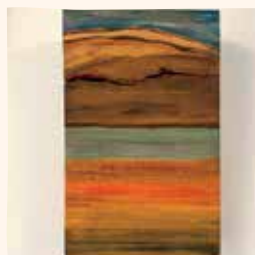
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Community

LIFE & LEGACY community celebration

By Osnat Gafni-Pappas, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

October 23, nearly 70 LIFE & LEGACY® donors gathered for the second annual LIFE & LEGACY Community Celebration, the first in-person event since the program began in the greater Ann Arbor area two years ago. LIFE & LEGACY is a program that aims to sustain Washtenaw County's beloved Jewish organizations for future generations, through after-lifetime giving.

Attendees at the event enjoyed music, schmoozing, and toasting to the achievements made over the last two years. In particular, attendees celebrated the 408 commitments, worth an estimated value of \$13.3 million, for the 11 participating organizations in the greater Ann Arbor area. The impact on financial stability and opportunities for growth that will be made possible for these organizations is exciting!

Three donors generously shared their testimonials with everyone, showcasing how vital the range of Jewish communal organizations are to our community. It was enlightening to hear why these community members chose to give to the various organizations, and the importance of those organizations in their lives.

One attendee, Barb Banet, remarked about the celebration, "It was so much fun to see everyone reconnecting after such a long period of mostly just Zooming. The three short speeches were all interesting and impressive."

Participants also had the opportunity to snap a photo in front of the Canada Red Cherry tree that was planted in their honor at the JCC. Make sure to check out the tree and commemorative plaque next time you are at the JCC!

If you're interested in learning more about LIFE & LEGACY or you're ready to make a commitment, please contact Osnat Gafni-Pappas at the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor at osnat@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3538. You can also reach out directly to any of the following participating community organizations: Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan, Beth Israel Congregation, Chabad House, Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies, Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor, Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, Jewish Cultural Society, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, Temple Beth Emeth, and University of Michigan Hillel. ■





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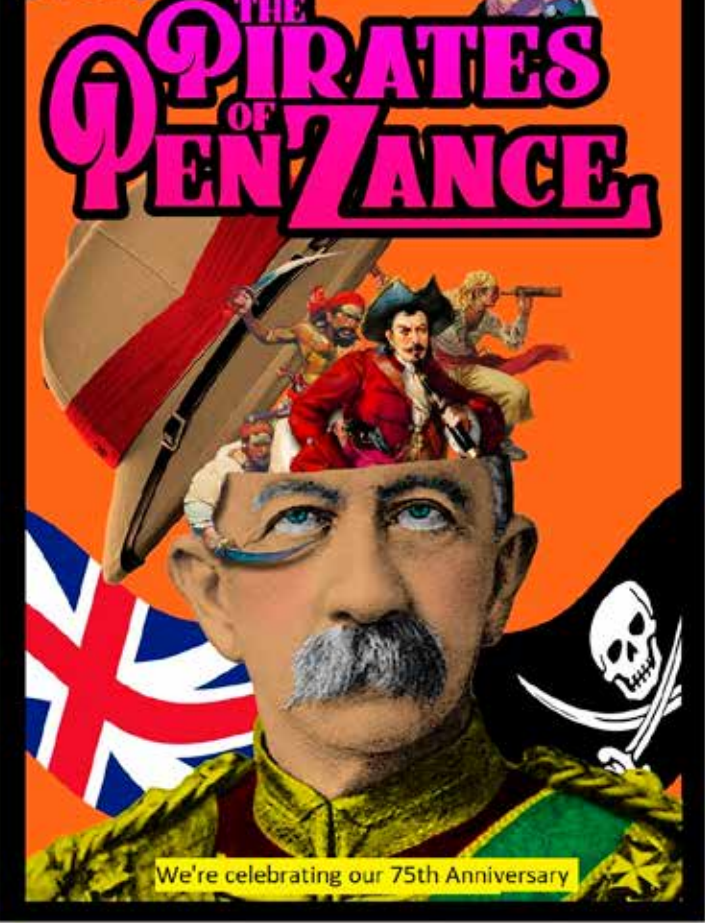
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Chanukah in Mexico

Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

The roots of Mexican Jewish cuisine are many. The first Jewish immigrants came to Mexico in the early 16th century to escape the Spanish Inquisition. Most of them had been forced to convert to Christianity but secretly continued with Jewish practices. Eventually the Inquisition also traveled to Mexico and people thought to be Jewish were persecuted. The Inquisition was finally abolished in 1813 and persecutions eased.

German Jews immigrated to Mexico in the 1840s, followed by other Western European Jews a few decades later. As the Ottoman Empire ended, Jews from Syria, Lebanon, and other Middle Eastern countries arrived followed by Eastern European Jews in the early 20th century.

Modern Mexico now has communities of Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Middle Eastern traditions. As many as 20,000 people in Mexico and the United States Southwest may be descendants of the Crypto or Hidden Jews. There have been many articles written about people discovering their genealogies with some exploring their Jewish heritage and even converting back to Judaism.

Among other interesting facts I found were stories of Mexican food traditions that may have begun with the Crypto-Jews. Some suggest that Bunuelos, a winter holiday dish of golden, deep fried balls of cheese-infused dough may have originally been a Sephardi Chanukah dish. Another theory is a springtime dish called Capirotada, a rich bread pudding infused with cheese and syrup, was possibly a way to disguise eating matzoh for Passover.

The influences have gone both ways. Mexican Jewish cooks use many of the spices, fruits, and peppers to add to traditional Ashkenazi recipes for gefilte fish or chicken soup. Other dishes are based on quesadillas, flautas, sopes filled with cheese, beans, salsa, and guacamole.

There are many Mexican-Jewish recipes and some not specifically Jewish can be made with chicken, fish, or vegetables instead of non-kosher meats and seafood. I'll try the fish and latke recipes for Chanukah this year.

Chicken in a Tomatillo, Chipotle, and Brown Sugar Sauce

Here is a recipe from Pati Jinich, a well-known chef and cookbook writer with a show on PBS called *My Mexican Table*. I've seen some of her shows and read some of her recipes, most of which are not kosher, but she does share some recipes that she grew up with in Mexico and that trace back to her Ashkenazi grandparents.

Serves 4–6

- 3 chicken leg quarters or 3 drumsticks and 3 thighs, rinsed and patted dry
- ½ tsp Kosher salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 2–3 tbs neutral oil
- 2 cups white onions, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 lbs tomatillos with the husks removed, rinsed, then quartered (There are some brands of canned tomatillos)
- 4 tbs piloncillo, shredded (it's a solid form of sugar cane and I do not know where to get it but you can use brown sugar instead)
- 1 chipotle chili pepper in adobo sauce (more sauce optional)
- 2 cups chicken broth or water

Season the chicken pieces with salt and pepper. In a thick and heavy skillet or casserole dish, heat the oil over medium high heat. When hot, add the chicken pieces and brown on one side for 4–5 minutes and then flip to the other side for another 3–4 minutes. Remove the pieces and set aside in a bowl. You can keep the skin or remove it. Next, add the onion to the skillet and cook, stirring for 3–4 minutes to soften and then add in the garlic for about 20 seconds. Make room in the pan for the tomatillos and let everything cook together for 6–8 minutes. Add the piloncillo, the chipotles, and sauce and stir well. When it comes to a simmer add in the chicken pieces along with the broth or water and cook for 30–35 minutes, stirring occasionally. The sauce should be chunky and thick and the chicken fully cooked.

Syrian-Mexican Chicken with Apricot, Tamarind, and Chipotle Sauce

King Solomon's Table by Joan Nathan

This recipe originated with the family of a woman named Flora Cohen. The family was originally from Syria. They moved to Guatemala and then to Mexico where they founded the first synagogue in Mexico City. Flora gave cooking lessons to young brides and Pati Jinich was one of her students. Jinich added the chipotle pepper and adobo sauce to the recipe.

- 1 chicken cut into pieces seasoned with salt and pepper
- ¾ cup dried apricots, roughly chopped
- 3 tbs apricot preserves
- 3 tbs tamarind concentrate
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 tbs chipotle sauce from canned chipotles in adobo sauce

After browning the chicken add 4 cups of water and raise the heat to medium high and bring to a simmer. Stir in the rest of the ingredients to make the sauce. Simmer the chicken and sauce uncovered for about 30–35 minutes until the chicken is cooked and the sauce has thickened.

Polenta Medallions in Spicy Tomato Sauce

From the blog *Challa-peño: My Mexican, American, Hungarian, Jewish stories and recipes* I don't know much about this blog, but I love the name. "Peño" has the tilde over the "n" like in "jalapeño." The blog is written by a mother daughter team.

The recipe does not specify how many servings, but a bar of polenta should serve 6–8.

- 1 bar of polenta, sliced into ¼ inch rounds and then each round cut into quarters and set aside
- 4 eggs, separated
- Dash of salt
- ½ cup diced onions
- ¼ cup canola oil and more as needed
- 3 diced tomatoes
- 1 tbs chili flakes (optional)
- ½ tsp saffron threads dissolved in ¼ cup warm water

Use a hand mixer to beat the egg whites with a dash of salt until you get stiff peaks. Then add the egg yolks and beat until the eggs are thoroughly blended. Use a large frying pan and add in about ¼ cup of oil. Dip the polenta medallions into the

egg batter and fry on both sides until browned. Drain them on paper towel. Add the diced onions into the hot oil (add more if needed) and sauté until they are translucent. Next add in the tomatoes and the chili flakes if you are using them. Stir constantly for about 3 minutes. Then add in the dissolved saffron threads with the water for about another 4 minutes. Place the polenta into an oven safe serving pan and pour the tomato sauce over the top. Serve the polenta warm or keep it warm in the oven.

Sopa de Frijoles y Calabaza con Fideos

I found this recipe in another interesting blog: *Flavors of the Diaspora*.

This soup could serve 6–12 people and it's super simple.

- 1 large onion, diced
- 7 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 dried ancho chilis, broken into small pieces and remove the seeds for less heat
- 1 tbs salt
- 1 tsp ground pepper
- ½ tsp each of ground cumin, ground cinnamon, and ground turmeric
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- 1tsp white or apple vinegar
- 1 15-oz can crushed tomatoes
- 1 large kabocha squash (or other similar squash or pumpkin), peeled, seeded, and chopped into chunks.
- 1 8-oz can corn kernels
- 2 15-oz. cans black beans or 4 cups of soaked dried black beans
- 1 package of thin noodles, or any shape you like
- 8 cups broth or water
- 3 fistfuls of spinach
- 2 sprigs epazote (it's an herb used in cooking beans but it's optional)
- 3 tbs oil

Sauté the onions, garlic and ancho chilis for a few minutes or until the onion starts to soften. Add in the spices and sauté another minute or two. Add in the vinegar and give it another minute or so. Add the tomatoes and mix well. In a minute or so the juices will start bubbling. Add in the squash, corn, and black beans and then add the water or stock and even more if the vegetables aren't covered. Bring to a boil and add the epazote if you are using it. Simmer uncovered for about 45 minutes or until the squash is soft and then add in the spinach. Remove from the heat.

Cook the noodles separately in another pot and store it separately. Serve the soup with a helping of the noodles and garnish with sour cream, chili sauce and/or cilantro.



Tex-Mex Latkes

This is from a blog called *Hilah Cooking*

Yields 12–16 latkes

She suggests grating the potatoes by hand and grate 2/3–3/4 of them on the large holes and the rest on the small holes. The small-grated potato helps bind the latkes without adding flour or matzo meal. Then squeeze the liquid from the potatoes over a bowl and save the liquid and let it settle out. Pour off the brown potato skin water

and save the starch that is left in the bottom of the bowl. Add that to the potato mixture to help with binding the latkes. She also suggests using a lot of oil.

- 2 pounds potatoes, the best are the starchy Russet potatoes
- 2 eggs
- ¾ cup finely chopped onion (about 1 small yellow onion)
- ½ cup crumbled or grated cotija cheese
- 1 or 2 jalapeno or serrano peppers, minced (too spicy? Use milder peppers or even sweet peppers)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 1 cup oil for frying (grapeseed, canola, corn, or light olive oil)

Mix everything together and heat 1/3 of a cup of oil in the pan. Scoop a large spoonful of the potato mixture into the skillet (about ¼ cup) and spread out to make a 3-inch patty. Fry for 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Serve with the traditional sour cream, applesauce, or jelly, and cilantro, or skip the cilantro if you hate it.

Mexican Fish with Green Sauce

The Jewish Holiday Kitchen by Joan Nathan

According to the recipe this serves 6 but I think that 5–6 pounds of fish should serve up to 8.

Joan Nathan credits the late Minerva Etzioni who was a wonderful Mexican cook. This is her recipe.

- 5–6 pounds fish: red snapper, bass, or striped bass, cleaned and boned, fins removed, and head and part of tail preserved (or have them removed too).
- Juice of 6 limes
- Salt and white pepper to taste
- 1 tbs vegetable oil
- 6–8 small firm ripe plum tomatoes, sliced in half lengthwise
- 6–8 large stuffed Spanish olives, halved lengthwise

- Green Sauce
- 25 large Romaine lettuce leaves, center white part trimmed and removed
- 1 green pepper, cored, seeded, and cut into large chunks
- 1 small white onion, cut into chunks
- 3 whole garlic cloves
- 5–6 radish leaves (optional)
- 6 scallions, green part only

Coat a large, deep roasting pan with oil, and place the fish in the center. Rub it inside and out with the juice of half a lime and sprinkle it with salt and white pepper. Refrigerate while you make the sauce. Use a blender or food processor, puree the lettuce leaves, green pepper, onion, garlic, radish leaves, if using, scallions, remaining lime juice, and add salt and pepper to taste. Pour this sauce over the fish and cover the pan with aluminum foil. Marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours. Bake in a 350-degree oven, uncovered, for 20–25 minutes, basting every 5 minutes. Fish is done when the flesh is opaque and moist. Carefully transfer the fish to a warm serving platter. Pour the sauce over the fish and decorate it with the tomatoes and olives. This dish can be served warm or cold. ■

The Letters Project: A Daughter's Journey by Eleanor Reissa

Reviewed by Joy Wolfe Ensor

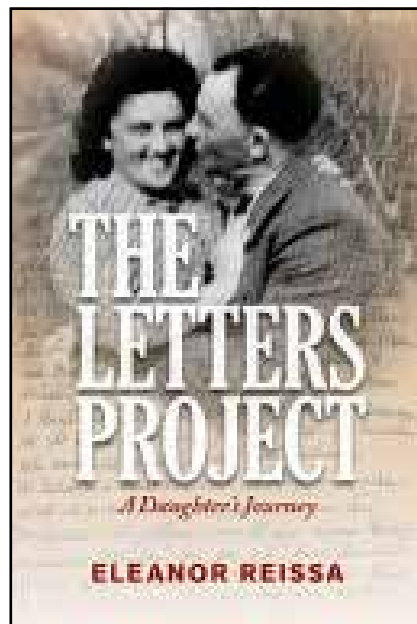
What do we know about our own parents? Eleanor Reissa asks this and more in her excellent memoir, *The Letters Project*. When we visit our parents' pasts, what are we looking for? These universal questions have particular poignancy for children of Holocaust survivors, who grew up navigating the minefields of their parents' silences. "I definitely inquired," Reissa writes. "But their responses were fractured, scatter-shot. Speaking of the past was clearly painful ... and I didn't want to contribute to any more heartache."

Reissa's father Chaskel lost his first wife and their young daughter in the Holocaust; their son was saved when he was sent to England on the Kindertransport. After surviving Auschwitz, Chaskel returned to Stuttgart, where he had lived since early childhood. There he met Ruchale, 20 years his junior. Now living in a DP camp in nearby Ulm, Ruchale, together with her son, her brother, and her parents, had survived the war in Uzbekistan.

As did many survivors who met after the war, Chaskel and Ruchale decided quickly to marry. Ruchale and her family gained entry to the United States first, while Chaskel stayed behind awaiting his papers. Upon reuniting in the States, their marriage produced Eleanor, but ultimately didn't last. Growing up, Reissa had visitations with her father that she experienced as unsatisfying and eventually burdensome.

After her mother died, Reissa discovered — in a purse stashed in the back of her lingerie drawer — a collection of 56 letters that her father had written to her mother in 1949, while he was awaiting his visa to join her in New York.

It took Reissa 30 years to get the letters translated; not coincidentally, she did so when she reached the age that her mother had been when she died. In that process, she embarked



on a quest to retrace her father's steps. It is this journey, and the remarkable discoveries that ensued, that are the focus of *The Letters Project*.

Reissa is an accomplished actor, singer, director, and storyteller with roots in English and Yiddish-language theater. Her writing style is conversational, and she vividly brings the reader into the immediacy of her lived experience. We feel as if we are by her side throughout her

painful and illuminating travels. Reissa uses sardonic wit to express and buffer her intense reactions to the material that she uncovers. Her Natasha Lyonne-esque Brooklynese rises from the printed words.

Creative minds can be untidy, and Reissa openly describes her disorganization as she plans and executes her trip. We want to jump in to say, Pack warmer clothes! Don't forget your ATM card! Be sure to get enough sleep! During her week in Germany (which feels like months, so compressed are her many discoveries), Reissa is cold and cash-poor and sleep-deprived. This, perhaps, is not an accident. Reissa writes, "My bones contain the chromosomes of memory." She embodies memory in a way that sparks our empathy for her, even while we realize that her discomfort is only a tiny fraction of her parents' incomprehensible suffering.

Reissa's theatrical background brings surprising insights, such as when she meets a German costume designer who, by examining old family photos, discerns the prosperity and security of Chaskel and Ruchale's pre-war lives in their elegant and well-tailored clothing. Old friends — and strangers who, by happenstance and grace, become new friends and companions — lead Reissa to her father's post-war testimony and help her process its horrors. Reissa transcribes and annotates this testimony over the course of several chapters. "The dead," she writes, "are screaming in my ears."

In the end, we are humbled by our inability to comprehend what people endured during the Holocaust. The letters, Reissa's journey of discovery, and the project of writing her

memoir give her the unexpected gift of greater understanding and compassion for both her father and herself. She moves from seeing herself as "an embarrassed child of an 'Other,' of a man I perceived as a powerless victim with false teeth and a funny accent" to seeing her father as "Tenacious. Instinctual. Smart. Brave. Greedy to live. This is where I come from, who I come from, who so many Jews come from."

This book focuses more on Reissa's travels in Germany than on the specific effects of her parents' trauma and resilience on her own life. She makes passing references to her impatience, anger, "secrecy gene," and relationship challenges (twice divorced, she experiences a particularly cruel breakup-by-phone in the midst of her travels) and offers a somewhat more focused description of her own challenges in the final chapter. We are left hungry for more and hopeful for another memoir from this very talented writer.

Ultimately, this book is a *cri de coeur*. Reissa writes for many of us in saying, "The slightest whiff of fascism and racism and authoritarianism triggers the hell out of me and sends me down the dark rabbit hole ... [L]ittle did my father's wife — or anyone else — know what all of that would lead to ... When do we know? Ever? Even when we see the future repeating the past, we never think it will happen to us. If we did, what would we do then? Still nothing?"

What would we do then? What will we do?

Joy Wolfe Ensor is a retired psychologist, a member of Temple Beth Emeth's Generations After group, and a co-editor and contributing author of *The Ones Who Remember: Second-Generation Voices of the Holocaust* (City Point Press, 2022). ■

"If My Tallit Could Talk..." by Dina Shtull

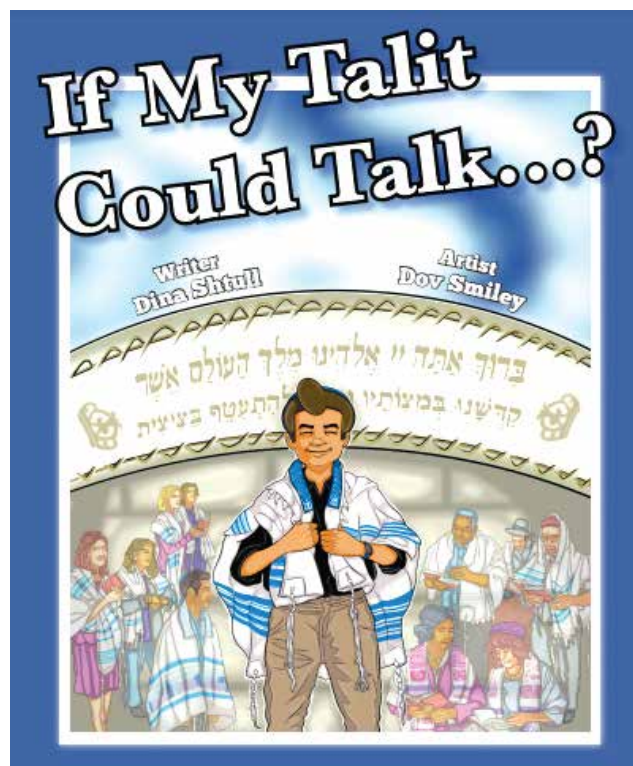
Review by Max Isaacs

If *My Tallit Could Talk...*? is a playful exploration of one of Judaism's most known ritual objects. Use of the prayer shawl, or tallit, often begins when a person becomes b'nei mitzvah, and so this story is also a coming-of-age story. Written by Dina Shtull, illustrated by Dov Smiley and with Yael Zoldan being a supporting artist, this short graphic novel is packed with scholarly information, colorful imagination, and engaging dialogue.

The story follows a 13-year-old who, while sitting through morning services in synagogue, notices the designs of their prayer shawl. To begin with, they are most intrigued with the knotted cords (tzitzit) that hang on each end of their tallit. The story is one continuous engaging midrash (investigation) of where these knotted cords came from and why they are important to Jewish tradition. The 13-year-old starts off looking at their siddur at the part of the Sh'ma which speaks about making tzitzit, looking at tzitzit, and where to attach tzitzit. However, it still does not quite explain what exactly tzitzit are.

From there the 13-year-old looks to rabbinic scholars such as Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki) and Rabbi Joseph Caro and their explanations of the significance of tzitzit. Both rabbis used gematria (Hebrew letters' numerical values) to explain the holy connections. Rashi and Rabbi Joseph Caro's

explanations are wonderful, but a bit complicated to dive into. The 13-year-old remem-



bers their teacher saying that all rituals have meaning, which leads them to imagine that

the knotted cords were helpful during the 40 years after the Exodus, when the tzitzit served as supports for the temporary tents made for resting and for a place of meeting. Furthermore, they make a connection to how some Jews cover their heads with their tallit during prayer, symbolic of Moses' meeting tent.

There are plenty of interesting connections that are made in this story, but the most fascinating point is perhaps the passage from Numbers 15:37-38 that commands us to "... make tzitzit on the edges of their garments ..." which could be referring to the atara (which means crown in Hebrew). One of the supporting points for this connection would be that the atara is on the edge of a tallit in which one wraps themselves as a garment.

This was a creative connection that I honestly never thought about before reading this book. Now it makes me

curious and want to take a closer look at how we have come to understand tzitzit as they are presented today.

The illustration and flow of information are presented beautifully and conveyed in a way that all ages will enjoy.

Another feature of this book that I appreciate immensely is the wonderful resource pages at the end of the book. These pages introduce and explain how to tie tzitzit in a step-by-step manner in both the Ashkenazi (7-8-11-13) and Sephardi (10-5-6-5) customs. There is a brief introduction to gematria, a chart showing the number value of each Hebrew letter, and examples of how gematria works. Lastly, there is a discussion guide page that has a few thought-provoking questions to continue learning and building ideas.

As a 5th and 6th grade Jewish religious school teacher, I highly recommend having this book as a resource to introduce the wonderful Jewish tradition of asking questions and investigating rich Jewish customs, while exploring and encouraging new perspectives.

Max Isaacs lives in Ypsilanti, teaches at Temple Beth Emeth, and is studying K-12 visual arts education at Eastern Michigan University. ■



Cheers To 100 Years!

Join us for a joyous gathering, to connect, reflect, and celebrate 100 years.

Bethel Community Transformation Center (Home of Breakers Covenant Church International and formerly the home of Temple Beth El) at 8801 Woodward Avenue, was designed by Albert Kahn, and construction was completed in 1922. This historic building has housed sacred work for 100 years and continues to serve the Metro-Detroit community.

This event is free to attend - RSVP by Wednesday, December 7th. Light refreshments will be served.

Contributions may be made to Bethel Community Transformation Center.
Website: <https://bctedetroit.org/donate/>
Make checks payable to: Bethel Community Transformation Center or BCTC

For more information, please contact us at (313) 818-3259 or via email info@bctedetroit.org

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Community

Shared Society Series: Krembo Wings

by Liora Rosen, Israel & Overseas Program Manager Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor.

This is the second of five articles in the Shared Society Series. The first, on the organization Hand in Hand Schools, appeared in the September 2022 edition of the WJN.

When we think of a shared society, especially in the context of Israel, we often think of Jews and Arabs, or Israelis and Palestinians, but there are many aspects of the society in which inequality, discrimination, and inequity persist, and many Israeli NGOs are focused on addressing these issues.

In this coming year, we will introduce you to some of the Jewish Federation of Greater

participate fully.

Enter Krembo Wings!

Krembo Wings is a national youth movement in Israel for children and adolescents both with and without disabilities. The organization aims to promote shared, inclusive activities that engender a sense of belonging. The encounters taking place in the movement contribute to raising the social awareness and familiarity of its members with a much broader spectrum of people in Israeli society. Krembo Wings seeks to provide a foundation that allows all its members, those with and without disabilities, to take



Ann Arbor's partner organizations in Israel. Reflecting our Federation's values of tzedakah, community, tikkun olam, responsibility for fellow Jews (Kol Israel aravim zeh bazeh — all of Israel is responsible for one another), chesed (compassion), and collaboration, these organizations are working hard to build a more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and integrated Israeli society. Federation is proud to share in their vision and support their work.

Krembo Wings is one organization with which Federation partners that exemplifies these values.

When one thinks about youth movements in the United States, you might think about a religiously affiliated program, with acronyms such as USY, BBYO, AARTY, NIFTY, or perhaps Boy / Girl Scouts. Those who grew up in these movements may recall monthly get-togethers, regional Shabbatons, and national or international social gatherings.

Youth movements in Israel are an entirely different game. They are more similar to teen sports in Ann Arbor — structured, organized, all-consuming (just ask the parents), and represent a large portion of a teenager's social group. But perhaps that is where the similarities end, because membership in a youth movement in Israel is a formative aspect of growing up in Israel and an integral part of society; and it sure seems like most Israeli kids are in one, starting at a young age and continuing through high school.

Yet, the majority of the youth movements in Israel, or around the world for that matter, cannot and do not accommodate young people with disabilities. All of the issues that affect young people, such as access to education and building a social life, also affect youth with disabilities, but in a far more complex way. Attitudes and discrimination linked to disability make it much more difficult for them to go to school, to make friends and to participate in local activities. In many communities, the environment is immensely challenging, with physical and communication barriers that make it hard for them to

part in accessible and specially tailored activities that address the emotional and social needs of those participants with disabilities. Their motto is "Together, creating a meaningful place for everyone" — and this means for youth of all abilities and backgrounds. Krembo Wings is a place where everyone is equal, and everyone truly belongs.

The first and only youth movement of its kind, Krembo Wings has thousands of activists — also known as counselors — mentors, and peers: participants see it as their actual youth movement and do not refer to their participation in it as "volunteering."

Krembo Wings holds an informal social-educational activity once a week in the afternoon, in the model of individual tutoring — in a group setting. Most of the tutors are teens from local public schools. Their participation with Krembo Wings is integral to increasing public awareness of high needs populations and social accessibility, as well as addressing the emotional and social needs and the integration of those with limitations into Israeli society.

Krembo Wings also believes that fighting stigmas, attitudes, and discrimination needs to start from a young age. It therefore provides training to kindergarten teachers to educate the very youngest students on how to be more inclusive and embrace differences.

Recognizing the power of their work and the impact Krembo Wings has made on Israeli society, Krembo Wings youths were invited to share their experiences at the Global Disability Summit for Youth.

And because they reflect so many of the values that the local Washtenaw County Jewish community holds dear, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is proud to support their efforts through community member donations to the Annual Community Campaign.

For more information about Krembo Wings or other Israel/Overseas allocations, please contact Liora Rosen, liora@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3534. ■



Museum of Modern Art, NYC
INTERIORS
in permanent collection gallery 419, 4th floor
on view indefinitely as of May 28, 2022
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOANNE LEONARD
[HTTPS://WWW.MOMA.ORG/ARTISTS/131253](https://www.moma.org/artists/131253)
[HTTPS://WWW.MOMA.ORG/CALENDAR/GALLERIES/5476](https://www.moma.org/calendar/galleries/5476)

How a Catholic university amassed a treasure trove of Jewish artifacts from the Bronx

Julia Gergely, originally for the New York Jewish Week and the JTA

A Catholic university may be the unlikely place for what may be the largest depository dedicated to the Jewish history of the Bronx.

But at Fordham University — the private, Jesuit institution in the Bronx — decades worth of archival documents and artifacts from the local Jewish community have found a home, thanks to its Jewish studies center.

For the last three years, Fordham has been collecting and cataloging items that detail a once-thriving Jewish community in the Bronx: yearbooks full of Jewish last names, bar mitzvah invitations, phone-books full of Jewish-owned businesses — all the simple transactions that define an era in history.

The archive at Fordham is one of the only physical collections of everyday material from Jewish residents of the borough, according to Magda Teter, the co-director of the Center for Jewish Studies at the university, who spearheaded the project.

“It’s not only preserving a piece of New York Jewish history, but also a way of life,” Teter told the New York Jewish Week. “Bringing this voice to the dominant Christian identity of Fordham and teaching about Jews [as a minority] within the dominant cultures is very important.”

During the first half of the twentieth century, Jewish life thrived in the Bronx. There were 260 registered synagogues in 1940, and the borough produced some of the biggest Jewish names in show business, fashion, literature and more: designer Ralph Lauren, politician Bella Abzug, novelist E.L. Doctorow, filmmaker Stanley Kubrick, Miss America Bess Myerson, Nobel Prize-winning chemist Robert Lefkowitz.

At the community’s peak in 1930, the Bronx was approximately 49% Jewish, according to the borough’s official historian, Lloyd Ultan. South of Tremont Avenue, the number reached 80%. Most of the Jewish Bronx was of Eastern European descent; many were first generation Americans whose parents had immigrated and lived on the Lower East Side, but who could now afford to live in less cramped neighborhoods with more trees and wider streets.

Though there is a strong Jewish community in the neighborhood of Riverdale, most of the Jewish community moved out of the Bronx for the suburbs after World War II when mortgages for white would-be homeowners were being subsidized by the government and Black and Latino communities were steered to Bronx neighborhoods they couldn’t afford or that the city had chosen to neglect. The Jewish population of the Bronx dropped from 650,000 in 1948 to 45,000 in 2003. Many of the synagogues have been converted for other uses, and the physical legacy of the Jewish community there has begun to erode over time, making an archive all the more necessary.

While Teter was always interested in collecting items from the Jewish Bronx, the archive got an unexpected boost from a member of the public. In the spring of 2020, at the height of the pandemic, Fordham hosted a virtual event, “Remnants: Photographs of the Jewish Bronx,” which featured evidence of the area’s faded Jewish history

gathered by writer and photographer Julian Voloj. (Voloj is the husband of the New York Jewish Week’s managing editor, Lisa Keys.)

In the audience was Ellen Meshnick, who had grown up in New York and now lives in Georgia. Inspired, she offered Fordham a trove of material her parents, Frank and Martha Meshnick, had kept throughout their lives in the Bronx. The boxes includ-

are usually portrayed.”

The Center for Jewish Studies at Fordham is relatively new: The college began offering a Jewish studies minor in 2016, and opened the department in 2017. At the time, the highlight of the library’s archives was the Rosenblatt Holocaust collection, which was funded by an alumnus. Since 1992, the library has amassed over 11,000

ing Voloj’s Bronx photographs, along with some of the recently acquired local archival materials, curated by sophomore Reyna Stovall, who is interning at Fordham’s Jewish studies center this semester.

“It is really, really rewarding,” said Stovall, who is Jewish. Stovall became involved in the Center for Jewish Studies because of her interest in Holocaust studies,



The former synagogue Beth Hamedrash Hagadol on Washington Ave. in the Bronx is now a church. This photo is part of the exhibit “Remnants of the Jewish Bronx” from Julian Voloj, which is on view in the Henry S. Miller Judaica Research room at Fordham University. (Julian Voloj)

ed donated yearbooks from Morris High School and Walton High School, songbooks, bar mitzvah invitations, a marriage certificate, receipts for a flower delivery — even a document from the hospital from when she was born — mostly from the 1930s through the 1960s.

The donation significantly bolstered what materials Fordham already had on hand, which included less personal but still unique items like matchbooks from kosher restaurants. Now, Teter is growing the archive through other private donations and occasionally by purchasing materials online — personal family archives, books about Bronx Jewish history, songsheets and the like.

“They may not be the most beautiful things, but we are interested in what people actually used and lived with,” Teter said.

Teter said that while the American Jewish Historical Society in Manhattan does collect the types of quotidian and personal items that American Jews kept with them in the last few centuries, they don’t have much that uniquely focuses on Jewish life in the Bronx.

The entire collection is part of a greater effort by Teter, the Jewish studies center and the librarians at Fordham to increase awareness about Judaism and Jewish people. “I will not hide that I think it’s an important way to fight antisemitism — to teach Jewish history and Jewish culture in all its colors and in all its experiences,” she said. “It enriches the students’ appreciation and understanding of Jewish life beyond how Jews

titles, videos and artifacts on the Holocaust, according to Director of Libraries Linda Loschiavo.

When Teter arrived, Loschiavo worked with her to bring in historical Passover haggadahs from all over the world. Fordham now possesses two Italian haggadahs from the 1660s, as well as Jewish artifacts from unexpected places, like playbills from Jewish Bollywood.

Last month the university opened the Henry S. Miller Judaica Research Room on the fourth floor of the campus’ main library — named for one of Fordham’s first Jewish students, who graduated in 1968. Miller, a leader of a financial restructuring firm, is now a trustee of the college.

Fordham President Tania Tetlow described herself jokingly as “a wannabe Jew” at the room’s unveiling. “I’ve understood how deeply intertwined Judaism and Catholicism are,” she said, “and the connections we have of the deep intellectualism of both faiths, of the desire to study text and the interpretation of text going back for thousands of years, of the love of ritual — and the central place of food and guilt!”

“At the moment, we envision that the research room will be a space for exhibitions that would foster the curatorial skills of our students and that will bring Jewish art and artists to campus,” Teter said. “We would now be able to display their art and combine the exhibitions with some items from the Judaica collection.”

The research room is currently display-

ing Voloj’s Bronx photographs, along with some of the recently acquired local archival materials, curated by sophomore Reyna Stovall, who is interning at Fordham’s Jewish studies center this semester.

“It’s pretty amazing that they have the collection to begin with,” she added. “It really shows Fordham’s commitment to diversity and inclusivity that they’re willing to take on this massive collection of Judaica, even though that’s not the religion that the school was founded on.”

Teter estimates there are about 300 Jews among the school’s 15,000 undergrads. As a result, the Center for Jewish Studies and the research room offers students from all backgrounds the opportunity to learn more about Judaism — as well as marginalized communities in general, and connect their stories to their own lives.

“Our identity grew to showcase Jewish studies at the intersection and in conversation with other fields and areas of study,” Teter explained.

The Center’s goal, she added, is “to make students, faculty and the public realize that studying Jews is not just for Jews, and that they can learn so much about the areas of their own concern and interest by studying Jews.”

“Something magical happens when you give students the opportunity to work with historical artifacts, and really touch history,” Teter said. “That’s what I think inspired the director of the library to devote that space to that kind of research and to that kind of student experience.” ■

Calendar

December 2022

As our community eases into in-person events with sensitivity to changing pandemic safety, always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here and for prayer services.

Thursday 1

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.
Women Aging With Attitude: TBE. A group approach to embracing life's transitions. 1 p.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.
Talmud- Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 2

Candle Lighting 5:45 p.m. Vayeitzei
Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Whinston: TBE. Bring your lunch and learn with Rabbi Whinston during this informal and social gathering. We explore different ideas throughout the year with participants guiding our subjects. 12 p.m.
Frist Friday Shabbat: JCS. Dinner from a local restaurant follows a short observance that includes secular readings, songs, candle lighting, wine, and challah. Children are welcome. Dinner is free for JCS members. The cost of dinner for non-members is \$10/person or \$25/family. Registration required: www.jewishculturalsociety.org at the Jewish Community Center. 6:30 p.m.

WTBE Hanukkah Bazaar: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 12 - 7 p.m.

Saturday 3

Havdallah 5:49 p.m.
Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.
Tot Shabbat: BIC. Tot Shabbat continues throughout the fall. Join us for a playful morning of Jewish songs, games, and stories. Challah and grape juice kiddush included. For kids ages 1 to 6, but all are welcome to join. 10:30 a.m.

Sunday 4

Mysteries of Alzheimer's Disease: Maimonides Society. Kellogg Eye Center. 9 a.m. to noon.
Tanya - Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidism and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. 11 a.m.
AARC Book Group. On Zoom. We will be reading two graphic novels by Liana Finck: Let There Be Light and A Bintel Brief. Please email Greg Saltzman for more information: gsaltzman@albion.edu. 4 - 5:30 p.m.

WTBE Hanukkah Bazaar: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 3 - 7 p.m.

Monday 5

Legal Implications of Child Turning 18: Jewish Community Foundation. Zoom. 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 6

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

Wednesday 7

Yidish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture, no matter what level of proficiency. For more information, to get the link, and to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please email Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu at least one day before scheduled meeting day every Wednesday

(except major Jewish holidays). 2 p.m.
WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 4 - 6 p.m.
"My G-d": Chabad. New six-week class on Wednesday. 7:30 p.m.
Theology Book Club: BIC. 8 p.m.

Thursday 8

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.
Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose: TBE. 12 p.m.
Women Aging With Attitude: TBE. A group approach to embracing life's transitions. 1 p.m.
Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.
Talmud- Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 9

Candle Lighting 4:44 p.m. Vayishlach
Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Whinston: TBE. 12 p.m.
Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat: BIC. Join us for a monthly Musical Kabbalat Shabbat led by Rabbi Aura Ahuvia in the Main Sanctuary and on Zoom. 6 p.m.

WTBE Hanukkah Bazaar: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 12 - 7 p.m.

Elementary Shabbat and Dinner: TBE. Ages 5 - 10. Registration requested. \$5 per person. 5:45 p.m.
Second Friday Schmooze: JCS at the JCC. Tim Chupp discusses the Origins of Matter. 7:30 p.m.

Saturday 10

Havdallah 5:49 p.m.
Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.
Second Saturday Morning Shabbat Service. AARC at the JCC. This is a lay led hybrid Shabbat Service at the JCC. Everyone is welcome! Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event. 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Shabbat Morning Services: Pardes Hannah. Zoom. 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Sunday 11

Tanya - Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. 11 a.m.
Festive Musical Moments: JCC. To benefit JCOR family. 4 - 6 p.m.
WTBE Hanukkah Bazaar: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 3 - 7 p.m.

Monday 12

Tuesday 13

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

Wednesday 14

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.
WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. 4 - 6 p.m.

Reducing Your Carbon Footprint: Heating and Cooling: TBE. On Zoom. Registration required for the Zoom link. Speakers: Status of conversion to renewable power generation in MI - Brian Rich, Consumers Energy; Options for Household Electrification - Matt Grocoff, THRIVE Collaborative; Testimonials on geothermal and other household electrification system usage - Ed Lynn, First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of AA & Matt Grocoff, THRIVE Collaborative; Workshop Host: Bill Parkus, Temple Beth Emeth. 7:30 p.m.
"My G-d": Chabad. New six-week class on

Wednesday. 7:30 p.m.
Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 15

Women Aging With Attitude: TBE. A group approach to embracing life's transitions. 1 p.m.
Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.
Aging Solo Monthly Meetup: JCC. 4 to 5 p.m.
Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.
Talmud- Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 16

Candle Lighting 4:45 p.m. Vayeishev
Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Whinston: TBE. 12 p.m.
WTBE Hanukkah Bazaar: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 12 - 7 p.m.

Saturday 17

Havdallah 5:51 p.m.
Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.
Tot Shabbat: BIC. 10:30 a.m.

Sunday 18

Chanukah Candle One
Taste of Chanukah: HDS. At the HDS in the JCC. 10 a.m.
Illuminate: BIC. Beth Israel invites all to join us for the fourth annual Chanukah celebration, Illuminate. The evening begins with a Chanukah party complete with games, crafts for kids, refreshments, and of course, the lighting of the giant menorah. After the menorah is lit, we are pleased to welcome Rabbi Abraham Hahn who will lead us in his unique mix of traditional Jewish liturgy and the call-and-response chant from India, called Kirtan. 5 p.m.

Hanukkah Candle Lighting: TBE. Outside. Join Rabbi Josh and Cantor Regina for a brief gathering to light the giant Hanukkiah lights in front of Temple Beth Emeth. Registration requested. 7 p.m.

Monday 19

Hanukkah Candle Lighting: TBE. Outside. 7 p.m.
Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 20

Chanukah Candle Three
Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.
Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Bereavement Group: TBE. For women who have lost a life partner. 4 p.m.

Hanukkah Candle Lighting: TBE. Outside. 7 p.m.
Tea and Torah for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 21

Chanukah Candle Four
Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.
WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. 4 - 6 p.m.
One Candle for Tzedakah. JCC. \$5 for under 5 years old, \$10 over 5:30 p.m.
"My G-d": Chabad. New six-week class on Wednesday. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 22

Chanukah Candle Five
Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.
Talmud- Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 23

Candle Lighting 4:49 p.m. Mikeitz Chanukah Candle Six

Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Whinston: TBE. 12 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping:

TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 6 - 7:30 p.m.
Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat. In person at the JCC and on Zoom. This is a hybrid service led by members of the congregation. 6:30 p.m.

Hanukkah Candle Lighting: TBE. Outside. 7 p.m.
Saturday 124

Rosh Hodesh Tevet Chanukah Candle Seven

Havdallah 5:54 p.m.
Rosh Hodesh Online Minyan Tevet: Pardes Hannah. 10 a.m.

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

Hanukkah Candle Lighting: TBE. Outside. 7 p.m.

Sunday 25

Rosh Hodesh Tevet Chanukah Candle Seven

Hanukkah Candle Lighting: TBE. Outside. 7 p.m.
Tanya - Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. 11 a.m.

Monday 26

Rosh Hodesh Tevet Circle: Pardes Hannah. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 27

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.
Tea and Torah for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 28

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.
WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. 4 - 6 p.m.
"My G-d": Chabad. New six-week class on Wednesday. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 29

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Women Aging With Attitude: TBE. 1 p.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.
Talmud- Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 30

Candle Lighting 4:53 p.m. Vayigash

Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Whinston: TBE. 12 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping:

TBE. 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Saturday 31

Havdallah 5:59 p.m.
Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Romania's ornate and sometimes crumbling synagogues get new access via virtual tours

Marcel Gascón Barberá, originally for the JTA

BUCHAREST — Stepping inside Romania's Fabric Synagogue in real life would be a dangerous proposition: Closed since 1986, the ornate 1899 structure in the heart of the city of Timisoara is crumbling inside.

Online is a different story. There, visitors to the Fabric Synagogue can look up at the domed cupola, its stained glass still intact even as holes dot the ceiling, and approach the ark, its closed doors leaving the illusion that a Torah might be contained inside. They can climb to the balcony and look out over the Hebrew letters still affixed to walls, then turn their gaze to the massive graffiti tag that occupies one whole wall of the second floor. They can even check out the synagogue's dust-laden organ before walking into the Timisoara sunshine and strolling to the municipal parks along the Bega River just a block away.

The virtual tour is one of eight launched recently to give Jews — and non-Jews — the chance to immerse themselves in a world that is no more: that of the non-Orthodox Jewish communities that developed under the Habsburg Empire in the western part of today's Romania.

Launched by Romanian NGO Pantograf in collaboration with Jewish local communities and activists, the website Povestile Sinagogilor, or Stories of the Synagogues, invites visitors to a virtual tour of eight historic sites in Romania, including Timisoara's main synagogue, which has been recently renovated.

The website includes interviews with current Jewish leaders of each community, as well as the English and Romanian transcriptions of oral testimonies collected throughout the decades. In them, Jews who were born in the area recount the prewar era of interethnic coexistence, the years of fascist persecution, and the mass emigration, mostly to Israel, during and after communism.

"It is a unique opportunity for the descendants of these communities to finally visualize what their grandparents left behind," said Ivan Bloch, a mathematician and IT entrepreneur who is also the president of the Jewish community of Lugoj, in western Romania.

Advances in virtual tourism have opened new frontiers for people interested in sites of Jewish significance. An initiative is underway to recreate online the destroyed Jewish cemeteries of Libya, and this summer, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem opened an exhibit that allows visitors to explore the Great Synagogue of Aleppo through virtual reality. Both of those efforts aim to capture the experience of being Jewish in a place where no Jews now live.

Romania, in contrast, does have a small Jewish population, but it is mostly centered in Bucharest, the capital and largest city.

The virtual tours focus on a different part of Romania, more than 300 miles to the west, called the Banat region. Previously under Ottoman rule, the region was incorporated in 1716 into the Habsburg empire, to which it belonged until its dissolution in 1918, when its territory was split among Romania, Serbia and Hungary. The Jews living in the portion that became Romania were mostly Hungarian-speaking and



Iosefin Synagogue in Timisoara, Romania, as seen on a new website opening doors to historical synagogues in Romania's Banat region. (Sebastian Puraci/Asociația Pantograf)

thrived until antisemitism became Romanian government policy starting in 1934.

Starting then, successive Romanian governments enacted increasingly aggressive legislation depriving Jews of their rights, and between 280,000 and 380,000 Jews living under Romanian rule were murdered during World War II, mostly in the Romanian-controlled territories in today's Ukraine. (Some 150,000 Jews living in Hungarian-occupied Northern Transylvania were also killed.) Most of those who survived left the country afterwards.

In Lugoj, the third-largest city in Romania's Banat region, Bloch said, the Jewish community once numbered more than 1,500 but is now well below 100. The synagogue there is in good repair, according to the website, but few Jews are present to see it.

"The project virtually rebuilds a connection that was severed in 1950, when half of the community emigrated to Israel together with its rabbi," Bloch said.

Besides opening a window to history for Jews abroad, the new website aims to educate local audiences.

"It is also directed to the residents of these cities who pass by the synagogues daily and don't know anything about their role and that of their Jewish communities in the broader Romanian society," project coordinator Raluca-Elena Doroftei told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Most of the synagogues featured in the website were part of Neolog Judaism, the reformist and liberal religious current that emerged in the 19th century in Hungary and extended across the Austro-Hungarian empire. Music played a central part in the religious services they held.

"Being of the Neolog rite they could sing and had a cantor, a choir and an organ," said Bloch, who points out that some of the organs of these synagogues "are still functional."

In 1948, the nascent Romanian communist regime forced Jewish communities to

unify in a single structure.

"The communists told Jewish leaders: We want you to have one single community that we can control, it is your problem how you organize it internally," said Felicia Waldman, a scholar whose studies have included postwar Jewish life in her native Romania. As a result, she said, the Neolog

community disappeared "as a separate structure and was forced to integrate in the majority Orthodox community." The same happened with the Sephardic community, which became a section of that same Ashkenazi official Jewish congregation.

"Today, we continue to pray and practice religion in an Orthodox format, in accordance with the rabbinate and the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania," said Bloch, the Jewish leader in the town of Lugoj, about the current situation.

In some cases, community leaders are hoping that the Stories of the Synagogues project could generate support to refurbish their historic buildings. The Fabric Synagogue, for example, was given to the local theater company

with the assurance that the company would pay to repair it; when the company could not raise the funds, the building returned to the Jewish community's control. Now, the new website says, the community is again "looking for solutions" to pay for a renovation.

"A perfect architectural work, a synagogue built to last hundreds of years," the website says, "is in danger of becoming a ruin." ■

Indiana synagogue mapping project: a virtual lunch and learn

On Tuesday, December 6 at 12 p.m. Dr. Wendy Soltz will discuss her years of research into Indiana's Historic Synagogues and showcase her elaborate maps that chart a course into Indiana's Jewish past.

This project has been funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Parks Service Historic Preservation Fund administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Department of Historic Preservation.

Tuesday, December 6, 12:00 - 12:40 PM EST

The Indiana Synagogue Mapping Project

A virtual Presentation
Presented by the Indiana Jewish Historical Society

With Dr. Wendy Soltz

RVSP for Zoom link at ijhs@ijhs.org

Temple menorah vs our menorah

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, Chabad of Ann Arbor

Chanukah (beginning on Sunday night, December 16) commemorates the miracle that happened with the seven-branched menorah in the Temple. So why do we light eight lights for eight days?



Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

Also, the Talmud states that the mitzva to light Chanukah candles begins at sunset. However, the Temple menorah was lit an hour and a quarter before sunset. Again, why does our commemoration differ from the way the original menorah was kindled?

The answer is that the main point of Chanukah candles is to light up the darkness. The miracle of Chanukah came at a time of great darkness after the Greeks defiled the Temple, and made a point of defiling every bottle of oil that was there, by breaking the seal of the High Priest that ensured its purity. They didn't break the bottles or pour out the oil, they merely broke the seals. We see then that it was more important to the Greeks to defile the oil than to destroy the Temple. What was their intention?

The Greeks didn't want to destroy us physically, they wanted to sever our connection to G-d. They had no problem with us keeping Judaism as a beautiful, inspiring practice, but not out of a sense of obedience to the Giver of the Torah. The pure oil that was defiled was symbolic of all that. The concept of purity and impurity is not logical. It is a Divine decree. And that

is what the Greeks couldn't deal with and sought to destroy. Of course, once they started to prohibit certain observances, it snowballed into a war on Judaism.

This is why the miracle of finding the jug of oil still intact with the High Priest's seal was so significant. The pure jug represented a part of us that is always connected to G-d, and that connection can never be severed.

Each of us has a G-dly soul, an actual "piece" of G-d within us. The soul has five parts, the highest being "yechida," which is always connected with G-d. Not the way G-d relates to the world, but much higher, the essence of G-d, beyond existence. This part of the soul cannot be touched by negative influences, just the opposite: when we tap into that part of the soul, we affect the world around us in the most amazing way, lighting the darkness of the world, not just that our light dispels the darkness, but that the darkness itself begins to shine.

And this is symbolized by the number eight. According to Jewish mystical teachings, seven is the number that represents the natural order of the world and eight is beyond existence.

Now we can understand why Chanukah is eight days, and the Chanukah menorah has eight lights. Because Chanukah is about our connection to G-d beyond existence, making the darkness itself shine. And this is why we light the Chanukah menorah at sunset. We light as it begins to get dark, because the purpose is to light up the darkness.

May the light of our Chanukah menorah turn the darkness of the exile to light in a way that the darkness itself begins to shine, and usher in the coming of Moshiach. The time has come! ■

Continued youth activists hazon from page 1

from representatives from so many different cultures and places in person is so exciting."

In coordinating this opportunity, Hazon provided a space for young people to participate, learn, and grow as Jewish leaders and activists. Reflecting on the importance of this convening, Jakir Manela, CEP of Hazon and Pearlstone writes: "Their involvement will exponentially multiply the visibility and potential partnerships and growth of this movement in the months and years to come. Amplifying voices of the youth — the generation who will have to live with the consequences of today's decisions — is absolutely critical. They should be holding us accountable; we have to start thinking of ourselves as the ancestors of future generations. What would make our descendants proud of us? Taking this kind of long-path view is what these students should be mandating of all of us in leadership positions. All of us at Hazon

and Pearlstone are proud to work in partnership with youth leaders to build a more sustainable future."

We cannot wait to reconnect with these youth leaders upon their return and integrate their experiences and learnings into our learning and engagement opportunities throughout the rest of the year.

Michigan teens interested in learning more about the climate crisis and JYCM can join JYCM staff and current members for the Michigan Teen Day of Climate Education and Action for students in 7th–12th grade on December 4 from 12:30–4 p.m. at the Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills. The event, open to any Michigan teen, will be an incredible opportunity to build connections with other passionate young people and learn more about organizing and advocacy. Go to jewishyouthclimatemovement.org to learn more and register. ■

Chabad Chanukah Events

Monday, December 19: 6 p.m. lighting the Menorah at Liberty Plaza

Monday, December 26: 1 p.m. Chanukah celebration at the Ice Cube ice skating and dinner"

Bereavement and aging solo in the age of COVID

Rebecca Nieubuurt, Jewish Family Services' Congregation-based Social Worker

In June 2020, when Ruth lost her husband of 45 years to cardiac arrest, she was left to grieve alone. Her children lived nearby and despite it being early days of COVID-19, the family decided to be together as a bubble. However, her contemporaries, friends and cousins, and siblings could not take such risks. Some of those close to her had lost a spouse already, others were caring for an ailing partner, all wanted to help, to hug, to listen and to grieve with Ruth, and they all made the difficult decision to support her virtually and over the phone despite their strong desire to join together in person. Now, two years later, Ruth finds herself processing this great loss as though it happened only yesterday. Recently, Ruth said, "Everyone loved Eddie so much, and when he disappeared from this earth at a time when we couldn't be together, that love had nowhere to go. Our grief was suspended, even as time moved on."

Throughout the pandemic, Genevieve has been balancing social interaction and safety well. She lives happily in her small condo with her senior cat and actively participates on her homeowner's association board. She is in frequent contact with her two nieces and sister-in-law, and enjoys tending to her small patio garden, her life is just as she wants it to be. Recently, she celebrated her 70th birthday and it struck her that while her nieces love

her, they are busy with their own lives, and caring for their own mother. While Genevieve has enjoyed relatively good health, she may need to rely on outside support as she ages. She said in a recent conversation with me, "I am considering my future and talking about it with my nieces. Somehow, it becomes a conversation about them, and not about me."

Ruth and Genevieve's experiences highlight the need for peer-to-peer support. Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County in partnership with Temple Beth Emeth, Beth Israel Congregation, and the Jewish Community Center strive to meet these needs. Monthly in-person group meetings are available to those aging solo, living alone, with no children or none living within a five-hour drive, and those grieving the loss of a life partner. All are welcome to join, registration is encouraged.

Bereavement Group: Every Third Tuesday 4–5 p.m. at Temple Beth Emeth. Registration at templebethemeth.org

Aging Solo: Every Third Thursday 4–5 p.m. at Jewish Community Center of Ann Arbor. Registration available at templebethemeth.org

Email Rebecca Nieubuurt at rebeccan@jfsannarbor.org for more information about these groups or if seeking individual support or are unsure if the group setting is for them. ■



Festive Musical Moments

A BENEFIT FOR JCOR

Sunday, December 11 4–6pm

A Presentation of Classical Works
Performed by Several of Ann Arbor's Most
Accomplished Soloists and Ensembles

~ Light Refreshments to follow ~
under the kosher supervision of Rabbi Will Keller

•••

Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor
2935 Birch Hollow Drive, Ann Arbor

All funds raised will directly benefit the service provided by JCOR volunteers to refugees through their first year in the U.S.

Admission is offered at the following levels of giving:
Menorah: \$108 | Dreidel: \$72
Latke: \$36 | Students: \$18
Children 12 & under: Free
Additional Information and to purchase tickets:

<https://bit.ly/jcorfestive>

*JCOR, Jewish Congregations Organized for Resettlement, is a Tikkun Olam-guided collaboration among six congregations working in partnership with Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County.

Obituaries

Gideon Hoffer, 82, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, died after sunset on November 5, 2022. "I wasn't lost, I knew exactly where I was. You were lost!" said Gideon Hoffer from the hotel, as the rest of the family waited at the museum, wondering where he had disappeared to.

Sadly, the story of his adventures (and mis-adventures) won't add any more chapters, as



he passed away November 5 due to a highly aggressive bladder cancer. Thankfully, he was surrounded by family and friends when he said "Shalom" for the last time.

A few months ago, he was eating gelato in Capri with his daughter Ronit and granddaughter Aviella, doing his favorite thing — traveling with his family. He leaves behind his wife Carol, who shared trips all over the globe. Ronit and her husband Matt Schwartz also have a pair of boys, Amitai and Aitan, while his son Ori has his daughter Ilana, fiancée Lisa Ratner, and Ilana's mother Lorine Dolby Hoffer.

But family is more than just blood relations, as his circle of friends covered the tennis courts (where he could still beat his son at the age of 75), poker tables, Benny's Lunch Bunch, and so much more. His sophisticated side loved the symphony and opera, but he was just as comfortable cursing refs, interceptions, and bad shots at Michigan football and basketball games (a lesson he passed on to his son and granddaughter).

He was a Chief Financial Officer at a series of entrepreneurial ventures, often on the cutting edge of technology, though he also took on the adventure of running a food truck business, well before they were on every corner.

Fiercely protective of his homeland Israel, he was a great supporter of many Jewish charities such as Federation, Jewish Family Services, and others.

In the end, he may not have been lost that day in Jerusalem but losing him now will be felt by everyone who had the pleasure of his company.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (<https://jfsannarbor.org/>).

Martin R. Warshaw. A long, eventful and honorable life came to an end on October 11, 2022, when Martin Richard Warshaw (known to all as "Marty") just weeks after celebrating his 98th birthday, passed away peacefully and under hospice care in Saline, Michigan.

In the days leading up to his passing, Marty was surrounded by family, friends, and loved ones who all came to celebrate the life of a remarkable man. He was born on September 17, 1924, in New York City, to Irving Gregg Warshaw and the former Adelaide Klein, and

grew up along with his younger brother Robert in Long Beach, Long Island. After graduating from high school in 1941, Marty attended Columbia, but his studies were interrupted by the Second World War. In 1943, Marty was assigned to the 1255th Combat Engineering Battalion in the U.S. Army. After three years at war, Marty returned safely and always said that survival was just a matter of pure luck.

Marty returned to Columbia and in 1948 finished his degree. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Michigan, married his beloved Alice Present, whom he had met before being stationed overseas, and took a job at one of his father-in-law's jewelry stores, Daniels Jewelers. His oldest son Gregg was born in 1950, followed by Mark in 1952 and twin girls, Lynn and Laurie born in 1955.

With a supportive wife and four children, he made the major career decision to pursue a PhD at the University of Michigan and thus began a lifetime affiliation with this renowned university. Marty soon became a full professor and Chair of the Marketing Department where he impacted the lives of many undergrad and graduate students. He authored numerous textbooks related to his field. He was a long-time fan of Michigan athletics and was



seldom seen without his blue "M" cap, which always caused comment wherever he went in the world. Marty and Alice lived a full life and enjoyed traveling the world together. A highlight of their life was their time at their second home in Aspen, Colorado where they shared their passion for skiing, tennis, and the outdoors with their children and grandchildren as well as a multitude of friends.

Shortly after their 50th wedding anniversary, Alice died suddenly in 1999, but within a couple of years he was introduced to Joyce Watson who would become the second great love of his life for the over 20 years they spent together until his death.

Marty's brother predeceased him, but he is survived by his four children Gregg (and Martha), Mark (and Jaquelyn), Lynn (and Vicki), and Laurie Harris. He was beloved by his four granddaughters, Jessica, Ann, Molly, and Sara and was so proud of his four great-grandchildren, as well as a host of nieces and nephews. He is also survived by special friends Gary and Martha Bloomfield and Geeke and Rob Land.

Marty will always be remembered for his kind, gentle nature, his impeccable integrity, and his spot-on advice to all who were fortunate enough to know him. He will be greatly missed by all. Fond memories and condolences can be sent to laurieharris1818@gmail.com. Donations in Marty's honor can be made to the Alice Warshaw WCC Scholarship Fund at WLDA in Ann Arbor and Planned Parenthood.

Lois B. Kluger, a registered nurse, active member of the community, devoted wife, and mother to four sons, died peacefully at her home in Williamsburg, Virginia on November 12, 2022, at the age of 89.

Lois Jean Brownstein was born in Troy, New York, on November 14, 1932, to Avraham and Hilda. Lois was a woman of agency and conviction. At the age of 17, she left her hometown and moved to New York City. She earned her nursing degree from the Brooklyn Jewish School of Nursing and later earned her BS and MS degrees. While in New York City, Lois was introduced by mutual friends to Jacob N. Kluger, a mechanical engineer. They were happily married for over 62 years until his death on October 11, 2016.

As a nurse, Lois worked in hospital nurseries in New York City. After moving with her family to Rochester in 1963, she took a professional break to raise her children. She returned to nursing and worked at a home for the aged for several years. Lois then worked over 15 years at a NY State residential home for severely disabled children and teens. Despite the enormous challenges, she loved the work. Lois volunteered with the Red Cross Disaster Relief Services as a frontline nurse.

Lois was devoted to her Jewish faith. She enjoyed attending synagogue and celebrating Shabbat and the holidays, opening her home to friends and community members. In the 1980s, Lois was active in organizing to help Soviet Jewry including letter writing, marching, and attending mass demonstrations in New York City and Washington, D.C.

She was an active member at Temple Beth El and later Congregation Beth Shalom, serving in multiple roles for the Beth Shalom Sisterhood, including co-president. She and Jacob raised their four boys to enjoy Judaism and support Israel.

Lois was a long-term member of the Rochester Chevra Kadisha burial society. A Chevra Kadisha, literally "a Holy Society," is a group whose sole function is to ensure the dignified treatment of the deceased in accordance with Jewish law and tradition. This auspicious title exists because performing a

favor for someone who is dead is considered the ultimate act of kindness, as a dead person can never repay the kindness, making it devoid of ulterior motives. As is tradition, Lois never spoke of her membership in the Chevra Kadisha. She kept her service and membership a secret from everyone but her husband.

Lois was very enthusiastic about many things that people often take for granted. She enjoyed participating in the Lois Club, attending local and national meetings. She was an avid quilter and made beautiful quilts for her children and grandchildren. She was a core member of the "gourmet club," hosting multi-course dinner parties focused on the food of a particular culture. A lover of books, Lois belonged to multiple book clubs throughout her adult life. In her eighties, she helped coordinate a book club and continued to enjoy playing bridge.

Lois was known for her beaming smile, especially when she was photographed with her children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren.



dren. Her joy was baking apple pies with them and teaching them her recipe.

Lois is survived by her brother Joseph Brownstein, by her children Larry (Josie), Levi (Karin), Avram (Dana), and Daniel (Beth). She will also be missed by her 16 grandchildren, her five great-grandchildren, and her many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. She was greatly loved.

To all the family and friends who knew Lois, may her memory be a blessing. ■

Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

- Susan and Neal Weinberg on the birth of their grandson, Benjamin Fisher Weinberg, October 7.
- Wendy and Ted Lawrence on the birth of their grandson, Benjamin Russell Lawrence-Adams, October 4.
- Debbie and Lev Linkner on the birth of their grandson, Elliott Leonard Linkner, October 20.
- Steve Leber and Dina Shtull on the birth of their grandson, Aviv Matan Leber, son of Tani Shtull-Leber and Stephanie Chalifour.
- Martha and Eric Young on the birth of their granddaughter, Eva Rose, daughter of Sam and Stephanie Young.
- Ellen Schwartz and Frank Wayman on the marriage of their son Bram Wayman to Val Neff-Rasmussen on August 11.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to:

- Laurie Harris on the death of her father, Martin Warshaw, October 12.
- Carol Hoffer on the death of her husband, Gideon Hoffer, November 5.
- The Kluger/Horowitz family on the death of Avram Kluger's mother, Lois Kluger, November 14.

The power of a community's promise

By Cole Nelson, Community and Digital Engagement Coordinator at Jewish Family Services

Last year, on a rainy fall Michigan day, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County hosted our first Walk a Mile in My Shoes event to a promising crowd of friends, family members, donors, and community members from all walks of life. We

so proud to be able to see that seed grow into a collaborative and engaging community event hosted at Burns Park Elementary School in Ann Arbor on a gorgeous autumn morning. Live musical performances and the event DJ provided some tunes while nearly

Additional thanks to a very generous (anonymous) matching donation, which allowed us to double our efforts! The funds and awareness raised through this event will touch all areas of JFS resettlement services: housing, nutrition, transportation, behav-

Song Foundation.

And a special thanks to those who spoke about their passion for JFS services, Rep. Debbie Dingell, our Grand Marshals Patty Benson and Brian Chodoroff, Ellen Abramson (JFS Board Chair), and Lada Ludina.



had just over 100 people in attendance and walked from a nearby bank to what is now our building on State Street. While 2021's walk was still an amazing success that allowed us to assist our community in so many substantial ways, we at JFS couldn't help but see the seed planted for a continuing annual event whose mission is to provide much needed community support for our friends in need of resettlement.

This year, on Sunday October 9, we were

225 guests spoke with JFS staff and volunteers to learn more about how we assist those living in Washtenaw County and beyond. With overwhelming support and participation, thanks to community members like you, we are proud to announce our current total fundraising amount from 2022's Walk a Mile In My Shoes event is \$236,000 (and counting, donations will be accepted through December 31, 2022 at <https://jfswc.akaraisin.com/ui/WalkAMile2022>).

ioral health, employment and government assistance, job and school placement, and more. We create sustainable life opportunities for our neighbors from around the world.

Thank you to our generous sponsors: Old National Bank, Bank of Ann Arbor, The Bottle Crew, Retirement Income Solutions, Domino's Pizza, Farbman Group, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, Homewatch Caregivers, Temple Beth Emeth, Verizon, NOMA Real Estate Services, and the

Mark your calendar for next year's Walk a Mile event on Sunday, September 10, 2023! Thank you! . ■





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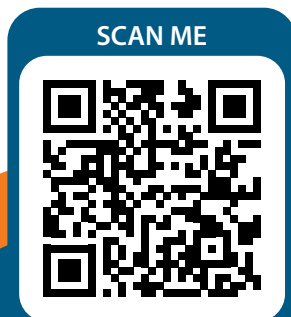


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