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Avishay Hayut explains hazui and doing what you can

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WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

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Volume XXIV Number 7

FREE

Klezmer at the J to support JCOR

Deborah Meyers Greene

The joyful sounds of klezmer by Schmaltz, The Klezmephonics, and Klezmer R&D will reverberate through the JCC on Sunday, April 7, from 4 to 6 p.m. for Jewish Congregations Organized for Resettlement's (JCOR) second annual fundraising concert. Listening, clapping, toe tapping, and dancing all will be encouraged, as will eating. The music will be followed by tables resplendent with delectable comestibles prepared under the supervision of Rabbi Will Keller. Tickets are available at jcorannarbor.org and at the door.

Why is JCOR raising funds?

On the final day of January, an exhausted Syrian refugee family of five began their first day in the United States. Two lucky JCOR volunteers and Jewish Family Services' Amanda Fahim were onsite at Detroit Metro Airport to greet Mom and Dad and three boys, ages 14, 10, and 8. The oldest — who stands about 5-foot-8 and loves math and soccer — is the spitting image of his father; the middle one looks very much like his mother, and the eight-year-old is a fine blend of the two.

No one, they said, had taken more than intermittent naps during their 48-hour series of flights from the Middle East to DTW. After friendly but tentative greetings, the family and their reception

Next stop was the JFS van which could be seen through the nearby sliding glass doors. As Mom and her youngest walked hand-in-hand through the door, the boy uttered a quick, enthusiastic phrase, simultaneously thrusting his free

to make a home. And they need housing before they are allowed to enroll their boys in school — a concern they have raised repeatedly during their first week here.

In the meantime, the family is adjust-



Schmaltz

party proceeded to the baggage area, where, miraculously, everything was there. The extremely well-organized family had five suitcases, all the same make and form, but each a different color and each a different size, to match its owner: largest for Dad, smallest in bright yellow for the 8-year-old, and everything between, in order.



The Klezmephonics

arm upward, hand balled up in a small fist. Mom translated: "We are in America!" An exceptional, Double-Wow! spine-tingling moment.

Until long-term housing can be secured, the family is residing in temporary quarters — a single room for five people, including three boys, one of whom has to bed down in a sleeping bag. JCOR and JFS are collaborating in the search which is top priority because they need housing



Klezmer R&D

ing remarkably well, practicing their limited English at every opportunity, and actively exploring their surroundings. On an unseasonably warm, early-February family outing to Gallup Park, Dad remarked at on how beautiful Ann Arbor is. "The best!" his 14-year-old chimed in.

JCOR will subsidize several of the family's

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Kavod from colleagues for Cantor Hayut

By Robin Little, second in a four-part series in honor of Cantor Regina Hayut

Cantor Regina Hayut knew right away that Temple Beth Emeth would be the right place for her (and her family). But let's hear what her colleagues have to say about why she was selected and the impact she has had over the last 10 years. I had the privilege of interviewing the four TBE rabbis who have worked with Regina (Robert Levy, Josh Whinston, Daniel Alter, and Chelsea Feuchs), as well as Susan Gitterman, who served on the cantorial search committee in 2013–14. Several words recurred in all these remembrances: mentor, friend, partner, leader, teacher, singer, and musician. Let me share what they had to say, in their own words, about our beloved cantor.

From Susan Gitterman:

Whoever we chose had big shoes to fill following Cantor Annie Rose, requiring someone with strength and self-confidence. This

was an issue with some of our candidates, but not Regina. But, first of all, we loved Regina's voice! Also, she demonstrated a



Cantor Hayut and Rabbi Josh Whinston

strong knowledge of the liturgy and the ability to lead a service well. I was pleased with how she described her work with b'mitzvah students at her previous synagogue. With Kol Halev, the adult choir, she has been especially interested in liturgical music, explaining the meaning and role of particular pieces of music in a service. She also started a band, Mizmoret, that will hopefully return now that the height of COVID has passed.

From Rabbi Emeritus Robert Levy:

I was looking for someone with whom I could work. The congregation was looking for someone with whom they could grow. With Annie Rose, our first cantor, we got used to a setting in which the chazan was the first among equals in the musical community. During the search process, I saw that Regina was serious about Judaism and saw herself as a leader of congregational worship and leadership of all sorts of musicality within the congregation. Some cantors are more about the performance and some are more about

getting people together and being part of a community. That was also what Regina was all about. Her strength was her commitment to working for the betterment of the congregation.

From Rabbi Josh Whinston:

Sharing the bimah with Cantor Hayut has been a pleasure. In seeking a new pulpit eight years ago, I wasn't sure how my musicality would be accepted by a new congregation or a cantor. Even in the interview process, it was clear that she was excited to harness my musical skills on the bimah. Cantor Hayut's interest in musical partnership speaks to her confidence as a musician and her openness as a clergy partner. There is no doubt I will miss the harmonies we make together on Shabbat, and the fun we have playing off of each other on the bimah!

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From the Editor

Reading is like listening

Since the last week in October 2023,



I've become a fan of the "listening session" in response to the Israel-Hamas war. The first one I went to was after a Shabbat morning service at a Reconstructionist congregation. The Torah portion that week included a rare trope in which the reader takes a long pause. The rabbi gave a dvar on the unusual trope to introduce the listening session during which each person in attendance (and on Zoom) would have a chance to say how they were feeling/what they were thinking about the war. When each finished, the congregation paused for each of us, the speaker and the listeners, to take a deep inhale and a full exhale. We didn't respond one to the other, we listened and then paused. And if we volunteered, we could speak our own truth for that moment, knowing that the only response would be a

deep breath from everyone. I needed what this listening and breathing offered: not a sense of Jewish unity, but community, nonetheless.

Over the ensuing four months, I've been to several listening sessions. Perhaps my appreciation of these in-person sessions is connected to how much I love putting together each issue of the Washtenaw Jewish News. If I do my editorial job well, the letters, opinion pieces, features, and other reports are like a community listening session. We find out what others are doing, thinking, and feeling. Reading is more like listening than talking, and if we nod in agreement, shout, or groan, the writers don't see or hear our immediate responses.

My "From the Editor" column last month was about the local cease-fire resolutions, and there is more about those in this issue, too. I'm grateful that Neal Elyakim, Amichay Findling, and Elaine Freed sent in their important responses, though I do think the intention of my column was misunderstood. I will try to be clearer here: both opposition to calls for cease-fire and support for cease-fire actions and resolutions— and many equivocations in between — are heartfelt, rationally-argued opinions and responses to the war. You can listen to them here. ■

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Letters to the Editor

"Cui bono?" Responding to the WJN editor's thoughts on the infamous "cease-fire resolutions"

Dear editor,
War is always a horrible thing, and more so ugly to watch from afar. Seeing in the media the pictures of devastated homes, injured and dead civilians and immense human suffering is gut wrenching, especially when the suffering is the outcome of actions of ones we hold dear, our Jewish brethren in Israel. In such moments, many hearts yearn to call the "obvious": a cease-fire, that will stop the killing and the suffering.

The heart pushes us to support these calls, wherever they are sounded: be they in the UN, when electing a congressional or a presidential candidate, or even in our local city council and education board.

But many times, aching hearts and moral determination blurs our logic and blinds our reasoning.

I will write my thoughts about two issues written by the editor in the previous issue: the first one is the mere morality of the call for a cease-fire, and the second one is the reasoning behind supporting or rejecting irrelevant "cease-fire resolutions" in city councils or education boards.

First, about the call for a cease-fire:

continued to pg 22

Community

Embracing trans joy at TBE

By Ari Marcotte and Ari Smith

I am exceptionally proud of the huge strides Judaism has made towards full inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in recent years. The Reform movement in particular has been on the vanguard of trans and queer acceptance, allowing the ordination of transgender rabbis and actively campaigning for LGBTQ+ rights. My own synagogue, Temple Beth Emeth in Ann Arbor, has greatly expanded its offerings for the queer community, from our first Pride Shabbat in 2019 to holiday events, social gatherings, and a weekly Queer Torah Study group. This year, we are continuing this trend through our second annual Trans Day of Visibility Shabbat, hosted by Mishpacha, the queer affinity group.

Trans Day of Visibility was created in 2009 by a Michigan activist named Rachel Crandall Crocker as a joyous alternative to Trans Day of Remembrance in November. While TDoR honors trans people whose lives have been tragically cut short due to violence, TDoV is designed to celebrate



trans identity and the trans people who are our neighbors, siblings, and friends, deserving of love and respect. While the day of remembrance is a crucial part of transgender awareness and activism — and indeed, we will take special pause to remember those who have been lost during our upcoming service — sorrow does not wholly define trans identity. Our primary goal with this service is to focus on those who are still living, and on the joy that transness can bring to ourselves and our community.

Our TDoV Shabbat program gives a platform for trans Jews to lead prayers and have honors on the bimah, a space from which we have been traditionally excluded. Despite this, we do not see ourselves as “making room” for trans voices, because there has always been room for us. We are instead stepping into a space that belongs to all Jews, and embracing the fullness of our tradition in all its forms. From being called to the bimah in non-gendered ways to leading our community in prayer and song, we are loudly proclaiming respect for the richness of trans lives and the love and wisdom we can share with each other. Throughout the service, we focus on the beauty and diversity of God’s creation, and celebrate that we are all created in that holy image, no matter how we as individuals express it.

Last year’s Shabbat was a revolutionary experience for many of our participants and attendees. One community member described the service as “showing that queer Jewish people are cherished members of their communities and religion and in the eyes of G-d.” Another member, who began regularly attending services at TBE after hearing about our offerings for queer Jews, expressed her amazement and gratitude for such radical acceptance, saying, “It’s simply amazing. It’s beautiful, it’s powerful, it’s humbling. It’s something trans adults like me who didn’t have community can be healed by; and also an opportunity for the community to stand up for trans kids and be like, the Mishpacha is here for them always.”

For my part, that service last year was the first time I’d ever seen queerness — let alone transness — expressed so joyously on the bimah. I’d been to services where the importance of allyship was stressed, been to services where queer community mem-

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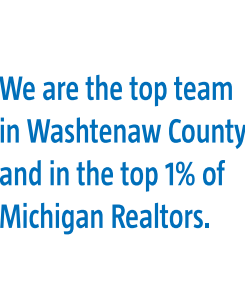
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Why oppose local cease-fire resolutions?

By Eileen Freed, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

Since November, activists around Washtenaw County have engaged in a coordinated campaign asking local governmental bodies to adopt resolutions calling for a cease-fire in Gaza. Some people who called for these actions were responding out of genuine humanitarian concern — there are many in the community who have relatives in Gaza and people who have expressed concern for both Israelis and Palestinians and sincerely seek peace. The large number of casualties, and the humanitarian crisis, in Gaza is horrendous, and all reasonable people can agree that it should end.

However, based on social media posts and public comments made at city, county, and school board meetings, most of the activists pushing for these resolutions — including a large number from outside the local community — hold extreme anti-Israel and antisemitic views.

To start, an exceedingly small number of pro-cess-fire speakers in these public fora condemned the inhumanity of Hamas' terror attack on October 7 — an attack that broke an existing cease-fire. Instead, in public comment and on social media, these "humanitarians" blamed the victims, including children and babies, for being "occupiers" — that is, living in the established and recognized borders of Israel. In addition, they denied the existence of hostages in Gaza and called the well-documented evidence of sexual violence perpetrated by Hamas a "myth." Social media posts by people who were previously involved in a Jewish/Palestinian dialogue group have promoted conspiracy theories that the Israeli army was responsible for the deaths at the Nova Music Festival, and that allegations of rape were unfounded.

Following calls during public meetings for an end to the "75-year occupation" (that is, erasing Israel, a recognized member of the United Nations), and the jeering, interrupting,

and chanting at meetings, many members of the local Jewish community have felt unsafe, silenced, and wondering where they fit into local civic discourse.

Since October, the Jewish Federation of



Greater Ann Arbor, community rabbis, and a group of politically connected volunteers have engaged proactively with local elected officials to ensure the Jewish community's experiences are taken into account. [See the November and December 2023 editions of the WJN for more on this work.] The opposition by Federation and many others to local government bodies engaging in international affairs was not because they were thought to be "volcanic rumblings of an imminent explosion of antisemitism," as posited by the WJN editor in last month's issue. That train left the station with an over 300% increase in antisemitic incidents since October 7, which followed the previous year's historic rise in antisemitism.

Unlike other communities across the country, Jewish leaders in Washtenaw County did not ask local governing bodies to condemn the October 7 terror attack. This is because they recognize that elected officials are tasked to engage in work over which they have control that

impacts local citizens. They are not experts in foreign affairs, and the time and effort they expend in engaging in this issue detracts from the work they were elected to do. This is why even those Jewish organizers who may personally want a cease-fire opposed these resolutions.

Moreover, the campaign to adopt cease-fire resolutions is a national effort to delegitimize Israel — one need only look at the hateful rhetoric of promoters mentioned above to understand this. Unlike the federal government, actions by city councils, county commissions, and school boards will not save lives. Let us remember that Hamas has used its significant resources for one purpose: to eradicate Israel. Hamas is ultimately responsible for the meaningless death and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Until they choose to lay down their arms or are defeated, cease-fires will be meaningless. When local bodies engage in these international affairs, it only serves to sow division and fear. And yes, it may also result in increased antisemitism.

While some local bodies adopted language that was relatively even-handed, none called for dismantling Hamas, a known terror organization that has pledged to conduct more October 7-style attacks. The Ypsilanti City Council, for instance, initially unanimously passed a virulently antisemitic and one-sided resolution which was later retracted. A slightly less inflammatory version calling for the return of hostages was still pointedly anti-Israel and was subsequently passed by 4-3 vote. In contrast, the Ann Arbor City Council and the Washtenaw County Commission engaged and sought input from the Jewish community when resolutions were raised, and those that passed

were not anti-Israel. They called for a *bilateral* cease-fire, demanded an immediate return of the Israeli hostages, and rallied for increased humanitarian aid.

The case of the Ann Arbor Board of Education is more problematic than any of the above. While Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti have not done so in recent times, it is not unusual for city councils to make statements addressing major global or national events. However, school boards and administrations exist to care for *all* the families and students in the district. Nevertheless, the resolution brought forward was not developed with input from a cross-section of the school community. This blindness to the needs of a portion of its own students has created an environment of distrust and fear among district families. A statement from community leaders following the school board decision is below.

Recent events have been disconcerting, but there are silver linings.

An unprecedented number of community members have been engaged in advocacy, speaking at City Council and School Board meetings, developing and disseminating petitions, and contacting elected officials directly. Federation leadership is immensely grateful for their efforts.

Volunteers and professionals have developed closer relationships with elected officials who are becoming more aware of Jewish communal concerns, like the rise in antisemitism and increasing need to expend valuable Jewish communal resources on security.

A Federation task force is developing a mobilization strategy to increase proactive political and civic engagement and is in the process of hiring a Community Relations Director to manage these efforts.

For more information or to get involved, contact Eileen Freed (eileenfreed@jewishannarbor.org). ■

Statement in Response to Ann Arbor School Board's Passage of Cease-Fire Resolution

1/17/2024

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and local community leaders are extremely disappointed in the Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Trustees vote to approve a resolution calling for a "bilateral cease-fire in Gaza and Israel." The October 7 terror attack by Hamas was and continues to be a heartbreaking tragedy. One hundred and thirty-two hostages remain captive in Gaza after more than 100 days. And Israel's response in Gaza has created an on-going humanitarian crisis for civilians in Gaza. The trauma and ramifications will be felt for years — decades to come.

Unfortunately, activists have used this crisis to sow division in our community.

The proposal of this resolution was politically motivated — not about students and education. It was part of a national activist effort to bring cease-fire resolutions to local governmental bodies — hijacking the important local work they were elected to do and calling on them to take positions on geopolitical affairs, over which they have no authority, which will have no effect on foreign policy, and which only impact the local community by further dividing it. The fact that the resolution calls for it to be distributed to print, voice and internet media speaks to the intention to spread this activity to other communities.

This resolution led to a poor use of district

resources — time, money, and personnel — and encouraged a chaotic and uncivil atmosphere leading many Jewish families to wonder about their place in this district and community.

The Ann Arbor School Board missed an opportunity to unite the community by putting forward an alternative resolution with very similar language that was shared with all board members; one that did not directly call for a cease-fire. The language of this alternative was inclusive of families connected to other world conflicts and called for training and resources to be provided to teachers helping them to feel more comfortable navigating these complicated conversations. While some sections of the alternative resolution and a sentence from a local City Council resolution were included in the final product, the cease-fire language remained, alienating the almost 2,000 signatories of a petition calling on the Board to focus on education, not engage in geopolitical affairs. It is deeply concerning that the many important issues facing the board, including a \$10M deficit, passing a special education millage, hiring a superintendent, falling test scores, and demanding accountability for addressing the egregious incidents of anti-Arab and antisemitic speech and behavior, were ignored while trustees engaged in this symbolic project. It does not, in any way, serve the students of AAPS and their fami-

lies. In fact, it may harm the district's efforts to hire a strong superintendent.

Unlike the Ann Arbor City Council and Washtenaw County Commission, there was no attempt to garner community input to craft a document that would be inclusive rather than divisive. Several trustees engaged meaningfully with community members for and against the resolution. However, their input was not brought forth until the resolution was being discussed in advance of the vote, rather than through a collaborative process prior to the board meeting.

We are grateful to Trustees Susan Baskett, Torchio Feaster, and Susan Schmidt who voted no or abstained, for understanding their role and scope of authority. We understand that their vote is not an indication of their personal position regarding a cease-fire — for it or against it. It is simply about standing up for good governance, concern for the school community, and the need for the school board to focus on the crucial issues facing the district and the children it serves.

As disappointing as the outcome of the vote was, this experience has engaged our community and fostered positive relationships with many members of the school board, including new board President Torchio Feaster and Vice President Krystle Dupree. Together with local families, we

will be watching closely for how the AAPS will handle incidents of antisemitism, racism, and other forms of hate. Community members are encouraged to report antisemitic incidents on our Incident Report Form. And we will continue to work cooperatively with school administration to address the educational needs of Jewish families and to continue to build a more inclusive school community.

Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor
Eileen Freed, Executive Director
Jessica "Decky" Alexander, Board President

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Rabbi Josh Whinston, Temple Beth Emeth
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Robert Savit, Board President, Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan ■

Community voices on the cease-fire resolutions

By Hannah Davis, special to the WJN

On January 17, Ann Arbor Public Schools' Board of Education passed a "Resolution Calling for a Bilateral Cease-fire in Gaza and Israel and to Address Hate and Discrimination," at a meeting which ran for over five hours. It appears to be the second school board to pass such a resolution, the first being that of New Haven Unified School District in Union City, California. Ann Arbor's city council passed a similar resolution on January 11, joining dozens of other cities such as Detroit, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, and St. Louis. According to Reuters (January 31), some 48 cities have passed resolutions calling for a cease-fire, and at least 20 have condemned the October 7 Hamas attack.

The two resolutions had some similarities: both called for a bilateral cease-fire in Gaza and Israel, release of all hostages, and unrestricted humanitarian aid at the levels recommended by the U.N. to the Palestinian people, and both condemned hate speech, anti-Arab racism, anti-Palestinian racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia (the school board added a condemnation of anti-Jewish racism after discussion and public comment). The city council resolution additionally requested that the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission "engage with affected communities during this crisis, to uphold the enforcement of Chapter 112 of the Non-Discrimination Ordinance, and to educate residents on how to file complaints of discrimination or harassment in our city." The school board resolution in turn encouraged educators to "facilitate informed and respectful dialogue about the conflict, aiming to foster a deeper understanding among students and staff, and to combat misinformation and prejudice," and committed itself to providing professional development and resources to support staff in that goal. Responding to criticism about the board's limited sphere of influence, the resolution was edited during the meeting to highlight "the importance of acknowledging global events even granted its limited role in international affairs."

Both the city council and school board meetings attracted vigorous debate. The school board received two organized letters from community members, each of which collected around 500 signatures. One, organized by Tahani Othman, chairperson of the AAPS Arab American Advisory Group and a teacher at Ann Arbor Open, expressed concern about the rise of anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian sentiment, supported the superintendent's statement condemning antisemitism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, clarified that "Criticizing Israeli government policies is not antisemitism. Israel does not speak for all Jewish people, and Palestinians have many Jewish allies and advocates," and called on the district to fulfill its commitment to its Equity Plan and ensure that Palestinian experiences are not avoided or silenced. The other, submitted by the Jewish Community Relations Council, stated the need to take action to stop the rise of discrimination and harassment in the school system, to ensure that all school board messages on the conflict are "balanced and neutral," to provide professional development for teachers and staff to

help address discrimination, and to recognize the Jewish Parents Advisory Council (see the article "At the school board table" published in the January 2024 *Washtenaw Jewish News* for further details). After the resolution was initially proposed in late December, a petition calling for its withdrawal gathered almost 2,000 signatures.

Over 100 individuals signed up to give public comment at the school board meeting, and 90 at city council. Comments at the city council meeting were largely in support, with many commenters adding support for the resolution in addition to their other unrelated remarks. In response to claims that such an action was not the job of local government, one commenter stated, "it is our business, because when the federal government fails to do the right thing, it is local government's obligation to convey the sentiments of its people." Several others connected the conflict in Gaza to the ongoing effort to establish an unarmed crisis response program in the city, drawing parallels between the militarization of U.S. police forces often trained by Israel, and arguing that the liberation of all peoples, whether from war or police violence, was connected.

Comments at the school board meeting were much more varied. Critics frequently clarified that their objection to the resolution had nothing to do with their opinion on the war or a cease-fire itself. Many stated that the resolution was outside the board's purview, calling on them to focus on educational matters, rather than foreign policy. In contrast, those who spoke in support of the resolution seemed to see the two as intrinsically connected — that if you support a cease-fire, you would support the resolution, and that if you oppose the resolution, you must by definition oppose a cease-fire — and their comments concerned the conflict itself, rather than board procedure and scope. The overall effect was that of two groups shouting past each other, rather than of a community dialogue.

Several commenters expressed fear that this resolution would lead to antisemitism and a toxic environment in schools; Leora and Josh Rubin stated that they were looking into pulling their children out of AAPS as a result. The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has stated they will investigate AAPS for discrimination after a Palestinian Muslim student at Tappan Middle School — the younger cousin of the student who introduced the draft resolution — was called a terrorist by a counselor.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor released a statement on the school board's resolution, saying they and local community leaders were "extremely disappointed" in the vote, arguing that the resolution's proposal was "politically motivated ... part of a national activist effort" to sow division in the community by forcing local governmental bodies to focus attention on this instead of other issues which should be higher priority. It stated that the only impact of the resolution would be to further divide the community and to encourage "a chaotic and uncivil atmosphere leading many Jewish families to wonder about their

place in this district and community," and that the board declined to vote on a similar resolution that was put forward that did not directly call for a cease-fire.

Ahead of the school board meeting, Rabbi Nadav Caine, in an email to Congregation Beth Israel, had shared the petition to withdraw the resolution, saying:

"As current parents of two children in AAPS, Lynne and I have both signed this petition. While we believe there are many heartfelt Jewish voices who believe the counteroffensive should cease, we believe that this resolution is not really about taking a moral position. Rather we believe that this resolution is meant to divide the community and stigmatize our Jewish children, who are already a woeful minority in their schools, when AAPS has faced no more pressing time in its history to focus on the academic and socio-emotional deficits of its children following the pandemic. ... It became clear to me at the City Council Meeting this past week that even the best intentioned and best worded cease-fire resolution means something different to a Jew and to those who are calling for them."

WJN reached out to members of the community for their comments.

Richard Stahler-Sholk wrote in to say:

"We can't hide in our local bubble from our shared responsibility for the wellbeing of all human beings in a global society. Hamas, Netanyahu, the Pentagon, and the arms industry are locked in a widening cycle of violence causing horrific suffering to innocent civilians of many ethnicities, and a cease-fire is an essential first step to interrupting this deadly cycle."

Amy Belfer, a Plymouth resident and member of Michigan Social Workers for Palestine, stated that Ann Arbor has a commitment to advance equity and human rights, and have followed through on their community's values of shared humanity and shown that they're listening to their constituents by passing the resolution. ... Especially for Palestinian Americans grieving the mass killing and genocide of their family and friends, these resolutions show that their human rights are valued and that their local government stands up for the rights and dignity of all people.

However, to her the resolutions lacked broader context: "they mentioned the hostages but not that Israel holds many Palestinian prisoners without charges or trials, including children."

Several commenters had specific criticisms of the process. Joy Wolfe Ensor wrote that the process itself was "extremely flawed" due to the unmoderated nature of the public comment periods which "were inflammatory in tone and weaponized language in a manner that left many attendees feeling unsafe." Lauren Zinn observed, "The whole thing could have been handled differently — regarding city council and AAPS board. From what I remember, the original let-

ter written by the Jewish community to the board early on did not recognize Palestinians as Palestinians, and this, understandably, rubbed that community the wrong way. There is room to improve on all sides."

Joy stated that while the AAPS resolution "was a sincere effort to support community members who were impacted by the war, ... sought to help community members who previously felt marginalized and invisible feel seen, [and] included language about cease-fire that many in the Jewish community (from leftwing anti-Zionists like Jewish Voices for Peace to center-right Zionists such as Thomas Friedman and increasingly loud voices inside Israel) endorse," it "created more heat than light. It inflamed divisions between the Jewish and Arab communities, and it inflamed tensions within the Jewish community."

Marc Susselman sent in a letter to the editor calling out the city's "utter hypocrisy" in its handling of this event versus that of the weekly antisemitic protests outside Congregation Beth Israel. "The Ann Arbor City Council passed a resolution condemning the protesters' conduct. However, they could do much more, but have refused to do so. ... When it comes to protecting Palestinians from what some claim are Israel's transgressions, Ann Arbor is ready, willing and able to do so. But when it comes to taking actual action, to enforce an ordinance it has on its books, to protect its own Jewish citizens from antisemitic harassment, it is silent — and its silence constitutes complicity."

If there is a consensus to be found among the many opinions in the community about these resolutions, it's that this is not — can not — be the end result. Lauren Zinn, who has a PhD in Education Planning, concluded with a call for follow-through on the part of the school board:

"What I do think the school board needs to do is support and fund teacher training to help students understand many conflicts around the world and here; not just their history (which the curriculum includes), but their dynamic changing communities today, and a review of possible solutions being offered by grassroots peace-makers ... as well understanding the obstacles (including current governments, international community failures, *historical and intergenerational* traumas of both peoples, and an understanding of healing efforts such as truth and reconciliation, restorative justice programs, memory culture installations, etc.).

To me, this resolution might be a step in that direction *if* the board follows up with teacher-training for 'age-appropriate and culturally sensitive' issues as they claim they will do." ■

Birthright, post October 7

By Allison Bloomberg, Israel Engagement Manager - IACT, University of Michigan Hillel

At the end of January, I was honored with the invitation to join the inaugural cohort of an Educator's Forum in Israel sponsored by the Birthright Israel Foundation. This group of 20, including North American madrichim (staff) from campus Hillels, campus Chabads, local Jewish Federations, and similar organizations plus five Israeli tour educators, was brought to Israel to tackle the question: What do we do with our Taglit Birthright trips in a post-October 7 Israel?

Throughout the week, we saw what Israel looks like post-10/7, and how the people of Israel are recovering from this tragedy. We bore witness to the atrocities committed on 10/7, visiting the site of the Nova Festival, Kibbutz Kfar Azza, and Sderot. We spoke with a Bedouin woman who gave us insight on the emotions of minority populations in Israel. We visited Hostage's Square in Tel Aviv, where we spoke with families who have loved ones still being held in Gaza. We also gave back to the land by potting fresh sage and lavender, which will be planted in the South to begin regrowth in destroyed farmland. In between these experiences, our cohort engaged in extensive conversation surrounding the Israel/Palestine conflict, how we educate our Birthright participants



Allison on the left in conversation with Gidi Mark, CEO of Birthright Israel.

on Zionism, and what can be done differently on Taglit Birthright trips to balance the tumultuous times with feelings of hope from Israeli society.

One of the most impactful conversations we had as a cohort was with the Birthright Israel leadership in Tel Aviv. In this meeting, I was able to touch on the campus climate at

the University of Michigan, and share with Israelis the influence of the war on college campuses; how pro-Israel students are fighting a war of their own; and its effect on prospective Birthright participants. Once both North American and Israeli staff were on the same page, we were able to truly dissect the Birthright itinerary and work towards

enhancing experiences to better address the needs of our students. Our cohort considered the educational goals structured by Birthright and if we are meeting those goals through trip itineraries.

We also spoke extensively about the importance of returning to Israel after such devastation. In order for the people of Israel to grieve and grow, we need to resurrect the tourism industry that was lost on October 7 and bring life back to what was destroyed. At Michigan Hillel, Birthright trips are the largest student trips to Israel, with 120 students traveling each summer. As one of the leading Hillels in the country, it is imperative to ensure that these trips are both fun and meaningful for our students. It is our responsibility as trip leaders to adapt to the changes of the time, both in itinerary and educational components of the 10-day trip. Traveling to Israel with a cohort of educators who share a passion to enrich the lives of Jewish students through Birthright granted me the opportunity to think critically and intentionally about the mission of these trips and the takeaways our students bring back to campus. I look forward to continuing to develop and run our Birthright trips so that more students can connect to such an important piece of Jewish peoplehood. ■

Kibbutz Zikim family: We make each other stronger

By Shiri Eshet, Israel Fellow at University of Michigan Hillel

Life has not been the same since October 7, not only in Israel but all around the world. The brutal terror attacks known in Israel as the "Black Shabbat" had a tremendous impact, also affecting college campuses across the U.S., some making headlines over the past few months.

One of those campuses is the University of Michigan, which used to be known for quieter and more peaceful days. Alongside all the classes, exams, and homework, Jewish students were forced to cope with feelings of pain, mourning, and fear — witnessing up close and from afar all the horrors and consequences of the attacks.

On Thursday, February 1, we had the opportunity to host at Michigan Hillel, in collaboration with the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, Jenny and Oz Naor, former Shlichim (emissaries) in Akron/Canton, Ohio, for 3 years (2010–2013). Until October 7, they lived happily in Kibbutz Zikim, one of the kibbutzim that were subject to Hamas's surprise attack on October 7.

The couple, along with their three children, have evacuated their home for the past four months. They packed their bags and decided to share their story with Jewish communities and campuses in the Midwest.

At the event at Michigan Hillel, Jenny and Oz recounted their chilling story from that day. Oz, who fought the terrorists for hours, with his back to his

own house's wall, without a break, shared that after finally putting his head down for a short while, he woke up in terror and couldn't distinguish between reality and the nightmare he had. Reality surpassed every nightmare and imagination.

The powerful conversation with Jenny and

Oz reminded us of how strong, resilient, and unique the Jewish and Israeli spirit is. People and stories like these teach us that there is no choice but to stand strong together: to listen to each other, to cry together, to mourn together, to laugh together, to celebrate together, and simply to be together. ■



Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to the families of:

Bruce Baker, husband of Genie Wolfson, and father of Sam and Lily. January 9.
Florence Young, mother of Virginia Young. January 10.
Joel Shore, father of Gayle Moyer (Bruce). Joel is also remembered by his wife Marilyn, his children Karen Wisialowski (Bill) and Michael Shore (Sally Beth), and his grandchildren, Alex (Elyse), Justin (Lara), Ben, Sarah, Rachel, Noah, and Amelia. January 26.
Eugene and Alida Silverman, parents of Andrew (Stacey) Silverman, Josh (Shirin) Silverman, and Leslie Silverman, grandparents of Sloane (Alec) Weissman, Leila Silverman, Dara Silverman, Ethan Kopstein, and Jamie Kopstein. Alida Silverman died on January 27, Eugene on February 5.
Judith Laikin Elkin on her death, January 14.
Marianne Sachs-Jacob on her death, January 30.
Alan Neal Weiss, the brother of Stephen Weiss, February 5.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

Eric and Candice Martin on the birth of their daughter, Montana Rose Martin, who was born on November 16.
Seth Alson and Heather Wheat on the birth of their child, Lyra Helen Alson, grandchild of Cindy and Mark Alson, who was born on January 2.
Ilana Firke on her bat mitzvah, March 2.
Arielle Kahana on her bat mitzvah, March 16.
Lisa and Jeff Tulin-Silver, on the birth of their grandson, Ari Alexander, on 11/12/23, to parents Noah and Sheryl Tulin-Silver. ■

Nahalal is prepared for emergencies

By Limor Regev, Nahalal, and Amichay Findling, The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor holds a special connection with the Israeli community of Moshav Nahalal, as part of the global “Partnership 2Gether” project of the Jewish Agency for Israel. As part of the partnership between the two regions, community members from Ann Arbor and Nahalal meet occasionally online for Zoom conversations and presentations about various topics.

the orchards exposed to Lebanese territory. Hundreds of thousands of people from both fronts are in temporary housing, and the implications for the school year, community life, and people’s livelihoods are significant. Tens of thousands of reserve soldiers, serving for over a hundred days, are fighting on the front, maintaining preparedness, and absent from their homes and workplaces. In addition to all this, the situation in the West



Moshav Nahalal’s circular layout

The latest meeting of the two communities included a presentation by Limor Regev, former Chair of Moshav Nahalal’s Local Committee. Limor shared with attendees the ways that Moshav Nahalal deals with current and potential future emergencies, the local community’s resilience, and the ways in which support from their friends in Ann Arbor has made a difference recently. In addition, Limor, a native of the western Negev, is deeply connected to communities who were among the most severely affected by Hamas’ October 7 massacre.

Limor shared her thoughts and emotions about their situation

Israel is in a situation like never before. The settlements of the Western Negev are evacuated; only the readiness team and farmers are left in the deserted settlements. Women, children, and most of the population are exiled in our land. The IDF is fighting inside the Gaza Strip, and every day there are casualties, wounded, and killed. The rocket fire on the settlements continues. Not at the rate of the beginning of the war, but still disturbing and threatening.

In the north, Hezbollah is careful to walk on the edge. They are shooting anti-tank missile and rocket fire at the settlements near the fence. The IDF is retaliating, and ready for ground operations. The residents of the northern settlements near the Lebanon border are evacuated and are currently more threatened than those in the south. In several kibbutzim on the northern border, about half of the houses have been damaged so far, and the citizens dare not approach

Bank is tense. The IDF is dealing with attacks every day.

The situation in Nahalal

On the one hand, Nahalal is currently one of the quieter and more peaceful places in Israel today, but everyone understands that everything can change in an instant.

In Nahalal and our surrounding area, there are thousands of evacuees from the north and the south who need a lot of physical and mental support. At the peak, at the beginning of the war, Nahalal prepared living spaces for more than 80 people, and there are currently about 40.

Thanks to the Ann Arbor community’s generous donation, we equipped ourselves with rescue and lifesaving equipment for the readiness team, including ceramic vests, tactical helmets, and more.

Thanks to your donation, an exciting project of therapeutic horse riding expanded from once to twice a week after evacuees were invited to participate for free. The full staff has volunteered their time to make this possible. This week, for example, we witnessed a particularly moving moment. A sensitive horse was treating an evacuee who was in a particularly difficult and distressed situation, when it literally lay down on the ground out of empathy. This act is a known phenomenon, but very rare, and it shows the strong connection between the horses and the people.

The community here supports and helps the spouses of the reserve soldiers in cooking, helping with the children, and various things as needed. Due to the situation, we

have established a volunteer support group in Nahalal. The wives of reservists and mothers of soldiers meet every week on Tuesday or Wednesday, along with a team of social workers and a clinical psychologist. Every week, the women (and of course men are also invited) express their concerns and share how they are coping during this difficult time at home.

Some of the reservist soldiers have started to return to the circle [a name for Nahalal referring to the community’s circular layout]. We are also trying to provide a response for them, both emotional support and support for their spouses until they adjust. For the reservist soldiers, we opened a local pub so that there would be a place to meet and feel a part of the community again.

In parallel, there is a general preparedness assessment for extreme war situations from the north. Last week, a comprehensive exercise was conducted involving all forces, in which over a hundred people from Nahalal participated: the emergency teams, the preparedness and care teams, teams for evacuating rubble and rescuing people from homes, teams for emergency electricity and water infrastructure, firefighting teams, medical teams, and teams for taking care of animals in case of damage to chicken coops, cowsheds, or other infrastructure.

Thanks to many donations and internal mobilization, Nahalal filled its equipment and other deficiencies in rescue and medical equipment and is improving its preparedness. And for that, I want to say thank you again. This mobilization on our behalf is not taken for granted. We all understand that if a total war breaks out on the northern front, the fact that Nahalal is so close to the Ramat David Air Force Base will make Nahalal a central target for Hezbollah’s fire. Since there are many large settlements in the area, including Afula, Migdal HaEmek, etc., the chance that emergency teams will be available to reach Nahalal and treat us in quick time frames is very low, and we must be prepared to handle all aspects of the emergency ourselves.

My connection to the Western Negev

I want to conclude on a personal note. As some of you know, I was born in Kibbutz Magen, which is adjacent to the Gaza Strip.

Many of the victims that day, and their families, are people I knew, including my teachers from school, family members of my classmates, and also some members of the kibbutz where I grew up.

Immediately after October 7, graduates of the local school in the Western Negev organized to establish a big tent and demand the release of the kidnapped. The stand is located on Kaplan Street in Tel Aviv.

To gain media attention and to advance the issues so important to us, we hold events, and this week we had a meeting of school graduates and teachers. Among the hundreds of participants were former teachers and principals, as well as two former teachers who were released from Hamas captivity and came to express support for the release of the other kidnapped.

I am a partner in this effort, and I believe that there is no more important moral, ethical, and national duty than this, and no task more important than this to release the hostages, so that we can continue to live here in this land. ■

Community study reboot

By Eileen Freed, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

Recognizing the need for valid and actionable data that serves the entire community, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, in partnership with local Jewish communal organizations and congregations, undertook a study of the Washtenaw County Area Jewish community in early 2023. The community study was conducted by an experienced research team at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University and NORC at the University of Chicago. The Community Study Implementation Committee is chaired by Barry Nemon and Randy Milgrom.

The original intention was to present the data and begin a community planning process in fall 2023. However, due to the tragic terror attack in Israel on October 7, 2023, and the shift to supporting Israel and addressing the impact locally, study organizers postponed the rollout of the results.

The group has reconvened, and the presentation of the data has been rescheduled for spring 2024.

“We were disappointed to put a hold on this important work in which we’ve been engaged for the past three years,” said co-chair Barry Nemon. “But we wanted to continue this process in a thoughtful manner, and attention and resources were needed elsewhere. I’m excited that we’re getting back on track.”

A preview event of the final report will be held for Federation’s Major and Legacy donors on Thursday, March 21, 6:30 p.m. by Zoom.

The official rollout will take place April 15 and 16, with an open community presentation and conversation with the researchers from Brandeis on the evening of April 15 at 7 p.m. More focused meetings for those invested in specific topic areas, such as congregational involvement and social services, will be held throughout the day on the 16th. Specific details will be provided in the coming weeks.

Data collection for the study took place November 2022 through January 2023. In developing the presentations, organizers will additionally take into consideration how the events in Israel have impacted the local community.

In the meantime, local volunteers who are experts in data analysis, strategic planning, and communications are reconvening to develop the presentations and begin work on the next — and most crucial — phase of the project: an actionable strategic visioning and planning process based on the study results.

Federation Board President Decky Alexander emphasizes that the next steps are a necessary continuation of the process started by the study. “As with other communities across the U.S. who have engaged in data-driven planning, I hope that the study gives us, if not a roadmap, a light on how to best engage, serve, and support each other now and in the future,” she says.

The Jewish Community Study of Washtenaw County is made possible by a collaboration of all local Jewish communal organizations, with financial support from the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Ann Arbor, the JCC of Greater Ann Arbor, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, Temple Beth Emeth, Beth Israel Congregation, Jewish Federations of North America, and the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation.

For more information about this study, please visit www.jewishannarbor.org/communitystudy/ or contact Federation’s Executive Director Eileen Freed at eileenfreed@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3537. ■

New group works with Democrats to separate Israel criticism from antisemitism

By Arno Rosenfeld

This story was originally published in the *Forward* on January 23.

Rep. Jerry Nadler, the New York Democrat, raised many eyebrows last month when he declined to support a resolution condemning antisemitism and criticism of Israel. Instead, Nadler, the unofficial dean of the Congressional Jewish caucus, said “the cynicism of it makes me sick.”



Jonathan Jacoby, director of issues related to Israel and antisemitism for Nexus

Progressive critics of Israel had insisted for years that mainstream politicians — including Democrats — were invoking antisemitism in “cynical” ways. But the December vote marked a significant shift in the debate, with dozens of stalwart Democratic supporters of Israel, including Nadler, rejecting the House measure because, they argued, it conflated anti-Zionism with antisemitism and represented “gross overreach.”

Behind the scenes was a group called the Nexus Task Force, a group of academics and liberal Jewish political leaders and philanthropists that had been lobbying President Joe Biden since shortly before he was elected president to avoid “turning antisemitism into a partisan issue.”

Lay leaders associated with the project had previously met with Nadler’s office before the vote and helped shape the views of Amy Rutkin, his influential chief of staff, during a series of meetings early in the Biden administration. “What they are so very good at is helping the Beltway understand when people are using antisemitism — and using the Jewish community — for political purposes,” said Rutkin, who retired this month after nearly 25 years working for Nadler.

But Nexus has largely been an academic working group with little infrastructure to support sustained lobbying. That changed in February with the hiring of Kevin Rachlin, who is stepping down as one of J Street’s top lobbyists to lead the new Nexus Washington office.

The Nexus Leadership Project will seek to influence policymakers more than the general public, and is positioned to the left of the Jewish establishment, which has been increasingly adamant that harsh criticism of Israel is antisemitic. But Rachlin said he expects that the organization will still operate

in the world of moderate Jewish politics and avoid the oppositional tactics of some progressive groups that have protested Israel in recent months.

Rachlin will be joining a crowded field of antisemitism advocacy that has shifted focus over the past several years from raising awareness of the issue to debating how to define and stop antisemitism. One of the task force’s

members, Derek Penslar, found himself at the center of one such firestorm after he was appointed to help lead a new Harvard committee to address antisemitism on campus and was quickly accused of antisemitism over his criticism of Israel.

Nexus quickly rallied Jewish scholars to Penslar’s defense, and for the last few years it has played a prominent role in seeking to augment the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s working definition of antisemitism so that it is not used to classify harsh criticism of Israel as antisemitic.

But despite all this, Rachlin said he hopes to

stay out of debates over antisemitism and Israel as much as possible. “We’re not anti-IHRA,” he said. “We’re pro-ensuring the U.S. has an effective national strategy to combat antisemitism.”

Deep divisions over definitions, strategies

Rachlin insisted that he is eager to work with organizations like the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee, and he came close to matching their position on antisemitism: “not all anti-Zionism is antisemitism,” he said in an interview. “But most is.”

Jonathan Jacoby, who has overseen the task force and will serve as director of the new Nexus organization, has said that the group’s definition is meant to serve as a complement, not rival, to the IHRA definition.

Despite those perspectives, its credibility on Capitol Hill, and a list of supporters that includes former State Department antisemitism envoys, U.S. ambassadors, and major Jewish philanthropists, Nexus has already run into a buzzsaw of establishment opposition.

As the White House prepared to release the first federal strategy to combat antisemitism last spring, leading Jewish groups sprang into action over fears that the plan would not offer an explicit — and exclusive — endorsement of the IHRA definition.

“No other definitions work,” Jonathan Greenblatt, the ADL’s chief executive, said on Twitter. The White House eventually mentioned both IHRA and Nexus in its plan.

Rachlin is used to helping lead an organization at odds with the Jewish establishment. J Street, the liberal pro-Israel group where Rachlin served as vice president of public affairs, has been repeatedly rejected from membership in groups like the Confer-

ence of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the American Zionist Movement.

“I had that thought: am I doing this again?” Rachlin said of taking the job with Nexus.

Others backing the new organization have made their peace with any fights to come. Alan Solow, a former chair of the

tions. In contrast, the Nexus group expects to lobby both the White House and Congress on policy and legislation, and work with Washington think tanks to shape ideas around antisemitism and Israel.

Palestinian advocacy groups in the U.S. have also been drawn into the issue. Local governments considering endorsing the IHRA definition can now count on large



Kevin Rachlin, director of Nexus

Conference of Presidents, will serve on its board and said he embraces the fact that Nexus has a “different point of view” than the establishment groups.

“There’s a long history among the Jewish people of wise dissent,” Solow said. “It doesn’t bother me in the least to be a dissenter.”

Definitions landscape grows

Nexus will be joining another Jewish organization defending critics of Israel from claims of antisemitism. The Diaspora Alliance was created two years ago, following the release of the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, which includes a definition that explicitly defends anti-Zionism and boycotts of Israel from claims of antisemitism.

While the Diaspora Alliance has a staff of more than 15, including a roster of organizers with deep roots in left-wing politics, they are spread around the world and focus much of their work on Europe.

Carinne Luck, the organization’s international director, said that Diaspora Alliance is broadly aligned with Nexus. “We are aiming in the same direction and we’re just doing a different piece of the work,” she said. The group mostly does education and training. “We’re not a lobby.”

While they suggested a series of people for First Gentleman Doug Emhoff to meet with during his trip to Poland and Germany last year, the Diaspora Alliance rarely puts out press releases or weighs in on Congressional resolu-

showings from organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace and the Council on American Islamic Relations, who turn out members to oppose the resolutions.

These groups often object to classifying any criticism of Israel as antisemitism, whereas the IHRA definition, Nexus, and the Jerusalem Declaration all set certain limits. For example, all three consider it antisemitic to deny Jews the right to live in Israel.

While the IHRA definition was endorsed by an international alliance focused on Holocaust remembrance, the group itself does not lobby for the definition in a traditional manner. “IHRA is not sending delegations to Capitol Hill or parliament,” said Mark Weitzman, who is part of the U.S. delegation to the organization, and oversaw the definition’s adoption.

One top priority for the new Nexus Project is to help push through Congress a bill sponsored by Nadler to fund Biden’s strategy to counter antisemitism and federal investigations into campus antisemitism.

Rachlin knows that political fights are inevitable, but believes the work is worth the grief. He grew up in Dayton, Ohio, and was one of the few Jewish students in school, where kids nicknamed him “Jesus” to poke at his religion.

“I’m excited,” Rachlin said. “But beyond terrified.”

Arno Rosenfeld is enterprise reporter at the *Forward*, where he covers antisemitism, philanthropy, sexual misconduct, and American Jewish politics. You can reach him at arno@forward.com and follow him on Twitter @arnorosenfeld. ■

Stand-up comedian Ariel Elias at EMU

Just in time for Purim, at 7 p.m. on March 20, the Eastern Michigan University's Center for Jewish Studies will bring comedian Ariel Elias to perform at the Sponberg Theatre at Eastern Michigan University. In partnership with Hillel, this event is free of charge. To register, please go to the link on the ad.

In October 2022, stand-up comedian Ariel Elias was performing her act on stage when a group of customers heckled her for "voting for Biden" and threw a beer bottle at her. Elias, with unflappable cool, told

the customers off and then picked up the thrown beer and drank it. A clip of this incident went viral, catapulting Elias' career. A slew of famous comedians and celebrities praised her publicly for how she handled the incident. She has since had her debut on Jimmy Kimmel Live and is touring widely. She has been featured in *Rolling Stone*, the *Washington Post*, and was named a "New Face" at the 2021 Just For Laughs Comedy Festival and as one of the Best Comedians of 2022 by *Paste Magazine*.



In her act, Elias mines humor from her struggles with body dysmorphia and from growing up Jewish in Kentucky. In one classic bit, she talks about how her name, Ariel, is pronounced by Jews and then by people in the South, where it is basically Earl. Elias has a prominent presence on social media and is a comedian with a rising profile. ■

Israeli playwright Ori Urian artist-in-residence

On March 9 (at 7 p.m.) and March 10 (2 p.m.) at Sponberg Theatre at Eastern Michigan University Campus, the young-adult play *Connected* by the celebrated Israeli playwright and television writer Ori Urian will be performed for the first time in English. Urian, who has been recognized by the Children's Stage Awards and the Israeli Academy Awards, has just been nominated for the ASSITEJ inspirational playwright award. With the assistance of the Zelma Weisfeld Grant for Culture and Education from the Jewish Federation of Ann Arbor and a Michigan Arts and Culture Mini-grant, and in partnership with Spinning Dot Theater, Urian himself will be an artist in residence in Ann Arbor

from March 3–10, and will do talk-backs with the audience after the performances.

Connected is a play about the way technology has impacted the lives of young people, and not necessarily for the better. The play is about a group of high school students who get lost on a field trip when they decide to stray from the group. In the play, Urian examines the way that an overreliance on technology harms us, whether in the form of trusting a GPS over what one sees with one's own eyes, or for the way social media alienates people from each other, leading people to prioritize their number of followers and status online over real-life relationships.

Such a topic is obviously relevant to our contemporary moment, oversaturated as it is

by technology. However, in the wake of the war between Israel and Gaza and the way it has reverberated here in the U.S. in city council meetings and campus unrest, this play is especially relevant in that it highlights the ways we are bound up with one another, and how social media foments conflict by fostering gossip and pernicious assumptions, leading us to withhold basic generosity from one another.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for seniors and students. There will be two performances, 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 9, and 1 p.m. on Sunday, March 10. Tickets can be purchased here: <https://emich.ludus.com/200447673>. For questions, please contact jewish.studies@emich.edu. ■



Build your Climate Action Toolkit

By Donald Levitt

If you believe that climate change threatens the world as we know it, and if you believe that Jews have a responsibility for tikkun olam, for repairing and improving the world, then it's time you developed your very own Climate Action Toolkit.

On March 10, from 1:30 to 5:15 p.m., Temple Beth Emeth will be co-hosting, along with Beth Israel Congregation and six additional local faith-based congregations, the Second Annual A2 Climate Teach-in. The focus of this year's Teach-in is helping each participant to learn practical "tools" for addressing climate change, and to select tools for their personal Climate Action Toolkit.

The Second Annual A2 Climate Teach-in will open with words of perspective and encouragement from three Ann Arbor high school students. They will be talking about their future, and what they hope adults will do to secure that future.

United States Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (Michigan's sixth District) will deliver the keynote presentation on "What We Can Do Together for Climate Action." Dingell recently announced that the city of Ann Arbor will receive \$230,000 to support ten AmeriCorps members in expanding climate change efforts through community outreach.

The heart of the afternoon consists of six breakout sessions along three tracks: What Can I Do? (food, transportation)

What Can We Do Together? (congregations and commercial buildings, investing and banking)



Professor Shelie Miller, Rev. Anne Clarke, Mayor Christopher Taylor, Rabbi Josh Whinston at the First Annual A2 Climate Teach-in. (Photo by Elli Gurfinkel)

Climate Advocacy and Climate Justice

Our final speaker will be Dr. Missy Stults, Director of the City of Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations. Dr. Stults will discuss innovative strategies around renewable energy and a just, equitable transition to carbon neutrality by 2030.

Participants will be able to learn more and finalize their Climate Action Toolkit during the closing Networking Session. During this session, 21 climate-related organizations will be available to answer individual questions and discuss how they can help you to achieve your climate action goals.

Register early

At our First Annual A2 Climate Teach-in, when Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor served as the opening speaker and Professor Shelie Miller was the closing speaker, there were 250 attendees and registration was closed due to space limitations, so early registration for the Second Annual A2 Climate Teach-in is encouraged.

A call for all community members to take action

"In 2024, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is calling upon our community to embrace climate action as part of the Jewish

commitment to tikkun olam," said Annie Wolock, Federation Board Secretary and Jewish Community Relations Committee Climate Action Committee Lead. "We are pleased that Temple Beth Emeth and Beth Israel Congregation have taken a leadership role in the Second Annual A2 Climate Teach-in."

The Second Annual A2 Climate Teach-in Details (Preregistration is required)

Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024

Time: 1:30–5:15 p.m.

Genesis of Ann Arbor (home of Temple Beth Emeth & St. Clare of Assisi Episcopal Church), 2309 Packard St. Ann Arbor

More information and registration: A2ClimateTeachIn.com. A sample Climate Action Toolkit is also available on the website. Questions can be directed to info@a2climateteachin.com. ■



Seniors lunch for everyone with WISE @ the J

By Rebecca Niebuurt, JFS Congregation-based Social Worker and WISE @ the J Program Coordinator

When I took on the responsibility of the day-to-day operations of WISE @ the J, I made it a point to ask each attendee why they enjoy coming, and why they keep coming back. “The food is great, but I come for the company,” says Erica Arnold, a regular attendee. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, WISE @ the J serves nutritious lunches to seniors. For a suggested donation of \$3, you can expect a well-balanced, gourmet, Kosher meal made by Head Chef Carly Balmer as well as fun activities, weekly movie viewings, and a Friday mahjong group.

Since 2019, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (JFS), in cooperation with Washtenaw County’s Office for Community and Economic Development and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor (JCC), has been dedicated to offering congregant meal options to area seniors. But the WISE @ the J program is special and so much more than food. As Erica said, it’s the company that keeps her coming back, a sentiment echoed by many regular attendees. When I asked Alan Seif why he came to WISE @ the J, he said, “During COVID, I was worried we wouldn’t be able to have, you know, ‘community’ the same way we had before. I missed my friends and meeting new people. I tell everyone I know; come and check it out.”

To ensure that folks still had access to good nutritious meals, JFS continued offer-

ing the congregant meals as a grab-and-go option at the height of the pandemic. And the meals themselves are important. Many attendees have noted that preparing meals at home, especially when preparing for just one person, is arduous. Let’s face it, we all struggle with keeping up on meal prep, nutrition, and a balanced diet no matter our circumstances. While she prides herself on her good cooking, Alice Train said, “When I spoke with my nutritionist, we realized there were some gaps in my meal planning and decided to make ‘attending WISE @ the J’ one of my goals to help increase opportunities for getting good nutrition.” WISE at the J offers the only Kosher congregant-meal program in the county. Chef Balmer prepares a variety of dishes including lasagna, veggie frittata, tuna croquette, and filet of salmon.

You may be asking, is this for me? Who comes to WISE @ the J? The answer is, it’s for everyone! Congregant meals are provided for a suggested donation of \$3 for people 60 years and older and \$5.50 for those under 60. There are no eligibility restrictions to participate, and the program attracts people from all walks of life. Among our happy WISE @ the J community are people who live in the homes where they raised their children, people who entertain large groups at home on the weekends, and people who live in 65+ communities. Others organize activities for their neighbors, some who have mobility issues,

and many come to participate in exercise classes. A wonderful group of Russian-speaking women come regularly and share their language and recipes generously. Caregivers and their care recipients come for a change of scenery and a chance to catch the latest news about their community, and some come only when their busy travel schedules allow. Each new person offers a new perspective, a fresh face, and great ideas. When you come to WISE @ the J, you can expect a friendly crowd, a lovely meal, and best of all, fun. As the Congregation-based Social Worker since 2020, I have been striving to find engaging ways to connect older adults to one another and their community in the wake of COVID. Now, as I have added this new role of WISE @ the J Program Coordinator, I hope to bring that spirit from my congregation work (which I continue to do) to the JCC. WISE @ the J always had great programming. I was so pleased to learn that Sally Adler had, for many years, been organizing movie viewings and chose to partner up with WISE @ the J to bring her movie club to a wider audience. JFS has always firmly believed that senior-led ideas produce the best results for programs aimed at their participation. Our Friday mahjong players are another great example. They wanted to play mahjong, and JFS and the JCC were able to provide a venue, stable scheduling, and the addition of a lovely lunch. And

they’re willing to teach you to play too! On Mondays, we offer a variety of activities: game days, trivia, bingo, art projects, informational sessions about area resources, wellness programming, fun projects with kids from the Hebrew Day School, and much more.

“I love WISE @ the J! We’ve always tried to keep things interesting, offering some new activities on Mondays. The seniors choose which films they want to see, and you’ve been so great, finding ways to screen hard-to-get movies like Oscar nominees. I see that when people come here, they feel connected because I, as a staff person, share that feeling with them. I can’t help but stop by as often as possible to chat with my friends at WISE @ the J,” says Elizabeth Churnesky, office manager at the JCC of Greater Ann Arbor.

Check your calendars, we’d love to have you join us on Mondays (12:30–3), Wednesdays (12–3:30), and/or Fridays (12–3:30). Simply call or email Rebecca Niebuurt (734) 219-5354 or rebeccan@jfsannarbor.org to register two days in advance and make your way to the JCC of Greater Ann Arbor, 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, for lunch, good company, and fun! Sally Adler says when people ask her about why she comes to WISE @ the J, she always encourages them to come, “There’s no membership fee, it’s only \$3, you get a good lunch, you don’t have to be Jewish, and everyone is welcome.” ■

JCC Annual Golf Outing will honor Newmans

By Ariella Monson, Director of Development and Operations, JCC

Join us for our Ninth Annual Golf Outing Fore the Kids on Monday, August 12, at Polo Fields in Ann Arbor, as we raise scholarship funds for the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor’s youth programming including Camp Raanana, JCC Maccabi, and early childhood programs. We are thrilled to be honoring Sharon and Chuck Newman, founders, longtime supporters, and friends of the Jewish Community Center.

Sharon and Chuck Newman have been active participants in the Jewish and Greater Ann Arbor communities for most of their adult lives. Sharon grew up in Detroit and Chuck in Wayne. They have resided in Ann Arbor since 1960 and 1958 respectively, where they raised their children, Steve, Rachel, Mike, and Shaina, and they are the proud grandparents of nine. In 1965, just two years after getting married, they became founding members of Temple Beth Emeth. While still in their 20s, Sharon was the President of the Temple Sisterhood and Chuck was the Treasurer. However, one of their most rewarding accomplishments

has been their founding of the Jewish Community Center of Ann Arbor.

Chuck’s involvement in the JCC includes roles as its second president and twice serving as Chair of the Opening Ceremonies of the JCC Maccabi Games in Detroit. He went on to cofound the Michigan Israel Business Bridge where he served as President, and was also President of the Michigan Jewish Conference. He served on the boards of the University of Michigan Hillel, Eastern Michigan University Hillel, and eventually held multiple offices on the Board of Directors of National Hillel, the Foundation for Jewish Campus, including its Chairmanship.

Sharon has been heavily committed to active participation in Jewish communal life since high school, where she was involved with the JCC and the B’nai Brith Girls in Detroit. She served on the first Board of Directors of the JCC and was its first Treasurer and Secretary. Sharon served as the Delegation Head of the JCC Ann Arbor Maccabi team for 12 years, traveling with our team to loca-

tions all over the country. As we rebuild Team Ann Arbor for the upcoming JCC Maccabi Games in Detroit, July 28–August 2, we are excited to offer an opportunity to honor them as our honorary Delegation Heads.

Both Sharon and Chuck are retired, but that hasn’t stopped the work they do for the larger community. Currently, Sharon serves as the CEO of their immediate and extended families and hosts seders for 70 or more guests. Chuck is an active member of the Executive Committee of the International Myeloma Foundation Board of Directors and is a leader with Distill Social and Protectors of Equality in Government, both of which he cofounded. During the pandemic, Chuck started a Zoom interview show, *Conversations!* presented by the Jewish Cultural Arts and Education department of the JCC.

The JCC’s annual golf outing provides \$50,000 worth of scholarship funds for all of our youth programs. The JCC’s Early Childhood Center is one of the top providers in the area, offering enrich-

ing and educational programs for children eight weeks to pre-kindergarten in our community. Camp Raanana, our popular summer day camp for pre-kindergarten to high school aged children, allows campers to experience a fun, safe, and memorable summer. JCC Maccabi, the premier engagement program for Jewish teens, offers Olympic-style sports competitions, community service, social and cultural events, and opportunities to make friends and memories that will last a lifetime. Without the support from community members, we would not be able to offer these fabulous programs to the greater community.

Show your support for the JCC and the Newmans by becoming a sponsor, golfing, making a donation, or joining us for dinner. More information about becoming a sponsor and registering for the ninth Annual Golf Outing Fore the Kids can be found online at www.jccannarbor.org, calling 734.971.0990 or reaching out to Ariella Monson, Director of Development and Operations, ariellamonson@jccannarbor.org. ■

Early Childhood Center open enrollment begins

By Peretz Hirshbein, Director of Child and Family Services, JCC of Greater Ann Arbor

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor’s Early Childhood Center (ECC) will be releasing its application for the 2024–25 school year on March 1, 2024, and will start accepting new applications on Friday, March 15. The ECC gives first priority for enrollment to siblings of currently enrolled ECC children. Applications from families of JCC affiliate organizations (TBE, BIC, HDS, JCS, etc.) have second priority, followed by applications from the general public.

The Ann Arbor JCC’s ECC is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the nation’s leading child advocacy organization. The ECC’s curriculum is guided by a set of core Jewish values as well as by the HighScope educational approach, the only research-validated early childhood curriculum. The ECC offers programs for children ages two months to five years old in specially designed learning environments suited for each specific age group. Infant rooms are warm and intimate

environments in which caregivers provide babies with the individualized routines they need. Toddler rooms are safe and reassuring spaces in which both the teachers and the environment can challenge these autonomy-hungry children. Preschool rooms are full of stimulating experiences, where children learn not only from their teachers, but also from each other. The ECC’s teachers provide a responsive curriculum that allows them to challenge and nurture children at all developmental levels. Language and literacy,

math, science, social studies, and physical development are combined with Jewish celebrations and values to create an integrated curriculum. Healthy living is promoted through the Jewish Community Center Association of North America’s Discover CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) program.

For more information about the Early Childhood Center, please visit www.jccannarbor.org or contact the ECC office at (734) 971-0990 or eccoffice@jccannarbor.org. ■

The Zekelman Holocaust Center reopens after huge remodel

The Zekelman Holocaust Center (The HC), located at 28123 Orchard Lake Rd, Farmington Hills, officially reopened its core exhibit on Sunday, January 28, marking a significant milestone in The HC's extensive multi-million-dollar renovation project. The timing of the reopening aligned with International Holocaust Remembrance Day, observed globally on Saturday, January 27.

The HC, which has provided Holocaust education at its current Farmington Hills location since 2004, began its renovation in May 2023, and has undergone a comprehensive \$31 million transformation, displaying a commitment to preserving the legacy of Holocaust victims and survivors. The new exhibit, a collaboration with renowned design firm Ralph Appelbaum Associates (RAA), brings a fresh perspective by centering the voices of those who experienced the Holocaust and highlighting survivors who made Michigan their home after World War II.

The new exhibit forgoes a traditional didactic approach in favor of Holocaust victim and survivor voices, making extensive use of archival footage, images, and artifacts, as well as interactive video of survivor testimony to place the voices of those impacted by the Holocaust as its focus.

"Memorializing the six million is the foundation of all of our activities. The greatest differentiating factor between the original and the new exhibit is the centering of the voices of those who experienced the Holocaust. Throughout the exhibit, visitors will hear the personal stories of those who survived the Holocaust and rebuilt their lives in Michigan after the war. By localizing the history from the perspective of those who lived it, rather than those who perpetrated it, we are showing that the Holocaust did not happen so long ago or so far away," said Eli Mayerfeld, CEO of The HC.

The decision to undertake this extensive renovation stems from The HC's recognition of the urgency to ensure the stories and experiences of Holocaust survivors remain accessible to future generations. As the population of survivors diminishes, The HC is acutely aware of the need to adapt its exhibits to meet the evolving needs of present and future visitors.



The renovation comes at a critical time for the American public. The Anti-Defamation League reports a 337% increase in antisemitic attacks compared to last year, much of it coming after the October 7 attack on Israel by Hamas terrorists whose charter calls for the extermination of the Jews.

"Rhetoric and propaganda defame the individual and the group, and when sanctioned by the state, lay the groundwork for genocide," Mayerfeld said. "Learning about the Holocaust helps visitors understand the potential consequences of antisemitism, and how to counter it today."

Mark Mulder, Director of Curatorial Affairs, who played an integral role in envisioning the design for the new core exhibit, said, "The way we center Holocaust victims and survivors and make each of the topics personal to individuals is a unique approach for a Holocaust museum. Further, our commitment to making sure the unique experiences of women are given equal attention is something that we are proud of," said Mulder.

Visitors familiar with the former iteration of the core exhibit will encounter new spaces shaped by the philosophy

and mission of the redesign.

"The area that used to be the Abyss is now called People and Possessions. It features artifacts that represent the several types of loss people experienced at the hands of the Nazis. For example, there are wedding rings found by U.S. soldiers in Dachau. We use the objects, along with archival footage from before and after the Holocaust, to help our visitors understand that people lost their material items, but they also lost their partners, families, and communities," said Mulder.

Annually, The HC reaches 150,000 visitors through in-person and virtual programs, exhibit tours, and teacher training workshops.

For more information about The Zekelman Holocaust Center, visit <https://www.holocaustcenter.org/>.

About The Zekelman Holocaust Center

Founded in 1984 by Michigan survivors who were intent on creating a lasting memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, The Zekelman Holocaust Center is guided by its mission to engage, educate, and empower by remembering the Holocaust.

Each year the Center welcomes thousands of visitors who benefit from having a local resource where they can learn the lessons of history's darkest period. Exhibits and artifacts on display include survivor testimonies, documents, paintings, and films, an authentic WWII-era boxcar, and a sapling from the tree located outside Anne Frank's hiding place window that is described in her diary. The Center also invites the public to make use of its extensive Library Archive, which contains more than 20,000 volumes.

Embedded in the community, the Center's Museum Educators and Docents tell the human story of the Holocaust to school and adult groups through customized tours, training, and programs. Participants are empowered to apply the lessons learned to create a compassionate society where people take responsible action. Learn more at www.holocaustcenter.org.

Hours: Sunday through Thursday 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m. and Friday 9:30 a.m.–3 p.m. The last admission is one hour before closing. Wheelchair accessible. Free parking. For additional information, visit www.holocaustcenter.org or call 248-553-2400. ■

JFS helps survivors of gender-based violence

By Cynthia Ketcherside and Shrina Eadeh, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is present in every society around the world and takes many forms," according to the International Rescue Committee (IRC). While GBV affects men and women, it is more common for women and girls to be affected by it. It is exacerbated by the challenges faced by displaced populations such as breakdown of the family structure, lack of access to services, displacement, and loss of economic resources.

In April 2023, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (JFSWC) submitted a proposal to our national agency, HIAS, to receive a grant to offer Gender-Based Violence programming. The purpose of the grant is to improve the knowledge and skills of our staff about GBV and ensure the agency can provide survivor-centered services. This includes being able to identify needs, barriers, and strengths of women and girls.

In May 2023, JFSWC learned that we were approved to run Phase I of the grant. Over the summer of 2023 four staff members completed HIAS trainings and conducted listening

circles with different populations related to Gender-Based Violence. After the completion of the listening circles, HIAS released Phase II to focus on implementing programs for women and girls based on the results of the listening circles. JFSWC submitted our proposal for the second phase, which was approved towards the end of the year.

In Phase II, JFSWC will obtain bystander intervention training. JFSWC will also ensure cultural orientation on gender-based violence is incorporated into the education provided to new refugee arrivals. Additionally, JFSWC will be able to purchase 10 brand new sewing machines and materials to provide ongoing sewing circles to refugee and immigrant women to provide a safe space to socialize and improve skills and independence. Finally, with the support of this grant, JFSWC is able to purchase materials such as bus passes, first aid kits, feminine hygiene products, gift cards, and more, to provide emergency kits to support women if they must leave their home suddenly.

With this funding, JFSWC aims to challenge harmful norms, promote gender equality, and provide support to survivors. We are working towards a future where everyone can live free from violence and discrimination. ■

Smartphones for refugees

Cynthia Ketcherside and Shrina Eadeh, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County has been resettling refugees for over 30 years. One of the core lessons we continue to learn is the importance and power of accessible communication systems. In the last 30 years technology has advanced so much. It has enabled our clients to communicate with our staff and community members but also with family overseas. This positivity impacted our client's mental health and well-being.

Connecting with family is one of the number one priorities for refugees we serve. If they do not arrive with smartphones, they request one. This connection enables them to initially decrease some of their anxiety about the new journey they have embarked on.

Having access to a phone has also empowered clients to communicate with

community members. Many use Google Translate to communicate that they need assistance while riding the bus or at the grocery store. It gives them a voice which would not be possible without it.

JFS is excited to share that in January 2024, our national agency, HIAS, announced a partnership with Ultra Mobile, an independent wireless provider on T-Mobile's network. Ultra Mobile donated 40 SIM cards to JFS that included a free month of service. These SIM cards can be placed into any unlocked mobile device, and after the first 30 days, renewal plans start as low as \$15 a month and remain pay-as-you-go with no required contracts. These plans can provide our immigrant and refugee families with more affordable rates to maintain connected to JFS, their family, and the community. ■

Derek Penslar's book examines Zionist history through emotions

By Irene Katz Connelly

This story was originally published in the Forward on February 5, 2024

Derek Penslar never expected the book he published last June, *Zionism: An Emotional State*, to circulate on social media.

It is an academic study of the emotions that have shaped Zionist thought and practice since the movement's inception. But Penslar, a Harvard history professor, found his work and public statements under new scrutiny when he assumed leadership of the university's antisemitism task force after the university's president, Claudine Gay, was forced to resign in part over her response to campus activism after October 7.

Critics slammed Penslar for having signed an open letter that described Israel's control over the West Bank as "a regime of apartheid." Larry Summers, a former president of Harvard, called for Penslar to resign his position as co-chair of the task force, and Rep. Elise Stefanik said in a statement that he is "known for his despicable antisemitic views." Bill Ackman, a billionaire Harvard alum who led the campaign for Gay's ouster, posted on X that by appointing Penslar, Harvard "continues on the path of darkness."

Others debated snippets from the book's section on anger in Zionist thought, especially Penslar's assertion that "veins of hatred run through Jewish civilization." (This quotation comes from a passage in which Penslar discusses the biblical Israelites' hatred of their enemies and the revenge fantasies of persecuted Jews in medieval Europe.) Citing this argument, Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt called Penslar's appointment "absolutely inexcusable."

Meanwhile, hundreds of scholars signed a letter supporting Penslar, and *Zionism: An Emotional State* was named a finalist for a National Jewish Book Award. Reached by phone, Penslar described the past few weeks as difficult and mystifying.

"I feel like there are two Derek Penslars in the world," he said. "There's the Derek Penslar who teaches at Harvard, who has devoted his professional and personal life to Israel, who cares deeply about his Jewish students, and who is very concerned about antisemitism. And then there is a malicious avatar whom people are accusing of heinous misdeeds."

This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Irene Katz Connelly: How did you become interested in studying Zionism through an emotional lens?

Derek Penslar: National movements are steeped in emotion: feelings of deprivation and hope for independence and freedom; the feeling of joy upon attaining independence; fear that one's enemy is going to do harm; and then love of the collective, love of the nation. At least in their original forms, nationalism and patriotism were all about various forms of love.

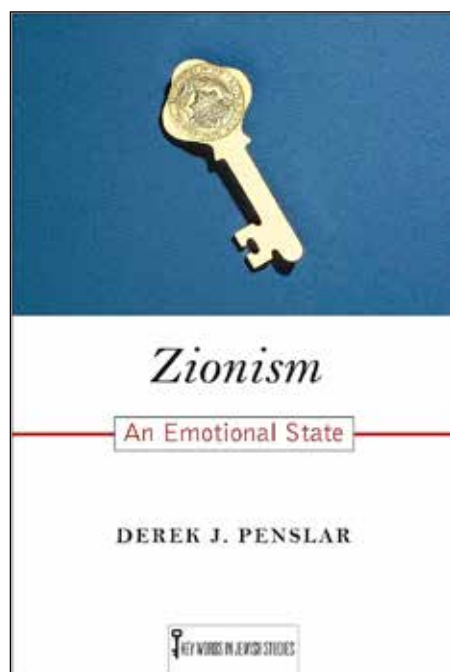
A lot of the work on Zionism and the state of Israel is about political and military leaders. So many courses on Israel are taught in terms of wars, without thinking about the underlying emotions of love, fear, collective solidarity, that have made it possible not only for Israel to materially fight these wars but to endure psychologically as a community.

The book is also about diaspora Zionists and their own attachments to the state of Israel, the fact that they have raised money for Israel and supported Israel diplomatically. They do that out

of a feeling of very powerful emotional connection that binds them to Israel. We don't study that connection.

IKC: I was especially interested in your discussion of Leon Uris's 1958 novel *Exodus*, which you argue both reflected and produced a deep emotional attachment to Israel among American Jews.

DP: The novel was a bestseller in America for 18 months, and it was read by a great many people who weren't Jews. But it clearly had a particularly powerful effect on Jewish readers. It appealed to their sense of solidarity with Israel, a sense of profound connection with Holocaust survivors and the revival of Jewish



life in Israel. But there's also a muscular, romantic, and even erotic value to the novel. This is made even more clear in the movie, with Paul Newman cast as Ari Ben Canaan, who embodies a masculine but sensitive ideal of the Israeli Jewish man.

A lot of the ideals of Israel that American Jews found so appealing in *Exodus* were already present in the 1950s. And we see in the 1960s, and particularly after the 1967 War, how this sense of adoration became even stronger. I can't say categorically that the novel *Exodus* increased emotional connection to Israel by X%, but it clearly embodied that connection.

IKC: One observation that surprised me was that some of the affective responses I considered essential to Zionism — like the adoration you just mentioned — are actually relatively new.

DP: American Zionism was fairly weak until the 1940s. A lot of Jews were busily trying to Americanize, many of them were Orthodox, and there was also a very strong Bundist movement. When Zionism did begin to take hold during World War II, with hundreds of thousands of American Jews joining Zionist organizations, they were doing it out of a sense of solidarity and compassion with European Jews suffering through the Holocaust. They weren't necessarily doing it because of a love of the land of Israel.

From 1946 to 1948, most of the fundraising efforts by the United Jewish Appeal emphasized Israel as a home for Holocaust survivors. As the 1950s wore on and Israel became

established, the emotional turn towards adulation began, leaping forward in 1958 with *Exodus* and reaching a peak after 1967.

IKC: This book provides a new taxonomy of different kinds of Zionism and examines the emotions underlying each. Why do you think it's important for people today to be able to distinguish between the Zionism of solidarity with Holocaust survivors, the Zionism of love for the Ari Ben Canaan-style Jew, and the Zionism of feeling inspired by seeing Hebrew letters on a Coke can?

DP: It's very important for Jews the world over to appreciate that there are many ways to be connected to Israel. The adoration of Israel which was very common in my youth, and that I experienced quite strongly as a young man, is not the only one. There are connections to Israel based on solidarity, there are connections to Israel based on fear for the survival of the state. There are connections to Israel based on worry that the state has taken the wrong direction.

One of the great signs of love is worry. Something I didn't write about in the book, because it came up right as I finished, was the crisis after the 2022 elections and the attempts by the government to limit the power of the judiciary. A lot of American Jews who are very connected to Israel began to express trepidation, worry, fear for Israel. A word that entered the vocabulary, which I hadn't seen before, is "anguish." Anguish is a sense of near despair for something that you care about deeply. And that's a sign of connection to Israel. Now, in the wake of October 7, there's yet a new wave of emotional responses.

Something else I point out in the book is that younger American Jews are less likely to be passionately connected to Israel than their parents. They're not necessarily anti-Zionist, but there's an emotional cooling going on. A lot of American Jews in their 20s are aware of Israel, but it's simply not central to their Jewish identity in the way it was for an older generation. So that's a different emotional connection.

IKC: One tension I see among people on the left is between those who disavow Israel's current actions but also see Zionism as a positive cultural attachment to the country and Jewish people as a whole, and those who say that the only meaningful analysis of Zionism is of its material implications for Palestinians today. Can your scholarship add anything to that debate?

DP: I don't really see that as a contradiction. The official organizations of American Jewry have emphasized for a long time that certain kinds of criticism of Israel are allowable if they come from love. The question is, what kind of criticism?

Can an American Jew criticize the occupation of the West Bank, and what does it mean if that criticism is made from love? Organizations like J Street, and others to the left of J Street, often combine a positive emotional connection to Israel with an appreciation of the untenable nature of the occupation. One can proclaim a strong attachment to Israel and have a clearheaded understanding of the deeply problematic nature of certain aspects of the Israeli state.

IKC: Does the demand that criticism of Israel come from a place of love suggest a belief that only Jews can legitimately criticize Israel?

DP: It could be a way of limiting criticism to Jews. It could also be a way of limiting criticism from Jews — because who will be the arbiter of whether the criticism from Jews is sufficiently loving?

In the book, I mentioned the short-lived peace organization Breira, in the 1970s. Its members were young American Jews, many of them students of elite universities, who had lived in Israel; many of them spoke Hebrew, they knew the country well, and they proclaimed their love of Israel. The establishment Jewish response was: No, you don't. You're talking about Palestinian statehood, therefore you cannot love Israel.

IKC: The idea that Zionism is rooted in emotions, like fear, pride or the desire to belong, can be threatening to those who see it as a rational political ideology. Did you expect this book to be provocative?

DP: I've encountered some pushback that the history of Zionism needs to be understood purely in the realm of thought and ideas; and that if you move to the level of emotion, somehow you are cheapening an exalted national project. I think this is wrong. All political movements have a very strong emotional element. To adapt that methodology to the case of Zionism is to accept that the Zionist movement is a political movement and that the state of Israel is a state.

I didn't think the book would be provocative in the sense that I'm not by nature a polemicist. The emotional perspective reflects our growing interest, in the 21st century, with the inseparable connection between body and mind — mindfulness, for example.

IKC: People invoked the book's treatment of anger or hate in Zionist thought as evidence that you aren't fit to lead Harvard's antisemitism task force. Did that surprise you?

DP: I'm hurt, to be honest, and I feel that those people have misunderstood. Fundamental to my approach to Jewish history is that Jews are human beings like anyone else. When Jews act as collectives, their behavior is not totally different from that of other human beings.

Human beings are capable of hatred.

To write that under certain circumstances, a Jewish national movement can foster hatred, is to recognize that Jews are normal people. I don't see this as an insult; I see it as an act of compassion with human beings who have a wide variety of emotional reactions to situations that they find endangering or threatening.

IKC: What would you say to those who oppose your leadership of the task force?

DP: I would only say that I approach the study of Israel the way I would expect my colleagues anywhere in the world to study the country of their choice. I'm not terribly happy with the United States right now, but I'm very happy to have been born here and live here. I don't see why there should be a contradiction between being critical of a particular country's policies and having a deep love of the country.

The real question is, do I care about Jews? Do I care about Jewish students? I love teaching, and I care very deeply about my students, whether they're Jewish or not. Antisemitism is a problem all over the United States, and we need to investigate it and do what we can to address it.

Irene Katz Connelly is a staff writer at the Forward. You can contact her at connelly@forward.com. Follow her on Twitter at [katz_conn](https://twitter.com/katz_conn).

“Camera as Passport: The Ship of Photographers” exhibition opens March 11

By Deborah Dash Moore

Starting in 1933 when Hitler and the Nazis came to power, a cadre of European Jews — German, Polish, Hungarian, Austrian, French — discovered that a camera could be their passport, first out of Germany and then out of Europe. Some of these women and men had been planning one type of career — lawyer, journalist, painter, musician — but then realized that they needed to find another way to earn a living. Taking photographs presented a sufficiently malleable opportunity that not only allowed them to leave Germany and then Europe but also to have the means to sustain themselves in foreign countries where they did not necessarily speak the language.

They did, however, mobilize the visual language of photography. For a number of these figures, forced migration became an asset during the golden age of photojournalism wherein their portable services were employed to supply picture stories on the move and around the world. Many of these Jews became influential photographers, shaping how their contemporaries saw the world. Looking back on their work, we can see how they have influenced our understanding of the modern world even as we can recognize their photographs as a significant component of modern Jewish visual culture.

Of the dozens of photographers who fled Europe, eight escaped on a single ship. The S. S. Winnipeg sailed from Marseille, France, on May 7, 1941. Germany had already conquered both eastern and western Europe and was poised to invade the Soviet Union. The United States was not yet in the war. Among the 750 refugees aboard



Fred Stein, *Epicerie Volailles, Antwerp, 1937*, courtesy Estate of Fred Stein

were photographers from Hungary, Belgium, France, and Germany: Ilse Bing, Josef Breitenbach, Boris Lipnitsky, Charles Leirens, Yolla Niclas, Fred Stein, Monie Tannen, and Ylla (Cammilla Henriette Koffler). During lifeboat drills, they discovered each other. Some of them narrowly escaped Vichy France under the auspices of the American journalist Varian Fry and the New York-based Emergency Rescue Committee that helped so many Jewish and anti-Fascist artists get out of Europe in the nick of time.

This exhibit introduces the University of Michigan to this intrepid group as exemplary case studies of the wide range of European

photographers who used their cameras as passports to other worlds. It focuses first on their European experiences pre-emigration before turning to their escape from Europe on the S. S. Winnipeg (with three of them taking photos on board the ship). The exhibit concludes with examples of some of their initial photographic reactions to the new world, seeing it through European eyes.

Join us to celebrate this exhibit's grand opening on March 11 at 3:30 p.m. in Weiser Hall Room 547 on the University of Michigan's Central Campus. “Camera



Fred Stein, *42nd Street Subway Exit, New York, 1945*, Courtesy Estate of Fred Stein

as Passport” is open for public viewing from 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The University of Michigan College of Literature, Science, and the Arts greatly values inclusion and access for all. We are pleased to provide reasonable accommodations to enable full participation in this event. Please contact js-event-coord@umich.edu to request disability accommodations or with any questions or concerns. Please provide advance notice to ensure sufficient time to meet the requested accommodations. ■

Love of Hebrew

By Nancy Leon

Growing up, I was quiet about it, but I liked Hebrew school. I liked it even though we rode there on an old yellow school bus three afternoons a week and on Sundays. When we got older, classes were during dinner which meant coming home on cold Minnesota nights, again on that bus, to eat a plate of leftovers.

Most kids hated Hebrew school and some misbehaved in ways they would never dare during regular school. I can still picture the bewildered, exhausted teachers. In one classroom, I remember a planned stunt: an alarm clock was set to go off, and everyone pulled out sandwiches yelling “dinner time!” The teachers were often young, many were Israeli immigrants, and they must have despaired at the resistance they met.

Despite the long hours and chaotic classrooms, I felt connected to Hebrew. I liked learning this new language with its strange symbols and right to left order. It felt like having a private code and a link to another time and place.

After my Bat Mitzvah, I studied He-



brew through eighth grade (an oddity at that time), but there was no formal way to continue. I did hang on to my Hebrew dictionary. Coverless and worn, I still have it, somehow moving it from place to place with me over the last 60 years. I remembered a few words and knew Hebrew songs from summer camp. But since we hadn't actually talked to each other in Hebrew school, I had no conversation skills. When I went to synagogue, prayers were familiar, but more from repetition than a real understanding of the words.

When my young son started religious school at Beth Israel in Ann Arbor, I happily reconnected with Hebrew. It was exciting to start seeing Hebrew print again. When tutors were needed to help kids read more fluently, I volunteered to teach basic Biblical vocabulary. I refreshed my knowledge of the alphabet and some simple words, like old friends, started coming back.

Our family went on a congregational trip to Israel in the summer of 2007. This was my

first time there, and I noticed I was able to read some Hebrew signs, even without the vowels. I found myself longing to read more, and better understand the conversations I heard around me.

One day, when we visited an Ethiopian family in their apartment, Rabbi Dobrusin sat on a couch with the mother, and had a long, fairly slow conversation. Listening, I realized I could understand parts of their dialogue, and felt encouraged that I could follow along. I decided then to look into adult education Hebrew classes when I returned home.

I was fortunate to find an excellent adult education Hebrew program sponsored jointly by Beth Israel and Temple Beth Emeth. The program was divided into conversational and biblical Hebrew sections. Initially, I enrolled in the biblical program, and prayers started making much more sense. Although I didn't know all the words, key meanings and beautiful passages stood out when I was in the sanctuary.

I then joined a conversational class, a time I looked forward to all week. We sat around a table speaking Hebrew about our lives, our families, and where and what we loved to eat. We went to a local

falafel place together where our teacher required us to order in Hebrew with the Israeli Arab owners. We laughed together and felt confused and later triumphant when we saw our progress. Many words from my Hebrew school years came back to me, almost as if they were waiting in the recesses of my brain to be called upon.

The people in the Hebrew class were brought together by Hebrew, but stayed together because of fondness and friendship. Several of us started having regular coffee, then lunch, where we would continue practicing our conversations. We had Shabbat dinners, celebrated weddings and the birth of grandchildren.

We also experienced huge loss and sorrow. One of our group members developed a brain tumor and we met at her care facility for several months before she died. Another had two strokes but managed to come back for some of our lunches. During the pandemic, a couple from our group made aliyah to join their children and grandchildren living in Israel. We still meet with them monthly on Zoom.

I feel lucky to have been reunited with an old love of mine, the Hebrew language. This time though, the learning included new friends and shared, memorable experiences. Plus, I don't have to ride that old yellow school bus anymore! ■



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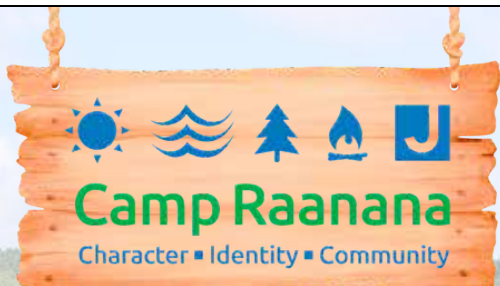
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Esther Bar-Shai's art at JCC's Amster Gallery

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

The Amster Gallery at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor continues to feature the work of local artists. Starting on March 17, the JCC will showcase the multiple mediums of local artist Esther Bar-Shai, including watercolors, pen, ink, and mixed media. Join us for Esther's Meet the Artist



event here at the JCC on Thursday, April 4, from 6–8 p.m.

Esther is a retired award-winning teacher of 50 years, first teaching in Israel and then in California. Born in Russia, Esther moved to Israel as a young child. At 21, she emigrated to California with her husband. They had four children and eight grandchildren. In 2012, Esther and her husband moved to Ann Arbor, and she decided to try painting in 2016.

In Esther's words, "I have always enjoyed crafts and creating. In the beginning, it was challenging — I didn't understand how much

technique was involved in watercolor painting. Over the years, I have taken many classes, and now I feel like the art is coming from me. It's an expression of who I am.

"My journey as an artist is ongoing; the more I paint, the more I discover how much more I still have to learn," Esther says. "My teachers have shown me different approaches and styles and I am inspired by them to discover new techniques and approaches. Now when I paint, I lose track of time. I love watercolors because the translucent quality allows me to layer colors to create depth and texture. Although I find it to be an ongoing challenge, I like to experiment with the paint-to-water ratio to control the opacity and intensity of the colors. I consider G-d the greatest painter, and everywhere I look in nature, I am inspired and in awe of G-d's creations."

Esther's artwork will be for sale at the JCC until the exhibit closes on May 31. We hope to see you at Meet the Artist on April 4!

Amster Gallery call for local artists

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor Art Committee is pleased to announce a call for artists to showcase their work at the Amster Gallery for the 2025 season. Exhibition at the Amster Gallery includes an opening reception with the artist for JCC members and the general public.

Artists or the pieces exhibited must have a connection to the Jewish community. All wall-hanging media is eligible for consideration; artists with three-dimensional works will be required to provide their own display cases and stands.

Interested applicants should please contact Drew Coel, JCC Marketing and Program Associate, by email at drewcoel@jccannarbor.org. ■



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"Stockholm: Old Friends Die Hard" TV Episode Screening

with Author Noa Yedlin, comment by Maya Barzilai
March 5 | 4:30 - 7 PM | North Quad 2435
RSVP to js-event-coord@umich.edu for a link to pre-screen Episode 1

"Camera as a Passport" Photography Exhibit Opening + Panel Discussion

with curators Deborah Dash Moore & Louis Kaplan
March 11 | 3:30 - 4:30 PM | Weiser Hall 555
Exhibit on public display March 4 - April 30



34th Annual David W. Belin Lecture: Towards a Jewish American Art History

with Professor Samantha Baskind (Cleveland State U)
March 14 | 5:30 PM Reception, 6 PM Lecture
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Book sales & signing available following lecture

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The surreal state of being Israelis feel after October 7

By Avishay Hayut

There is no exact equivalent word in English to describe the word **הזוי** (pronounced Hazui). A combination of crazy, surreal, and delusional is the closest to convey the feeling of Hazui. This word was used in almost every conversation I have had with family, friends, and other people I met in Israel recently. It also describes the disbelief and utter post-traumatic feelings that most Israelis have experienced over the past four months since October 7.

On that morning, we all woke up to one of the most horrific and brutal historical attacks on the Jewish state and Jews all over the world. Since that event the worldwide Jewish community has been suffering increased antisemitism. As someone born in Israel and a son of Holocaust survivors, I felt violated yet again. I needed to go there to be with my family and fellow Israelis to do something to help in the national effort to recover from the mayhem the attack left on its citizens. I spent close to four weeks in this amazing, wounded country. The experiences I had left me with a greater sense of awe as well as concern for my homeland. I don't want anyone to have the idea that I fully support the actions the Israeli government — pre and post 10/7 — however, there is no doubt in my mind that the mere existence of Israel is vital not only for Israelis but for Jews all over the world.

It is important to note that the towns and kibbutzim around the Gaza border are less threatened now since the IDF military invasion. However, Hizbollah, which is positioned at the Lebanese border, is better equipped and has more fighters than the Hamas. It poses a greater threat on a second front should it choose to start a war. The situation is further complicated by the fact that Hamas has about 80–90% support in the West Bank and 60–70% in Gaza. The IDF is constantly performing raids in the West Bank to prevent attacks inside Israel by terrorists embedded within the Palestinian population. It is possible that this overwhelming support of Hamas in the West Bank is fueled by Jewish settlement aggression somewhat protected by the government. Nevertheless, one should not be fooled to think that the objective of many Palestinians is a two-state solution. The objective is and seems to always have been the elimination of the Jewish state. The events of October 7 and its aftermath including the reactions in the Palestinian and Arab streets are a testament to this goal.

I started my volunteer work at a depot that gathered donated clothing, food, furniture, and other household items earmarked for the displaced families from the Gaza and Lebanon borders. There I sorted clothing by size, gender, and season. Though the place was packed with items, few came to take any. The evacuees and victims are still in a state of limbo. Wanting to give them what they need requires more than the stuff at that center.

I then began helping prepare warm meals for Israeli soldiers in both the northern and southern fronts. I was working in a kitchen at Jack's Inn (in Kfar Nechamia) doing whatever was needed. I did everything from cutting vegetables and chicken into pieces

to seasoning and stuffing potatoes with meat patties to just cleaning up and washing dishes. This kitchen both ships its prepared food to the soldiers as well as sending their food truck on a biweekly basis to the border to make soups and pizzas for soldiers at their bases. My most significant experience was to join one such excursion close to the Lebanese border. For me, it was coming full circle because we served artillery troops using modern versions of the same cannons I

ing the IDF battling within Gaza. Israelis see less of the carnage and more of the difficult urban environment by which the soldiers have to fight, street by street and house by house. And, in my opinion, from what I have seen, the IDF does not target civilians. It is clear to most Israelis that without this phase of a ground war, the future of Israel would be less secure and its survival threatened. Most also acknowledge that without

location a tourist haven with hotels and restaurants like in Hong Kong or Singapore, which could have brought money and prosperity to all of Gaza, or better yet, a solid civilian infrastructure for safe, healthy, and joyful living. However, it was never their agenda or goal. That infrastructure is proof of their goal to eliminate the Jewish state and kill every Jew in it.

If I have to sum up my visit I would say



used in my military service at the very same front. I felt like I was serving a younger version of myself. While serving the hot pizzas, we had to put on ear plugs since the troops were returning fire towards Hizbollah targets that had just sent rockets into the nearby town of Kiryat Shmona. The soldiers were very appreciative of the delicious pizzas and gobbled down all that we made. After the long day and our vehicle getting stuck in the mud, I returned to my brother's house at 3:30 a.m. exhausted but extremely elated for being part of this important act of kindness and service to our brave soldiers.

I also participated in a meeting at Kibbutz Ruchama near Gaza where hostage families, friends, and their supporters gathered to plant 136 carob trees in honor of the remaining hostages. The stress of the families felt like a dagger to the bone. This was followed by a visit to the Gaza border where I saw through the fence some of the burned houses. It was right near the Nova festival site where there is a big memorial for the murdered victims: a huge sign by the field where trees, each with a photo of a hostage attached, were planted. My heart overflowed with sadness and anger for the horrific attack.

In Israel, viewing Israeli TV and talking with people, one sees scenes you don't see in the media here. Not a single day goes by day without stories about families who suffered the attack, who have lost family members or who have members that are still held in Gaza as hostages. There is no day without the heroic stories of those who fended off some of the attacks and there is no day without see-

this ground war there would be no pressure on Hamas to release the hostages. So far, the Israeli army made impressive advances that were thought to be impossible prior to the ground attack. Most Israelis do not want to see civilian casualties but blame them on the way that Hamas has entrenched itself within the population.

They do not see another way to remove Hamas from controlling Gaza.

If the Israeli aim was genocide, many more Palestinians would have been killed and this war would probably be over by now. There has been no army in the world which had to fight under such conditions. This is a heavily populated area, riddled with an underground tunnel system that is akin to the subways of major modern metropolitan centers but in a much smaller land area. Yet these tunnels were not built for the purpose of transporting people from one destination to the other. It was built for the sole purpose of war — hiding in and fighting out of to attack its neighbors on the other side of the border. Please don't forget that many of these neighbors have helped the Gazans with solar power and other technologies, jobs and transportation of their sick to Israeli hospitals, and were staunch supporters of a two-state solution. That sentiment of living side by side in peace is mostly gone for most Israelis because they now believe that in this moment there is no partner for peace. Just consider the fact that instead of investing money and manpower in building this extensive war infrastructure, Hamas could have built at its prime Mediterranean beach

it was one of the most important, thought-provoking, and self-actualizing experiences in my life. Israel's future is very hard to predict, and I have no expertise or great knowledge to share. It is very easy to paint this situation black and white but actually the truth is extremely complicated and full of nuances and colors and shades of gray. A friend, who is a very successful and smart lawyer, prior to the war held the notion that Gaza needs to be wiped of its citizens or that they should be transported to other Arab countries. He told me that after October 7, he sees that both people have their truths and that a solution will only come if we sit together and accept that both of these truths are valid. This would be the beginning of a constructive conversation that can lead to peace. I hope that at the end, if not in my lifetime then at least for my children's and the generations to come, there will be two countries living side by side helping each other prosper in a new Middle East reality where war is a thing of the past and military presence is simply a deterrent. This is my wish for my homeland: a country that against all odds continues to prosper, side by side with neighbors who seek and achieve peace and prosperity as well.

The writer of this article is a contributor to the book *The Ones Who Remember: Second-Generation Voices of the Holocaust*, published by City Point Press, 2022.

If you would like to donate to Jack's Kitchen, please click here: <https://givebutter.com/kiTHQ2> ■

Kudos for Regina cont from pg 1

From Rabbi Daniel Alter (former Director of Education)

Over my six years at TBE, my relationship with Cantor Regina developed from instant colleague to a mentor and dear friend. Together, we changed the culture of tefillah education and encouraged our students to grow from passive recipients to active leaders of Jewish worship. From our work behind the scenes and with the religious school, to our holiday planning and leading Shabbat and life cycle moments together, Cantor Regina encouraged and empowered my growth as a rabbi and as a person. I am forever grateful!

From Rabbi Chelsea Feuchs (Interim Director of Education)

I joined the staff at TBE in 2023, during Rabbi Josh's sabbatical. Cantor Regina went above and beyond taking me under her wing. She was kind and patient and always happy to explain the way that things run at the synagogue. I felt so supported and having her trust meant a lot to me as a new rabbi. She was very intentional about inviting me to as many events, life cycle rituals, and services as possible. I credit so much of my integration into the TBE community to her. While her retirement is well earned, I will miss seeing her daily, but I feel confident we will spend time together because we enjoy each other's company so much.

In conclusion, we must note that Regina is not the only member of the Hayut family to have made a major impact at TBE. Several of her colleagues mentioned the significant role her husband Avishay has played. He has been a true partner, supporting Regina, and modeling the role of a clergy spouse. He shares his musical gifts, singing in the tenor section of Kol Halev and accompanying the choir on the guitar. During the pandemic, Avishay played the guitar for Shabbat services for many months when services were streamed from the Hayut and Whinston homes.

The Hayut children have also contributed to the musical life of TBE. Their older son, Yoav, conducted the choir during the last High Holy Days services. Their younger son, Alon, has played the cello beautifully for many years during the Kol Nidre prayer on Yom Kippur. We are all grateful that the Hayut family will continue to live in Ann Arbor and be a part of the TBE community.

Visit the Rejoice with Regina website, to learn more about the ways TBE is honoring her this year. <https://www.templebethemeth.org/rejoice-with-regina.html> ■

TBE events in March

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 & Ari Smith. Guest leaders welcome! Contact Ari M (ari.j.marcotte@gmail.com) for more information.

WTBE Gift Shop

Wednesdays from 4–6 p.m.

Fridays from 6–7:30 p.m.

Washtenaw County's only Judaica Shop! Located in the Genesis building at 2309 Packard St., Ann Arbor.

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, 4–7 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.

Renaissance Group presents Game Night

Saturday, March 2, 7 p.m.

Get ready for a night of fun at the Renaissance Group Game Night! The event is open to all adult TBE members. There is no cost to attend. You are strongly encouraged to bring a game or two that you love and are willing to teach and play with others, but bringing a game is not required. It should be possible to enjoy the game in about an hour even if it is not fully completed. If you would like to join us, please register and plan to bring a small evening snack/dessert to share at the event.

Getting Good at Getting Older

Thursday, March 7 and March 21, 7 p.m.

Join Rabbi Josh Whinston and Cantor Emerita Annie Rose for our six-part book discussion using the text *Getting Good at Getting Older* by Richard Siegel and Laura Geller. 7 p.m.

Family Camp

Friday, March 8, 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.

Rosh Chodesh Circle

Monday, March 11, 5:30 p.m.

In the TBE Chapel and available via Zoom.

LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck

Friday, March 15, 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!

Family Purim Carnival

Saturday, March 16, 10 a.m.

Join us for a Family Purim Carnival with Purim spiel in the sanctuary followed by a carnival in the social hall. Pizza will be available for purchase. Registration requested.

Bereavement Group

Tuesday, March 19, 4 p.m.

The group will have opportunities to share openly about their process of grieving and will also have topic-based readings to spark discussion.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose

Tuesday, March 19, 7 p.m. and Thursday, March 21, 12 p.m.

Please come to our Tuesday night sessions OR our Thursday afternoon sessions. Registration is not required, but is helpful for our planning.

An Evening in Shushan: An Adult Purim Party

Saturday, March 23, 6:30 p.m.

Registration ends on 3/18. Eat, Drink, and Be Merry in Shushan! Enjoy Persian-inspired cocktails, mocktails, and delicious food while celebrating Purim, Judaism's most uninhibited holiday, with friends and possibly a foe! Included in the festivities is the Ann Arbor, Michigan, premier of the critically acclaimed(?) The Roast of King Ahashuerus, featuring an all-star cast right out of the Book of Esther, with a "big name" special guest star (no, we are not telling you who — it's a secret!) This "adults only" Rejoice With Regina retirement event is sponsored by Temple Beth Emeth. Costumes are encouraged but not required. This event is free and there is a suggested donation to benefit the Cantor Regina Lambert-Hayut Music Fund.

Trans Day of Visibility Shabbat

Friday, March 29, 7:30 p.m.

The second annual Shabbat service to honor the trans community on Trans Day of Visibility. ■

Letters to the Editor

Cui bono cont. from pg 2

The two adversaries fighting this war are the state of Israel and Hamas. Both are independent state organizations, one is recognized by the international community and is a (imperfect) democratic state, and the other is widely recognized as a terror organization that took over the Gaza strip in a violent coup against the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority in 2007, killing and injuring hundreds of Palestinians.

Hamas and Israel are fighting a long and bloody conflict, during which Israel took many steps to defend its civilians from Hamas' indiscriminate aggressiveness, by investing billions in building bomb shelters, barriers, developing radars and anti-rocket systems, and much more. During the same time, Hamas has not done so. In fact, Hamas has designed its defensive strategy around immersing itself within the civilian population, using people as shields, instead of using concrete or steel. Furthermore, the vast resources Hamas did invest in building underground shelters and tunnels are strictly off-limits to civilians, who should be protected "by the UN, not Hamas," as Mousa Abu Marzouk, a senior Hamas official, told the press on October 23. As a comparison, when the allies started bombing raids against Nazi Germany in 1940, during the second World War, the Nazi government invested substantial resources in building massive "flak towers" in their cities: concrete buildings which enabled safe haven to 6,000 civilians each, as well as a hospital, and anti-aircraft defenses.

And who was to blame for German or Japanese civilian losses during the war? Would any sensible person imagine placing responsibility on the Brits or Americans for these numerous deaths? Of course their governments, who started a cruel war and refused to surrender, were responsible and held the full blame.

Would the suffering of German civilians justify a cease-fire if France, Holland, Poland, and numerous other countries were still occupied, and the Nazi government refused to lay its arms? Would that be humane?

And why would the situation between

Israel and Hamas be different? Why would a cease-fire while Hamas still holds civilian hostages and states that it still wants to destroy Israel, and is ready to rebuild its capabilities to do so, be just and humane? How could the residents of the western Negev go back to their ravaged homes while knowing that the same government that rampaged and massacred their communities is still in power?

A cease-fire without removing the threat, from Israelis as well as Palestinians cynically used as human shields, is not only unjust, but also stupid.

Second, why should any sensible person reject the irrelevant "cease-fire resolutions"?

Proposing a "cease-fire resolution" in a student or city council, let alone an educational board, has nothing to do with cease-fire. First, because it would not affect any of the relevant sides — be they the Israeli Government, Hamas, the UN, or the President of the United States. Second, since as we said earlier — it is just unjust.

So why is it wildly proposed anyway? This is the classic question of "Cui bono?", "who benefits?" The "meaningless" anti-Israeli proposals are a strategy long held by pro-Palestinian organizations for many years, starting with the widespread BDS movements' proposals on various campuses. Those movements have strategically proposed anti-Israeli resolutions in universities and student governments across the world, including those who had no investments in the occupied territories of the West Bank in the first place. So, it was meaningless. But not really. Since this strategy was all about forcing an irrelevant conflict into the political discourse and pushing people to take a stand in it. The idea behind it, is that once those students took a pro-Palestinian stand the first time, when it was meaningless, and even made sense (the occupation of parts of the West Bank by Israel is unjust in my view), it will be easier for them to take a pro-Palestinian, or, more so — anti-Israeli stand again, when it will matter. For example, in the upcoming primary elections of the Democratic congressional candidates.

Any discussion in any "cease-fire resolu-

tion" benefits only one side — and that is Hamas. Rejecting them has nothing to do with, as the editor thinks, antisemitism.

It has to do with solely one thing — humanism.

Amichay Findling, Community shaliach (emissary) in Ann Arbor, Israeli, and professional in two "legacy organizations"

Don't ignore the brutality of Hamas

To the Editor,

In the February "From the Editor" column you describe the local responses for and against the recent resolutions passed by the Ann Arbor School Board and City Council. While it is true that an argument made against these resolutions is based on the fact that the City of Ann Arbor and the Ann Arbor Schools do not have a foreign policy and making such decisions falls, in your words, "outside the mandate and jurisdiction of the local Michigan entities," you go on to side with those supporting such resolutions because, again in your words, their "calling for a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war must be recognized as an ethical, moral, rational, political, humane reaction."

You indicate the need for a cease-fire (and resolutions calling for such, even from local entities with no foreign policy mandate) is needed due to the "death and destruction in Gaza" and because of the "failure to bring the hostages home" as well as what you call the "corruption and ineptitude of the Netanyahu government."

Unfortunately, nowhere in your opinion do you recognize that those same hostages were brutalized, raped, burned alive, and taken by terrorists who invaded Israel proper, burning innocent civilians alive, shooting and murdering babies, young people as well as old, as they reveled in their actions, videotaping themselves as they wantonly killed and burned. Nowhere in your opinion do you write to demand that the terrorist Hamas group immediately release the hostages. Nowhere in your opinion do you recognize that Hamas, on October 7, 2023, broke an existing cease-fire when it sent in

hundreds of armed terrorists for the sole purpose of killing Jews and abducting Jews from Israel.

There are many who believe, as I do, that Israel can do more to protect innocents as much as possible as they prosecute this war against the Hamas terror group. But I also believe, as many others do, that Israel has an absolute right to do what it is doing to go after the Hamas terrorists by destroying their infrastructure, leadership, and ability to carry out future attacks. What you also did not mention in your opinion is that Hamas celebrates their own people's deaths. Hamas cares little about the Palestinians living in Gaza. Hamas puts civilians in front of their fighters as shields. Hamas uses hospitals, schools, and civilian buildings to place their weapons, missile launchers, and terrorists. Hamas built tunnels instead of civilian infrastructure with the billions of dollars donated by other nations. Hamas still holds over a hundred hostages, hidden away for over 100 days, continuing to terrorize them. Hamas, more recently, refused to entertain any discussion of a cease-fire.

A cease-fire is a contract between parties. If one party is a terrorist group, like Hamas is, that contract is meaningless. The International Court of Justice can't sanction Hamas because it's a terror organization with no laws. How can the world, or even well-meaning Jews, expect that the Hamas terror group will honor a contract? A cease-fire, in the way described in your opinion, would only serve to help the terrorists. A cessation of military activity by Israel would help Hamas fortify their control over the population, rebuild armaments, create more missiles, move hostages to more secure locations, and strategize new ways to attack Israel. The only solution is for Hamas to release of all the hostages and surrender. Absent that, the Israeli military campaign against the Hamas terror group will continue.

Unless and until Hamas releases all the hostages and returns any bodies of dead Israelis in their possession, Israel should not, cannot, must not cease operations against this vile terrorist group.

Neal Elyakin, Ann Arbor ■



JCOR Klezmer cont. from Pg 1

necessary expenses that are not covered by public funds, such as subsidizing a portion of rent and utilities until employment is secured, paying for specialized health care and transportation needs, and much more.

JCOR is an all-volunteer collaboration among six Ann Arbor area congregations: Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan, Beth Israel Congregation, Jewish Cultural Society, Pardes Hannah, Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation, and Temple Beth Emeth, who work in partnership with Jewish Family Services to help newly arrived refugees start their lives in the Ann Arbor area. ■

TBE Trans day cont. from Pg 3

bers participated, participated in many services myself as a queer and trans person, but there is a difference between *acknowledging* queer and trans identity and *expressing* it. To express the fullness of joy of my trans and Jewish identities at the same time — from the center of our place of worship no less! — was so transformative. For a long time I, like many of my peers, hadn't believed any of this was possible. But we made it happen. And we are determined to keep it going so others can see.

These days, it feels as though every time I read the news there's yet another piece of legislation or some vicious attack — verbal or otherwise — against transgender people. There is much more widespread acceptance and understanding of the LGBTQ+ community than there was even a decade ago,

but it sometimes feels as though trans folks are barely hanging on to that newfound olive branch from straight society. Law after law seems to be pointed directly at our community, making it difficult and frightening to raise children, get medical care, play sports, or even just go to the bathroom. When I feel this way, I am proud that I can turn to my Temple — not just for refuge, but for solidarity and empowerment as a queer Jew.

We hope that you will join TBE for this year's Trans Day of Visibility Shabbat, even and especially if you are not trans yourself. One of Judaism's biggest values is that of community, and we must embrace all members of our community, even those who don't fit the exact image we expect. We must uplift all voices in our community and stand behind and with them. There's enough room in Judaism for all of us.

The Second Annual Trans Day of Visibility Shabbat will take place on March 29, at 7:30 pm at Temple Beth Emeth ■

The Sister Knot

Excerpt from A Novel by Ann S. Epstein

Context: Liane and Frima, orphaned by the Holocaust, spent five years living on the streets of Berlin through cunning, theft, and prostitution. Now age 13, they are brought to the U.S. by a Jewish refugee agency seeking to have them adopted. The book, which tracks their friendship over more than five decades, is told from their alternating perspectives, beginning with Liane.

The mildewed hallways reeked of garlic and piss as we climbed to the sixth-floor apartment that would be our home until, hopefully, they found each of us a better one. A sign on the door, in large blue letters framed by sunflowers, read “Oyf Haskhole” in Yiddish. “Camp Beginning,” the chaperone translated, giving us our first English lesson. For Frima, me, and four other children, it was the beginning of a new life after the Nazis had failed to end ours. They’d succeeded with our parents, which made us orphans, a label I scorned. It implied we were helpless and depended on adults. Frima and I had taken care of ourselves on the streets of Berlin for the past five years. We were resourceful enough to avoid the extermination camps which would have killed us too.

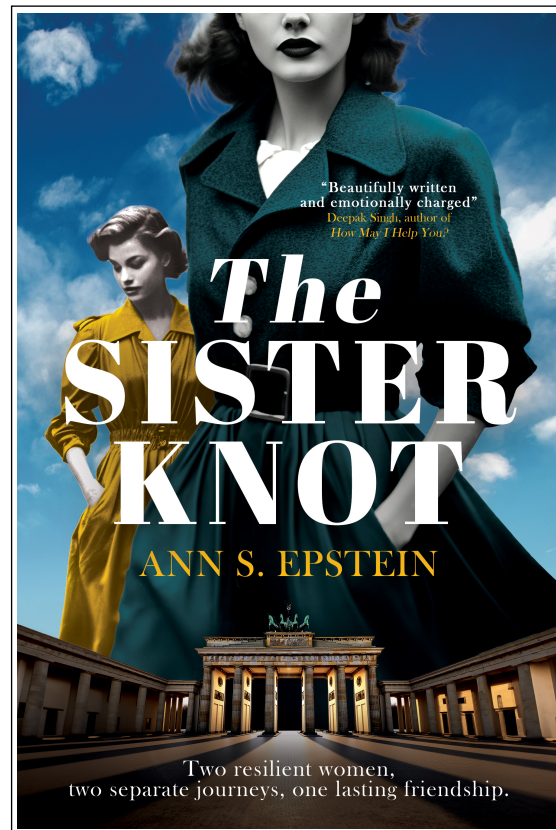
The six of us were a typical assortment of war children, although we were all Jewish. At Kloster Indersdorf, the institute for displaced youth near Dachau where we’d lived briefly before coming here, children came from many countries and every religion. War doesn’t discriminate. We six were chosen because a Jewish-American agency sponsored us. Our group included a boy and a girl between three and five, who’d been too young to know their ages or parents’ names when they were hidden. The Institute had named them Mendel and Berta. They looked like a miniature old man and woman but were quiet and would be adopted easily if prospective families didn’t object to their thumb-sucking and bed-wetting. Two older boys, Salomon and Reuven, were in their mid-teens, a couple of years older than Frima and me. Their attitude was that because they’d suffered, the world owed them a living. I knew we had to go out and earn it.

We’d walked the few blocks to Oyf Haskhole after descending the stairs from a train that ran high above the ground. Miss Stone, the dumpling-shaped woman with springy gray curls in charge of us, called it “the elevated.” As we rattled along the tracks, I looked into the upper-story windows of the buildings we passed and wondered if the tenants had learned to blot out the sound of the trains at night. Frima and I had done that at the Institute, only there, instead of trains, we shut our ears to the nightmare screams of children who had survived the camps.

There were almost as many signs labeling things here as we’d grown up with in Germany. The one at the station platform said “Fordham Road” and the street we turned onto was called “Morris Avenue.” Frima and I would have to learn English quickly to get around the Bronx as readily as we’d navigated Berlin. As far as my eyes could see, there were few landmarks to help us. All the buildings looked identical to ours: dirty red brick, three to six floors tall, many with street-level store fronts. On either side of our entrance was a butcher and a fish store. Neither smelled too fresh but women in summer dresses, carrying satchels, passed through their doors.

I could feel our neighbors’ eyes staring at

us through their peepholes when we passed their doors, as if we were the Gestapo coming to round them up. For a moment, everything seemed backwards. Before Miss Stone herded us into our apartment, 6F, one of the boys asked about an unmarked door next to it. She told him that it opened onto a staircase that led up to the roof. He asked if people tried to escape there. “That’s where we hang the wash,”



she explained. Another child worried about where we’d dry our laundry in winter if there was snow on the roof. “Don’t concern yourselves,” said Miss Stone. “All you children will be gone by then.” She no doubt meant well, but I didn’t believe her. Promises were as empty as unfilled stomachs.

We’d barely stepped inside and set down our own satchels when shouting erupted in the hallway. When our chaperone opened the door, a rotten cabbage sailed through and bounced off the wall before she closed it. The door was made of thick metal, but it couldn’t blot out the angry words our neighbors were chanting. We didn’t have to speak English to understand them. “Child psychopaths,” they screamed. “Their minds and bodies are diseased.” “They’ll infect the families who adopt them.” “They’ll infect our entire country.” “Death to vermin.”

Insects, rats, or subhumans, Untermen-schen, was what Nazis called Jews in Germany. We hadn’t been warned that many Americans felt the same way, but it didn’t surprise me. Nastiness lives everywhere, sometimes hiding behind a nice front. It was too soon to tell about Miss Stone or the people who’d paid our way here, but I knew better than to let down my guard.

Miss Stone pointed to the kitchen. We instinctively huddled under the table but were told it wasn’t necessary here. Instead we stood, still in a tight group. The chaperone picked up the telephone next to the sink and explained she was calling the building’s super, Anoush Kasparian. “Hello, Mr. Kasparian? This is Shir-

ley Stone, the caseworker from National Refugee Service. There’s a disturbance on the sixth floor. I’d appreciate your assistance.”

I assumed the authorities here were on the side of the mob, the same as in Germany. So I was surprised when, two minutes later, I heard the super berating the people in the hall. “Amot! Shame on you. You sought refuge

in America when you fled your homelands, just like I fled Armenia after the Turks butchered us. T’voghnel! Leave these poor children in peace.”

The shouting continued but soon after Mr. Kasparian threatened to evict everyone, the grumbling died down and we heard their footsteps retreating. Miss Stone looked through the peephole and opened the door to a small but wiry man with a bristly mustache, holding a big hammer in one hand and a crowbar in the other. He put them behind his back as he bowed to her and smiled gently at us. The super told our caseworker to call him if there was any further trouble and before he left, he addressed us directly. “Be good, children. Prove them wrong.”

Miss Stone showed us our bedrooms, boys in one and girls in the other, at opposite ends of the hall. She slept in the living room on a foldout couch, which she closed during the day. Each bedroom had a three-drawer dresser and a shared closet, more than enough space since we had so few things to unpack. We each had our own nightstand though, which held a lamp and an illustrated book. Berta’s was *The Margaret Tarrant Nursery Rhyme Book*; Frima’s was *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*; mine was *Hans Christian Anderson’s Fairy Tales*. The drawings in Frima’s were dark and ugly; mine were bright and pretty. We traded books. It was easier than switching beds.

When our caseworker came in to make sure we were settled, she said that when we were adopted we’d each have so many clothes and shoes that we could fill an entire dresser and closet of our own. I waited for her to say we’d have our own bookcases too. Instead she looked at the object I’d placed beside my book and wrinkled her nose. “What’s that piece of trash?”

“It’s not trash,” I said. “It’s sculpture.” I’d begun assembling small statues soon after I landed on the street. It satisfied my need to put back together what I’d lost, although the works were as vague and abstract as what I sought to recapture. At first, I found wood and metal scraps in old buildings abandoned before the war. As children, we knew little about Germany’s failing economy but saw beggars pore through garbage bins. We never expected to scrounge ourselves someday. Once the war heated up, I collected the defective parts piled outside munitions plants before they were loaded onto trains to be melted down and remade. Later still, it was easy to find splintered wood, twisted iron, and other odds and ends in the rubble left by Allied bombs.

At first Frima couldn’t understand my in-

terest in “trash” either but she was curious about how I made the sculptures. I stole a rasp to file down sharp metal scraps and for jagged wood, I snuck into a carpenter’s shop to take sheets of sandpaper; I figured he wouldn’t miss one or two. Sometimes just rubbing two scraps together was enough to smooth their edges. Meanwhile our edges were getting rougher. The biggest problem was attaching the parts. I tried to cook up glue from the bones of dead fish on the riverbank, but that took water and heat, things we needed for ourselves. Ditto strips of leather or rubber, which we stuffed inside the soles of our holey shoes. Eventually I settled on wire, which was easy to find outside the factories and inside the wreckage.

Before long, Frima started to bring me things that she found on her own foraging trips. Watching me work was as much a distraction for her as making the sculptures was for me. Her best “find” was two slender rods with metal bands around the middle that made them look as though they were embracing. I mounted them on a chunk of wood for balance and added thin curly wires streaming down from the top of one rod and short, thick bolts sticking straight out from the other. Frima named it “Sisters.” That’s the sculpture that was on my night stand.

“This isn’t art. It’s trash,” Miss Stone repeated. She asked if I had more, but before I could answer, she dumped the ten inside my satchel onto my bed. “Down the incinerator they go.”

Frima grabbed the woman’s arm. “Who are you to say what art is? And which of our belongings we can keep? These are Liane’s. If you take them, that’s stealing.”

Miss Stone stared at Frima’s iron grip until Frima let go and replaced it with an iron stare. The caseworker’s face softened but her voice was still firm. “It’s a small apartment for seven people. There’s not much room as it is and we need to fill it with beautiful things. Liane can keep one.” The lady wasn’t a pushover. I had to give her that. Miss Stone told me to choose. I told Frima to choose for me. Of course, she picked “Sisters.”

Although the apartment was crowded, it was spacious compared to the places we’d holed up in the last five years. Sometimes I pinched my elbow to convince myself I was really here. The kitchen table was big enough to seat everyone. The bathroom, though small, was a luxury. Miss Stone vowed to find bigger and better homes for all of us. “The more of you I get adopted, the more donations NRS will receive to bring others.” She said it typically took six weeks to place younger children and up to three months for older ones. Boys were harder than girls, but I knew Frima and I wouldn’t be easy. Adoptive parents preferred children who were hidden to those who’d survived the camps or lived on the streets. They thought trauma made them bitter and tough; they were right. But we didn’t care. Frima and I didn’t want to be adopted. As she told me the night we left Germany, “Liane, we are all the family the other needs.”

<https://www.vineleavespress.com/the-sister-knot-by-ann-s-epstein.html> ■

Purim: Vegan and more

By Lonnie Sussman

These columns are written the month before they are published so it's possible my mood, the weather, and the state of the world might be in better shape four weeks from now. My mood should be better — it will be the Hebrew month of Adar, this year, Adar Bet or the second month of Adar. Did you know that the Jewish calendar includes a leap month when it is needed to ensure that Passover starts on the first full moon after the spring equinox? Anyhow, there is an expression, "When Adar enters, joy increases." Let's hope so. The weather should be better, it will be springtime! I've already started some seeds for early cold weather vegetables. As far as the state of the world, I have no ability to predict the future but the strength, support, and joy of be-

ing with family and friends should provide some optimism.

Let's think about Purim meals. The first three recipes are for the desserts, two doughs for the hamantaschen and one cookie recipe. Ashkenazi tradition is the pastry is a triangle because it was in the shape of Haman's hat. Other traditions say the triangle is the shape of his ears, pockets, or even his fleas. There are many traditional fillings including mohn, which is Yiddish for poppy seeds, apricot butter or jam, or prunes. Enjoy creating your own fillings or using up all the open jam jars in your pantry. There is another tradition that Queen Esther kept kosher in the palace by eating only vegetarian food, so I have included a couple of vegetarian and vegan recipes. There is also one chicken recipe for those who want something else.

your own rice flour: rinse long grain rice in cold water, drain, and dry thoroughly on paper towels. Use a blender or food processor and process very well until the rice is ground and has the texture of flour.

2 eggs
1 cup sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
2 tbs rosewater
1½ cups rice flour (add slowly as you may need a little less or a little more)
Poppy seeds for decoration, optional

Use a medium bowl and add the eggs and sugar and whisk or beat until pale yellow. Then stir in the oil, then the rosewater, until well blended. Stir in the rice flour until you get a soft dough, adding additional rice flour if needed. Form the dough into small

balls, about 1½ to 2 inches in diameter. Place the rounds on a parchment lined baking sheet. Use a teaspoon to make an indentation on top of each cookie and sprinkle some poppy seeds into the indentation. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 15–20 minutes or until very lightly browned. Cool on a wire rack.

Tofu Kalbi

Totally Kosher, by Chanie Apflebaum

This is a vegan recipe and serves 4

What a lovely cookbook! I am familiar with the writer from her blog, "Busy in Brooklyn." She calls this dish

Kalbi as it is based on a Korean recipe from *Bon Appetit Magazine* that is made with short ribs. Since this is made with tofu, she uses the Korean word. The sauce is originally from the magazine recipe.

1 (15.5-ounce) package extra firm tofu
1/3 cup fresh orange juice
¼ packed cup brown sugar
3 garlic cloves, minced
1-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and grated (I use a jar of pre-grated ginger)
2 tbs soy sauce
1 heaping tbs gochujang (chili paste) or a teaspoon of sriracha mixed with a bit of miso paste
2 tsp toasted sesame oil
Zest of 1 lime plus the juice of the lime
¼ cup canola oil

Prepared rice, lettuce cups, chives, red chili slices, sesame seeds, and lime wedges for serving.

Drain the tofu and wrap it in layers of paper towels or kitchen towels with a heavy pot or can on top to remove as much moisture as possible. Cut the tofu into ½-inch slabs and pat dry. Use a small bowl for the orange juice, brown sugar, garlic, ginger, soy sauce, gochujang, sesame oil, lime zest, and juice, and whisk together. Use a nonstick skillet or a cast iron (the best) and heat the canola oil. Carefully add the tofu and cook until the bottom is dark brown and crisp. This may take about 5 minutes. Carefully flip the

slabs and cook another 5 minutes or so on the other side until it is also crisp and dark brown. Remove the tofu from the pan and either pour out or blot out the remaining oil into a small bowl to cool off before discarding. Return the skillet to a medium heat and add the sauce until it is at a simmer and add in the tofu slices. Baste the tofu occasionally until the sauce is thick enough to coat a spoon. Serve in lettuce cups with the rice, tofu, drizzled with more sauce and add the chives, chiles, and sesame seeds as you wish.

Turmeric and Coconut Braised Cabbage with Chickpeas

I found this recipe in an email from the magazine *Bon Appetit*

This is also vegan. Serves 4

I made the recipe close to how it was written but used a Fresno chili instead of a hotter one. Using roasted or braised cabbage in different sauces has been very popular this year. My husband and I loved this recipe, and I will make it again with other vegetables like cauliflower and sweet potatoes.

½ medium head of green cabbage, about 2 pounds
2 medium shallots (of course you could use onions or leeks), peeled and finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1-inch piece of ginger, peeled and minced
1 chili pepper, finely chopped
3 tbs olive oil, divided
1 tsp kosher salt (may need more)
1 13.5-oz can of coconut milk, full fat
1 can of chickpeas, drained
1 tsp each of brown mustard seeds (I only had black so that was what I used), ground cumin, and ground turmeric
½ cup vegetable stock or water

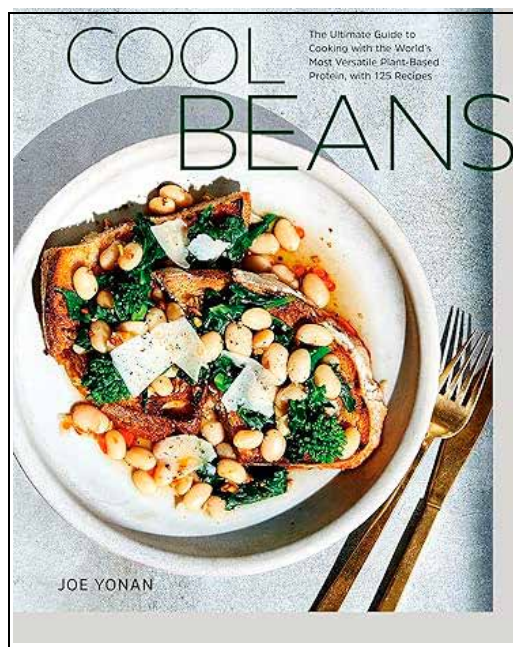
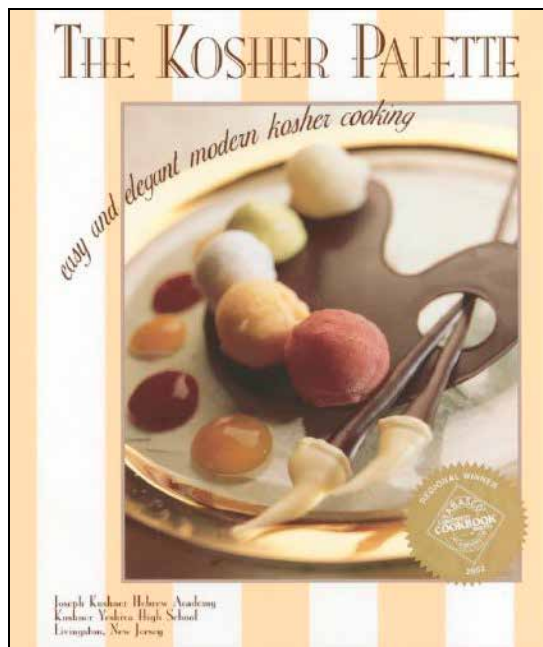
Slice the cabbage in half through the core and then make 4 wedges. Heat a large skillet or wide Dutch oven with 2 tbs olive oil. Salt the cabbage and place cut side down until lightly charred, about 5 minutes. Then turn it over and char the other sides. My wedges always fall apart but the idea is to char the leaves. Transfer the cabbage to a plate while you make the sauce. Heat the remaining tablespoon of oil in the skillet or pot and add the mustard seeds, cumin, and turmeric, stirring until the seeds start to pop, about 1 minute. Add the can of coconut milk and the can of chickpeas and ½ cup of water or stock. Add at least another ½ to 1 tsp of salt and stir to combine all the ingredients. Put the cabbage back into the sauce and baste it.

Creamy Indian Black Lentil Stew

Cool Beans by Joe Yonan

Makes 6 servings

Tradition has it that Queen Esther kept kosher in the palace of King Achashverosh by eating only dairy. Maybe today she would eat vegan. For those of you who are looking for more vegan recipes I suggest more Indi-



Israeli Hamantaschen

This recipe came from an Israeli woman I met years ago. There are many other recipes for making the dough; I like this one because the cornstarch helps keep the pastry from having the triangle open up during baking and the filling oozing out. This recipe is vegetarian.

2½ cups flour
½ tbs baking powder
½ cup sugar
1 tbs cornstarch
Pinch of salt
1 stick butter or margarine or another plant-based butter
2 eggs

Mix the dry ingredients and then add in the butter and the eggs to form a soft dough.

Here is an interesting filling instead of jam.

1½ cups ground almond, 1 egg, ½ cup sugar, 1 tsp ground coriander

Mix the ingredients together.

Vegan or Dairy Hamantaschen Dough

The Kosher Palette by Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy and Kushner Yeshiva High School

Yields 2½ to 3 dozen

1 cup unsalted vegan butter (Earth Bound) or butter, softened
1 8-oz package of vegan cream cheese or

dairy cream cheese, softened
½ cup plus 2 tbs sugar
½ tsp vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour

Beat the butter and cream cheese with an electric mixer until creamy and then add the sugar, beating well, and stir in the vanilla. Stir in the flour to make a smooth dough. Divide the dough into 2 balls and cover in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight. Roll out the dough. I use a small glass to cut out circles about 3 inches in circumference. Use about ½ tsp of the jam or filling of your choice to put in the center of the circle. Pinch the dough into a triangle allowing a little of the filling to be visible. Put the filled triangles on a greased or parchment covered baking sheet and chill in the freezer for about 15 minutes. This will help prevent the dough from opening. Give another pinch to the top of the triangle and bake in a 350 degree oven for 15–20 minutes.

Rice Flour Cookie

The International Kosher Cookbook by The 92nd Street Y Kosher Cooking School
Makes 1 dozen

This is a recipe from the Iranian-Jewish community diaspora. I'm going to add some cookies to our Purim baskets. You can make

Kosher Cuisine

an or Asian recipes and you can control the spices to your taste. The recipe is not super spicy and is easy to do. Go to By the Pound, where you can buy only the amount of rice, beans, or lentils and spices that you need. I don't think Queen Esther ate this because tomatoes are a New World fruit.

1 cup whole black lentils (urad)
¼ cup red kidney beans (rajma)
¼ cup split yellow chickpeas (chana dal)
Water
1 small red onion, cut into chunks
3 tbs untoasted sesame oil or another neutral oil
1 tsp freshly grated ginger
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
2 tsp garam masala
1½ tsp ground coriander
1 tsp kosher salt, plus more to taste
¼ to ½ tsp red chili powder (or skip it)
¼ tsp ground turmeric
½ cup tomato puree
¼ cup unsalted vegan butter
5.4-oz can (2/3 cup) coconut cream

Optional garnishes can include 1 cup unsweetened, dried large-flake coconut and ½ cup chopped cilantro

Rinse off the lentils and beans and cover with water, simmering them over medium-low heat for up to 90 minutes or until the beans are tender. While they cook, puree the onion in a blender or food processor. Pour the oil into a pan and when it starts to shimmer add the pureed onion. Stir occasionally until it lightly browns on the bottom. This should take about 5–8 minutes. Stir in the ginger, garlic, garam masala, coriander, salt, chili powder, and turmeric and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in the tomato puree and cook, stirring occasionally for about 10 minutes until the entire mixture starts browning on the bottom side. When the beans are ready add the tomato mixture to the pot along with the butter and the coconut cream. Bring the mixture to a boil and stir, making sure the bottom of the pot is not scorching. The idea is to reduce the mixture until it thickens, about 20 minutes. If you are garnishing with the coconut flakes, toast them lightly in a dry skillet over medium heat. Serve with stew over rice or naan (Indian bread). Best served hot.

Polo Kon Prounes, Chicken with Prunes

Cookbook of the Jews of Greece by Nicholas Stavroulakis

Serves 4

This is a dish from the Jews in Salonika who arrived from Spain in the 15th century. Although there is still a small Jewish community there, most of the Jews were sent to their deaths by the Nazis. I'm on an email list for Diana Kochilas who writes about Greek food and the Mediterranean Diet. I watched her make this dish on a short video and then looked in the *Cookbook of the Jews of Greece* and found a very similar recipe. If I were still making chicken, I'd make this one for Shabbat or for Purim.

3–4 pounds of chicken pieces, breasts, legs, and thighs, or to your taste
3 tbs olive oil
2 medium onions, yellow, white, or red, sliced into nice rings, not too narrow
3 cloves garlic, chopped
3 fresh tomatoes cut into chunks or use a can of tomatoes with whole tomatoes

½ tsp cinnamon
1 tsp crushed coriander seeds or 1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp cayenne pepper
25 prunes, pitted. You can soak them in water but not really needed
½ light red wine
1 cup chicken stock
Salt and pepper to taste

Add the olive oil to a large pan or pot and nestle the chicken parts into the oil to brown the skin on all sides, then remove from the pan. Now add the onions and garlic to the remaining oil in the pan and sauté until the onions become transparent. Add in the tomatoes, seasonings, and the prunes. Simmer the sauce over a low heat until the sauce starts to thicken. If the sauce looks too thick, add a little red wine. Add the chicken back into the pot and enough chicken broth to cover the chicken. Simmer, tightly covered, for about 45 minutes–1 hour or until the chicken is very tender ■.

The Peruvian flavors of Culantro

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 heard the buzz. “Get there early because they fill up fast.” So, we decided to make our visit to Culantro on a cold Monday night — a slow time for any restaurant, right? Wrong. At 6:30, we got the last available table. Immediately, we were struck by the beauty of the dark wood tables and chairs set against a shock of botanical greenery on the walls. The atmosphere was quite inviting and hinted at Peruvian art and culture. The dining room is small with about a dozen tables, but don't let that scare you away — the service was quick, the order-at-the-counter style of service doesn't invite you to linger too long, and tables turn over frequently.

Culantro, cilantro, what is the difference? According to *The Cultured Table* website, cilantro is a delicate herb with light green, feathery leaves, while culantro has dark green spear shaped serrated leaves. Culantro also has a much stronger flavor than cilantro, though the two have a similar aroma when the leaves are crushed or chopped.

Although we could not identify much of the seasoning in our food, it was harmonious and no one flavor dominated another. The predominant seasonings in Peruvian cuisine are oregano, smoked paprika, garlic, annatto (which lends a lovely yellow hue), cumin, fiery aji pepper, and the aforementioned culantro.

Not being familiar with Peruvian food, we sat down to study the menu before go-



ing up to the counter to order. We had heard that the charcoal rotisserie cooked “Pollo a la Brasa” was a classic so it made the cut. It was fantastic! The chicken, marinated for 24 hours, was well seasoned, and even the white meat was juicy. The charcoal imparted a flavor so delicious we could not get enough. The dish was served with an aji amarillo (spicy, yet fruity pepper) dipping sauce that packed a punch! We chose (disappointingly lukewarm) fries and black beans for our sides. The black beans were prepared well and were tasty. At under \$10 for a quarter of a chicken and a choice of 2 sides, it was a bargain.

We were intrigued by the “Seco a la Nortena.” Described on the menu as slow cooked “thick beef cuts” cooked in aji panca, which our research tells us is one of the

most common native peppers used in Peruvian cuisine, beloved for their mild heat, subtle smokiness, and rich, berry-like flavor. We weren't sure what to expect; nevertheless, we gave it a try and were rewarded for our gamble. The marriage of the fork-tender beef and the aji panca was a good match paired with deliciously soft and creamy canario beans and a salsa criolla, a common Peruvian red onion salsa.

We forged ahead into more familiar territory and tried the Yucas Fritas and fried plantains. Both were delicious served with progressively spicier green and red pepper sauces. Ask for a side of the garlic mayo for some relief from the heat! The two large empanadas were a variation on the Mexican and Central American varieties we have tasted in the past. The crisp pastry was dust-

ed with sugar. The filling contained the same beef as the Seco a la Nortena, with the addition of chopped hard-boiled egg and black olives. When eaten with the other dishes, it was hard to distinguish between the flavors, but with a leftover empanada reheated the following day, the tangy olive flavor stood out from the blend of spices in the beef.

We don't often have room for dessert, but this time we decided to try the Tres Leches cake. It was a nice, sweet finish to the spicy meal, but did not stand out.

Overall, we enjoyed our Peruvian experience. However, Culantro might not be a great choice for people with allergies or special diets. The menu items are not labeled with helpful information like allergens, vegetarian, or gluten free as we have come to expect. There are two vegan menu items listed on the menu. Getting questions answered about ingredients and preparation at the counter was a difficult and frustrating endeavor, primarily because of a language barrier on the night we visited.

Like many new restaurants, Culantro is following the model of ordering at the counter, and then sitting down with a number on the table. Wrapped cutlery is on the table, and a bar near the ordering counter has cups, water, and extra condiments. The food is delicious, prices are reasonable, and the decor takes you on a brief escape to Peru. Located in the former space of the Broken Egg, a little north of the main drag on Main Street, it was easy to find street parking on the night we visited.

Culantro

223 N. Main St., Ann Arbor

(734) 369-4302

<https://www.culantroperu.com/> ■

Calendar

March calendar of special events

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

Friday 1: Candle Lighting 6:08 p.m. Ki Tisa

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 2: Havdallah 7:08 p.m.

Monday 4

A Conversation with Playwright Ori Urian: At the JCC. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 5

150 Days-A Community gathering to mark 150 days since Oct 7: Fed. At the JCC. 6 p.m.
Getting Good at Getting Older: TBE. 7 p.m.

Friday 8: Candle Lighting 6:16 p.m. Vayak'hel

Saturday 9: Havdallah 7:17 p.m.

AARC Second Saturday Shabbat Morning Service. At the JCC. 10:30 a.m.

Connected - A play by Ori Urian. EMU. 7 p.m.

Sunday 10 Rosh Hodesh Adar II

Party and Events Showcase: JCC. 11 a.m.

AARC Book Group: *Jewish New York: The Remarkable Story of a City and a People* with Deborah Dash Moore, first author of the book. Lunch at noon, followed by a hybrid in-person/Zoom discussion of the book from 1 to 2 p.m.. To get the Zoom link, please email Greg Saltzman at gsaltzman@albion.edu.

Connected - A play by Ori Urian. EMU. 2 p.m.

ISRAEL360 Presents: Yaron Eliav, U-M Associate Professor for Rabbinic Literature and Jewish History of Late Antiquity: BIC. Yaron Eliav is an award winning scholar and teacher at the University of Michigan (most recently the 2019 University of Michigan Honored Instructor Award and the 2022 LSA Humanities Research Opportunity Grant). He is an expert in the fields of Judaic Studies, Jewish history in the Roman world, Talmud, and archaeology, as well as in the fields of Classical (Greek and Latin) and Early Christian studies. 4 p.m.

Monday 11 Rosh Hodesh Adar II

Rosh Chodesh Circle: TBE. 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday 13

Main Event featuring Aaron Dworkin: Fed. At WCC Morris Lawrence Building. 6:30 p.m.

Friday 15: Candle Lighting 7:24 p.m. Pekudei

Saturday 16: Havdallah 8:25 p.m.

Family Purim Carnival: TBE. Join us for a Family Purim Carnival with Purim spiel in the sanctuary followed by a carnival in the social hall. Pizza will be available for purchase. Registration requested. 10 a.m. Tuesday 19

Tuesday 19

Bereavement Group: TBE. The group will have opportunities to share openly about their process of grieving and will also have topic-based readings to spark discussion. 4 p.m.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose: TBE. 7

Wednesday 20

An Evening of Comedy with Ariel Elias: EMU. 7 p.m.

Thursday 21 Fast of Esther

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

Friday 22: Candle Lighting 7:32 p.m. Vayikra

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat and Potluck: AARC. At the JCC. 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 23: Havdallah 8:33 p.m.

An Evening in Shushan: An Adult Purim Party:

TBE. Registration ends on 3/18. Eat, Drink, and Be Merry in exotic Shushan! Enjoy Persian-inspired cocktails, mocktails, and delicious food while celebrating Purim, Judaism's most uninhibited holiday, with friends and possibly a foe! Included in the festivities is the Ann Arbor, Michigan premier of the critically acclaimed(?) The Roast of King Ahashuerus, featuring an all-star cast right out of the Book of Esther, with a "big name" special guest star (no, we are not telling you who — it's a secret!) This "adults only" Rejoice With Regina retirement event is sponsored by Temple Beth Emeth. Costumes are encouraged but not required. This event is free — and there is a suggested donation to benefit the Cantor Regina Lambert-Hayut Music Fund. 6:30 p.m.

Sunday 24: Purim

Purim Palooza: NextGen A2. 2 p.m.

Purim in the Shtetl: Chabad and JCC. 4:30 p.m.

Purim Party and Megillah Reading: BIC. Join Beth Israel Congregation members and community as we celebrate Purim: Barbie style. We'll read the megillah, sing songs, and enjoy watching Esther navigate the world of the patriarchy as only Barbie can. Join us at 6 for kids' activities including a costume contest, building, mask making, and hamantaschen. At 6:30, we will begin the megillah with Barbie spiel. No registration required, just come ready to party. 5:30 p.m.

Friday 29: Candle Lighting 7:40 p.m. Tzav

Trans Day of Visibility Shabbat: TBE. The second annual Shabbat service to honor the trans community on Trans Day of Visibility. 7:30 p.m.

Saturday 30: Havdallah 8:41 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., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/

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

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

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

Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org
Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org
UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org ■

March Beth Israel events

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 Congregation 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.

Volunteer Appreciation Brunch

Sunday, March 3, 10 a.m.

Please come to our volunteer brunch on March 3, 10 a.m. to noon. There will be delicious food and also a wonderful program. Barbara McAnelly, the Director of Engagement and Programming of our congregation, will tell us about volunteer opportunities at Beth Israel, and then a speaker from the League of Women Voters will talk about a possible end to the electoral college system. All are welcome, whether you are a current volunteer, a volunteer in the past, or are interested in learning how to become more involved. RSVPs are greatly appreciated. Please RSVP to Meira Miller at meirabatpinchos@gmail.com.

School Shabbat

Saturday, March 9, 9:30 a.m.

Join BIRS students and teachers as they participate in Shabbat morning services.

Tot Shabbat

Saturday, March 9, 10:30 a.m.

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

Babysitting at Beth Israel

Saturday, March 2, 9, and 16, 9:30 a.m.

Babysitting is now available on the same days as Tot Shabbat and B'nei Mitzvot. Babysitting is no longer available on other Saturdays. If you are interested in registering for babysitting, please email Barbm@bethisrael-aa.org.

ISRAEL360 Presents: Yaron Eliav, U-M Associate Professor for Rabbinic Literature and Jewish History of Late Antiquity

Sunday, March 10, 4 p.m.

Yaron Eliav is an award-winning scholar and teacher at the University of Michigan (most recently the 2019 University of Michigan Honored Instructor Award and the 2022 LSA Humanities Research Opportunity Grant). He is an expert in the fields of Judaic Studies, Jewish history in the Roman world, Talmud, and archaeology, as well as in the fields of Classical (Greek and Latin) and Early Christian studies.

BIRS Parents and Kids Purim Play and Teacher Appreciation

Sunday, March 17, 10 a.m.

The entire congregation is invited to the Beth Israel Religious School Purim play and teacher appreciation ceremony for parents, kids, and congregants. Morah Carol Feldman's fourth and fifth grade class will treat us to their annual class

shpiel, and we'll together honor our BIRS teachers for their tremendous contribution to building our community and building up our children.

BIC Chodesh Chadash

Monday, March 17, 6:30 p.m.

Join the women of BIC to socialize, learn, and connect. We will discuss traditions around Purim, share group mishloach manot, have a rousing round of Jewish Geography, and learn about different interest groups in our community. Come and bring your friends, ideas for what you want to do in this group, mitzvah projects, or a special learning initiative you can lead or want to participate in. We look forward to connecting with you.

Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday, March 22, 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. All are welcome to attend.

Congregation Purim Party and Megillah Reading

Saturday, March 23, 6 p.m.

Join Beth Israel Congregation members and community as we celebrate Purim, Barbie style! We'll read the megillah, sing songs, and enjoy watching Esther navigate the world of the patriarchy as only Barbie can. Join us at 6 p.m. for kids' activities including a costume contest, building, mask making, and hamantaschen. At 6:30 p.m., we will begin the megillah with Barbie spiel. No registration required, just come ready to party!

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin

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.

Theology Book Club: Online

Wednesdays at 7:30 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 p.m. (in-person in M and M Chapel and virtual)
Mondays–Thursdays 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. ■

Did you serve? Michigan JWV is looking for you.

By Donald Schenk, Department of Michigan, Jewish War Veterans

Did you or a family member serve in the United States Armed Forces? Are you currently serving in uniform, either on active duty or in one of the reserve components or National Guard? You know, Army? Marine Corps? Navy? Coast Guard? Air Force? Space Force? What about the Uniformed Service of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)? If so, have we got a deal for you!

The Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America (JWV-USA) — that “best-kept secret” — is returning to Ann Arbor to recruit new members and form a new post in Washtenaw County. That post will be the fourth in the state and part of the Department of Michigan (JWV-MI) which is currently concentrated in Oakland County.

Who are these guys and girls you ask? They are men and women who make up just under 2% of the military from all branches, of all ranks, and from all eras that served the

nation and just happen to be Jewish, like you and me. An elite group! Founded in 1896, JWV-USA is the oldest veteran service organization in the nation. It has posts throughout the United States, but it has never been active in Washtenaw County or the Ann Arbor community. Through upcoming recruitment efforts, that is all about to change because of you, but only if you act quickly. Read on!

Why join JWV? JWV has several priorities as the “Jewish voice for veterans and veteran’s voice for Jews.” Formed originally to combat “the big lie” of the post-Civil War era that Jews did not serve in the military, JWV-USA exists today for purposes directly related to preserving our way of life, advocating for veterans at the local, state and federal level, and fighting bigotry. Perhaps its most pressing action is the fight against the rising scourge of antisemitism. To that end, members of JWV-MI are a visible force at state-level activities to fight antisemitism

such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Michigan “Walk Against Hate.”

JWV-MI hosts monthly meetings and activities throughout the year and participates in patriotic observances at significant national holidays.

Each Memorial Day members of JWV-MI ensure the graves of our fallen are appropriately marked with American flags so that they and their selfless service to the nation are not forgotten.

Through its membership in the Michigan Commanders Group of Congressionally Chartered Veteran Service Organizations, JWV-MI educates Michigan legislators and advocates for important veteran issues.

JWV-MI is an active supporter of Fisher House Michigan (<https://www.fisherhousemichigan.org>). The entry foyer at the Ann Arbor Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center is named in honor of former JWV-MI member and World War II Ritchie Boy, Dr. Guy Stern (z’l).

Want to learn more? Of course you do, and here’s the fun part. On Tuesday, 12 March, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., representatives of the Department of Michigan will be in the community to discuss the mission and purposes of JWV, and how it is organized locally and nationally. They will answer your questions about membership and forming a post in Washtenaw County so our underserved veterans in this community are represented and supported. Can’t make this meeting? Well, there will be two more on 11 April, same times and same place.

The meeting will be at the Jewish Community Center, 2935 Birch Hollow Road, Ann Arbor. To learn more about JWV-MI, go to <https://www.jwv-mi.org>. You can also contact me at Membership@jwv-mi.org. ■

Join or Die and what makes democracy work?

Two Robert Putnam in-person events, March 11 and 12, are presented by University of Michigan’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI-UM), at Towsley Auditorium, Morris Lawrence Bldg., Washtenaw Community College.

Robert D. Putnam is Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University. A member of the National Academy of Sciences and the British Academy, he received the Skytte Prize, the world’s highest accolade for a political scientist, and the National Humanities Medal, America’s highest honor in the humanities. He has written 15 books, translated into 20 languages, including *Making Democracy Work* and *Bowling Alone*, both among the most cited (and bestselling) social science works in recent decades. He has been consulted by five U.S. presidents and half a dozen other world leaders, including Pope Francis.

On Monday, March 11, 5–8 p.m., Putnam will host a showing of the documentary film about his research, *Join or Die*, and answer questions afterward. In this film, follow the half-century story of America’s civic unraveling, through the journey of legendary social scientist Robert Putnam, whose groundbreaking “Bowling Alone” research into America’s decades-long decline in community connections could hold the answers to our democracy’s present crisis. Flanked by influential fans and scholars — from Hillary Clinton, Pete Buttigieg, and Surgeon General Vivek Murthy to Eddie Glaude Jr., Raj Chetty, and Priya Parker — as well as inspiring groups building community in neighborhoods across the country, join Professor Putnam as he explores three urgent civic questions: What makes democracy work? Why is American democracy in crisis? And, most importantly ... What can we

do about it? The cost for this in person only event is \$12 for OLLI members and \$20 for non-members.

On Tuesday, March 12, 10–11:30 a.m., Putnam will present “The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again.” This in-person presentation will also be available on Zoom. Professor Putnam says, “Deep inequality; unprecedented polarization; a fraying social fabric; extreme cultural narcissism — Americans today agree only that these are the worst of times. Similarly, during the Gilded Age 125 years ago, America was exceptionally individualistic, unequal, polarized, and self-centered. But then America turned a corner, becoming until the 1960s steadily more equal, cooperative, generous, and focused on our mutual obligations — a society on the upswing. What lessons can we learn from that period?” This program is part of OLLI-UM’s Alfred Gourdji Distinguished Lecture Series. The cost for a day pass is \$12 for OLLI and \$20 for non-members.

To register for either or both events: Non-OLLI-UM members go to:

<https://mmcommunityprograms.med.umich.edu/umich/course/course.aspx?catId=79>

and then scroll down to the two Putnam event descriptions and add to cart below each event you wish to attend.

OLLI-UM members go to:

<https://www.michiganmedicine.org/community/osher-lifelong-learning-institute>

Sign in; go to “Lectures”; then to “Alfred Gourdji Distinguished Lecture Series.” ■



A survivor's legacy: The music of Cantor Saul Nadvan

By Rabbi Gabrielle Pescador

To honor International Holocaust Remembrance Day, I had the opportunity to share my research on the history and musical contributions of Cantor Saul Nadvan, a Holocaust survivor who served my family shul, Congregation Shaar Hashomayim of Windsor, Ontario, from 1950 until his death in 1979. The event was hosted by Windsor's Congregation Beth El.

Cantor Nadvan's voice, melodies, and way of leading services were what I considered the normal sound and experience of the synagogue. Despite the magnificence of his voice, he was not at all showy or bombastic but rather a humble master of his art. What came across was his devotion and piety, and his love for the Jewish people. Through his musical and spiritual artistry, he transmitted the essence, the soul of Jewish liturgy. He chose to stay in my small hometown and stir the souls of our Jewish community and fill our cups with Yiddishkeit and Jewish tradition through sacred music.

I took great pride in knowing that Saul Nadvan was the cantor of my shul. I bragged about him for years. When I started rabbinic school and started leading services, particularly on the High Holy Days, my memory of the way he lamented, exalted, and communicated joy and devotion instructed me, as if he were whispering in my ear. Through memory, he became my teacher and the inspiration for me to enter cantorial school and become a cantor.

Not long after, the pandemic hit, and a very strange thing happened.

Stuck in the house for months, my husband and I became devoted to decluttering. We donated items, recycled, and threw a lot of stuff out. One day, as I was about to add items to the recycling bin, I noticed that the bin was practically full and on top was a cassette labeled "Cantor Saul Nadvan." I gasped. What was that doing there? I had no idea that such a tape existed. It must have belonged to my parents and been in my garage for at least the 10 years since my mother's passing. And why did it suddenly pop up, so close to the time I entered cantorial school? To be honest, I felt that I was being nudged from the other side.

Luckily, I found an old cassette player in my garage, as well as an unopened cassette head cleaner, that must have also belonged to my parents. I cleaned everything up and was ready to hit play yet hesitated for a moment. I worried that my childhood memory was exaggerated and that the tape was unplayable after being stored in my garage for so many years. But curiosity got the best of me; I hit play, and as I listened my eyes flooded with tears. Nadvan's voice was better than I remembered, and I got to hear him pray again after so many years.

I shared the music with my teachers in the ALEPH Cantorial Program. They were all so excited for me and appreciative of Nadvan's artistry. But it was Cantor Marlena Fuerstman who urged me to transcribe the music and learn to sing it. That process became a labor of love that led me on a journey of research and exploration.

Since finding the cassette, I discovered more recordings of Nadvan's liturgical settings — in the Stollman Family Sound Recordings in the Archives of Ontario, in the

archives of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim and in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France Catalogue Général. I learned details about Nadvan's biography based on findings from Rabbi Samuel Stollman's essay in the *50th Anniversary of Shaar Hashomayim*, Rabbi Jonathan Plaut's *Jews of Windsor*, Tina Frühauf's *Transcending Dystopia: Music, Mobility, and the Jewish Community in Germany, 1945-1989*, the Bad Arolsen Holocaust Database, and personal anecdotes of former and current members of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim.



Cantor Nadvan was born in Plungyen, Lithuania, on December 26, 1912, as Shaul Tuvia bereb Yosef Yehuda. His family name was Schenker. The cantor Hebraized his last name after coming to Canada, changing it from Schenker to Nadvan. Both names mean gift or offering. We learn from the essay written by Rabbi Samuel Stollman that Nadvan completed secondary school and lived with his parents until 1934 when he left to study singing in music conservatories in Riga and Memel, Latvia. In 1935 he moved to Kovno to serve as cantor at a local synagogue until 1941 when he and other Jews were rounded up by the Germans and moved to the Kovno Ghetto to work as forced laborers. In 1944, he was sent to Dachau, where he barely survived the beatings, starvation, and extremely poor living conditions, and was forced to entertain the Nazis by singing with the prisoner orchestra and chorus. After he was liberated by the Allied Forces in 1945, he was admitted to a sanatorium for sickness and exhaustion. In 1946 he was well enough to leave the sanatorium and find employment as a cantor in Munich.

There is information about Nadvan's professional life in Munich after WWII in Tina Frühauf's book, which documents that he and another cantor, Jacob Gross, co-led an inauguration service for the synagogue at Reichenbachstrae in Munich on May 20, 1947. The synagogue was rebuilt after nearly being destroyed on Kristallnacht in 1938. Cantor Nadvan opened the inauguration service with Mah Tovv, a prayer of reverence and awe for the gathering of Jews in places of worship.

That Cantor Nadvan opened this service with Mah Tovv intrigued me, as there was a setting of Mah Tovv on the cassette I found in my garage. I sent Tina Frühoff a copy of the recording. After listening to it she had no doubt that it stemmed from Nadvan's time in Europe in the late 40s due to the pronunciation and accompaniment. So it is

not totally off base to imagine that Nadvan used that setting, or parts of it, at that 1947 gathering of the newly liberated Jews of Munich. What a blessing it must have been to be gathered as Jews, to pray together, to recite the words "mah tovu ohalecha Yaakov" (how good are the tents of Jacob), after all they had endured.

Rabbi Samuel Stollman, with whom Cantor Nadvan had served for his entire tenure, wrote "Cantor Nadvan not only was a marvelous singer but also composed a number of melodies which he introduced



into the Sabbath and Holy Day services" and added that Nadvan was a master of nusach, the synagogue modal music and its motifs. From listening to and transcribing Nadvan's settings, it is clear that Nadvan also loved the opera, shown in moments where he weaves operatic elements into traditional nusach to create intensity and highlight a theological idea.

This is to be expected as Nadvan was a conservatory-trained musician. There is evidence in the Bad Arolsen Holocaust Archives that Cantor Nadvan studied with an opera coach in Italy before coming to Canada. Nadvan outlined his history between 1934 and 1950 in order to apply for IRO assistance. In that history, we learn that in 1947 Nadvan left Munich for Paris to reunite with his married sister. While staying with her, he was able to earn enough money as a singer to travel to Milan to study with Gina Cigna. Gina Cigna was a leading dramatic soprano who sang at La Scala until 1945 and then turned to teaching.

At the International Holocaust Remembrance Day event in Windsor, I had the opportunity to share seven of Cantor Nadvan's settings, performed by me, Cantor Deborah Fick, Cantorial Soloist Tracey Atin, and Cantor David Neumark. The seven pieces included Mah Tovv, Sim Shalom, Lecha Dodi, Friday Night Kiddush, Yom Shabbaton, and two High Holy Day settings (V'al Ham'dinot and Ya'aleh Tachanuneinu).

Nadvan's music illuminated and animated the liturgical text. His use of dynamics, embellishment, Jewish modal scales and motifs, dramatic pauses, and operatic elements functioned to comment, make textual comparisons, and highlight religious ideas, words, and phrases in order to create a particular mood, feeling, and midrashic interpretation, to help the worshiper find meaning and enter prayer more deeply. Despite the pain he endured during the Holocaust, Cantor Nadvan saw a path of redemption for the Jewish people through

memory, prayer, and religious observance. It is clear that he was a man of tremendous faith and that he devoted his life to arousing that faith in others. As Rabbi Stollman so tenderly stated, Nadvan's "life was a niggun [a song] — a melody — with its joys and sorrows, aspirations, petitions, and faith" and that his music continues to visit us "in the sanctuaries of our memories and hearts."

It is my hope that sharing Nadvan's music will contribute to the history of Jewish sacred music of the twentieth century, and that his melodies and musical settings will be shared and adapted in the synagogue, concert hall, and Jewish learning spaces.

To hear a recording of Cantor Nadvan singing Mah Tovv, search "Cantor Saul Nadvan Mah Tovv" on YouTube. ■

Jewish New York, a remarkable story

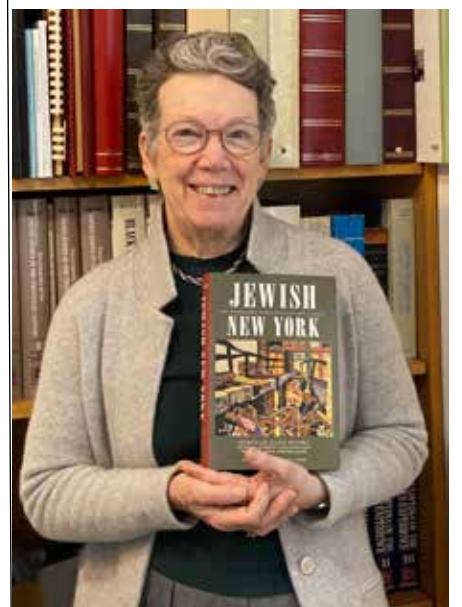
By Greg Saltzman, special to the Washtenaw Jewish News

The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC) book group will discuss *Jewish New York: The Remarkable Story of a City and a People* at its meeting on Sunday, March 10. AARC member Deborah Dash Moore, first author of the book, will participate in the discussion.

The book presents the history of Jews in New York City from 1654 to 2015. Moore, a professor of history and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, won a National Jewish Book Award for her most recent book, *Walkers in the City: Jewish Street Photographers of Midcentury New York*.

"Studying New York Jews has been a professional passion of mine since my dissertation years," Moore said, "and I relished the challenge and pleasure of transforming a three-volume history, *City of Promises*, into this new one-volume book. [I'm] looking forward to discussing *Jewish New York* with the Ann Arbor Jewish community."

The AARC book group's March 10 meeting will begin with a lunch from 12 noon to 1 p.m., followed by a hybrid in-person/Zoom discussion of the book from 1 to 2 p.m. To get the Zoom link, please email Greg Saltzman at gsaltzman@albion.edu. ■



Obituaries



Joel Shore, 90, of Ann Arbor, died after sunset on 26 January. Beloved husband of 68 years of Marilyn Shore. Cherished father of Gayle Shore Moyer and Bruce Shore Moyer, Karen Shore Wisialowski and William Wisialowski, and Michael and Sally Beth Shore. Proud grandfather of Alex (Elyse) Moyer, Justin (Lara Robeznieks) Moyer, John Benjamin Wisialowski, Sarah Jayne Wisialowski, Rachel Carson Shore, Noah Fisher Shore, and Amelia Rose Shore. Adoring great-grandfather of Callie and Blake Moyer. Loving brother of the late Stanley (the late Marlene) Schusterman. Dear brother-in-law of the late Sylvia, the late Florence, the late Aaron, and the late Dorothy. Also survived by many loving nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. Contributions may be directed to: Ann Arbor Art Center, 117 W. Liberty St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104, 734-994-8004, <https://www.annarborartcenter.org/donation-request/>; Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, 220 E. Ann St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104, (734) 995-5439, <https://discoverscienceandnature.org/>; or a charity of your choice. Funeral services were held January 30, 2024 at Temple Beth Emeth in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Interment at Beth El Memorial Park Cemetery in Livonia.



Associate Professor Emeritus **Eugene M. Silverman**, M.D. (June 30, 1938–February 5, 2024) and his wife, **Alida Silverman** (October 24, 1940–January 27, 2024) both recently passed away and their joint funeral was held on Tuesday, February 6. Dr. Silverman, “Gene,” came to the Department of Pathology as a Pathology Resident in 1968, following his medical education at New York University School of Medicine and

three years in the U.S. Army Medical Corps (1965–1968). He remained in the department his entire career, until he retired as Associate Professor Emeritus in July 2004. During his tenure, he served in hematology and neuropathology services, as well as on the University Faculty Committee to examine the goals and function of the pathology residency program, and on the subcommittee that later evaluated the residency program. In addition to his commitment to education, he served as the Associate Director of MLabs, our Michigan Medicine Laboratories outreach division, from 1986–1991, then Director of MLabs from 1991 until his retirement in 2004. He was instrumental in expanding MLabs’ reach into multiple new avenues including establishing reimbursement contracts with Medicare and commercial insurers. Gene also served as the Director of Laboratories for multiple small, local hospitals across Michigan and represented the University of Michigan Health Services on the Joint Venture Hospital Laboratories consortium.

Gene and his wife, Alida, were ardent supporters of the Ann Arbor Civic Theatre for nearly 50 years, and Gene served on their Board of Directors. They also loved the Ann Arbor Symphony and frequently attended. The family requests donations be made in their honor to the Ann Arbor Symphony or Planned Parenthood of Ann Arbor in lieu of flowers.



Judith Laikin Elkin was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1928; she had lived in Ann Arbor since 1980. Judith died on January 14. Married for 47 years to Sol M. Elkin, who predeceased her. She was the mother of Alissa Ruth Leonard and the late Susannah (Stephen) Zisk. She is survived by four grandchildren: Sarah, Talia, and Abigail Leonard, and Sam Zisk.

Educated in Detroit Public Schools and the Farband Folk Shule, Judith earned a BA in English from the University of Michigan (1948) and an MA in International Relations from Columbia University (1950). After raising her children, she returned to the University of Michigan to earn her PhD in history (1976). Identifying a gap in historical studies, she founded the Latin American Jewish Studies Association to support research in that area and served as its president for 18 years. She was the author of numerous books and articles on this subject, including *The Jews of Latin America*, the foundational text for the field.

Judith was one of the few women commissioned as a United States Foreign Service Officer prior to passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. She served as vice consul to India, Pakistan, Burma (Myanmar), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and Afghanistan, where she traveled extensively. A memoir of her experiences was published as *Krishna Smiled: Assignment in South Asia*. She later was assigned to London, England, as visa officer, where she had experiences recounted in her memoir, *Walking Made My Path*. She resigned her commission in order to be free to marry and found a family. Back home in Detroit, she wrote a column on foreign affairs for the *Detroit Free Press* and *Toledo Blade*.

From 1989 on, she was an associate of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. While conducting research as an independent scholar, Judith taught history and political science at Albion College, Wayne State University, Ohio State University, and the University of Michigan. She also held administrative positions at Albion College, Great Lakes Colleges Association, and Union Steel. She was encouraged in her work by grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Fulbright Association, Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, American Jewish Archives, American Association of University Women, Touro National Heritage Foundation, and American Council of Learned Societies. She served as an elected member of the Albion school board, the board of the Michigan Chapter of the Fulbright Association, and the board of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor.

Bruce William Baker died at home in Beulah, Michigan, on January 9, 2024, after living with metastatic prostate cancer since June, 2020. Bruce was born in Fort Lee, Virginia, on November 2, 1955, but lived his entire life in Michigan, in East Lansing and Ann Arbor. He spent part of every summer by his beloved Crystal Lake near Frankfort and Beulah. In 2019, he achieved his lifelong dream of retiring there.

Bruce grew up in East Lansing, Michigan, and graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in philosophy in 1978. In 1982 he received his JD from the University of Michigan. Although he passed the bar and was recruited by firms in Detroit, Bruce never practiced law. His legal training served him well, however, in his business career.

He worked for several startups in Ann Arbor, before starting Radius Garden, his own garden tools company, which featured tools of his own design. His ergonomic hand tools with their curved green handles and shovels with round handles forged a new direction in garden tools whose designs had hardly changed in hundreds of years. With the invention of the Root Slayer, Bruce made the removal and/or transplanting of shrubs and trees much easier — almost fun.

Bruce discovered the art of bonsai after a trip to Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, and he made bonsai his lifelong hobby. He also loved playing golf and bridge, traveling, walking and hiking, and experimental film. He was a self-taught expert on native

plants who credited his love of nature and gardening to his grandmothers. A walk anywhere with Bruce — the golf course, city streets, or out in the woods — was an opportunity for him to tell those in his company about the plants that surrounded them. He was also constantly on the lookout for possible native trees to dig up and turn into bonsai. Google “Bruce Baker bonsai” and you’ll find numerous videos in which Bruce demonstrates his love and mastery of bonsai as well as his straightforward explanations of the process and the art. He loved relaxing evenings with friends and family, sharing food and drink, especially smoked meats and good bourbon.

He had an unrelentingly positive outlook on life, and he never lost that positive feeling even while contending with the onslaught of a fatal disease. He managed to see New Zealand, golf in Scotland, exhibit a tree at a national bonsai exhibition, and make one final trip to China in the last year of his life. His final accomplishment was to establish a home for his bonsai collection at Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids.



Survivors include his wife of 43 years, Genie Wolfson, and his children, Sam and Lily Baker. Also surviving are his sisters Jill Baker (Robin Wagner), Tammy Baker Moeller (Stan), brothers-in-law Martin (Eilidh) and David Wolfson (Anita Perala), nieces Kate Spinillo (Christian) and Sophie Wolfson, and nephews Kevin Yelvington and Evan Wolfson. He is also survived by his mother, Rose Baker, and aunt, Una Davidson, and his cousins Maurine Griffin and Ron Davidson.

Bruce’s bonsai collection has been donated to Frederik Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and will be housed there beginning in the summer of 2024. Contributions in his memory to the maintenance and upkeep of the Baker-Bull Bonsai Friendship Garden and other bonsai at FMG may be made by check to:

Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Foundation, with a note on the Memo line of the check, “Baker-Bull Bonsai Friendship Fund” and mailed to: Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Foundation, 2929 Walker NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. ■

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