



50 years
of
friendship

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WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

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FREE

Celebrating two Ann Arbor centenarians

By Rebecca Nieubuurt

My very first visit to Balfour Senior Living started with wonder and ended in awe. As I walked into the lobby, I was wrestling with the question, “How do we measure the impact of someone’s life?” Is it in their lineage, their work, the number of lives touched by one person? It is, perhaps, unmeasurable the impact of any individual on the world. Yet, most of us hope that our presence on earth has been noticed, welcomed, and helpful.

It is my privilege to share a small part of two women’s stories, women who live full, long lives, dedicated to family and their communities. Women who have been noticed, welcomed, and helpful.

I was invited to Balfour Senior Living to interview these two remarkable Jewish women because they had reached a milestone that evades most and can even be difficult to bear for the remaining few who get there. Ida Chapin and Esther Rubin have lived a century. Greeted by a valet, I humbly handed over the keys to my modestly-priced minivan and stepped into the opulent lobby. I was struck by the beauty of the room but more so by the

contentment on the faces of the residents. They were gathering in the lobby, where I was waiting, to enjoy a lecture presented

ed first to Esther Rubin and then to Ida Chapin by Belfour’s Executive Director, John Juroe.

While Balfour Senior Living had impressed



(L) Esther Rubin 2/19/1924 (R) Ida Chapin 5/11/1923, photo by Gregory Fox

by a retired Religious Studies professor. Getting to the task at hand, I was escort-

me with its balance of warmth and class, fine dining and robust social calendar, my visits with

Esther and Ida were what really inspired me. Esther and Ida are fine examples of longevity, both of sound mind, each of them vital and eager to tell her story, both lovely inside and out. But, of course, their stories were unique as is each one’s impact on the world around them.

Esther Rubin

After doing her part in the war efforts, manufacturing soldiers’ uniforms, Esther, born in Montreal, got a job with Connaught Laboratories at the University of Toronto’s School of Hygiene. It was there that she was, in part, responsible for the commercial development of penicillin during the tail end of World War II, and therefore its dissemination into the market leading to saving many lives. She described to me a letter her lab at the University of Toronto received from the Haag, thanking them for eradicating syphilis among the prostitutes of Amsterdam with this remarkable drug. Some of her lab mates were scandalized by the mention of working girls, but Esther understood then, at 20 years old, that every life saved was one she could hold dear, knowing that her work had re-

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Hostage families speak: Bring them home

By Levana Aronson

On Friday, December 8, 2023, we had the honor to listen to two Israeli hostage families who came to Detroit to share their stories. Jewish and non-Jewish professionals, lay leaders, clergy, and politicians were present. Some of the audience members have lost family members, and others have relatives fighting in the IDF.

Ella Ben Ami — the 23-year-old daughter of Ohad and Raz Ben Ami — and her boyfriend Raz Rozenberg were asleep in bed on Kibbutz Be’eri that black Shabbat morning of October 7. They were awakened to the nightmare of sirens and rockets, followed by gunshots and voices speaking Arabic right outside the mamad door (safe room). Ella and her boyfriend Raz were held up in Ella’s safe room for 12 hours with no food, water, or bathroom provisions.

For a period of time, Ella had communication over WhatsApp with her parents, who are also residents of Be’eri. Shortly



Erez Moses, Yair Moses, Raz Rozenberg, and Ella Ben Ami

after losing communication with her parents, Ella saw a picture on social media of her barefoot 57-year-old father Ohad in his underwear being kidnapped by Hamas. She did not know if her mother, 57-year-old Raz Ben Ami, was alive. Later she found out that her mother, who requires regular medical attention for a brain tumor and spinal tumors, was taken hostage too. Raz Ben Ami was released with the sixth wave of hostages on November 29.

When IDF soldiers finally reached Ella and her boyfriend, she would not evacuate the kibbutz without first looking for her sister. She ran from home to home protected by the soldiers and described that she dropped to the ground to dodge bullets, and soldiers used their armored bodies as a human shield for her. She eventually found her sister and

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From the Editor



Washtenaw made the national news in January when the Ann Arbor City Council and Ann Arbor Public School Board passed resolutions calling for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war. Though it didn't make as much national news, the Ypsilanti City Council also passed a ceasefire resolution.

The organizing of the local legacy Jewish organizations to defeat the resolutions was primarily based on the rationale that calling for a ceasefire is outside the mandate and jurisdiction of the local Michigan entities and is therefore unnecessarily divisive. This reasoning did not prevail. At the various board meetings, Jews spoke on both sides of the resolutions. Next month I hope the WJN will publish an article on local Jewish reactions to the ceasefire resolutions.

Although it is often said sardonically, a well-recognized first reaction among Jews of a certain generation to almost any shard of news is the rhetorical question, 'Yes, but is it good for the Jews?' It's the punchline to a

joke, yet is also serious business for rabbis and other professionals who serve the Jewish community. It's serious for me too, as the publisher and editor of the Washtenaw Jewish News

So, in this moment, I ask "Are calls for 'ceasefire' good for the Jews?" Our legacy Jewish organizations answered with a definitive no, at least in regard to these local resolutions.

Their opposition is prompted, I think, by something deeper than the limited jurisdiction of local boards. For some who are dedicated to a life of service to the Jewish community, the calls for ceasefire are felt, in the gut, to be the volcanic rumblings of an imminent explosion of antisemitism.

I've noticed times when the ceasefire movement seems to be animated by self-righteous joy and anger at a perceived unmasking of Jewish evil intentions. In other words, I fear the ceasefire movement is energized, along with horror and despair, by antisemitism. Though we know the military strength of Israel is quite superior, the Israel-Hamas war feels existential, even to the most liberal of Jewish leaders.

There are many other Jewish leaders who feel this moment differently, expressing concern rather for the "weaponization of antisemitism." As former Harvard Hillel director Bernie Steinberg (z'l) recently wrote: "It is not antisemitic to demand justice for all Palestinians living in their ancestral lands. The activists who employ this language, and the politics of liberation, are sincere people; their cause is a legitimate and important movement dissenting against the brutal treatment of Palestinians that has been ongoing for 75 years."

In early January, Americans for Peace Now, the left Zionist organization formed in the wake of the first war in Lebanon, called for a ceasefire. "Continuing this devastating war poses unacceptable risks for Israel, Gaza civilians and the entire region," James Klutznick, the chair of APN said in a statement. "For the sake of the security and well-being of civilians in Israel and in Gaza, the Biden administration must push Israel to bring about an immediate cessation of hostilities and pivot from war to peacemaking."

With the knowledge of the death and destruction in Gaza, the failure to bring the hostages home, the known corruption and ineptitude of the Netanyahu government, calling for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war must be recognized as an ethical, moral, rational, political, humane reaction.

And our gut reactions cannot be ignored. This local Jewish newspaper will continue to try to be a container for multiple voices. I look forward to hearing from you. ■

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Letters to the Editor

No bromides

Dear Editor,

The article written by Millet Ben Haim published in the January issue of the WJN describing her ordeal as a survivor of the brutal attack by Hamas on the attendees of the Nova festival on October 7, 2023, was profoundly moving and a testament to her courage and that of her rescuer, and a memorial to those of her countrymen who did not survive the massacre. The despicable, barbaric conduct by Hamas revives the exhortation which was repeated over and over again after the Shoah — Never Forget! Never forget the sacrifice of our fellow Jews, which repeats itself throughout our history, and which must be a warning to us to remain vigilant against the anti-Semitism which curses us generation after generation.

In the midst of the poignancy of Ms. Haim's account, however, there is an aspect with which I must express my misgiving, and which was made the title of the article, reflecting what Ms. Haim states has become her moral compass: "There will not be a victory of light over darkness until we will figure out that we must turn on the light." This seems a sensible enough bromide, which one's mind accepts without much critical reflection. But, I ask, who is the "we" being referred to? The implication is that the "we" includes the Israelis, includes the Jews

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Joan Cohen Jones at the JCC's Amster Gallery

By Drew Coel, Ann Arbor JCC

The lush and serene watercolor landscapes of Ann Arbor artist Joan Cohen Jones will be on display at the Amster Gallery of the Ann Arbor Jewish Community Center from February 5 to



her childhood and adolescence. Joan says that she stopped creating art sometime in high school when academics took precedence. Even though Joan wasn't creating art throughout most of her academic career, she found a way to incorporate her two loves, mathematics and art. She taught courses and wrote books on the numerous connections between art and mathematics. Joan hoped that by recognizing these connections, her students (future teachers) would learn to appreciate the everyday applications of mathematics that enhanced their lives.

As Joan neared retirement, she decided to take a watercolor course, based on the recommendation of a childhood friend. That was 10 years ago. Since that time, Joan has worked tirelessly to master the art of watercolor through workshops with nationally and internationally recognized artists as well as excellent local teachers. Joan is a perfectionist and applies the same diligence and focus to her watercolor as she did to her academic pursuits. While she says she can always find something that "could be improved," her work has been very well received and exhibited in numerous venues. Joan's work is collected by watercolor enthusiasts from Maine to California. She continues to develop her skills and, over the past few years, has incorporated pen and wash, a combination of black ink and watercolor, into some of her creations. Joan travels to Maine each summer for inspiration because she says there are more artists there, per square mile, than anywhere else.

Please join Joan at the Amster Gallery on Thursday, February 29, where you will have an opportunity to meet the artist and explore her work. ■

March 15. Please join us for a reception on Thursday, February 29, from 6–8 p.m. at the JCC to meet the artist and explore her work. This event is free and open to the public.

Joan describes herself as a traditional watercolorist, merging exquisite detail with panoramic scenes that employ both soft and vivid colors. Joan has always been interested in art, jokingly saying that her creativity "peaked" when she was in kindergarten and used her elbows to paint with finger paints to create prints that looked remarkably like morning glories. Her painting received so much attention that the school principal asked Joan to describe her "process." Joan's interest in art continued, encouraged by her mother, a gifted amateur artist, throughout



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Centenarians *continued from page 1*

lied people's suffering. She names this as her most proud achievement, and it is indeed amazing to have a role in such an important part of human history.

But Esther's life was just beginning, as was her impact on the world. She relocated to Ann Arbor in the early '60s, bringing her two sons with her, to work in a lab where she was the only woman and therefore the lowest paid employee. She remarried and it was then she decided to pursue a career in social work. A fun bit of family history: Esther attended the University of Michigan at the same time as her oldest son was graduating, her youngest son was entering school, and her husband was working on his PhD, essentially making central campus the new family living room. Esther's career as a clinical social worker in Ann Arbor was dedicated to young men living at the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School for adjudicated boys, who were there for anything from truancy to murder. "I get the most fun out of thinking of my work with the boys," Esther told me proudly. Esther was responsible for the young men's mental and emotional care, and she oversaw day trips off campus. She has no way of knowing what ripple effects her care of those young men might've had. Did some go on to have children and careers? Did others simply return to the fold of their families more whole than when they left? Some, no doubt, did not have happy endings, but her pride in the work is not diminished by that inevitability, for, as social workers, we have to focus on the moments of connection and trust they made a difference.

Esther's life was filled with dedication to her community as well. She was a regular volunteer with the Ann Arbor

Civic Theater Company, enjoying behind-the-scenes contributions such as set design and building and tear-down. She does have one acting credential, having portrayed Mama Rose's mother in a production of Gypsy. Esther participated in the transition of Learning in Retirement to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) in 2007 and served as its Board President twice during her tenure with the organization. She served on the board of her co-op, Colonial Square, and gave her time to Habitat for Humanity. For her own health and wellness, Esther participated in several Dexter-Ann Arbor Runs, in which she holds two records, making her the only record holder for 80-95 year-olds, though she retired from running at age 85.

Ida Chapin

A native Detroiter, Ida Chapin is a slip of a woman whose smooth skin defies her 100 years. She welcomed me alongside her daughter Jan — equally youthful and petite — in Balfour's restaurant where we shared coffee and lunch. Ida remembers her father fondly, though he was a complicated man. He tried his hand at everything from candy making to playing the fiddle, and even bootlegging to support his family during the Great Depression. His official profession was plumber, and Ida remembers watching him dig trenches to plumb their home with a horse-drawn machine and recalls with pride when he purchased his first car to support his business. She recounted stories of the Purple Gang, a famously violent group of Prohibition-era thugs in the Jewish community of Detroit, making deals with her father for the moonshine he was brewing in their bathtub and placing their own alcohol stores in the family's attic. The government even raided her home at one point, unsuccessfully, searching for the valuable contraband. Ida

and her family carry this uniquely American legacy, characterized by personal fortitude and moxie, with them. Ida credits her sometimes unconventional upbringing as the source of the guts it took for her to work in a top secret think tank for the State Department during WWII.

Ida went to Washington, D.C., during the war, looking for ways to contribute to the war effort. She answered an ad for a secretary and knocked on the door of one Albert Einstein for her interview, only to be told, upon seeing her tiny stature and young face, that she was much too young for the position and dismissed. She found a job working in Human Resources for the Atomic Bomb Development Team, where it was her responsibility to run messages from the team to the White House. (Ida made note that she rarely actually ran anywhere, but did do an awful lot of walking.) She handed missives to Truman's staff at the White House and returned with responses to the operation. She would watch Truman take his morning walks on the White House grounds as she dealt with his staffers. She greeted J. Robert Oppenheimer on his trips to D.C. and handled the day-to-day tasks necessary to keep the important operation running smoothly.

After the war, Ida returned to Detroit with her husband where, after a honeymoon on a Great Lakes Cruise Ship, she attended Wayne State University for some time before taking the secretarial exam and accepting a position with the Detroit Public Schools. Ida's career there surely impacted an untold number of children. Ida witnessed firsthand the Great Migration and the struggle for those working families to make it in America. She became a teacher's aide and a tutor, and worked after hours to help the children

of those families succeed in school. Her career spanned some of the most turbulent times in Detroit history, as she witnessed the union strikes and 12th Street Riot, and the impact these events had on working families in Detroit. Her second marriage, at 69 years old, brought with it the opportunity to travel the world and relax into retirement with a wonderful partner. When asked, however, what was her proudest achievement, Ida said, "My family, I am most proud of my family."

Between them, Esther and Ida have four children, two step-children, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Esther and Ida's descendants are the people who feel most intimately the impact of these two matriarchs' remarkable lives; they are also the ones who will bring the women's stories and legacies into the future. They are fortunate people indeed. Those of us lucky enough to have met Esther and Ida only get to claim a small ripple from the stone of their lives in the waters of existence. I hope to have captured some key features of those lives on these pages. It is an exercise in futility to try and describe any individual's life in its entirety, to count all of those a life well lived have touched, and isn't that something?

Rebecca Nieubuurt, LLMSW is a Social Worker with Jewish Family Services in the WISE Aging Services Department. If you or a loved one need help with aging related issues, please call Jewish Family Services at (734) 769-0209 or visit www.jfsannarbor.org. If you are interested in learning more about Balfour Senior Living visit www.balfourcare.com/ann-arbor ■

Aaron Dworkin to headline Main Event

by Gulia Chernyak, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is thrilled to announce that social entrepreneur, poet-journalist, filmmaker, and author Aaron Dworkin will headline this year's Main Event taking place Wednesday, March 13. Aaron will share his story of growing up with multiple identities and how his experiences influenced his professional path, including his profound and cutting-edge work as founder of the Sphinx Organization. Aaron will share excerpts from his newest book and perform his spoken word poetry. This year, we will honor Jonathan Trobe and Joan Lowenstein with the Federation's second annual Pillar Award. The Pillar Award recognizes volunteer contributions to the community related to the Federation's three pillars: Philanthropy, Engagement, and Convening. The event takes place in person at Washtenaw Community College's Morris Lawrence Building. The program with Aaron Dworkin will be live streamed for those unable to attend in person.

Bringing the community together is a primary goal of the Main Event and with the support of the fantastic Host and Planning Committee, as well as 2024 Event Chairs Leonard and Marilyn Kirsch and Peter and Jennifer Van Beck, this year's event will do just that. "It

is an honor for my husband and I to serve as Host Committee Chairs along with my parents," said Jennifer Van Beck. "We are passionate about getting young families more involved in the Ann Arbor Jewish community, which has been a wonderful community to be a part of since we moved here in 2018. This year, due to the shocking increase in anti-Israel activities and antisemitism in our community since October 7, we must all come together to fight antisemitism wherever we find it, stand strong with the Jewish State, and find strength within our Ann Arbor Jewish community. Attending this year's Main Event is so important with everything going on and we look forward to seeing everyone on March 13."

This year's featured speaker, Aaron Dworkin, was named a 2005 MacArthur Fellow, was President Barack Obama's first appointment to the National Council on the Arts, and is a member of President Joe Biden's Arts Policy Committee. Aaron P. Dworkin is former dean and current Professor of Arts Leadership and Entrepreneurship at the University of Michigan's School of Music, Theatre and Dance, which is ranked among the top performing arts schools in the nation. Aaron is a successful social entrepreneur, having founded the globally recognized Sphinx Organization, the

leading arts organization with the mission of transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts. He also serves as host of the nationally broadcast Arts Engines show with a viewership of over 100,000.

As a bestselling writer and poet-journalist, Aaron has authored *The Entrepreneurial Artist: Lessons from Highly Successful Creatives*, and four other books, including his memoir, *Uncommon Rhythm: A Black, White, Jewish, Jehovah's Witness, Irish Catholic Adoptee's Journey to Leadership*, and a poetry collection, *They Said I Wasn't Really Black*. He serves as the Poet-in-Residence of the City of Ann Arbor's Bicentennial, the Rodham Institute, Fisher Foundation, Wright Museum of African-American History, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Grantmakers in the Arts, Ovation TV, and Shar Music.

Hailed by critics as "powerful," "stirring," "passionate and heroic," and "a tour de force," Aaron has performed his poetry during his national tours including at the Wright Museum in Detroit, Galapagos Theater in New York, Harvard University, Chautauqua, University of Michigan, Minneapolis Orchestra Hall, NJPAC, and Orchestra Hall in Detroit amongst others. He has two recording albums and has collaborated with

artists representing a wide range of genres, including Yo-Yo Ma, Damien Sneed, Anna Deavere Smith, Damian Woetzel, Lil Buck, and others. His Emmy award-winning film, *An American Prophecy*, was honored by numerous festivals, while his visual digital art project, *Fractured History*, has exhibited to rave reviews.

In addition to its aim as a community-building program, the Main Event is the widest-reaching fundraising event of the Jewish Federation's Annual Community Campaign. The Annual Community Campaign provides significant unrestricted funds to Federation's communal partners in Ann Arbor, Israel, and around the world. The Campaign also supports community-wide initiatives of the Federation, such as combatting antisemitism and ensuring financial sustainability of local community institutions through the LIFE & LEGACY® program. Attendees of the Main Event will be asked to support the community with a pledge to the Jewish Federation's 2024 Annual Community Campaign.

For details and tickets to this year's Main Event, visit www.JewishAnnArbor.org, email info@jewishannarbor.org or call (734) 645-1619. ■

Hostages continued from page 1

evacuated after bearing witness to horrific murder, mutilation, and homes set on fire. She stated that she did not even recognize her kibbutz, it was so devastated. Ella said she did not want to go into great detail, as she did not want to horrify the audience. She relayed these stories deadpan — traumatized by her experiences, her mother's captivity, and her father's captivity and unknown fate, not even having had time to grieve and mourn for her numerous friends, relatives, and the community members who were murdered. Ella kept reiterating how she feels like a child who just wants her family back and wants peace.

Ella was born on Kibbutz Be'eri and grew up with sirens, rocket fire, and the 15 seconds at best that she has to sprint to her mami. She always believed, and still believes, peace is possible with her Gaza neighbors, but the realities of the last two months have left her traumatized, homeless, and fearing for her father's life and all of the hostages' lives. When Ella was asked about a ceasefire, she relayed that, "if we have a ceasefire, it means Hamas is still around and we cannot go back home. If there isn't a ceasefire, what are the implications for the hostages?" Faced with this impossible dilemma, Ella reiterated, "I am just a child, I want my parents back." According to Ella, until the present moment, she knows nothing about her father's whereabouts or health since he was kidnapped, and none of the released hostages saw him. When asked about her mother's experience in captivity, Ella said her mother barely shared anything, but she noted that upon release, her mother commented, "it's so great to be able to have a bottle of water."

Yair Moses and his son Erez, the grandson of 77-year-old Margalit and 79-year-old Gadi Moses, began by stating that this tragedy did not happen two months ago, this tragedy is still happening every day. Every day families are living through the night-

mare of not knowing anything about their loved ones. No one, not even released hostages, has seen Yair's father Gadi, nor have they heard anything about him since he was kidnapped from his home on Kibbutz Nir Oz on October 7. Yair said the family celebrated for one day when his mother Margalit was released with the first wave of hostages on November 24, and then it was back to applying pressure for the release of his father and the rest of the hostages who are being held by Hamas. He did not talk about things that he learned from his mother upon release from captivity, "as they are personal, about others, and pose a security risk for the hostages held." He called on humanitarian agencies, specifically the Red Cross, to do more — referring to the Red Cross as a "taxi service." According to him and as we know, the Red Cross has not visited the hostages nor brought them medications. He said his mother relies on a CPAP machine to sleep and she did not sleep for 50 days. Jokingly, he said now she is like a teenager and has to be awakened by 11 o'clock. He recalled writing to the International Red Cross saying "my parents have been taken hostage," and their email reply was, "contact the local Red Cross."

The Ben Ami and Moses families are calling out to the world for help, and they are calling out to the Israeli government with the ongoing message to keep the hostages' release front and center and in the media 24/7. They want everyone to fight to Bring the Hostages Home Now!

Although we have heard and watched the message of the hostage families in the media, hearing their stories in person has been so much more heartfelt and impactful. We appreciate that we had the opportunity to listen to their painful stories, meet them in person, and give them a hug.

We pray that all of the hostages will be released expeditiously and that peace will be possible in our day. ■

No bromides continued from page 2

world, as if something we have done, or have failed to do, has contributed to the darkness, has prevented the light from being the antiseptic against the hatred and ignorance which has fueled the turmoil in the Middle East and has perpetuated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I reject this self-censure, because it is contrary to the facts and contrary to the history of the conflict, in which Israel has made every reasonable, civilized effort to put an end to the conflict, to let light into the conflict, to the point of appeasing the Palestinians without at the same time accommodating their request that the Israelis commit suicide, commit another Masada.

It is generally true, as the saying goes, that it takes two to tango. And self-reflection in any dispute, whether it be between spouses, siblings, friends, or co-workers, is always to be encouraged. But in some tangoes one of the dancing partners is not being cooperative, and, for whatever reason, is deliberately sabotaging the dance. In such a dance, self-reflection by the other partner to remedy whatever is causing the imbalance is not, and will not be, productive. Such is the case in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and no amount of self-flagellation by Israelis or American Jews will remedy what they have not caused — the basic intransigence

and refusal to compromise on the part of the Palestinians themselves. That is not to say that Israel's policies in dealing with the conflict have been perfect and above rebuke. They have not. Harassment of the Palestinians by armed settlers is a travesty and must be prosecuted. The expansion of the settlements has been, in my opinion, counter-productive and not given the Palestinians hope that, eventually, they will have their own state. On the other hand, the Palestinians' continued insistence on the right of return as a condition to the end of hostilities has not given the Israelis a reason not to expand the settlements. Nor has the payment of bounties by Palestinians to their homicidal suicide martyrs been a source of light in this dispute. It has been the Israelis, who, time after time, have sought to open the door to the light, and the Palestinians who have repeatedly shut the door, blocking the light and imposing darkness. And no amount of self-censure by Jews — however well-intentioned and psychologically comforting — will force that door open. There will not be victory of light over darkness until the Palestinians make a conscious decision to contribute to letting the light in.

Marc Susselman

Inspired by civil disobedience

To the editor of the WJN and our Jewish community,

I am very thankful that this paper reflects the views of all of us in Washtenaw County and beyond. I found the courage that Molly Kraus-Steinmetz and her fellow protestors showed in following their moral principles and Jewish values to civil disobedience to be inspiring. I was moved by the Prayer of Mothers for Life and Peace on the front

page. Our community holds many views on the war in Israel-Palestine. Many of us are in anguish over the atrocities of October 7, and also over the massive death toll of civilians in Gaza — up to a third of whom are children. I appreciate that this editor has the strength and wisdom to publish articles and opinion pieces from our entire community, not only those who support Israel's military campaign. Please continue to represent all of our community's voices in these pages.

Kate Levin

New in Ann Arbor: An Israeli movie club

By Amichay Findling, Israel and Overseas Director, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

January 10 marked the beginning of a new cultural club in Ann Arbor's Jewish Community: The Israeli Movie club. Initiated by Ann Arbor's community shaliach, Amichay Findling, and curated by Tamar Kay, an Israeli film maker, The Israeli movie club will present four Israeli movies that deal with marriage and divorce. The screenings will take place at the JCC and will be followed by a presentation by Tamar and a community potluck dinner.

The first movie shown was *Late Marriage* (Hatuna Meuharet) by Dover Kosashvili. The 2001 film was positively reviewed and was Israel's submission for Best Foreign Language Film at the 74th Academy Awards. The community meeting was vivid, and many got a chance to break bread with old and new friends in their native language: Hebrew.

The film series' presenter and curator, Tamar Kay, is a four-time Israeli Academy Award nominee. Her thesis film, *The Mute's House*, was shortlisted for the 2017 Best Short Documentary Academy Award (Oscars) and won numerous awards in prestigious festivals. *Unchained*, an Israeli TV drama Tamar co-created, premiered in 2019 on the Israeli

KAN channel and was purchased by SBS in Australia. Tamar has edited a number of documentary films and TV series, some of which won Israeli Emmy awards. Currently she's working on a feature-length film with the support of the Rabinovich Foundation. Tamar is a graduate of the Sam Spiegel Film and Television School. Prior to her film studies, Tamar completed a dual degree in psychology and philosophy. Currently she's a fellow at the Frankel Institute for Judaic studies, University of Michigan.

The rest of the series is planned to take place on the following dates, all at the JCC, Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.:

March 6: *Fill the Void* (2012) by Rama Burstein

May 1: *In Between* (2016) by Maysaloun Hamoud

June 26: *Unchained* (2019) by Tamar Kay: watching a chapter of the series and discussion with the creator.

For further information please contact Amichay Findling by email: amichay@jewishannarbor.org. ■



Federation prepares allocation distributions

By Federation Staff

Did you know that the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor provides more than a million dollars to local and international Jewish communal organizations every year? In 2023, for the second year in a row, that amount surpassed \$1.5 million. If you've ever wondered how this happens, we've got answers for you!

Where does the \$1.5 million come from?

From our generous community! Each year, dedicated volunteers and staff of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor contact community members to ask them to support the community by donating to the Annual Community Campaign. The 2024 Annual Community Campaign began in September and is currently in full swing, thanks to the generosity of hundreds of members of the greater Ann Arbor Jewish community. The power of this campaign is its collective nature. Donors support the local institutions they value and participate in a national effort to care for the global Jewish community, all with one gift. You, too, can contribute at JewishAnnArbor.org. Every gift of \$18 or \$1800 matters!

Who decides where the money goes?

Volunteers from our community! Each year, two groups of volunteer Allocations Committees (one for local & domestic and one for Israel & overseas), consider proposals from organizations and initiatives that provide essential services to the Jewish community. These include proposals requesting unrestricted funds to enable organizations

to focus on their missions — such as caring for those in need and providing Jewish educational and engagement opportunities for community members of all ages — and proposals for specific projects, such as strengthening Israeli civil society by fostering productive relationships between Jewish and Arab citizens. “The Allocations Committees are an important way to bring community input in the process,” says Allocations Committee Chair Jeremy Bloom. “We convene thoughtful people with a range of experiences who inform our decision-making.” The Allocations Committee presents a proposal to the Federation’s volunteer Board of Directors, which votes on the final distribution.

What’s the money for?

Funds go directly to local and international organizations that enrich Jewish life and care for Jews most in need, as well as to community-wide initiatives that make Jewish Washtenaw County as strong and vibrant as it can be. For Federation’s beneficiary partners, these are funds that they don’t have to worry about raising themselves, allowing them instead to focus on the work they do best for our community. “This year,” says Bloom, “we are exploring ways to strengthen the process and looking to provide some funding directly for particular community priorities as determined by the community study and additional communal conversations. This will be in addition to continuing to provide unrestricted funds.”

Have I heard of any of these beneficiaries or initiatives?

Probably some of them! Jewish Family Ser-



vices and the Jewish Community Center receive allocations from the Annual Community Campaign, along with many other local institutions. So does Krembo Wings, a youth movement in Israel for young people of all abilities. Examples of initiatives made possible by the campaign are coordination to take collective local action combating antisemitism and Community Engagement Grant funds that foster innovation and collaboration across the community.

When does all this happen?

Organizations seeking funding through the allocations process submit proposals that are reviewed in April each year. The Allocations Committees make funding recommendations for the year to the Board of

Directors, which votes to approve the recommendations at its May Board meeting. An announcement of the year’s allocations is made to the entire community at the Annual Meeting in late May or early June.

I want to learn more / I might want to be part of this process!

Great! The more diverse volunteer voices, the better for our community. The Allocations Committee will hold an Allocations Town Hall Wednesday, February 28, at 7 p.m. for people who would like to learn more. Visit JewishAnnArbor.org/about-us/community-impact to learn more or contact the Federation at info@jewishannarbor.org to get involved. ■

Federation awards fourth round of community engagement grants

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is delighted to announce the allocation of four new Community Engagement Fund grants awarded to local initiatives with the goal of promoting cross-organizational collaboration and innovation in the local Jewish community. A grant selection committee, comprised of community volunteers, evaluated proposals against the fund’s principles of cross-communal collaboration, creativity and innovation, and joy and connectivity.

Community Genizah

Hebrew Day School (HDS), in partnership with the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor (JCC), Jewish Family Services (JFS), Jewish Federation, Beth Israel Congregation, and Temple Beth Emeth (TBE), will coordinate the creation of a local genizah, a space for the respectful burying of cherished ritual objects and holy documents containing G-d’s name. Rabbi Will Keller, HDS Head of School, said that “the lack of a community genizah has become a concern for rabbis and other community leaders, as there is a growing amount of unusable ritual items in need of respectful care. We’re excited to be a part of initiating this important community resource.”

Fifth-grade students at Hebrew Day

School will spearhead the process including clarifying what should be placed in the genizah and collecting and sorting items. The aim is for the genizah to be formally put into service in spring 2024 in conjunction with a multi-generational community educational program.

Who Knows One

Beth Israel Congregation, Temple Beth Emeth, and the JCC have joined forces to present “Who Knows One,” an interactive Jewish Geography game-show presented by Micha Hart. This cross-communal adult program is designed to connect and engage people from across organizations, demographics, and religious observance. “I’m excited about this event because it aims solely to bring members of the community together for a night of comedy and connection,” says Barbara McAnelly, Engagement Manager at Beth Israel Congregation.

2024 Maccabi Games Opening

The 2024 JCC Maccabi Games takes place in Detroit this summer, and the Ann Arbor JCC aims to engage members of the community in all aspects of the games. There will be opportunities to volunteer and to join the community in bussing together to the opening ceremony to wel-

come the parade of athletes from around the world, including the combined Ann Arbor/Nahalal Delegation.

WISE Intergenerational Program

Jewish Family Services, together with the JCC and HDS, will build on the WISE at the J social and educational program for older adults to establish a series of intergenerational events for older adults and HDS students. The importance of reducing social isolation and offering opportunities for seniors in the community to build connections is a main emphasis of WISE at the J. Including students from HDS will add to the experience for the seniors and will provide opportunities for students to share joys and cultural traditions and to build relationships in a safe space that celebrates resilience and hope for the future.

The Community Engagement Fund is supported by the Jewish Federation’s Annual Community Campaign to encourage organizations and individuals to work collaboratively on new, innovative initiatives to cultivate a strong, engaged, connected, caring, vibrant, and enduring Jewish community in Washtenaw County.

The next round of Community Engagement Grants, including the Zelma Weisfeld Fund for Culture & Education, takes place this spring. Grant requests of up to \$5,000 (\$3,750 for the Zelma Weisfeld Fund) will

be considered and must be submitted by a formal or informal partnership of three or more collaborators. The deadline for this grant application March 15. Applicants are asked to submit a letter of intent by February 15 to info@jewishannarbor.org. Decisions will be made within one month of the grant deadline.

More information and an application for submission is available at www.jewishannarbor.org. For more information or to inquire, contact Eileen Freed at eileenfreed@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3537. ■

Page Avenue Books



pageavenuebooks@gmail.com

Top 10 legacy giving myths debunked

By Osnat Gafni-Pappas, Life and Legacy manager, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

10. I'm too young to think about leaving a LEGACY gift.

Anyone, regardless of their age, can decide to support the organizations they care about after they are gone. You can choose, no matter your age, how your assets will be distributed in the future.

9. I have to be rich to make an impact.

Regardless of the size of your estate, your legacy gift will have an impact on the organizations to which you choose to leave a gift. In fact, most people are able to make a more meaningful gift after, rather than during, their lifetime.

8. I already give money annually.

Thank you! Giving to an annual campaign is vital for the organizations that you care about. But when you are no longer around to make an annual gift, a legacy gift can help ensure that your support will continue for generations to come.

7. I will need to hire an attorney.

There are many ways to leave a legacy gift that don't require hiring a lawyer, such as naming an organization as a beneficiary of a portion of your retirement fund or life insurance policy.

6. My kids might need my money.

Leaving a portion of your estate to charitable causes will give your children a terrific example of the importance of giving back to your community, without forsaking their financial support.

5. I might need my money.

It's true, you might. And it'll be there for you if you do. This type of gift represents what you want to give once you are no longer here to use your assets.

4. I won't get to decide what happens to my gift.

You can designate how the money can be used ahead of time so that it will be used exactly as you wish.

3. If the organization collapses, my money will be lost.

Since it is hard to predict where any of us will be in the future, you can indicate that you'd like it to go to a particular cause as a second choice if your designated organization does not exist at that time.

2. I don't want the publicity associated with legacy giving.

Publishing a list of legacy society members and offering special opportunities to legacy donors can inspire others to consider joining in this important endeavor. However, you can absolutely choose to remain anonymous!

1. It's too confusing and complicated.

There are many options for leaving a legacy gift, many of which are simple. We are here to help guide you. If you have any questions, please reach out to Osnat Gafni-Pappas at osnat@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3538 to discuss how you can leave a legacy gift to the organizations that are close to your heart.

You can also reach out directly to any of the following participating Life & Legacy® 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. ■

Calling past Maccabi participants

By Ariella Monson, Director of Development and Operations, Ann Arbor JCC

We are looking for past coaches, athletes, host families, and delegation heads who participated with Team Ann Arbor at any of the JCC Maccabi Games that took place over the past 40 years. The excitement is brewing in Southeastern Michigan, and we want to make sure everyone knows about the fun you experienced when you were involved. The Games will be in Detroit from July 28 to August 2. If you are a past participant, you know that JCC Maccabi is more than a sports competition — it is the premier Jewish engaged program for Jewish teens aged 12–16.

This will be an opportunity for the entire Ann Arbor community to join in the JCC Maccabi Games experience. Do a mitzvah this summer and host two teenage athletes from around the country. Volunteer as a medical provider at a sporting event, serve lunch or dinner to the athletes, help run a social action project, or cheer on team Ann Arbor at the Opening Ceremony. The list of opportunities goes on and on, and you won't want to miss out! Registration information is now available for participants and host families and can be found on our website, jccannarbor.org.

Past participants: We are looking for your information and your memories to build our

JCC Maccabi alumni program. Please take a moment to fill out a brief survey at <http://tiny.cc/wctsvz> to help share the excitement.

Interested athletes should contact our local delegation head, Marlowe Susselman, marlowesusselman@jccannarbor.org. If you are interested in opening up your home and want more information about volunteering this summer from July 28–August 2nd, please contact Ariella Monson, ariellamonson@jccannarbor.org. Sponsorship and registration information is available on our website, <https://jccannarbor.org/departments/youthteens/jccmaccabi/> ■



Sarah Okin and Ariella Monson



Alyse Tankanow



Katie Newman

Community Security Update

By Shane Dennis, Community Security Manager

As your Community Security Manager, I wanted to provide an update on what I've been doing recently. The terrorist attacks on Israel on October 7 have had an effect on all of us and showed that security is more important than ever. Based on data released by Secure Community Network (SCN), they have logged a record 772 antisemitic incidents in October and 634 in November, up 290% from the past year. SCN has also been made aware of



over 700 bomb threats/swatting incidents at Jewish facilities in December alone. Unfortunately, one of our own synagogues is included in that number, showing that we are not immune.

As stated in my previous update, a priority with the creation of my position was to develop a better line of communication among all our agencies regarding security matters. During this time, I have sent out numerous security notifications to our community leadership to keep them aware of security concerns as well as training opportunities. Many of the recent notifications have been to inform of anti-Israel/pro-Palestinian protests in the community. The vast majority of those events have been held on the University of Michigan campus.

I have also been working on several administrative projects. To help better inform the community about security matters I have been assisting in adding a "Security" page to

the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's website. When it becomes operational it will include the Incident Report form that can already be accessed on the Federation's website at JewishAnnArbor.org/IncidentReporting, a resource link for additional guidance from the Department of Homeland Security and SCN, an Event Security Needs form to let me know about upcoming events that law enforcement and I should be aware of. It will also have a tab that will allow you to donate to the LiveSecure initiative which provides the personnel, training, tools, and resources needed to protect our Jewish community.

Another project that I have worked on was to update Jewish Community Security Inc's "Law Enforcement Guide to Judaism" to include information for the Jewish facilities and organizations in the greater Ann Arbor area. This guide is designed to assist those in law enforcement, or anyone else, that are not familiar with Jewish culture and customs. I have sent this guide to all the law enforcement agencies in Washtenaw County. This guide will also be available on the Security page of the Federation website.

In addition to immediate responses whenever they're needed, I have continued to meet monthly with local law enforcement to share any security concerns and request police presence at community events as needed. I was also able to arrange for Ann Arbor Interim Police Chief Patrick Maguire to attend the Community Leadership Council Meeting in November. This allowed our leadership to express their security and safety concerns directly to the chief. I have also assisted more of our local organizations with security training, including for the teachers at Temple Beth Emeth's School, as well as Security and CPR training for the staff at the University of Michigan Hillel.

The draft of the community-wide Crisis Communications and Management Plan that we created has been finalized and distributed to community leadership for review. A tabletop exercise to test and train with the plan will occur in the near future with community leaders.

The federal security grant process is starting soon. I will be assisting our local agencies with completing applications for infrastructure improvements to make our community as safe as it can be.

To learn more about security efforts in greater Ann Arbor, or to get involved, please contact me at shane@jewishannarbor.org. ■

Michigan's groundbreaking climate legislation

By Elli Gurfinkel

On December 14, 2023, on the last night of Hanukkah, five state representatives from Washtenaw County were honored at an appreciation evening at Temple Beth Emeth in Ann Arbor. They were hosted by the climate-action committee of the temple, the Dayenu Circle, to thank them for recently

Most progressive Public Service Commission in the country on measuring environmental justice health-safety impacts.

Makes Michigan a top three state in the nation for energy efficiency programs.



passing bold climate legislation.

The Dayenu Circle tied the event to Hanukkah, because in the spirit of the Festival of Light, Michigan became a guiding light for other states by enacting one of the country's most ambitious climate laws — the Clean Energy and Jobs Act.

The climate-action committee, which is part of the national Dayenu organization, advocated for the passage of this act and wanted to thank the representatives for their courageous votes. The lawmakers who came to the celebration were Felicia Brabec, Jennifer Conlin, Reggie Miller, Carrie Rheingans, and Jimmie Wilson. Other legislators who were instrumental in sponsoring and voting for this bill were State Senators Sue Shink and Jeff Irwin and State Representative Jason Morgan.

Other climate-action partner organizations from local congregations had representatives at the event, including Temple Beth Israel, St. Claire's Episcopal Church, Blue Ocean Church, Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

Here are some of the groundbreaking details of the new law:
Fastest buildout of wind and solar in the Midwest — reaching 50% of Michigan's energy needs by 2030.

Strongest labor standards of any climate package passed in the country.

Tenfold increase in access to rooftop solar.

It supercharges siting of renewable energy projects by creating a local-state process through the Michigan Public Services Commission (MPSC).

After brief remarks, the legislators were awarded certificates of recognition and appreciation. The event concluded by an informal social gathering with traditional Hanukkah treats and live music.

All five representatives said that they were grateful for being invited to the celebration and appreciation for passing the climate legislation.

To find out more about the Dayenu Circle at Temple Beth Emeth, please visit their web page at <https://www.templebethemeth.org/dayenu-circle>. You can join our monthly online meetings and find out how to participate in future climate-action initiatives guided by the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World).

At the Hanukkah event: From left: Dayenu Circle chair Cantor Regina Lambert-Hayut, Elli Gurfinkel, Rep. Jennifer Conlin, Rep. Reggie Miller, Rep. Felicia Brabec, Rep. Carrie Rheingans, Rep. Jimmie Wilson, and Rabbi Josh Whinston. **Photo by Lon Horwedel** ■

Come party with the party planners

By Staci Kennedy and Yael Zoldan, Special to the WJN

Anyone you know planning a bar/bat mitzvah or a special event? Then make sure to mark your calendars, because the JCC is thrilled to report that the Ann Arbor Party and Events Showcase is back! This annual event will be held at the Ann Arbor Jewish Community Center on Sunday, March 10, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The expo features many of the best vendors from southeast Michigan who provide services for celebrations large and small, such as b'nai mitzvah, weddings, and graduations, among other occasions.

The Showcase is presented in partnership with event production expert, Staci Kennedy, founder and operator of Who's Got The Time event planning, and décor/design specialist, Yael Zoldan, owner-operator of Designs that Matter custom party design studio. Staci and Yael are both based in Ann Arbor, and their extensive event and design experience, along with their professional relationships with area service providers, allows them to curate a best-of-the-best event for Showcase attendees.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet local vendors and explore options for

upcoming milestone events. Staci notes that, "Yael and I love hosting this community-wide Showcase at the JCC. Planning an event like a wedding or bar or bat mitzvah can feel really overwhelming. This is the perfect way to meet and get to know some incredible vendors who always do a fantastic job for their clients. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet DJs, try out photo booths, sample delicious food from some of our favorite caterers, and meet some wonderful event professionals."

According to Yael, "This event is designed to be one-stop-shopping for all your vendor needs. And because we're in such a warm environment, it's really easy to talk and establish a rapport with these talented vendors."

The Ann Arbor Party and Events Showcase is free of charge to attendees and open to the public. Advanced registration is suggested (but not required) to help vendors prepare by visiting jccannarbor.org. For more information on attending or to participate as a vendor, contact Staci Kennedy at staci@whosgotthetime.com or Yael Zoldan at yael@designs-that-matter.com. ■

Questions for Purim: celebrating without stereotyping

By Esther J. Terry and Deborah Meyers Greene

It soon will be time to write the Purim spiels (it's March 24 this year), plan our costumes, and bring out the groggers. In observing Esther's victory over Haman's evil plot, we delight in telling the story and celebrating the survival of our culture and traditions.

As we do this, it is important to be aware of the history and culture of those we choose to represent in our spiel and costumes because, in the words of Rabbi Hillel, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to others" (Shabbat 31a). Looking forward to Purim, his words prompt us to avoid mocking or insulting the history, culture, or traditions of others in the spiels we share and the costumes we choose.

This applies whether the "others" are Jews who are people of color, Jews who are not people of color, Jews who are LGBTQIA or disabled Jews, or not Jews at all. We are compelled to avoid actions, words, or representations that will be received by others as hateful or hurtful — except of course for the heinous Haman and his cohorts.

These suggestions have been adapted from numerous sources, including recurring community sessions on "How to Talk to Your Kids about Racial Justice". Asking the recommended questions in this list can help you avoid hateful or hurtful representations.

If you select a costume that may refer to or be inspired by another culture, ask yourself:

Do I have the ability to speak thoughtfully about that culture?

Do I know enough details to articulate what inspired me and why I appreciate its relevance to the Purim story?

If your answer is no to either or both questions, select another costume or use this as an opportunity to learn.

With Regard to Costume Hair and Makeup

Proceed with caution if hair and makeup are important aspects of your costume. Choosing hair and makeup that look as if you are changing your own race or ethnicity may reflect harmful stereotypes about people from those races or ethnicities.

Considerations for Purim Carnivals, Spiels, or Other Events

About illustrations, drawings, or costumes of characters portrayed at your event, ask yourself:

Are any physical features of the characters over-emphasized or caricatured in ways that can be hateful or hurtful to others?

Are the archetypal villains in the story portrayed with darker skin tones than those who are portrayed as heroes?

If you are staging a Purim spiel, before you commit to casting and costume decisions, ask yourself:

Do any of our costume choices stereotypically represent or target a culture, race, ethnicity, or gender identity?

Do any of our casting decisions target a culture, race, ethnicity, or gender identity by depicting an entire group as villainous?

If your answer is yes to either or both questions, adjust your plans until you can answer "No" to both questions. ■

Hebron on my mind

By Shifra Epstein

Under the weight of the horrific and un-ending wars in Gaza and Ukraine — with no end in sight — I find solace in sharing with my Michigan community my personal journey of more than 50 years ago; my search for peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Here is my story as was reported by the Israeli freelance journalist, Emanuel Prat, and published in the Haaretz Newspaper in July 1968. Prat accompanied me one day on my taxi ride from Jerusalem to the city of Hebron, 13 miles south from Jerusalem in the West Bank. As you will see in the article, I traveled to Hebron twice a week to teach Hebrew to residents of Hebron. Prat also included two pictures he took of me while teaching Hebrew to teachers and professionals in Hebron.

An Israeli Teacher for Hebron's Teachers

Emanuel Prat (Haaretz, July 3, 1968): At the taxi station at Damascus (Nablus) Gate in East Jerusalem, Arabic speaking taxi drivers are accustomed to seeing Israelis, among them many adolescents, with a sense of wanderlust. Young Israelites traveled with Palestinian taxi companies to different cities in the West Bank, which up until 1967 were closed to Israelis. Especially popular are the cities of Hebron (Al-Khalil), Nablus, Ramallah, and Jericho in the West Bank, which Israel also calls Judea and Samaria. However, the drivers at Damascus Gate have never seen a blond tall Jewish woman who approaches them and asks in poor Arabic: "Where can I get a shared taxi to Hebron?"

In the three months that followed, Shifra Epstein became a familiar face to these taxi drivers, arriving to the taxi station twice a week traveling to Hebron. Shifra is not a regular passenger; she is a teacher in the El Husseini School and in the Institute for Teaching Foreign Languages in Hebron. Also in Hebron, in the streets of Abraham, our Father, Shifra is a familiar face and men and women greet her, "Marhaba," "Hallow," "Hi, Mualama!!!" (female teacher).

After the Six Days War and the opening up of the West Bank to Israelis, Shifra felt a need to get to know the new life as intimately as possible. She left her comfortable room in the Student Dormitories of the Hebrew University (at Givat Ram) and settled in the Old City. She was the first young woman who settled in Hotel Petra in East Jerusalem. Shifra told me "I had no fear, and I didn't listen to those who had all kinds of fears. And the fact is that nothing happened to me in the Old City, I feel as if I was born there (and not in Ramat Gan)." When she was asked if by any chance she knew somebody who would be interested to travel and teach the Arabic teachers of the El Huseni School in Hebron, She immediately answered "I am." She began traveling to Hebron twice a week immediately.

"I cannot say that my first trip to Hebron wasn't without tension. But in the middle of the road the tension disappeared. One time the driver left the main road of Hebron and drove to a side road. He immediately apologized: He didn't have a license and he didn't want to be searched by an inspector. It was an unpleasant moment: but everything was

OK."

She was a little bit worried. "I thought I would encounter hatred or contempt from my students who are teachers in the most extreme school in Hebron. During the first class, it was very cold in the room. The students came all covered with kafiyot. All that you could see were bright eyes. In the middle of the class stood a smoky stove, causing the light in the room to be murky. The atmosphere was quite somber until one of the students apologized and told me that they sit like that because they are very cold."

Shifra has total command of her classroom, the students drinking every word, absorbing the lesson easily and asking for more. Many among them speak Hebrew already and compare Hebrew words with Arabic words. Part of the class is devoted to conversation in Hebrew between two students. One male student made a mistake and spoke like Shifra, in female gender. The class overflowed with laughter.

Two hours after teaching at the El Huseini School, Shifra moved to the Institute for Teaching Foreign Languages. The Institute belongs to the Distinguished Hebron Judge

Hussen El Shiuchio. At the institute Shifra teaches two big classes, divided by gender. The topic of the class was "newspaper, journalist, photographer, and camera."

What brings the people of Hebron to study Hebrew? The people of East Jerusalem recognize that Hebrew will be useful through time. But what about the people of Hebron? Do they believe that in future the territories will remain in control of the Israelis and that Hebrew will be useful? Not one of Shifra's students is willing to answer this question positively, but they also aren't completely negative. They agree that whatever the future of the territories, contact with Israelis will continue. There will never be a complete separation, as it was in the past.

On the way back to Jerusalem we picked up two female hitchhikers, both of whom are Shifra's students. They live in the village of Halhul, on the border of Hebron. They are members of a Palestinian women organization dedicated to the improvement of the lives of Palestinian women.

I asked them why they study Hebrew. "We want to get to know Israelis," answered one woman in fluent Hebrew. "Without a lan-

guage it is hard to get to know people. I think that Jews should learn Arabic." She is willing to teach Arabic to Israelis in a club.

"Are the Israelis as they were described to you by the Jordanians?"

"Certainly not. You are completely different than we anticipated. We first thought that you will slaughter every last one of us and the word 'Israeli' was frightening. Now we see that you are human beings, like all human beings."

"And your teacher? Shifra?"

"Shifra is like all of us. She is one of us." I asked Shifra, aren't there enough new immigrants from faraway places that need to study Hebrew in order to be absorbed in the country? Why not teach them?

Her answer: "This is Zionism as well. And when I say Zionism I mean Zionism without quotation marks, Zionism. It is important. But what I have been doing in Hebron is also very important. And in some way, it is also Zionism. I feel a huge satisfaction working with my Arab students."

It's not a surprise that Shifra's friends start calling her Shifra El Halilit, "Shifra from Hebron." ■

ח י נ ו ד ו נ ו ע ר מורה ישראלית למורי חברון

ושבו לא יהיה ניתוק כפי שהוא היה בעבר. בדרך לירושלים אנו אוספים שתי טרמפסטיקות, תלמידות של שיפורה. הן גרות בעיירה לחלוט במבואות חברון וחברות בארגון נשים ער. ביתן, מעין, ורצו. מדוע הן לומדות עברית? אגתנו רוצות להכיר את הישראלים, עונה אחת מהן בעברית שוטפת, ובלי לשון אי אפשר לה. כיר את האנשים. אני חושבת ש היהודים צריכים ללמוד ערבית, היא מוכנה ללמד בכל חוג שהוא, האם הישראלים הם כפי שצוירו בפנינו? על ידי הירדנים, בסתם שלא (היא מרבה להשתמש במלה 'בסח'). אתם לגמרי אחרים מאשר חשבנו שאחם. קודם חשבנו שאחם תטבחנו אותנו עד לאחרון ושם 'ישראלי' היה מטיל פחד. עכשיו אנחנו רואים כי אתם בני אדם ככל בני אדם. והמורה שלכם? שיפורה? שיפורה היא כמונו. היא אחת מ'אתנו'.

שאלתי את שיפורה: האין די עולים חדשים במקומות נידחים הצריכים ללמוד עברית כדי להיקלט בארץ? מדוע לא תלמדי אותם?

הלזאת יקרא רפורמה?

מכדי למשוך כוחות מעולים. הטובים הליכים למקצועות מבטיחים יותר. העלאת שכרו של המורה תביא למ שיכת כוחות מעולים יותר להוראה. יש להכניס לבתי הספר את אמצעי ההוראה החדשים ביותר וללמד בי שיטות ההוראה המודרניות. יש לערוך רפורמה אמיתית.

בסופקאים וסופרי כת"ם הסתדרות המורים הנקעה כאיני טרנסמיט שאין לה ולא כלום עם ענין החינוך וכל דאגתה היא לעזרה. אותם הבירוקרטים שהצביעו נגד הצעת הרפורמה הואשמו בכניעה ל החלטות הבלתי-הוגנות של מרכזי מפלגותיהם ורק אנשי משרד החינוך וחברי הוועדה שתמכו בהצעת הורפורמה נוצני ארגון המורים התינונים זכו לשבחים (ושבחים גם מאמרי המערכת ב.ה.ארץ).

ירשו נא אנשי המינהל במשרד החינוך וחברי הכנסת הרוחניים מ' הוויות המחקר החינוכי מתרפורמה. יניחו לה שר החינוך עם כל כוונתו תני הטובות והעתונאים שיצאו ל המליץ על תכניתו. יתנו כולם לומר חי החינוך לאמר את שלהם אחרי שיערכו ניסויים מקיפים. בל ית' עסקו הבורסקאים במלאכתם של סופרי סת"ם.

תים כל מלה, קולטים את השיעור בקלות ודורשים עוד. יבים מהם כבר מדברים עברית ומשווים מלים עם ריות עם מלים ערביות. חלק מן ה שיעור מתנהל בצורת דרשה בעברית בין שני תלמידים. כאשר אחד התלמידים טועה ומדבר כשיפורה, ב מין נקבה, גועה כל הכיתה בצחוק.

לאחר שעתיים של לימוד בבית ספר אל חוסייני עוברת שיפורה ללמד בכסוף ללימוד שפות זרות השייך לשופט חוסייני אל שיוכר. אותו שופט אשר התפרסם לאחרונה בגלל נסיגו לפסול עורך דין ישראלי מלהופיע בבתי משפט בגדה. שם מלמדת ש פרה שתי קבוצות גדולות: אחת של גברים, שניה של גברות. גלויות אל המורה ונושא השיעור היה: עתון, עתונאי. צלם. מצלמה.

מה מביא את אנשי חברון לבוא וללמוד עברית? אנשי ירושלים הי מזרחית יודעים כבר כי שפה זו ת הית שימושית בחלק זה של העיר לאורך ימים. אבל מדוע חברונים? האם גם הם סבורים כי שימוש ב שפה זו יהיה כדאי בעתיד וכי ב שטחים המוחזקים ישארו מוחזקים בידי ישראל? אל שאלה זו איש מ' תלמידה של שיפורה אינו מוכן להי שיב בחיוב, אך גם לא בשלילה מר חלטה. כמעט כולם מאוחדים בדעה כי יהיה עתידם של השטחים אשר יהיה, מגע עם הישראלים ימשך

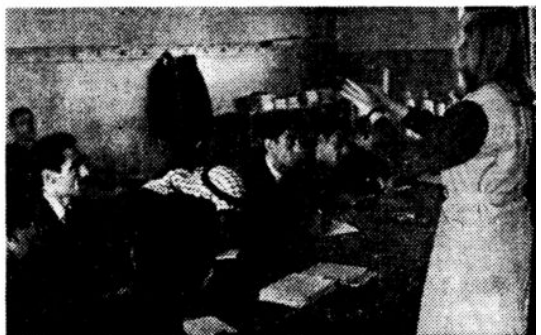
הכתוב החסר יוצר דו-משמעות

הכתוב החסר הוא דרמטי מעי יותר מן הכתיב המלא: עם זאת גם הכתיב המלא יוצר דרמטיזציות חדשות — למסקנה זאת הגיע הפרופ' חיים רבין מהאוניברסיטה העברית במחקר ש ערך על השפעת שיטות הכתיב על יעילות הקריאה.

את המחקר ערך המכון למחקר חברתי-שימושי במימון קרן פורד. פורסם רבין ועוזריו סיפלו בבעיה זו מצדה הבלשני ודיר יצחק מ. שלזינגר ועוזריו מצדה הפסיכולוגי.

המחקר נערך על פי שאלון שהוגש ל-180 תלמידי כיתות ד' של ארבעה בתי ספר יסודיים בירושלים — מפ' לכתבים וממלכתיים-דתיים. לתלמידים הנבדקים הוגשו קטעי ספרות בשלר שה סוגי כתיב: חסר, מלא (הנהגה בעתונות) וכן הכתיב המלא לפי כללי ועד הלשון.

בתחנת המוניות בשער שכם ב' יושלים אפילו הנהגים הערביים ופתעו: בלונדינית גבוהה ותמידה אלה בערבית עלגת היכן היא ילה למצוא מונית לחברון? הנהג זה כבר התרגלו למראה ישראלי, הם נערים שחשקה נפשם לטייל —



שיפורה אפשייין ותלמידה החברוניים

נוסעים במוניות ערביות לחברון, שכם, ליריחו ולכל אורכה ורוחבה ול הנהג המערבית כאילו נסעו בחן

מאת עמנואל פרט

ימים ימימה. אולם הנהגים בשער כס טרם ראו נערה יהודיה בלונ' ית גיגשת בפשטות ושואלת: "היכן אן מונית לחברון?" הדבר קרה לפ' ' כשלושה חודשים. מאז הספיקו נהגים להתרגל גם לשיפורה אפש' יין, בבאה לתחנת המוניות פעמיים שבוע בדרכה לחברון. אין שיפורה טיילת סתם אלא מורה לעברית ב' ית ספר, אל חוסייני" ובמכון ללי וד שפות זרות בחברון.

גם ברחובות עירו של אברהם א' שים מברכים אותה היטב: "מר' אבה, מועלמה" מאז מלחמת ששת ימים ושיחוריר ירושלים חשה שיפ' ה צרון להכיר את החיים החדשים צורה בלתי אמצעית בכל האפשר. יא עזבה את חדרה הנוח במעונות סטודנטים בקרית האוניברסיטה ו' ברה לגור בעיר העתיקה. היא היתה עלמה היהודיה הראשונה אשר הח' יסה להשתקע בעיר העתיקה. לא יו לי חששות וגם לא שמעתי לדב' י אלה אשר היו להם כל מיני פח' ים. ועובדה: לא קרה לי כלום ואני



נורא. באו התלמידים כולם עסופים בכפיות, כך שאפשר לראות רק עי' נים מבריקות. באמצע הכיתה עמד תנור עשן. האור היה חיוור. האווירה היתה קודרת למדי עד שאחד מהם ביקש את סליחתו ואמר כי הם יוש' עכשיו כיוון שקר להם מאד."

בימינו נראה כי שיפורה משתלטת יפה מאד על כיתתה. התלמידים שר'

New group for discussion and support around Israel/Palestine

By Rebecca Epstein

Members of the Washtenaw County Jewish community have formed Shamati, a new group, in response to the current and ongoing crisis in Israel/Palestine. At the group's core is respect and value for all human life and the belief that Israeli and Palestinian liberation is immovably bound together.

The group meets approximately monthly to intellectually and emotionally process what's happening in Israel/Palestine and its impacts on our own lives. Conversations, some guided by group members and some free form, are rooted in respect for our diversity of opinions, identities, and life experiences, informing the group's name — Shamati — a Hebrew word meaning "I have heard you, I am listening, I am with you." Examples of the group's activities so far include:

Discussing how we each relate to Zionism and anti-Zionism.

Addressing gaps in our historical and political knowledge to strengthen the value of our conversations and actions.

Processing how we are affected by antisemitism and islamophobia.

Sharing visions for coexistence in Washtenaw County, Southeast Michigan, and abroad.

Workshopping strategies for ethical parenting in difficult times.

Creating opportunities for local action to affirm our commitments to life, well-being, and liberation for all affected by the conflict.

Group structure and topics evolve to meet the needs of participants. Activities and conversations are exploratory and, while they tend to generate more questions than they answer, provide strength and support to group members as we try to make some ripples in these hard times. If you are interested in potentially joining this group, please email Rebecca Epstein rebeccadan-aepstein@gmail.com. ■



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If you have been losing hope, read this

By Denise Thal

I first learned about Standing Together from a November 17, 2023, article in the *New York Times*, "Israeli and Palestinian Activists Ask Americans to Take Side of Peace," which profiled a 10-day tour by two of the organization's representatives up and down the East Coast.

What I read in the *Times* made so much sense to me: "They [Standing Together] have called Hamas, the group that controls the Gaza Strip, both 'the enemy of the Palestinian people' and 'a fertilizer for radical Jewish extremism.' And they have voiced a frustration over what they see as a war for the moral high ground, happening outside of Israel and mostly over social media, that denies their experiences." The article went on to quote Standing Together's Alon-Lee Green: "We're trying to play a different game in Israel and Palestine ... And this game is very simple. It says that both Jewish people and Palestinians are going to stay on this land. No one is going anywhere."

As a Jewish American progressive on Israel/Palestine issues, I was horrified by the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack on Israel, but also certain that a war to eliminate Hamas would only improve its ability to recruit more adherents and kill many innocent Gaza residents in that process. And, like many Jews in the months since then, I have read English-language news and commentary, listened to podcasts, and engaged in agonizing conversations with family and friends. I initially fantasized that the shocking violence would shake Israelis and Palestinians (and their American friends and supporters) to their core, and that some type of epiphany, some willingness to compromise, some perfect solution would emerge. Of course, that has not happened.

On January 7, I was fortunate to hear directly from Rula Dooad, a Palestinian citizen of Israel and national co-director of Standing Together, and Nadav Shofet, a Jewish Israeli and member of the Standing Together leadership team, via Zoom with a group of 50 others from all over the U.S. It was a wide-ranging conversation about their individual histories and the organization's projects and goals.

Neither Rula nor Nadav grew up planning to help lead a movement. Rula Dooad was born in northern Israel to a family that always spoke of themselves as Palestinian, but were clear that it was too dangerous to be political. She trained as a speech therapist and grew into activism after facing several incidents of discrimination. The last straw was an encounter she had at a bakery in Ashdod in 2014 during Israeli attacks on Gaza in response to rocket fire by Hamas. She describes being the only Arab in the bakery when a Jewish Israeli woman, responding to a newspaper image of kids killed by the bombing, said: "I hope they all burn; they deserve it." Rula described how, in the past, she would have stayed quiet, but she couldn't stay silenced in that situation: "What do you think about me and you going up to the roof of this building to hear screams of children in Gaza being burned alive." In that moment she decided to become an activist. But she



did not immediately find her political home — one which respected her identity as a Palestinian, a citizen of Israel, and a woman. At a march in 2017 she found her place when she saw Standing Together, speaking and holding purple signs in both Arabic and Hebrew — purple is a depoliticized color in Israeli politics, — associated with neither the right nor the left.

Nadav Shofet served in the Israeli military and worked in the tech sector; he originally learned about Standing Together during the 2020–2021 protests against Netanyahu. The organization was vocal about education, health, and welfare, and Nadav participated in work on behalf of students who were being evicted from Tel Aviv University dorms that had been privatized. He, too, had found his political home.

During the Zoom call, Rula and Nadav described a grassroots organization of Israeli citizens with chapters in communities and universities around the country. It seeks to establish an equitable society for all people, working on a wide range of issues — housing, health care, education, the environment — and it believes that these goals can only be achieved by Israelis and Palestinians working together. I applaud these goals and wish them for our country as well. But, for me, the most important part of the Standing Together message is its focus on how to move forward on the current war between Hamas and Israel.

Like many organizations, Standing Together is calling for a ceasefire and a return of hostages. For me, what sets Standing Together apart is its focus on building relationships that can create a path beyond the

present hostilities toward a peaceful future. Their website makes this clear:

Our message is simple: There is another way. We have seen our country launch countless wars and military operations only to end up in the same position. Israel's policy of attempting to destroy Hamas' military capabilities every few years has only led to Hamas getting stronger. No military operation has ever produced lasting safety and security for Israelis — let alone for Palestinians. The occupation of the West Bank and the blockade on Gaza must end, because they harm Palestinians and guarantee no real safety for Israelis. We know that a negotiated peace agreement is the only way to ensure safety, freedom, and equality for both peoples. As a progressive grassroots movement, we are focused on building the political will in Israeli society to reach a political solution by building a mass movement of Jewish and Palestinian citizens who truly believe that such a shared future is possible.

We are building a shared home for all those who refuse hatred and choose empathy. We won't erase our differences, but rather believe in a true partnership based on shared interests. This is the meaning of Standing Together.

Standing Together is an organization that acknowledges the difficulty of the path forward, but has started moving in the only plausible direction toward peace.

You can learn more about Standing Together from its website: <https://www.standing-together.org/about-us>. There you can also find information on becoming a member and/or making a one-time donation. ■

Words of Torah: Yitro and Jewish unity

By Rabbi Ari Blech, visiting rabbi of the Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan

The stories of the Bible may not change, but we do — and our experiences shape the way we read even the most familiar of stories. In Parashat Yitro, a father-in-law offers unsolicited advice — but it's good!

A grateful nation, just months out of slavery, is told they will become “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” — quite the status upgrade! The Jews prepare, from washing their clothes to shifting their mindset. Powerfully and passionately. They voice their commitment, at one point saying “All that Hashem has spoken we will do.” (Later, this phrase takes on its more well-known form, *na'aseh v'nishma*, reversing the order.)

God is about to appear. If ever there were a moment for theatrics, this would be it — and God delivers. There is thunder, there is lightning, and in a magical mystical moment of synesthesia, some suggest the sound is seen and the lightning is heard!

A thick cloud spreads, a bugle blares. Excitement gives way to panic, scheduling tweaks are made, and the Jews, overwhelmed, hear all or most of the 10 utterances from Moshe.

Tradition, as is its wont, fills in a few details. So seminal was this moment, that Jews of all time — as well as all future converts — stood shoulder to shoulder at Sinai.

Perhaps, only somewhat tongue in cheek, a greater leap of faith resides in a different statement of Chazal (Jewish sages). Exodus 19:2 describes a scene that many an attendee of Jewish summer camps will recognize with longing or a touch of PTSD: overnights. The entire (soon to be) Jewish nation sets up camp. The Hebrew word for that should be *va'yachanu* but instead it is written in the singular, *va'yichan*. A well-known Rashi supplies a touching thought: The singular form is used



because at that moment in time they were united, *k'ish echad* — like one person — *b'lev echad*, with one heart.

Unity is good, and in short supply. Two Jews, three shuls. Insert your own not-so-funny joke here. And so, my simple question is: How did they do it? What enabled them to gel in ways we struggle to reproduce 3,500 years later?

Two other not-so-modern-Midrashim provide us with a helpful approach. Riffing on the description of Jews at the foot of the mountain, the Rabbis reimagine the

scene: What we are *really* being told is that the Jews saw the foot of the mountain from below — because God lifted Mount Sinai over our heads!

The point of this Herculean feat? According to BT Shabbat 88a, God was giving us an offer “we couldn't refuse”: either you accept my Torah here and now, or I can always just “let go.”

There's another way to understand this. Rashi on this same “foot of the mountain” verse (Ex. 19:17) notes that “the Shechina was going forth ... as a groom who goes

forth to meet their bride.” In which case it's not much of a leap to conclude that the mountain was lifted over our heads with love. The idea that we marry God is not new; here we are given orchestra seats plus a nice image of the chuppah!

I want to use these two divergent takes on the mountain to answer our question about Jewish unity. One way that Jews tend to come together is in the aftermath of tragedy. Distinctions that seemed so important, so necessary to cling to and to fight about, suddenly disappear. On October 6, Jews were as divided as ever. On October 7 and since, the displays of *achdut* (unity) have been astonishing. From bumper stickers to billboards the slogan sweeping Israel has been “*B'yachad Ninatzeach*,” together we will win. More impressive, it's gone from lip-service to lived-service as Jews line up to help other Jews whose look (and whose outlook) is very different from their own.

Rabbi Sacks once said, “I don't need you to agree with me, I need you to care about me!”

We care for each other. We care about each other. When a mountain is hanging over our heads, we remember who our friends are, who our brothers and sisters are, what matters and, more important, what doesn't. That's one path to unity.

There's another. Maybe it's harder, but ultimately it's more profound. I reach out my hand not because they hate us, but because I love you. Because what unites us can be so much greater than what tears us apart. Because the very same chuppah is open on all sides, like the tent of Abraham, in welcoming embrace.

Whichever approach we choose, let our ways be pleasant, our paths, peaceful. ■

Stacy Carroll joins AFMDA

Stacy Carroll has been named associate director of major gifts for American Friends of Magen David Adom in Michigan, a role she will assume on January 15.

Magen David Adom is Israel's emergency services system, which provides Israel with ambulance and paramedic services, and oversees, processes, and distributes blood for the country's national blood bank, among other services. In her new role, Carroll will solicit philanthropic support for MDA in Michigan.

Most recently, Carroll held the positions of chief advancement officer and director of advancement and planned giving at the University of Michigan's Hillel, helping to support the newest generation of Jewish leaders. Prior to that, she served as national director of development at the American Brain Tumor Association in

Chicago. She holds a B.A. in public health and social affairs education from Indiana University.

In addition to her 20 years of fundraising experience, Carroll has a unique connection to the work of AFMDA, having spent several years as a volunteer EMT on her hometown's ambulance squad.

“This makes the challenging, tireless, and emotional work of the medics in Israel near and dear to my heart,” she said. “As I look ahead, I am so optimistic for all that the future will hold. Through my calls with friends and Hillel supporters, I have learned what a strong history AFMDA has in our area and am excited to see its rebirth here.”

“One would be hard-pressed to find a more loving, active, and philanthropic community than ours,” she added.

“Stacy brings very strong connections



within the local community, deep expertise in the cultivation and stewardship of major donors, and an obvious passion for the work of Magen David Adom,” said Richard Zelin, director of strategic philanthropy for the AFMDA's Midwest Region. “At this critical time, when Israel's first responders need our support more than ever, we are pleased that Stacy will help ensure they receive critical resources to save lives.”

A resident of the Metro Detroit area for a decade, Carroll lives in Brighton on a hobby horse farm with husband, Michael, and their two children, Fiona, 6, and Declan, 5. They are proud members of the Jewish Farmers Network, and their children attend Shir Shalom's Shores program at the JCC of Metropolitan Detroit. Carroll is also a staunch Michigan fan who believes there is nothing quite like “bleeding maize and blue.” ■



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Liana Finck, Maya Barzilai, Rafe Neis

February 6 | 4:30 - 6:30 pm
North Quadrangle, Room 2435

Symposium on Ottoman Jewish Culture

Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies

February 12 & 13 | 9:30 am
Rackham East Conference Room



"Stockholm: Old Friends Die Hard" TV Series Screening

Noa Yedlin, Maya Barzilai

March 5 | 4-7:30 pm
North Quadrangle, Room 2435

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'IGOR LEVIT IS LIKE
NO OTHER PIANIST'

(The New Yorker)

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JCOR news

By Deborah M. Greene

Mazel tov to JCOR's "first family"!

Jewish Congregations Organized for Re-settlement's (JCOR) (Colombian) refugee family cut the ribbon for their new home in early December, less than 14 months after arriving in the United States and are now counted among the ranks of American homeowners thanks to their unflagging will and hard work, and successful collaboration with Habitat for Humanity.

JCOR's next refugee family

On the night of the freak snow squalls in late November, JCOR volunteers met the incoming (Yemeni) refugee family at Metro Airport: mother, father, their seven-year-old son, his four-year-old little sister, and their 10-month-old baby sister. The volunteers swapped lightweight jackets for heavier ones, laid a crocheted blanket over Baby Sister in her carriage, and slipped mittens on the older children's hands along with long strings attached to huge (4x4-foot) dinosaur and butterfly balloons.

The Jewish Family Services van driver bravely navigated highway lanes suddenly cloaked in snow to deliver them to temporary lodgings in Ann Arbor where JCOR volunteers had already delivered groceries, clothing, and toys and books for the kids. The next day, a JCOR volunteer made an emergency delivery of baby formula and diapers.

As JCOR volunteers zeroed in on permanent Ann Arbor housing, the family decided they really wanted to tap into the Arabic community in



Dearborn. They soon located a rental home there through expert community networking and, in mid-December, JCOR reluctantly waved goodbye, wishing them the very best in their journey.

...& Now JCOR looks forward

JCOR is collaborating with JFS to plan for its next family which should be arriving in February. Watch this space or visit jcorannarbor.org for updates.

You will know it's spring

...when the klezmer clarinets begin to wail at the JCC on Sunday, April 7. Save the date for JCOR's annual fundraising concert, "Traditional Music with a Klezmer Accent." It'll be a roaring good time, featuring local standouts Schmaltz, the Ralph Katz-David Gitterman Duo, and more.

From our family to yours

The JCOR spirit went to the gym in De-

cember. Members of Ann Arbor's 3N1 Revolution Fitness recently launched a high-energy campaign that netted \$1,325 in gift cards for JCOR's next refugee family, and they provided gifts for the children of the Yemeni family now in Dearborn. "3N1 is more than a gym, we are a family," said owner Eddie Brooks (shown in orange shirt). "It's so gratifying to receive gifts like this from the broader Ann Arbor community," said JCOR co-lead Rita Benn. ■



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50-year friendship offers close look at caring dialogue on Israeli-Palestinian conflict

By Violet Ikononova, originally published on January 2 in the Detroit Free Press, reprinted with permission

For any two other people, the debate over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might have gotten ugly.

He's Jewish and supports a two-state solution. She's Palestinian and wants one state with equal rights, which critics say would spell the end for a Jewish homeland.

He condemns the October 7 Hamas attack. She says it was to be expected. Though she doesn't want civilians killed, "violence," she says, "breeds violence."

But these two are not enemies. They're best friends, and have been close for more than 50 years.

As the war in Gaza stokes and entrenches divisions around the world, metro Detroit lawyer Dick Soble, 80, and Arab American museum founder Anan Ameri, 79, represent an increasingly rare example of open inquiry and expression. Their discussion is probing, thoughtful, uncensored. On the big stuff, they tend to agree. Where they don't, they listen, and even come to appreciate one another's views.

"One of the things that runs through the world right now is we've become micro tribes and we talk about how we hate, dislike, and want to fight the other," Soble said. "I'm an American Jew and she's a Muslim Palestinian American, and neither one of us views each other as the other. And I think that's one thing that's different that allows that dialogue to continue, is it starts off with respect."

Though they come to the conflict from opposing backgrounds — Soble was raised in a household where the prevailing view was "Israel, right or wrong," and Ameri was born in British Mandate Palestine and relegated to refugee status by the creation of Israel — they're united by justice-oriented values.

Soble focused his career on civil rights law, helping win major settlements for victims of alleged systemic harassment by male guards at Michigan's female prison and the disbandment of "red squad" political surveillance units in large Michigan police departments. Ameri, meanwhile, founded and directed both the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn and the Palestine Aid Society of America, a nonprofit supporting Palestinians in refugee camps or the occupied territories, more broadly.

Over the years, they've witnessed one another's marriages, comforted each other through divorce, and traveled together around the world, cultivating a deep friendship that Soble says creates "the bridges for us to go back and forth."

Catastrophe, setback, and awakening

Ameri's early childhood was shaped by war and instability. She recalls bombs dropping around her Jerusalem home as she lay on a mattress in the center of a living room floor, wrapped in her parents' embrace. She was three years old then, and would soon be separated from them for the better part of a year, sent to live with relatives in Syria for safety.

Ameri never returned to that Jerusalem

home. When Israel won its war of independence in 1948 and seized control of 80% of the land that made up British Mandate Palestine, she said her family was evicted in what's known as the Nakba — or catastrophe, in Arabic. Her father's family members, who lived in Jaffa at the time, were meanwhile scattered across the Arab world, kicking off a yearslong effort to reunite them.



After resettling in East Jerusalem for several years, Ameri's family eventually moved to Jordan for greater opportunity, their lives profoundly altered by what they'd endured.

"At no time did we sit together and not talk about the life in Palestine," she said of family gatherings. "At no time did people sit together and nobody cried."

At least 700,000 Palestinians were displaced by the Nakba. But it was 1967 that inspired Ameri to devote her life to the Palestinian cause.

That year, Israel captured the West Bank in the Six-Day War — what Palestinians call the Naksa, or "setback" — pushing another wave of refugees to Jordan and marking the beginning of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories whose borders remain today. Ameri, then a college student, volunteered at a refugee camp, turning tents into schools and helping reunite loved ones separated from one another.

"You hear about your family trauma, but life goes on," said Ameri. "It was not like seeing all these refugees coming and crying and children who've lost their parents — and they're thirsty ... and hungry."

"That was my awakening. '67 made me understand '48."

She went to work at the Palestine Research Center, in Lebanon, collecting information on Palestinian history and political struggle.

Soon, however, she'd be whisked from the Mideast to the U.S. by love — and Dick Soble.

Devotion to justice breeds friendship

Soble, who grew up in Massachusetts, met Ameri after his own political awakening, also in the late 1960s.

As a member of the Volunteers in Service to America, an anti-poverty program providing resources to nonprofits, he spent time

highly educated siblings whose occupations include diplomat, activist, therapist, and architect — a background with "enormous opportunity" for academic and political education that Soble said Ameri "brings to any friendship."

Ameri deepened his understanding of the struggle for Palestinian justice and liberation and Soble deepened hers of the parallel struggle for African Americans.

For Ameri, whose family remained in the Mideast, Soble quickly became like kin. He was the only non-Muslim to witness her and Abdeen's wedding — which, much to their relief, did not present an issue for the imam who officiated the ceremony. When she and Soble separated from their respective partners in the 1980s, both lived in downtown Detroit. They provided each other support, rode bikes through Belle Isle, and went to upscale restaurants like the Whitney with Soble's holiday bonuses.

She taught him to cook Arab food — a pastime they resurrected via Zoom during the pandemic — or tried, anyway. Soble said he set his sights too high, rolling grape leaves with "pudgy fingers" that left them looking as if they'd been "run over by a tractor-trailer."

When she moved to Washington, D.C., to expand the Palestine Aid Society, Soble visited, and after she returned to Detroit for her now second husband, the couple elected to move to Ann Arbor to be near friends, including Soble. Ameri now stops by Soble's home so frequently she keeps a pair of slippers there, and he brings with him sheepskin-lined Crocs to wear inside her home. An old photo of Soble — less gray — is framed in Ameri's office, alongside images of her siblings.

"I call him my security blanket," Ameri said. "I feel like whatever (the) situation is, I can call on Dick and I know he'll be there, and I'll always be for him."

"He always understood my pain"

Throughout their 50-plus-year relationship, conflicts in the Mideast have flared and ebbed.

For Ameri, the Sabra and Shatila massacre in 1982, during Lebanon's civil war, was a particular low point. After Israel invaded the country with the stated aim of destroying the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), then based in Beirut and launching attacks on Israel, Israel's military besieged the Palestinian Shatila refugee camp and its sister area of Sabra, allowing a right-wing Lebanese militia to kill an estimated 2,000–3,500 civilians (more, Ameri points out, than were killed in Israel on October 7, and with vastly less attention). The PLO, however, had already been gone for weeks, with U.S. and other confirmation.

Ameri had volunteered at the camps, and the dead included students and families she knew. She was devastated and, as tended to be the case, Soble was there for support.

in segregated Selma, Alabama — home of the famed civil rights marches — and witnessed the beatings of demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago. Eventually, he was assigned to Detroit, where he represented tenants as a recent law school graduate.

The experiences bookended a comfortable upbringing in a largely apolitical household (except on Israel), teaching Soble that the police, contrary to his early understanding, were, in fact, "not everyone's friends," and prompting him to devote his own life to curbing what he saw as abuses in state power.

By 1970, he was a partner at a law firm with civil rights attorney Abdeen Jabara, representing leftist causes including labor, minority interests, and draft resistance.

Soble and Jabara met Ameri that year during a trip to Lebanon, where Jabara had family. A freelance reporter on the side, Ameri was profiling Jabara due to his activism around Palestinian and Arab issues in the U.S.

The two fell in love, and, with Soble's help obtaining a visa, eventually married in the U.S.

Soble and Ameri clicked too. With politics and a thirst for knowledge at the core of their identities, they forged a friendship that would outlast the marriage.

"I wanted her in my orbit," Soble said of the initial draw. "She enriched my life, I liked being with her — she was smarter than I was ... who wouldn't want that?"

Ameri hailed from what Soble called a "heady" political family, with a father who worked in the Jordanian government and

“He always understood my pain,” she said. “He never argued with my pain. He never said what happened is OK. ... I never heard a word of justification.”

Said Soble, “I’ve always been of the view that you can’t have a meaningful dialogue with anyone unless you try to listen.”

It never mattered to Ameri that Soble was Jewish. She said her father had instilled in her the belief that there were good people across all faiths; that the Israeli government, rather than Jewish people, was responsible for Palestinians’ plight, and that “there are Jews who were wonderful people and they don’t believe in what’s happening.”

Ameri, in fact, only learned Soble’s background after he wrote the U.S. Embassy to overturn its initial denial of her visa, due, she said, to her work at the Palestine Research Center. Jabara had enlisted Soble’s help, believing a letter of invitation from an American Jew would be better received than one from a Lebanese American.

“When people are asking if I have Jewish friends, I find the question absurd,” said Ameri, who is also a member of the progressive group Jewish Voice for Peace. “If (people are) good people, we share values, they’re kind ... I love them.”

Friction

She and Soble’s father, however, had friction.

An American Jew born in the early 1900s, Herb Soble watched from the U.S. as antisemitism gave way to genocide in the continent his parents had left behind. Without Israel, the younger Soble said his father saw Jews thrown out of countries and persecuted, and eventually concluded that without a designated safe haven, they would become extinct.

“My father thought Jews needed a homeland,” Soble said. “He never considered the Palestinians needing a homeland.”

Those beliefs gave rise to a tense and illuminating exchange for Ameri, shortly after she moved to the U.S.

She was wearing a Palestinian dress she dons for special occasions when she met Herb Soble at a birthday party for Dick. As their conversation veered to the Mideast, Soble’s father threw a rhetorical grenade — telling her peace in the region would come only “when the Palestinians become educated and civilized.”

Ameri was stunned; she said she’d never before been confronted by that sort of dehumanizing rhetoric.

Her shock manifested in a series of sharp retorts.

“My father and mother both have degrees,” she said. When the elder Soble called them the exception, she said “I don’t think they built universities just for my father and mother.”

Then, in a move she quickly regretted, Ameri invoked the Holocaust.

Germany, she said, was seen as “one of the most civilized countries in the world ... with music, art, universities and science, when they massacred the Jews.”

Though she walked away feeling guilty for having been “cruel” to an elder — no less the father of a close friend — it was a teaching moment. For the first time, she had been exposed to the mentality her cause was up

against.

Herb Soble never provided his son with details of the conversation. Reflecting on his exchange with Ameri later that day, Dick Soble recalled that all his father said was, “she’s a very nice person.”

The tunnel

They hadn’t discussed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for several years before October 7.

As the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank grew, further impeding the prospect of a Palestinian state, and Israel-Hamas

refrigerator.

Though Soble and Ameri both identify as progressives, they didn’t always agree. And though the conversation could at times get charged — particularly for Ameri, whose sister remains in the West Bank and for whom the conflict is more personal — they were open and explorative when they diverged. Nothing was off the table.

Ameri expressed deep frustration with mainstream U.S. media coverage of the Hamas attack. She recently canceled her New York Times subscription because of what she saw as the outsized attention the

Ameri supports one, covering the area of Israel and the Palestinian territories. She previously supported two, but now sees the more than 700,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem as an insurmountable barrier and doesn’t believe a nation of Palestine would be permitted to arm itself.

Soble supports two states, in part to maintain a Jewish homeland in the event global antisemitism again rises near the extremes of the Holocaust.

But on an overarching point, they agree: Both want an immediate end to the war.

“There are those who believe in one-



wars came and went with lopsided death tolls that took far more Palestinians, the subject became too painful for Ameri.

“Every time I talk about it, I go into depression,” she said. “It hurts because you don’t see a light at the end of the tunnel. You don’t see the tunnel to start with.”

But Hamas’ attack, and Israel’s retaliatory war, opened the floodgates: “In these last two months, I cannot not talk about it,” she said.

Soble has honored both postures — silence, and now, loquaciousness.

On a recent Tuesday at Ameri’s home in Ann Arbor, the pair spoke at length over coffee as the death toll in Gaza approached 20,000 — or one in every 200 Gazans killed.

Evidence of a life of political struggle dotted the house. Photos showed a younger Ameri in a Che Guevara shirt, and handcuffed at a federal building in Washington after what she said she believes was an anti-apartheid demonstration, though couldn’t quite recall because she’s been arrested at so many protests. A thank-you card for a donation to Rashida Tlaib — the lone Palestinian American in Congress — was affixed to the

paper devoted to it over past Israeli attacks — like settler violence and bombings of Gaza.

Soble pushed back. “The image I have when I look at the Times today is of destruction, is of Palestinian babies, of the suffering, and it’s in graphic form. I think that the horrific nature of what Israel is doing is forcing the media to say to its readership, this is a monstrosity ... they’re killing people indiscriminately.”

Maybe, she concedes — but she dropped the subscription before she could tell.

President Joe Biden was a sorer subject. Ameri’s voice grew pitched and she started to swear. “Trump is awful, but Biden is awful, so I’m not voting for either one,” she said, folding her arms across her chest in a note of finality.

Soble said he sees why — Biden, in both their views, has given Israel free rein to commit war crimes, providing the country military aid without conditions. But Soble struggles with what to do in 2024, believing Biden the lesser of two evils when compared with Trump.

On a one- versus two-state solution,

state, two-state, and there are now 17,000 people who have no state,” Soble said, referring to the number of Palestinians killed by the time they spoke. “So we have to prioritize what we put our political efforts behind, and any other discussion sidetracks us from (the ceasefire being) critical to getting to any other solution.”

Interviewed separately, Ameri and Soble both spoke to the shared values and principles they say make their open dialogue possible.

“When you’re with someone for 50 years (with a different background than you), you learn a lot,” said Ameri. “You open your horizons ... and Dick was very instrumental in that. I can ask him any question and he won’t make me feel stupid for asking.”

“She has an enormous capacity to listen,” said Soble. “She has strong political views and a rational basis for those views, but she’s one of these friends I’m not afraid of asking stupid questions to help me formulate my own approach.”

They’ll meet again this winter in Spain, for a trip with their respective spouses. Both hope the war will, by then, be over. ■



UPDATE ON FLOOD AT JFS BUILDING

Over the weekend of January 12th, during the winter storms, frozen pipes burst leading to excessive flood and water damage to the JFS building on South State Street. The JFS Team is devastated by the irreparable damage caused. Along with building property and equipment, our stock of donated supplies for clients has been destroyed. This includes items such as winter coats, new car seats, toiletries and toys. Most of these were secured for soon-to-arrive refugees.

Thank you to the community for the outpouring of support. We are fortunate to have such incredible friends and partners who have offered up office space, cash donations, and well wishes.

At this time, financial donations or gift cards to Amazon, Meijer, Target and the like will provide our case workers with the most flexibility to swiftly secure items needed for clients. Given the building remains closed and usable space is quite limited, donations of items can unfortunately not be accepted at this time.

While the building is temporarily closed, we are working our regular business hours, providing services. In person services such as Food Pantry and Transportation Services are ongoing. Where possible, services are being offered virtually. If you have questions about accessing services, please contact the JFS staff member providing your care, email info@jfsannarbor.org, or call us at 734-769-0209.

Gift cards can be dropped off or mailed to 2245 S. State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. If coming in person to donate gift cards, please enter through the State Street entrance where the onsite security guard can accept them.



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Photo courtesy of Owen Kaufman

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AARC's Rav Gavrielle receives ordination

By Emily Eisbruch, special to the Washtenaw Jewish News

Thanks to the wonders of Zoom, members of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC) watched the ordination of Gavrielle Pescador, held in mid-January in Lakewood, Colorado. Rav Gavrielle, as she is known to the congregation, was previously ordained as a cantor, and has served as the AARC's spiritual leader since July 2023.

"Rav Gavrielle has brought exemplary leadership to our congregation, in the realms of service and musical leadership, shepherding congregants through life cycle events, and much more" says AARC Board Chair Debbie Gombert. "It is wonderful to see her receive her rabbinical ordination — that so many of us can be present for this simcha and milestone — even if it is via Zoom!"

Rav Gavrielle's unique pathway to the rabbinate is summarized in her lovely smicha (ordination) statement, shared below.

"I was raised in Windsor, Ontario, and attended Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, a synagogue co-founded by my maternal great-grandfather. Jewish tradition and religious practice were central to my upbringing, and that grounding has continued to inform my perspective on community, ethics, and spiritual life through adulthood. After the passing of my beloved mother



and father, I became particularly drawn to deepening my connection to Jewish community, as I was no longer able to celebrate holidays, rituals, and life cycle events with my family. I responded to my grief by immersing myself in Jewish studies and ancestral wisdom, which eventually led me to enroll in rabbinic school at the ALEPH Ordination Program.

"In the middle of my rabbinic studies, I became reacquainted with Ashkenazi hazanut, which called up beautiful memories of the soundscape of my childhood synagogue. But it was only after having the life-changing experience of serving as cantorial soloist for Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation in 2019 that I

decided to enter the AOP's cantorial program and become a double track rabbinic-cantorial student. I received smicha as a Hazzan in 2023.

"I have had the opportunity to serve in leadership roles in recent years. This past July I stepped into the role of rabbi of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation. Before that I served as Spiritual Leader of Temple B'nai Israel of Petoskey, Michigan, and as guest cantor in synagogues throughout the country. I also founded Pardes Hannah's Rosh Chodesh minyan in 2018, which I led every month for four and a half years.

"Around the time I began my rabbinic training I learned to play the harp and gradually started including the instrument in my

service-leading. I consider the harp to be an instrument of healing because of its soothing sound quality and biblical resonance, and I use it as a tool for heart opening and easing the pathway to religious experience and devekut.

"I am committed to helping people find meaning through engaging in Jewish life. I see many pathways to meaning-making in Jewish tradition — through prayer and celebration of Shabbat and holidays, through the study of Torah, Jewish thought, and Jewish history, through Jewish art and creative ritual, and through the many expressions of tikkun olam.

"I am grateful to many people for supporting me on this journey. First and foremost, I want to thank my husband and life partner, Javier, who is my rock and constant source of love, encouragement, and wisdom. I also want to thank my teachers and classmates, who have helped me to stretch my mind and heart and expand my consciousness in all four worlds. And finally, I want to thank my mashpia, Reb Ori Har, for helping me to awaken to the role that the body plays in my spiritual development."

To learn more about the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation, please visit <https://aarecon.org/>. ■

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The Levys of Monticello

By Deborah Meyers Greene

At the end of the tour of Monticello, their guide acknowledged the Thomas Jefferson Foundation's role in preserving the estate from which, "We can learn from the past to the extent that we're able."

"And thanks to the Levy family," added Rob Hoffman, reiterating earlier mention the guide had made of his family.

"What? Yes, the Levy family..." said the guide.



"We are Levys!" Rob and his mother, Nancy, chimed in, to which their guide responded, "Oh, Hallelujah!"

Months later, back home in Ann Arbor, Rob said, "The Levys of Monticello have always been part of my family's backstory."

That backstory begins with Rob's great-great-grand uncle, Uriah Phillips Levy (1792-1862) who served 50 years in the U.S. Navy, ultimately becoming the first Jewish Commodore, which was then the highest rank in the USN. Uriah was a hero of the War of 1812 and helped lead the campaign to abolish flogging in the USN. In 1942, he was honored with the naming of a Cannon class destroyer escort, which was christened the USS Levy by Nancy's mother as she looked on.

UPL's mercurial personality rose to legendary heights in response to expressions of disrespect or antisemitism, a trait that is credited at least in part for his six courts-martial and two forced exits from the Navy — for which he was reinstated by two different U.S. presidents.

Motivated by his profound admiration for Thomas Jefferson's views on religious liberty, UPL traveled to France to commission a statue of the former President which now stands in the Capitol Rotunda. While there, UPL visited Jefferson's friend and collaborator, the Marquis de Lafayette. "How is Monticello?" Lafayette asked. It is speculated that UPL's subsequent purchase was prompted at least in part by that discussion.

Shortly after his return to the States in 1834, eight years after Jefferson's death, UPL purchased Monticello at auction. The once magnificent estate on the mountaintop had been reduced by nearly half to 218 acres of overgrown fields surrounding a dilapidated and almost empty house that stood in "deep disrepair" on "slovenly" grounds according to records of the time.

Twelve enslaved people, whose number grew to 20 before Emancipation, were part of

the purchase which included the main house and outbuildings, grounds, miscellaneous animals, and 12 humans. Ownership of humans was acceptable, even desirable, in the antebellum south. This was true even for a man who clearly valued freedom, the freedom of religious choice and practice, as much as Uriah, a prominent member of a community that retells the tragedy of their own ancestral enslavement

in sacred texts and who celebrate the wonder of freedom at Pesach.

"We were shocked to learn that Uriah was a slaveholder," said Rob. "After we saw it in the film, *The Levys of Monticello*, we talked about the irony of Uriah, a Jew and a northern Jew, owning slaves. We talked about what to do about the descendants of those enslaved people, and how we might locate them." As they are doing for the Jefferson estate, Monticello staff are using their records and resources to carry out the search.

As Monticello's new owner, UPL invested substantial personal funds to return the house and grounds to their earlier grandeur and expanded the acreage beyond its original measure. He also reacquired and refurbished major items such as restoring to working order the seven-day clock that had been made to Jefferson's specifications in 1793.

UPL put his widowed mother, Rachel Phillips Levy (1769-1839), in residence at the estate in 1837 where she died and was buried near the house, on Mulberry Lane. The Levy family legacy along with Rachel's grave were neglected for half a century, which American historian Melvin I. Urofsky suggests was due to antisemitic views among some of its board and members. The situation improved in 1985 when a new caretaker acknowledged the family's critical role in preservation of the estate and gave Rachel's grave appropriate care and prominence including a substantial new engraved granite slab.

On a steamy sunny day in 2023, Rachel's great-great-grand-niece Nancy placed flowers and stones on Rachel's headstone and then sat on the slab to read aloud excerpts from her written memories of Monticello. "They also have a wonderful display near her grave about the Levy family and their role in preserving Monticello," said Rob.

UPL died while serving as a naval officer with the Confederacy. Soon thereafter, the

Confederate government appropriated the property, eventually selling it to another inept owner who neglected the condition of the house and grounds, yet again reducing it to meager condition.

UPL's nephew Jefferson Monroe Levy (1852-1924) reacquired Monticello in 1879. A three-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives, prosperous real estate and stock investor, friend and associate of the era's scions including his friend J.P. Morgan, JML invested hundreds of thousands of dollars from his own funds to repair the house and grounds. He made very few structural changes, choosing to preserve the utter poetry of Jefferson's architectural creation. During his tenure as owner, JML hosted two sitting U.S. presidents — Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt — at Monticello, along with gatherings of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and hundreds of visitors and tourists on a routine basis while he continued extensive travel abroad.

In 1909, the wife of one of JML's fellow congressmen launched a barely disguised antisemitic campaign to wrest the hallowed ground from the Levy family who were cast as "foreigners" and "outsiders." Astonishingly, the effort made newspaper front pages across the nation. Although her campaign failed, JML ultimately did agree to sell the property in 1923 to the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, ending the Levy family's cumulative 93-year ownership of the property, an expanse of time that surpassed the years of ownership by Jefferson and his descendants.

Ironically, in the late-1930s, Rob's grandfather Robert Bookman insisted that his wife, Alma Hendricks Levy Bookman (1902-1954), secure a DAR pin to help shield her against the rising tide of antisemitism.

A Family Journey

Nancy Hoffman, Rob's 93-year-old moth-

er, is the oldest surviving descendant of both Uriah Phillips Levy and his nephew Jefferson Monroe Levy. Her mother, Alma H. L. Bookman, was one of four daughters of Louis Napoleon Levy (1854-1921), JML's brother and real estate investment business partner.

Nancy remembers visiting Monticello with her mother in 1940. "I was only 10 then, but I remember the gatekeeper calling out to my mother 'Alma? Alma, is that you?' as we approached. He recognized the little girl who had over-summered there to visit her (Great-) 'Uncle Jeff' — her uncle Jefferson Monroe Levy, that is. Hitching a ride with them from the gate to the house, the fragile, white-haired man 'guided us through the house into private family quarters. When I saw where my mother had played under the dome in that gorgeous room with the sunlight coming in, I was just mesmerized," Nancy recalled.

Eighty-three years later, Nancy repeated those steps with her son Rob as the two were given a personal tour of the private quarters that are ordinarily closed to tourists. "It was a glorious visit," said Nancy as they drove away at the day's end.

After Monticello, mother and son stopped in D.C. to visit Mark Leepson, author of *Saving Monticello*, where Rob recalls they "geeked out on Levy family history."

Beyond Monticello, their journey through family history stretched from Rhode Island to Philadelphia, New Jersey, and the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, home of the 35,000 square foot Commodore Uriah P. Levy Center and Jewish Chapel which opened in 2005. They enjoyed a guided tour of the building where the facilities manager gifted them an original Levy family-era fencepost that had been stored there.

"We took it back to New York," said Rob.



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Cantor Regina Hayut: A three-part series

By Robin Little

The early years

As Temple Beth Emeth and Cantor Regina Hayut prepare for her retirement in June 2024, let's look back on her childhood and career before she joined the synagogue in 2014.

Growing up in Jericho, Long Island, Regina Lambert loved to sing for as long as she can remember. Her paternal grandmother taught her Yiddish songs and would then have Regina sing for her friends. She wanted to take voice lessons at the age of 10, but her parents, Matt and Judy, said she was too young. She asked again at age 13 ("Well, I've had a bat mitzvah, so now I'm a woman!") and was told she was still too young. But by age 15, Regina started voice lessons and for the last two years of high school she attended the Juilliard pre-college program in voice. She wanted to go to Oberlin College to study music, but her parents said no. Instead, she went to Swarthmore College as a pre-med student — her parents wanted her to be a doctor — but Regina continued to prefer singing. She was the section leader of the sopranos in the college choir. When she graduated, she knew she was not going to go to medical school.

Regina worked for her father, a registered architect and professional engineer, doing engineering calculations. She continued to have voice lessons as well as taking acting and music classes. At this time Re-

gina wanted to be an opera singer. But in her voice classes she met a few cantors and then started singing at a synagogue on Long Island, where she grew up. She met a singer in a cantorial choir who had been a bassoonist but gave that up to become a cantor. (Small world connection here: Arlene Bernstein became the cantor at Rabbi Josh Whinston's parents' synagogue in San Diego.).

Regina learned that a career as an opera singer involved a lot of travel and that it was not for someone who wanted a family. This was around the time that Regina met Avishay Hayut in 1996, so she decided to change her career path and study to be a cantor. Avishay was not on board initially, but after attending a service at the synagogue where she was singing, he agreed with her and was incredibly supportive of her path, which was a long one. They married in 1998 at his mother's home in Israel.

Hebrew Union College's School of Sacred Music was a four-year program starting with the first year living and studying in Jerusalem. During that first year, the students worked on developing a connection to Israel and Hebrew language skills, as well as building a supportive cohort. She continued her studies back in New York, holding part-time jobs at synagogues, singing, and teaching. Both of their sons were born during cantorial school, Yoav in 1999 and Alon in 2001,

so she learned multitasking very quickly.

Regina's first job as a cantor was at the Barnert Temple in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey. The senior rabbi was Elyse Frishman, subsequently the editor of the Mishkan T'filah Reform prayer book. Regina found her to be an amazing mentor, learning how to build community and engage in social action. After five years, she moved to Temple Beth Or in Washington Township. At that time, the Reform Jewish community was shrinking, as was involvement in synagogue life. After seven years there, when the rabbi decided to leave, Regina was asked to continue on a part-time basis. As that would mean selling their home and moving to a new, less expensive neighborhood and new schools for the boys, they made a family decision to look at other options. Regina narrowed down the listings to four locations. Other than Temple Beth Emeth, there were openings at synagogues in Washington, D.C., Dallas, and Chicago.

After her phone interview with Temple Beth Emeth, she told Avishay, "This might be it!" But the placement director encouraged her to check out the other jobs, and for a variety of reasons, none of them were the right fit. She and Avishay paid a visit to Ann Arbor and after a second visit — the first was during a blizzard — Regina accepted the position at Temple Beth Emeth, to start

in the summer of 2014. One of the deciding factors in this decision was that she and Avishay wanted this to be their final move and a place to call home for their retirement years.

Her 10-year history at Temple Beth Emeth as cantor, music and spirituality leader, and choir director will be covered in an article in the March issue of the Washtenaw Jewish News. In the meantime, to learn more about the ways we will Rejoice with Regina, visit www.templebethemeth.org/rejoice-with-regina.html. You can make a donation to the Cantor Regina Lambert-Hayut Music Fund and find out about the community-wide gala (dinner and a tribute program) at Washtenaw Community College on June 1. ■



TBE Events in February

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

Tot and Elementary Shabbat Service and Dinner
Fridays at 5:45 p.m.

Join Cantor Hayut and Rabbi Whinston to celebrate Shabbat with fun activities, stories, songs, and age-appropriate learning for children ages 0–5 and children ages 5–10. Registration requested.

Shabbat Service

Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Shabbat service

Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Weekday morning blessings

Weekdays at 9:15 a.m.

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

Afternoon blessings

Thursdays at 3 p.m.

Join Cantor Hayut for an intimate short service.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah

Sundays at 2:30 p.m.

Contact Cantor Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org for details and with questions.

Women's Torah study

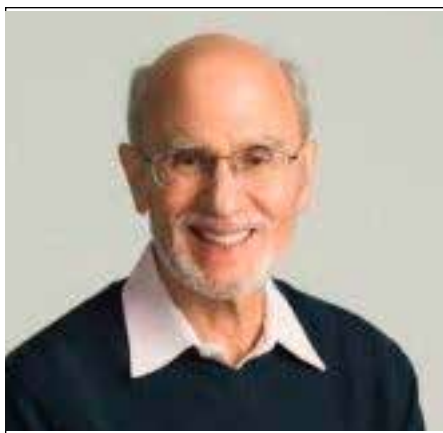
Mondays at 7:30 p.m.

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.

Queer Torah Study

Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

Join us in person or via Zoom for a discussion of queer themes in the weekly Torah portion! Led by Ari Marcotte and Ari Smith. Guest leaders welcome! Contact Ari M (ari.j.marcotte@gmail.com) for more information.

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club with Cantor Hayut
Thursdays at 11 a.m.

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 to 7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner

Thursdays at 5 p.m.

Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session.

Lunch and 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.

Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion.

Gaza and the Hundred Years War

Sunday, February 4, 7:30 p.m.

In the TBE Sanctuary and available via Zoom. Registration required.

A talk by Dr. Victor Lieberman. This talk will set the current Gaza war against the background of a century of Palestinian-Jewish competition. It will examine three frequently heard critiques of Israel, namely that Israel is an illegitimate imposition on the Arab world, that Palestinian hostility responds primarily to Israeli oppression, and that Israel routinely flouts international norms. This talk will then seek to explain why these hostile critiques are widespread and deeply rooted among sectors of Western opinion and throughout much of Asia and Africa. Finally, it will consider what the future of Arab-Israeli relations may look like.

Rosh Chodesh Circle

Thursday, February 8, 5:30 p.m.

In the TBE Chapel and available via Zoom.

Family Camp

Friday, February 9, 6:45 p.m.

Family Camp provides an opportunity for families to play and learn together, for students to reinforce and share some of what they are learning in the classroom, and most importantly, to strengthen ties among students and parents/caretakers.

Congregational Read Book Discussion

Monday, February 12, 7:30 p.m., and Saturday, February 24, 7 p.m.

For the past few years, the Social Action Committee has coordinated a Congregational Read, a book club type of gathering where everyone reads the same book, and then discussion groups are held to talk about the book. This year, we will read *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson. The theme of this book will be part of our overall focus on civil rights this year. The Social Action Committee is sponsoring a congregational civil rights trip in the spring. We hope that you will start reading *The Warmth of Other Suns* soon. There are copies at the Ann Arbor District Library, but you'll need to hurry to get your copy in time!

LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck

Friday, February 16, 6 p.m.

Join us for a Shabbat dinner and candle lighting with members of the local queer community! Bring a dish to share with others, make new friends, and let us know what you'd like to see in future queer programming! ■

Calendar

Special Events

Always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here and for prayer services.

Thursday 1

Fighting, Surviving, Rebuilding: An Evening with Oct. 7 Survivors, Jenny and Oz: Hillel. 5:30 p.m.

Friday 2: Candle Lighting 5:32 p.m. Yitro Family Shabbat: Jewish Cultural Society at the JCC. All are invited to join the 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. 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 3: Havdallah 6:35 p.m.

Sunday 4

Winter Fun Day: NEXTGen A2. 12 p.m.

Gaza and the 100 Years War, a talk by Victor Lieberman. TBE. 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 6

Let There be Light: A talk with comics artist Liana Finck: Frankel Center. North Quad, room 2435. 4:30 p.m.

Mandy Patinkin in Concert at the Michigan Theater. 7:30 p.m.

Thursday 8

Getting Good at Getting Older: TBE. 7 p.m.

Friday 9: Rosh Hodesh Adar 1: Candle Lighting 5:41 p.m. Mishpatim

Saturday 10: Rosh Hodesh Adar 1 (day 2) Havdallah 6:43 p.m.

Monday 12

Symposium on Ottoman Jewish Culture: Frankel Center. Monday and Tuesday Rackham East Conference Room. 9:30 a.m.

"Curating Jewish Washington: Encounters with History and Public Memory in the Making Of The Capital Jewish Museum." Free and in-person now also on zoom at EMU Student Center. Presented by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan and EMU Center for Jewish Studies. In a 21st-century museum, how do we translate the latest scholarly knowledge to reach a broad audience and make effective use of three-dimensional exhibit space? In a community-based museum, how do we develop stories in which community members can recognize themselves, but also see history in new ways, including how myth and memory have sometimes clouded — or even misrepresented — history they thought they knew? Dr. Eric S. Yellin, historian and professor at the University of Richmond, will discuss his experiences developing the inaugural exhibitions of the new Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, DC. As a visiting curator, Yellin worked with museum staff to research, write, and design a new museum dedicated to the history and experiences of Washington's Jewish communities. 7 p.m.

Congregational Book Read: TBE. *The Warmth of Other Suns*, by Isabella Wilkerson. Zoom

discussion. 7:30 p.m.

Friday 16: Candle Lighting 5:50 p.m. Terumah

Saturday 17: Havdallah 6:52 p.m.

Tuesday 20

Rabbi Sharon Brous: BIC. 6:30 p.m.

Thursday 22

Getting Good at Getting Older: TBE. 7 p.m.

Friday 23: Candle Lighting 5:59 p.m. Tetzaveh

Saturday 24: Havdallah 7 p.m.

Congregational Book Read: TBE. *The Warmth of Other Suns*, by Isabella Wilkerson. In person discussion. 7 p.m.

Thursday 29

Amster Gallery Exhibition with Joan Cohen Jones: JCC. 6 p.m.

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

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-445-1910, aarecon.org

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000

Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org

Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com

Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies (EMU): www.emich.edu/jewish-studies/

Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., isa.umich.edu/judaic/

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4th Annual Social Action Committee
Congregational Read
THE WARMTH OF OTHER SUNS
THE EPIC STORY OF AMERICA'S GREAT MIGRATION
BY ISABELLA WILKERSON

Two opportunities to discuss the book:
February 12 at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom
February 24 starting at 7 p.m. in person with Havdalah with Cantor Hayut

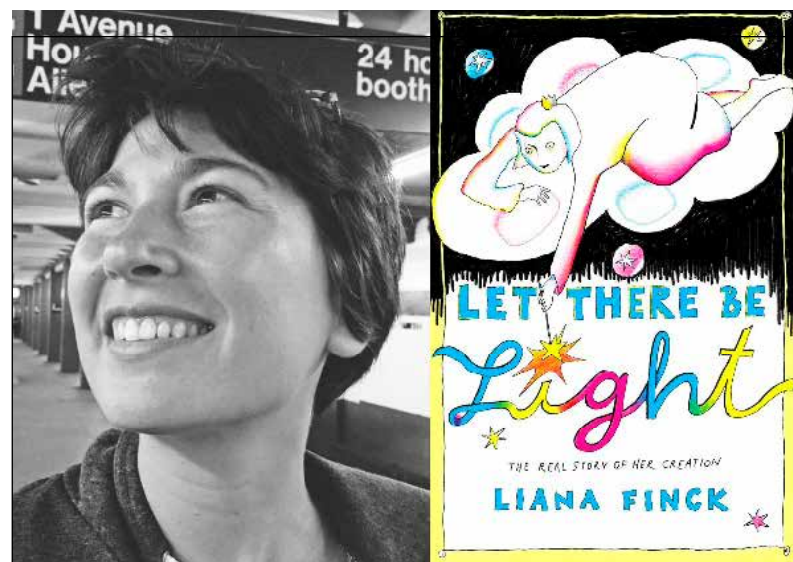
Registration Requested: bit.ly/TBEWarmthofOtherSuns

For the past few years, the Social Action Committee has coordinated a Congregational Read, a book club type of gathering where everyone reads the same book, and then discussion groups are held to talk about the book. This year, we will read *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson. The theme of this book will be part of our overall focus on civil rights this year. The Social Action Committee is sponsoring a congregational civil rights trip in the spring.

There are copies at the Ann Arbor District Library, but you'll need to hurry to get your copy in time!
www.templebethemeth.org | 2309 Packard St., Ann Arbor, MI



Eric Yellin will speak at EMU on February 12



Liana Finck will speak at UMich on February 6

Beth Israel presents Rabbi Sharon Brous

On February 20, at 6 p.m., Beth Israel Congregation will welcome Rabbi Sharon Brous to discuss her new book, *The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Mend Our Broken Hearts and World*. Her talk will be in-person only and will feature a Q&A session and reception.

Rabbi Sharon Brous is a leading voice in reanimating religious life in America, working to develop a spiritual roadmap for a soulful, justice-driven, multi-faith ethos in Los Angeles and around the country. She is the senior and founding rabbi of IKAR, a Jewish community that launched in 2004 to reinvigorate Jewish practice and inspire people of faith to reclaim a moral and prophetic voice. IKAR quickly became one of the fastest growing and most influential Jewish congregations in the country, and is credited with sparking a rethinking of religious life in a time of unprecedented disaffection and declining affiliation.

Brous's 2016 TED talk, "Reclaiming Religion," has been viewed by more than 1.4 million people and translated into 23 languages. In 2013, she blessed President Obama and Vice President Biden at the Inaugural National Prayer Service, and returned in 2021 to bless President Biden and Vice President Harris, and then to lead the White House Passover Seder that spring. Brous spoke at the Women's March in Washington, D.C., in 2017 and at the opening of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice the following year. She was named #1 on the Newsweek/The Daily Beast list of the most influential Rabbis in America, and has been recognized by The Forward and the Jerusalem Post as one of the fifty most influential Jews. In 2021 she was one of CAP's 21 Faith Leaders to Watch, and she was featured on the cover of TIME magazine in a 2018 tribute to Norman Rockwell's Four Freedoms.

Brous is in the inaugural cohort of Auburn Seminary's Senior Fellows program, which unites top faith leaders working on the frontlines for justice. She also sits on the faculty of the Shalom Hartman Institute-North America and REBOOT, and serves on the International Council of the New Israel Fund, the national steering committee for the Poor People's Campaign, and the advisory board of Dayenu, a Jewish Call to Climate Justice.

She is a graduate of Columbia University, was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary, and lives in Los Angeles with her husband and three children.

Tickets are available on the BIC website and will include a free copy of her book along with an opportunity to purchase additional copies. Space is limited so watch for the ticket purchase link and don't miss this opportunity to hear one of the preeminent Jewish voices of our time.

More at Beth Israel in February

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes, and events. Services are being held in person and virtually, unless otherwise noted on the calendar. Below is a list of the links to participate virtually in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is now live streaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congrega-

All are welcome to attend.

Tot Shabbat

Saturday, February 10 and 24, 10:30 a.m.

Join us for a playful morning of Jewish songs, games, and stories. Challah and grape juice kiddush included. For kids ages one through first grade and their parents, but all are welcome to join.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin



tion AA MI). All links are also 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.

Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday, February 2, 6 p.m.

A Jewish Renewal-inspired singing service led by Rabbi Aura Ahuvia. The choir, dubbed the "Holy Levites," will be holding a rehearsal at 5:30 p.m. leading right up to and seamlessly into services.

Mondays at 4 p.m.

Led by Rabbi Robert Dobrusin, this class meets on Zoom on Monday afternoons from 4–5:15. We read the text in Hebrew or Aramaic with an accompanying English translation and all discussions will be in English so no familiarity with Hebrew is required. This winter we will be studying from the second chapter of the tractate Berachot which deals with the laws and traditions relating to the saying of the Shema.

Kabbalah Intensive with Rav Nadav

Monday, February 5 and 12, 6:30 p.m.

Come explore the mysticism, history, concepts, and theology of Kabbalah with Rav Nadav to deepen your understanding of Kabbalah, the texts, and your own Judaism. Join us! Class will take place upstairs at G and S 2010.

Camp Style Shabbat

Friday, February 9, 5:45 p.m.

Join us for a family-friendly dinner for all sponsored by the McLaughlin Family. Come enjoy a pasta bar dinner at 5:45 p.m. followed by the Friday evening service at 6:15 p.m. featuring Rav Nadav on the bimah and Rachel Lawrence-Lupton on guitar. Cap the night off with dessert after services. All are welcome to this free event. Please register on the Beth Israel website (bethisrael-aa.org).

Quiz Night

Saturday, February 10, 7 p.m.

Quiz Night is coming on Saturday night, February 10. The doors will open at 7 p.m. and the festivities will start promptly at 7:30 p.m. Snacks and drinks will be provided. Teams will generally be 10 people. Form your own team or just come out and you will be matched up with other trivia enthusiasts. List your team members on the registration form. The fee for the night is \$10 per person. It will be a challenging and stimulating evening of trivia. Come out and join the fun.

World Wide Wrap

Sunday, February 11, 10 a.m.

Beth Israel is proud to take part in the annual tradition of the World Wide Wrap. Join us as we lay tefillin beginning with Shacharit at 10 a.m. followed by a kid's learning experience (parents welcome) at 10:45 a.m. Contact Meg with questions (meg@bethisrael-aa.org).

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

Sundays at 5:00 p.m. (in-person in M and M Chapel and virtual)

Monday — Thursday at 7 p.m.

Friday Evening Services — in person and virtual

Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services — In person and virtual

Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. ■

Welcoming Shabbat with love and food

By Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

The January *Washtenaw Jewish News* arrived just a few days ago. I'm emotionally touched by the articles and the letters to the editor. Thank you to Clare for printing the articles even though it's taking me several days to read the entire paper. That happens when there is a lot to absorb and think about. So much is happening in our community and in our world and it is difficult to wrap our minds around everything. Sometimes I have the energy and joy to start the day with optimism and other days, not so much.

Family, friends, and rituals continue to help as does a good walk outside and good conversations with my husband and others. February is not always the easiest month in Michigan. The grey skies, the cold, and the aftermath of holidays and vacations can lead to feeling blah. I know this will pass and I know that daylight is getting longer every day. Who knows, we may even experience more than an hour of sunlight in February.

I thought about starting the column this month with the confession that I really don't feel like cooking anything. The only meals I

really give thought to or get excited about are Friday night dinners with our family and friends. I think about what people like and what they won't eat, which grandchildren are coming and what I can make for them and can I find something interesting or a new way to make salmon.

I usually have a theme like a particular cuisine or what the weather has been or any idea I read about in the New York Times food column or on a blog.

Here are some recipes for a Friday night Shabbat dinner that reflect my own tastes, but I hope some of these recipes will be enjoyed by others.

We usually start our dinner by waiting for everyone to get here. We have sliced cucumbers and celery, carrots, or chips with hummus.

tender, and the liquid reduces about ¼. This should take about 30 minutes. While the soup is cooking, heat the oven to 425 degrees and mix the remaining cauliflower and oil along with ½ tsp salt and roast in the oven for about 15 minutes, then stir the cauliflower and add in the rest of the beans and roast another 15 minutes until everything is crisp and the cauliflower is golden. I didn't have the cannellini, but I added a whole package of cherry tomatoes and a large, sweet potato, peeled, and chopped, to roast along with the cauliflower. When the soup has cooled a bit use an immersion blender or the food processor to puree the soup. You can blend to the texture you like. Then add the frozen peas and reheat the soup for another 3-4 minutes. Add in the lemon zest and juice and stir. You can add the roasted cauliflower and beans to top each bowl. We used the roasted vegetables as a warm salad.

Onion Tart

Cook in Israel by Orly Ziv

Serves 2-4

I watched an episode of *America's Test Kitchen* on PBS. They were making a very complicated onion pie from scratch that looked fantastic, but I wasn't going to bother. This recipe is more my style although the exact instructions are not given. The TV version used a lot more butter in the dough and only heavy cream.

Olive oil and butter (but no measures given)
4-5 white and/ or red onions, sliced
1 tsp salt
1 tsp fresh thyme or ½ tsp dry
1 sheet puff pastry, defrosted
2 eggs
1 cup milk or heavy cream
1 cup grated cheddar cheese

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Heat some oil and butter in a pan and fry the onions until they are transparent. Add the salt and thyme and mix well. Place the puff pastry dough in a greased rectangular baking dish. I'm not sure how big the dish is but the puff pastry should fit snugly in it. Arrange the onions on the top of the dough. Mix the eggs, milk, and cheese and pour the mixture over the onions. Bake until lightly browned and crisp. Slice and serve.

Fish in Tomato Sauce Jewish-Turkish Style

Cook in Israel by Orly Ziv

Serves 6 but add another vegetable or salad or grain to the meal.

Olive oil
6 fish fillets, try bronzino or tilapia or cod
1 onion, chopped
1-2 tbs tomato paste
1-2 cloves garlic, sliced
3-4 tomatoes, diced (use a can of diced tomatoes)
Chopped cilantro or parsley
1 hot pepper, sliced (optional) or use a mild or sweet pepper, sliced
1 tsp sugar (also optional)
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Fry the chopped onions in olive oil until softened. Add the tomato paste, garlic, tomatoes, and cilantro or parsley until the tomatoes, if fresh, are softened or the canned are warmed. Place the fish in a large baking pan and pour the sauce over. Bake for about 10 minutes or until the fish is cooked through and the sauce has thickened. Add more cilantro or parsley to sprinkle on top for serving. Another option is to sauté the fish fillets on both sides until cooked through. It will only take a few minutes per side. Spoon the sauce over them to serve.

Chicken with Lemon, Tarragon, and Onion

Serves 4-8.

I feel a little guilty using only vegetarian or fish recipes in this column. Just because I haven't cooked any chicken in a few years doesn't mean you shouldn't. This was one of my favorite ways to roast a chicken.

1 or 2 whole chickens, depending on how many people are eating.
2 lemons, cut into wedges
2 onions, cut into chunks
Fresh or dried tarragon, a little goes a long way. You could also use rosemary if you prefer
Olive oil

I rinsed and dried the chickens. Stuff the inside with some of the onions and lemons and a little tarragon. Rub some olive oil on the skin of the chickens. Add potatoes, carrots, sweet potatoes, or any other vegetable you like to roast to the pan. Add more onions and lemon and a little more tarragon. Roast in a 375 degree oven for about an hour, turning the chicken over once.

Paleo Banana Cream Pie

Whole Kitchen Sink Blog, by Bailey

I was thinking about a vegetarian cookbook I bought back in the 1970s because I read about a "healthy" yogurt pie with a crust made of wheat germ. It was the 70s. I found the cookbook but not the recipe, so I went searching for another. Here it is.

Crust
1½ cups almonds or pecans
½ cup almond flour
6 Medjool dates, pitted
2 tbs softened or melted coconut oil
½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp vanilla extract
Pinch of salt
Pie Filling
2 cans full-fat coconut cream, refrigerated for several hours or overnight.
2-3 bananas, sliced
¼ cup pure maple syrup
½ tbs vanilla
¼ tsp cinnamon
Topping
1-2 more bananas

½ cup chopped almonds or pecans

Add the crust ingredients together in a food processor or high-powered blender and blend until the almonds and dates are finely chopped and the mixture is thick and sticky. If the nuts aren't well blended add up to 1 tbs water. Line an 8-inch glass pie pan, or an 8-inch springform pan, with parchment paper or a little melted coconut oil. Press the crust ingredients into the pan evenly but not as far as the edges of the pan. Layer 1-2 sliced bananas over the crust. In a bowl, add the 2 cans of coconut cream (but leave out any remaining liquid), the maple syrup, and the cinnamon and vanilla. Use a hand or standing mixer to beat until light and airy. Pour over the crust and top with more bananas or nuts if you want.

Cracked-Top Chocolate Cookies

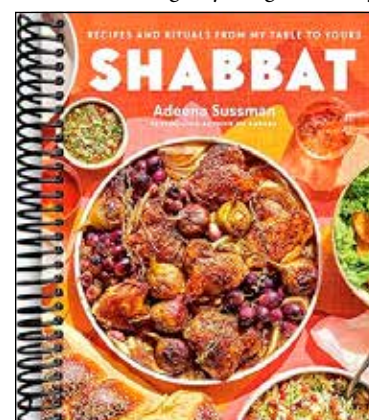
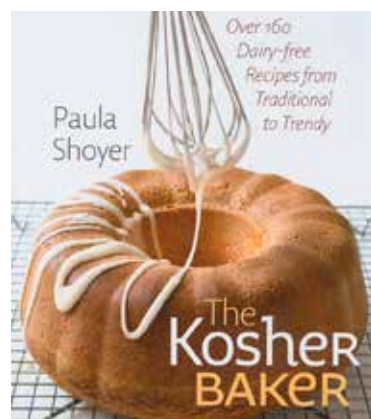
The Kosher Baker by Paula Shoyer

Makes 6-7 dozen.

This is the very best kosher and parve baking cookbook I have found. Over the years I've made and written about some of her recipes. The only problem I have is finding parve (not dairy) margarine, so I often use butter and use the recipe for dairy meals. I have tried the vegan products, but I don't love them. This recipe uses canola oil which is parve.

¾ cup canola or vegetable oil
2 cups sugar
1 cup unsweetened cocoa
4 large eggs
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
½ cup confectioners' sugar for coating the cookies, optional

In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, sugar, and cocoa. Add the eggs one at a time and whisk well after each addition. Add the vanilla and whisk again. Add the flour, baking powder, and salt and mix well with a wooden spoon or silicon spatula. Place the dough in the refrigerator for 1 hour. Line 3 baking sheets with parchment paper or bake in batches. Use a tablespoon to scoop up the dough and roll into balls about 1 inch in diameter. If you want to coat the cookies in confectioners' sugar, place in a small bowl. Roll the cookies in the sugar until they are heavily coated and then place the balls on the prepared baking sheets about 1½ inches apart. Put the sheets in the freezer for about 15 minutes or longer until you want to bake them. Bake at 350 degrees for 12-16 minutes, depending on how crunchy or chewy you like your cookies. Either way they will look soft, and they will spread and crack on top when they are almost done. Let cool on baking racks. ■



Lentil, White Bean, and Cauliflower Soup

Shabbat by Adeena Sussman

Serves 8

I made this soup without the white beans. All I had were black and it was fine. The soup is thick and filling and delicious. Yes, it's a type of lentil soup but very different texture and flavor.

6 tbs olive oil
1 large onion, chopped (about 2 cups)
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp ground turmeric
1 tsp sweet paprika
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp dried red pepper flakes (I didn't use them)
2 tbs tomato paste (I didn't have any tomato paste so I used tomato puree)
6 cups low sodium vegetable or chicken broth
1 medium cauliflower separated and chopped into small florets. About 6 cups
2 cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed and drained
1 cup red lentils
1½ cups frozen peas
Zest and juice of 1 large lemon, about 1½ tsp zest and 3 tbs juice

Heat 2½ tbs olive oil in a large soup pot and add the onions, stirring often until they are golden. Then add the garlic, turmeric, paprika, cumin, and red pepper if using that, and cook, stirring for about 2 minutes. Now add the broth, 4 cups of chopped cauliflower, 1¾ cup of the beans, the red lentils, and 2 tsp of salt. Bring to a boil and then reduce to medium low and cook until the cauliflower is

Award-winning authors to present to online book club

The *Ones Who Remember: Second-Generation Voices of the Holocaust* is a 16-chapter anthology written by members of Temple Beth Emeth's Generations After group. Since its publication in 2022 (see WJN, February 2022), the authors have delivered almost 80 live and Zoom presentations, reaching readers all over the United States and internationally (in Israel, Canada, the U.K., and Switzerland). In addition, the book is a Foreword INDIES Gold award winner in the Anthologies category, a Nautilus Silver award winner for the best memoir describing heroic journeys, and a finalist in four other award competitions.

Nautilus has invited the book's editors and authors to be part of its inaugural online book club. The six-session series will be held on six

consecutive Monday nights from 8–9 p.m. EST, starting on February 12 and concluding on March 18. Registration will be limited to 20 participants.

The book club will feature a different topic each week with a variety of authors. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in live discussion with the authors and will have access to curated resources to supplement weekly themes and, more generally, the second-generation experience. In addition, sessions will include guided practices to encourage self-reflection and to experience compassion, gratitude, and tolerance.

For more information, please visit <https://www.nautilusbookawards.com/theoneswhoremember> ■

Montecello *continued from page 18*

"We were so touched by that gesture, a wonderful example of how meaningful the trip was for my mother. That day wound up being one of the really great highlights of the trip."

The Deepest Roots

Uriah Phillips Levy's great-grandfather, Samuel Nunez (1668–1744), was born Diogo Nunes Ribeiro in Portugal during the Portuguese Inquisition, the descendant of Jews who had fled to Portugal to escape the Spanish Inquisition. An observant Jew who presented as Catholic, Samuel was the personal physician to the King and the Grand Inquisitor of Portugal. Eventually found out to be Jews, his entire family was imprisoned, tortured, and then freed by the Grand Inquisitor who needed Samuel's medical attention. As quickly as possible, the family prepared to leave Portugal for London which they did in 1726. Once safe, Samuel and his sons were circumcised to prove their Jewish identity and he and his wife remarried in a Jewish ceremony.

In 1733, the year the colony was established, the family arrived in Georgia where Samuel was for many years the only physician. In acknowledgement of his successful treatment of victims of a yellow fever outbreak, Georgia founder General James Edward Oglethorpe granted the family permission to acquire land despite orders from the London Trustees to avoid a concentration of Jews in Savannah by removing them from the area altogether. Oglethorpe also valued the Levy family's reputed skills in cultivating of the prized Madeira grape. Madeira wine, a favorite of Thomas Jefferson, was used to toast the Declaration of Independence upon its signing in 1776 and was served following George Washington's inauguration in 1789.

Many of Samuel Nunez's descendants are recognized as founding members of major American synagogues in New York City, Philadelphia, and Newport, Rhode Island. These include Kahal Kadosh Mikveh Israel, The Hope of Israel, the oldest Jewish congregation in the city of Philadelphia and the second oldest congregation in the United States. In 2011, the synagogue raised a six-foot bronze statue of UPL, who is quoted as declaring, "I am an American, a sailor, and a Jew."

A Levy at UMich

The University of Michigan William Clements Library holds comprehensive personal records including the original memoir of Captain Jonas Phillips Levy (1808–1883), UPL's

older brother, JML's father, and Nancy and Rob Hoffman's direct ancestor. A veteran of the Mexican-American War, JPL also served in the Peruvian Navy, for which the Peruvian government awarded him the "freedom of the country" medal. Well-connected in the corridors of power, JPL was instrumental in getting UPL's statue of Jefferson placed in the Capitol Rotunda. He also was among the founders of the Washington Hebrew Congregation of Washington, D.C., where he led the successful effort to secure legislation, signed into law by President Franklin Pierce on June 2, 1856, to ensure their right to purchase land for the synagogue — the only synagogue in U.S. history to be chartered by an act of Congress.

At Home in Ann Arbor — for a While

Rob's father, Elliot Hoffman, was an entertainment lawyer who was instrumental in the leadership of the Newport Jazz Festival where Rob spent many summers. "One of my earliest memories is meeting Louis Armstrong. He said, 'Slap some skin on me, Son,' which of course I did," recalled Rob.

Now head of the local archivist firm Priceless Preservation, Rob was a reporter with the Ann Arbor News before its sad demise. "I like to say I'm probably the only journalist who has interviewed Michael Phelps, Tom Brady, and Shaquille O'Neal all in a three-year period." Looking to the future, Rob is entertaining the prospect of returning the Levy family line to Portugal with a possible move there in coming months.

In the meantime, "This story deserves to be known and heard. My family's commitment to Monticello is the major reason it's around today. Jefferson was a great man but not a great businessman. His estate could easily have been victim of any number of catastrophes from neglect.

"The film *The Levys of Monticello* is very powerful, not only in the way it captures the very essence of my family's efforts to preserve Monticello, but in [its depiction of] the undercurrents of antisemitism that continue to this day including, ironically enough, Charlottesville's 'Unite the Right' march. Before the film, I had an enormous amount of respect for Uriah. I came out of the film with an even deeper admiration and appreciation for his nephew (and my uncle) Jefferson Monroe Levy, who weathered all kinds of challenges to help make Monticello what it is today." ■

JFS new carryout Shabbat dinners

By Candace Bulkley and Trina Fuller

Candace and Trina became friends in the Temple Beth Emeth adult b-mitzvah class that graduated in 2022. They will be honing their palates, visiting, and writing about a variety of independent, locally owned Washtenaw County restaurants, catering to a variety of dietary preferences.



We were intrigued after receiving a couple of emails with details about Jewish Family Services' new Nourish Creations Family Meals. Dinner for a family of four, carried out on a Friday afternoon, at a reasonable price. A simple carryout dinner order that could help support the heroic efforts of JFS sounded too good to be true. But it wasn't — it was great and we can't wait to order again.

Nourish Kitchen has been a part of the JFS offerings for several years, providing lunches at their WISE events, and delivering meals for the home-bound. In May 2023, they opened a new commercial kitchen and expanded their offerings to the community. In addition to the monthly family meals, they are available to cater small to medium breakfast and lunch events. All revenue from Nourish Creations will go into JFS programs serving needs in our community.

Two delicious-sounding family meals were offered in December: the \$60 Winter Salmon Dinner included garlic maple glazed salmon, roasted root vegetables, a choice of holiday salad or spinach chickpea soup, and rolls. The \$50 Israeli-Inspired Dinner included spinach and feta bourekas, choice of Israeli salad or spinach chickpea soup, and baba ganoush with pita chips.

Due to an allergy and taste preferences we chose the Israeli inspired meal, which to our surprise upon unpacking contained both the salad and soup. This was not a problem for our work-week weary tasters!

The soup was an excellent starter. Its broth was light and deeply flavored, complementing the earthy chickpeas and spinach. The non-traditional Israeli salad was very good too. Tossed with an herby vinaigrette, the rustic-cut fresh tasting vegetables stood up well to generous chunks of feta cheese mixed throughout. This treatment of the ingredients lent the salad a more substantial heft — perfect for mid-December. One of our tasters would have been perfectly satisfied to have had the entire salad to themselves for dinner.

Our diners were pleasantly surprised when they finally got around to trying the Baba Ganoush with pita chips. It had a lovely silky texture and mild flavor, which was wel-

come to a "smoky" food-averse member of our group. Even after we had finished eating, we kept going back for additional nibbles of it with the crispy pita chips. Our entree, spinach and feta bourekas, were crispy puff pastry triangles generously filled with spinach and feta cheese and topped with everything bagel seasoning. Perfectly portioned at two bourekas per person, these little bundles of joy satisfied our senses, crispy, cheesy, a bit garlicky, and a bit salty.

Overall, this carryout dinner was a success on many levels. It tasted good, that's really important. The portions were generous, so much so that if you are single or a couple, you could yield two or three meals from the contents. In our busy lives there is something nice about occasionally taking a night off from cooking or stashing the food to enjoy for the rest of the weekend. Knowing that you are supporting JFS by purchasing the monthly Friday night meal will satiate a different need, investing in the needs of our community.

If there are any hairs to split here, no reheating instructions were included with the meals. The pickup window is between 3–5 p.m., which is an early dinner time for many of us. When you pick it up, the meal is hot and ready to eat and that is perfect for some of us, but if you normally eat at a later hour, the food will need to be reheated. It would be a shame to compromise the quality of the food for lack of directions. Our bourekas arrived in a tightly covered container, resulting in a soggy pastry due to steam and the lag time between pickup and dining. It was easily remedied by placing the bourekas in a low oven to crisp them — microwaving would have been a disaster for the puff pastry. The Nourish Creations kitchen is a work in progress and process improvements will come in their own time.

Michelle Malamis, JFS Director of Business and Philanthropic Advancement, spoke to us about this endeavor and said, "We are so excited to see the success so far with our Friday Night Meals, Chanukah Cookies, and small event jobs. The goal is to grow the catering business to the point where we can be less reliant on grants and other philanthropy to support our food and other programs serving our community. We are so grateful to the community members who have supported us over the past few months and look forward to serving the community long into the future." These diners certainly look forward to seeing what the new year brings for Nourish Creations and to ordering again soon. February's dinner will be on Valentine's Day — February 14 — and the international dinner will be Central American. Go to <http://give.jfsannarbor.org/ge/nourish> to order.

Nourish Creations @ Jewish Family Services

Pickup of pre-ordered meals: 2245 S. State St., Ann Arbor

<https://give.jfsannarbor.org/ge/nourish>

michellem@jfsannarbor.org ■

Noted China scholar and family matriarch, Merle Goldman

Merle Goldman died peacefully in her Cambridge, Massachusetts home on November 16, 2023.

A few years ago, Merle was given a coffee mug decorated with the quote, "Proceed as if success is inevitable." Rarely has a mug so perfectly captured someone's approach to life. Despite growing up at a time when most women did not pursue careers, Goldman proceeded to distinguish herself as an



academic heavyweight and a powerful human rights advocate. She lived life with an eternal optimism and joy that seemed to prevent her from seeing barriers, a trait that was particularly valuable for a woman of her generation.

Merle Dorothy Rosenblatt was born March 12, 1931, in New Haven, Connecticut. Her parents Jacques and Rose Rosenblatt were immigrants from Romania and Belarus. Like many Jewish immigrants of their time, they opened and ran a small

business. Her parents, along with most of their siblings, worked together to open independent stores in different American cities that they called the Mill End Shop. Most of them focused on selling fabric remnants and offering upholstery — a great Depression-era business.

After graduating from the Gateway School in New Haven, Merle distinguished herself and trained as a scholar at Sarah Lawrence College, where she later became a trustee. Merle enrolled at Radcliffe in 1953 in pursuit of an M.A. in Chinese area studies, followed by a Harvard PhD focused on Chinese history. The field of East Asian Studies was just emerging at American universities, and Merle studied with and alongside some of the giants of the field, including John K. Fairbank, Ben Schwartz, Henry Rosovsky, Roderick MacFarquhar, and Ezra Vogel. For six decades, she was a vibrant and creative affiliate of the Fairbank Center for East Asian Studies at Harvard University, where she wrote her books and nudged an incredible community of scholars and colleagues to join together for lively lunchtime discussions of China, Japan, and the world beyond.

She became a tenured full professor at Boston University where she taught from 1972–2001 and was noted as a leading thinker in the field of modern Chinese history. Her research focused on the relationship between China's intellectuals and the authoritarian regime of the Chinese Communist Party. Her 1967 book, *Literary Dissent in Communist China*, made her one of the first American scholars to highlight the lack

of intellectual freedom that existed in China at a moment when many academics glorified China's attempt to reinvent society. Her subsequent publications *China's Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent* (1981), *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China: Political Reform in the Deng Xiaoping Decade* (1994), and *From Comrade to Citizen: The Struggle for Political Rights in Communist China* (2005) further solidified her reputation as the go-to expert on the struggles of China's intellectuals. She was interested in life beyond the academy, publishing explanatory pieces in publications like the *New York Times* and *Boston Globe*. She served on the board of Human Rights Watch and was a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1993–1994. In 1998, she became the co-author of *China: A New History* with her predeceased mentor, John K. Fairbank. In the course of her work, she met with U.S. Presidents as well as Chinese leaders, including Deng Xiaoping.

Goldman was married for 64 years to Marshall I. Goldman, who was a noted authority on the Soviet economy. The two met in the summer of 1949. Merle naturally asked what Marshall was reading and was impressed to hear that he was studying Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*. After Marshall received his draft notice on their honeymoon, Merle ended up spending almost a year with him at Fort Hood in Texas, where Marshall served in the Army. The couple then moved to Cambridge for their graduate work at Harvard and remained in the Boston area for the rest of their lives.

Merle and Marshall traveled extensively through China and Russia, often leading alumni trips for Harvard University and Wellesley College, and always comparing notes on the tensions between economic reform and political freedoms. They were a rare couple for their generation — two high-powered academics who advised presidents and policymakers. But nothing gave Merle more joy than time spent with her family. She relished the opportunity to share a Shabbat meal with children and grandchildren and remained a spirited Jewish soul through her last hours.

Her partnership with Marshall was an inspiring model of a mutually supportive marriage, with high expectations for themselves and their children. Though she wasn't heavily invested in preparing Thanksgiving and Passover meals, she relished the holiday gatherings and loved taking her grandchildren to the Wellesley Booksmith afterward to pick out any book they desired.

Merle is predeceased by Marshall as well as by her beloved brother, Adolph Rosenblatt, both of whom died in 2017. She leaves behind four children: Ethan Goldman of West Hartford, Connecticut, Dr. Avra Goldman of Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dr. Karla Goldman of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Seth Goldman of Bethesda, Maryland. She loved being with her 12 grandchildren and was thrilled to meet her four young great-granddaughters.

Merle Goldman lived her life as if success was inevitable. And it was. ■

Burton Caine, Temple law professor emeritus, has died at 95

By Gary Miles, originally published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 21, 2023

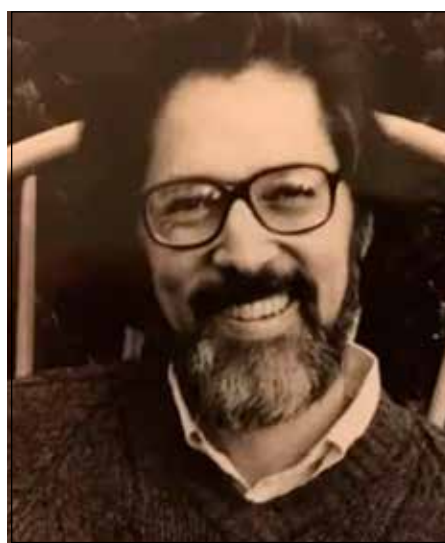
Burton Caine, 95, of Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, a law professor emeritus at Temple University, longtime litigation and antitrust lawyer, former president of the American Civil Liberties Union of Greater Philadelphia, Hebrew scholar, prolific writer, peaceful protester, and veteran, died Thursday, December 7, 2023, of aspiration pneumonia at Lankenau Medical Center.

A lifelong intellectual and social activist, Professor Caine traveled the world for decades, lecturing and advising politicians, religious and business leaders, judges, students, and others about constitutional law, civil rights, the First Amendment, antitrust, and paths to peace. He taught law students at Temple from 1977 to 2018 and instructed classes abroad in Japan, China, and Israel.

Over the arc of his 66-year career, he discussed civil liberties with Communist Party leaders and debated the death penalty on national TV in China. He went to the Soviet Union twice to support political dissidents and assembled diplomats and others at symposia in the United States to address peace in the Middle East.

He marched against the Vietnam War and later represented efforts to remove the Ten Commandments from government buildings and grounds. In 1987, he advised the legislature of the Philippines as it crafted the nation's new constitution.

"He was an activist who always stood up for what was right, and, through his actions, taught me to do the same," said his daughter, Sara Caine Kornfeld.



Professor Caine and his wife, Shulamith, spent 71 years in what she called "a very fulfilling marriage."

As a lawyer, Professor Caine defended disadvantaged soldiers in Georgia and Alabama for the Air Force's Judge Advocate General Corps in the 1950s. He handled litigation and antitrust cases in the 1960s and '70s for the law firm Wolf, Block, Schorr & Solis-Cohen, and he successfully sued Philadelphia in 1979 as general counsel for the ACLU when Mayor Frank Rizzo wanted to violate the separation of church and state during a visit by the pope.

"I hope, when I teach American consti-

tutional law, people will not write it down because it's in a book," he told the *Harvard Law Bulletin* in 2002. "I hope it will govern their lives."

Professor Caine was a member of the ACLU for 70 years and president of the local chapter from 1983 to 1987. He made it a point to visit protesters, conscientious objectors, and other activists who had been jailed, and he won the ACLU state chapter's vigilance award for service in 2003.

In a tribute, Peter Goldberger, president of the board of directors of the ACLU of Pennsylvania, said Professor Caine was a "teacher, champion, and inspiration" who was "utterly dedicated to the work and principles of the ACLU and one of our greatest members of all time."

He was director of Temple University's Israel Program, chair of the board for Americans for Religious Liberty, and chair of the Greater Philadelphia Lawyers Committee for Soviet Jewry. He also taught trial practice at the University of Pennsylvania for a few years before joining Temple. He also taught trial practice at the University of Pennsylvania for a few years before joining Temple.

He traveled often to Israel, pored over biblical Hebrew texts, and served as president of the board for the Solomon Schechter Day School, now Perelman Jewish Day School. He debated all sorts of legal issues on TV talk shows and at countless seminars and forums, and published hundreds of articles, editorial opinions, and letters to the editor in the *Inquirer*, *Daily News*, and other

publications.

"He had a strong and relentless intellect," said his son Gidon.

Born April 4, 1928, in Darby, Burton Caine took violin lessons as a boy and was a star on the John Bartram High School debate team. He earned a bachelor's degree in English from Penn in 1949 and law degree from Harvard University in 1952. Afterward, he served two years as a first lieutenant in the Air Force.

He met Shulamith Wechter in high school during a debate, and they married in 1952. They had daughter Sara and sons Uri and Gidon, and lived in Center City, Elkins Park, and Bala Cynwyd.

Professor Caine spoke fluent Hebrew at home, enjoyed classical music, and attended Philadelphia Orchestra concerts. He read history books and encouraged spirited debates on controversial topics at the nightly dinner table. He and his wife also hosted countless other activists and community leaders at memorable dinner parties.

"He was gentle, funny, and sweet as a father," said son Uri. "He was an idealist. And when he was serious, he meant business."

In addition to his wife and children, Professor Caine is survived by eight grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, two brothers, and other relatives including his nephew Rabbi Nadav Caine of Beth Israel Congregation in Ann Arbor. Two brothers died earlier. ■

Sallie Kochin Abelson, business entrepreneur and retired development director at UM Hillel

By Gary Miles, originally published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 2, republished with permission

Sallie Kochin Abelson, 78, formerly of Havertown, Pennsylvania, founder and chief executive officer of Contemporary Designs gift company, and retired director of devel-



opment at University of Michigan Hillel, died Saturday, December 23, 2023, of heart failure at a nursing center in Richmond, Virginia.

Ms. Abelson founded Contemporary Designs in 1978 after creating a Jewish trivia board game called Aliyah. Later, she added greeting cards, stickers, stationery, books, puzzles, pencils, T-shirts, and hundreds of other gift items to her eclectic inventory.

She traveled to trade shows across the country, marketed Aliyah in 14 states, and eventually opened a manufacturing plant in Iowa that employed more than 50 people. It's not surprising, her family said, that Hanukkah and Thanksgiving were her favorite holidays. "Her superpower was generosity," said her son David. "Giving gifts was her thing."

Seeking new ways to connect with young Sunday School students while living

in Ames, Iowa, in the 1970s, Ms. Abelson dreamed up the idea for Aliyah. Players start the game in the United States, and the first to reach Israel is the winner.

Players advance by answering questions in 27 categories about Jewish history and culture. For example, how many days did Queen Esther tell the Jewish people to fast? The correct answer is three.

People loved the game almost immediately, and demand for it grew at schools, synagogues, and, later, retail stores. "I wanted to explain the traditions, so people have a deeper understanding of Judaism," Ms. Abelson told *Tablet Magazine* in 2021. "I hope they learned not just what we do, but why we do things."

She consulted with a nearby toy factory to see how Parker Brothers made its popular board games and started her own operation in 1978 in her garage and basement. She organized the questions and oversaw production while relatives and neighbors were hired to assemble the tokens, dice, cards, and other parts of the game.

Later, she opened a manufacturing plant with printing presses and hired artists, designers, accountants, and a sales staff. "The whole business ran on her creative energy," said her son David.

Inventory reached 1,500 different gift and novelty items with an annual revenue of nearly \$2 million by the time she closed the business in 1997. She estimated in 2021 that she sold more than 10,000 copies of Aliyah.

"Jews are pretty proud of who they are, and they want to celebrate that pride," she told the *Detroit Jewish News* in 1993. Her son Michael said in a tribute: "She had a rare knack for combining a deep commitment to Jewish education and culture with an incredible creative and entrepreneurial spirit."

Ms. Abelson graduated from Michigan with a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1967 and returned as the school's Hillel di-

rector of development from 1998 to 2014. In that role, she helped support more than 40 Jewish student groups and raised millions of dollars for Michigan Hillel's award-winning programs and events.

She was profiled by Emily Eisbruch in the March 2008 edition of the *Washtenaw Jewish News* after she donated the archives of Contemporary Designs to the university's Jewish Heritage Collection. She said: "I am really proud that Contemporary Designs was one of the pioneers in the development of modern designs for Jewish materials."

Born August 23, 1945, in Philadelphia, Sara-Ann Kochin grew up in Havertown. Her great-grandparents, Abe and Anna Levis, founded the Levis hot dog restaurant in Philadelphia in 1895, and it remained in her family until 1977.

Called Sallie throughout her life, Ms. Abelson was an outstanding student at Haverford High School. She played varsity field hockey and basketball and graduated in 1963. "She was a star," said her older brother Levis Kochin. "She was difficult to follow."

After her bachelor's degree at Michigan, she earned a master's degree in counseling at Pennsylvania State University in 1970. She married Geoff Abelson and had sons Michael and David. They moved to Iowa and divorced later.

An active Democrat who raised money for and worked on many political campaigns, Ms. Abelson visited President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore at the White House, and was recognized for supporting candidates in Iowa.

She valued experiences over possessions and was an expert at organizing extravagant parties and important events. She cultivated lifelong friends and was, her family said, a proud breast cancer survivor. "What a gift it was to have known Sallie," a friend said in an

online tribute. "Her joy and positivity were infectious."

She moved from Michigan to Richmond a few years ago to be close to her son Michael and his family. Her son David said: "Sallie was a force of nature and had a magical way of making things happen."

In addition to her sons and brother, Ms. Abelson is survived by two grandchildren and other relatives.

Services were held December 28, 2023.

Donations in her name may be made to Hillel International, Charles and Lynn Schusterman International Center, Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Building, 800 Eighth St. NW, Washington, D.C., 20001. ■

Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to the families of:

Morton Daniel Pikstein, father of Marla Linderman Richelew (Joshua), and Adam Mitchel. Grandfather of Naomi, Joshua, Zenah, Yakirah, and Avivah. December 26. Sallie Abelson on her death, December 23. Yuval Warshai, January 8

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

Toby Freddolino on his bar mitzvah, February 24.

Lori Bennett and Steve Stein on the birth of their grandchildren; Cyvia Emila Ashton Stein, daughter of Libby Ashton and Bennett Stein, and Ellis Brooks Stein Fahlsing, son of Allie and Charles Fahlsing. ■

The giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai

By Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, Chabad Ann Arbor

On Shabbat of February 3, the Torah portion is Yisro. It contains the narrative of the most definitive event in human history: the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.



In order to understand what happened at Mount Sinai, we need to examine the concept of Torah itself.

As wisdom, the Torah is Divine, and therefore higher than any other body of knowledge on earth — "For it is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations."

As a moral guide, the Torah is the epitome of all virtue, superior to any code of ethics that can ever be devised by man.

All man-made ideologies and schools of philosophy contain an admixture of good and evil, truth and falsehood; in fact, any element of truth found in a particular ideology is merely a derivative of the eternal truth of Torah.

Yet the greatness of Torah far supersedes our human and therefore limited perception.

The Torah is intimately connected to all of existence, as G-d created the world ac-

cording to the "blueprints" contained in the Torah. Its minutest details directly affect all of creation, determining the amount and type of G-dly influence present in the world.

Observing this fundamental relationship between Torah and reality, King David declared in Psalms, "Your statutes were music to me in my dwelling place."

And yet, as explained in the Talmud, G-d was not pleased by these words of praise. King David was reprimanded for comparing the Divine wisdom of the Torah to something as mundane as song. The Torah is even greater than the mere fact that physical reality is dependent on it.

What then, is the essence of Torah?

Chasidic teachings explain that Torah is simply the wisdom and will of G-d, united with Him in absolute unity.

G-d and the Torah are one entity. The Holy One, Blessed Be He, has granted us the

opportunity to grasp the Divine by allowing us to partake of His eternal wisdom.

All other attributes and characteristics of Torah — its unlimited enlightenment, its ethical superiority, its direct influence on existence — are only secondary to this fact, the logical outgrowth of its essential nature.

As Torah is a part of an infinite, omnipotent G-d, it is only natural that its perfection extends to all these other areas as well.

This eternal quality is most obviously manifested in the inner, esoteric part of the Torah, the teachings of Chasidut.

Chasidut is not limited to one particular realm, but rather animates and illuminates all of Torah, which is why it is known as "the light of the Torah." The study of Chasidut therefore serves to prepare the world for the revelation of Moshiach and the Era of Redemption, when "the knowledge of G-d will cover the world like the waters of the ocean cover the sea bed." ■



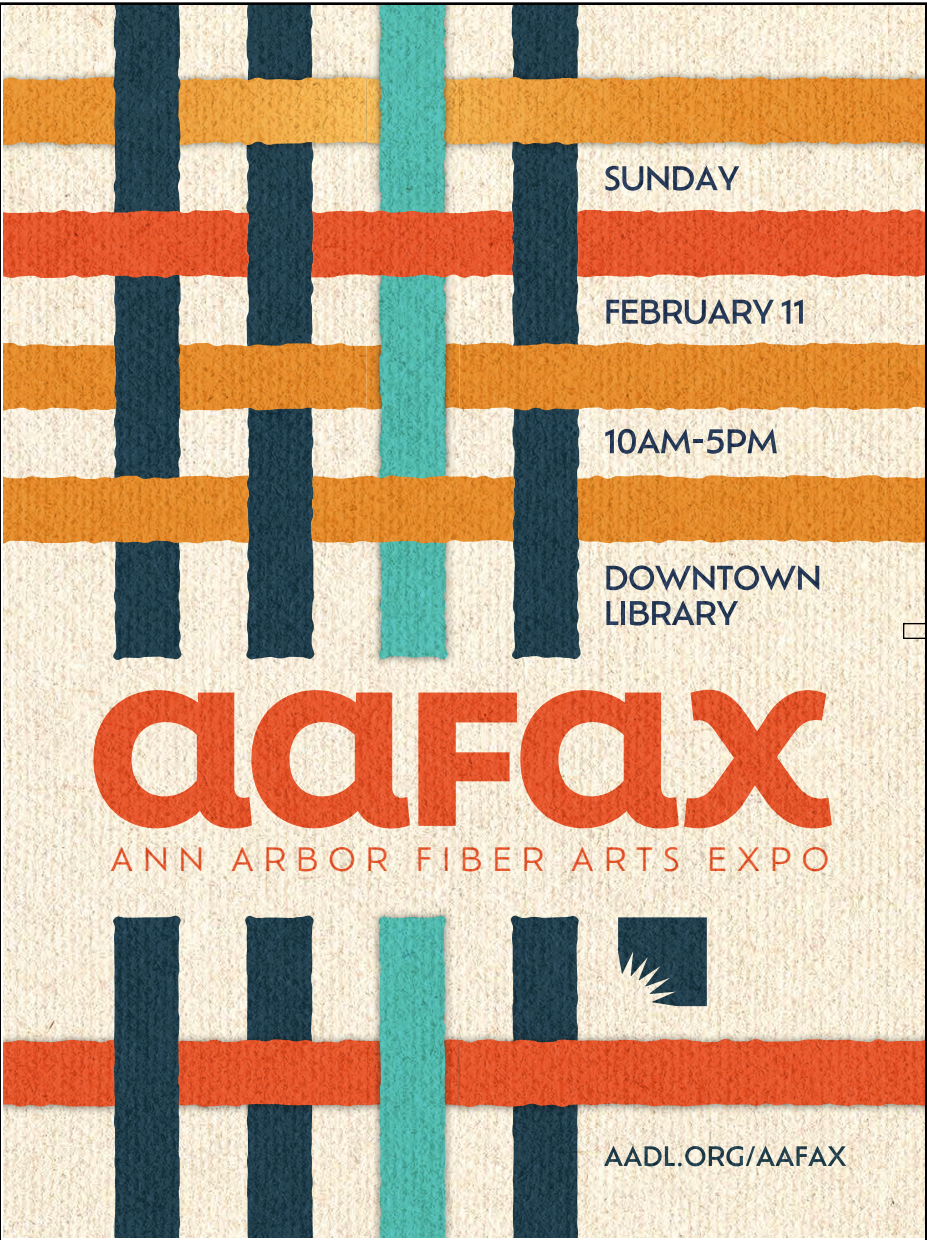
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Make a Gift: <https://giving.umich.edu/basket/fund/702177>.

While studying for technical degrees, the Michigan Marching Band (MMB) taught both Cheryl and me the lessons we would use for the rest of our lives, showing us how hard we could work and what the payoff could be. While at UM, the Society of Women Engineers guided Cheryl to her career in Biomedical Engineering and Medical Physics. Then after one of the many band marriages, we spent 30 years discussing how to encourage women to pursue technical careers, as Cheryl had done.

All her life, Cheryl lived to help others. Just weeks before she died, she told a friend, “I want to help others until the end.” Then she smiled. “And after that if I can.” With this scholarship, she can. The Cheryl Penpraze White and Gordon A. White Scholarship will be awarded to a member of the MMB who is also in the Society of Women Engineers. Cheryl would approve, so I know we’re doing the right thing.

-- Gordon White, entering class of 1977



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