



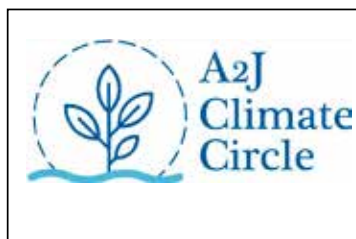
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WASHTENAW

JEWISH NEWS

MARCH 2025

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FREE

JFS of Washtenaw responds to federal policy changes: We will not abandon refugees

Recent federal policy changes have abruptly suspended key refugee resettlement programs, cutting off nearly \$4.7 million in federal funding designated to Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County for initial resettlement. A significant portion of this funding was intended for direct assistance and payments on behalf of refugees and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV)

holders — individuals who worked for the U.S. military in war-torn regions like Af-

ghanistan and Iraq and were promised safety in return for their service. Effective immediately, federally funded resettlement services have been halted until further notice, leaving countless individuals and families in an uncertain and precarious situation. As of writing this message (February 10, 2025), the funding freeze has not been lifted and remains in effect, leaving refugees, SIV holders, and the agencies that support them in a state of uncertainty, unable to provide the essential services needed for successful resettlement and long-term stability.

What this means for JFS and our clients

For decades, JFS has been a trusted provider of refugee resettlement services, ensuring that newcomers have the foundation they need to build safe, stable, and fulfilling lives in our community. This sudden and devastating suspension threatens everything we have worked so hard to build.

Refugees and SIV holders who have already arrived may now be left without critical support. Housing, employment, and basic needs assistance are all at risk, placing these

individuals — many of whom sacrificed for the U.S. military — in dire situations.

Our dedicated staff, who have committed their lives to welcoming and assisting refugees, face immense uncertainty about how to continue this vital work with no federal support. Unfortunately, due to the loss of funding, JFS has been forced to lay off valued team members in the affected programs, further straining our ability to provide critical services to those in need.

The core of our resettlement efforts is in jeopardy. JFS is prohibited from incurring new costs, and there is no guarantee of reimbursement for any services we continue to provide.

JFS will not abandon the refugees in our care

Despite these unprecedented challenges, Jewish Family Services will not turn its back on the refugees we have committed to resettling.

Our Board of Directors has made the firm decision to uphold our contractual and ethical obligations to those who have arrived in recent months. These vulnerable

individuals and families are already here, and they need us now more than ever.

Using all available resources, we will ensure that our newest arrivals have access to safe housing, food, and essential support services. We refuse to leave them alone to navigate this crisis without guidance and care.

At the same time, we will continue to advocate — both for those already in our community and for the thousands of refugees and SIV holders who were approved for travel but are now stranded abroad, uncertain if they will ever reach the safety they were promised.

Beyond the first 90 days: The critical need for continued support

While we await further clarification on how funding for post-resettlement services will be affected, our immediate goal is to ensure that the most recent arrivals — who are now at their most vulnerable — are not left without essential support.

Resettlement is not a 90-day process.

continued to page 4



"Purim at the Circus": A spectacular celebration!

By Shternie Zwiebel

Get ready for an unforgettable Purim experience as Chabad and the Jewish Community Center once again bring the community a joyous and action-packed celebration! Year after year, families eagerly look forward to this beloved event, and every year we create a fresh and exciting theme to make Purim come alive. We've danced through "Purim in the 60s," experienced "Purim in the Shtetl," and traveled to "Purim in Israel," just to name a few. This year, we're bringing the excitement and wonder of the circus to Purim!

With Purim falling on a Friday this year, we've crafted a high-energy yet streamlined event that allows everyone to experience the full joy of the holiday while finishing in time for Shabbat. In just 90 minutes, we are packing in nonstop fun that will transport families into a world of color, laughter, and excitement.



From the moment guests arrive, they will be immersed in a circus-inspired atmosphere, filled with the lively sounds of celebration, the sweet aroma of fresh popcorn and cotton candy, and the thrill of classic carnival games. A delicious dinner will be served, featuring favorites like hot dogs, French

fries, soft pretzels, and more, ensuring that everyone has the energy to enjoy the festivities.

The evening will begin with a lively megillah reading, setting the tone for a night of Purim joy. As always, the beloved costume parade will give children and adults alike the chance to show off their most creative Purim outfits. And the excitement doesn't stop there — the Detroit Circus will take center stage with an exhilarating live performance, bringing jaw-dropping entertainment for all ages.

As the event comes to a close, every family will receive a special Shabbat kit, allowing them to take the warmth and joy of the evening home with them.

Purim is a holiday of joy, unity,

and celebration, and this year's Purim at the Circus promises to be an event to remember. With an atmosphere bursting with excitement, entertainment that will dazzle and delight, and the warmth of community spirit, this is one Purim celebration you won't want to miss!

Purim at the Circus

Date: Friday, March 14, 2025

Location: JCC of Greater Ann Arbor


Time: 4:30 p.m. Megillah reading– 5:00-5:45 p.m. dinner and activities – 5:45-6:20 p.m. Circus Show

Cost: \$10/person


RSVP and more information www.jew-mich.com/events

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From the editor



Amid the chaos and turmoil of Trumpism and the ongoing tragedies in Israel/Palestine, I find Jews returning again and again to our fundamental teachings: Treat immigrants and refugees (the neighbor and the stranger) with dignity as we would want to be treated, see God's face in every human, do acts of loving kindness, repair a broken world, study text to discover what God's wants from us. I see these values practiced on every page of this WJN. I don't have more words right now, so I'll turn to a poem I found on Ritual Well, <https://ritualwell.org/ritual/parshat-shemini/>

Parshat Shemini

by Sharon Bronstein

Do numbers matter?
October 7th it was 157 in the morning, by night
over 200
it rose each hour, it seemed
over 1000
but then some weren't counted for weeks because there was only ash to sift and teeth to compare to dental x-rays
1,200 and then 240 and 105 exchanged, then 4, and 1 freed,
then 134 left and 20 dead
and 2
rescued and then one by one more dead and then 600 soldiers.

Purim, my stomach tightened knowing I would hear another number chapter 9 Megillat Esther when the Jews were supposed to be murdered, every last one, but then fate changed
but the edict couldn't be altered
First we hung Haman, that's fair, our

children's children eternally shake his grave, no rest for the wicked
Haman Hamas – no difference, only the repetitive theme over and over and over in every generation they rise up
V'he shi'amdah to kill us
then 10 hung children of Haman, taught by Haman and Zeresh, they must be
evil
too.
This is the first year I thought, how old were those children?
I sat at the edge of my seat knowing a big number was coming
towards the end of the Megillah, but I couldn't remember the exact one
32,000 I thought. Numbers mixed up, chanted 75,000 — we killed and then rejoiced.
75,000 the number we haven't yet reached but
could
sometime.
I'd heard that number every year
those we'd murdered
just in case they would murder us
But it was different this year
I'd heard it before like a story, every other year,
a parable.
I'd heard it knowing that Jews are people of peace.
We, the gentle scholars, the scientists, the people of the
Book. 75,000 was not real people, a forgettable number
Not the number of real people, of children, some innocent ones,
some who may still be in the womb.

Parshat Shemini, another number, 8, we are
forbidden to eat birds of prey because we don't want to become
like them.
Are eagles, hawks and owls evil?
their eyes and beaks designed to hunt
mice and fish.
What is the number that makes you a predator or makes you prey?
Six million means you are prey
30,000 not yet predator, 75,000 maybe
If you hunt to feed your young, to make your nest
a safe place for your babies
what is number that identifies you as predator or prey? ■

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Coming soon

Painting is quality time with HaShem

By Drew Coel, Marketing and Program Associate, Ann Arbor JCC

The Amster Gallery at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor continues to feature the work of artists — local, throughout southeast Michigan, and beyond — for all in the community to enjoy. Currently showcasing at the JCC is a collection of paintings by Yevgeniya (Genia) Gazman of Metro Detroit, with the reception to take place on Thursday, March 6, from 6–7:30 p.m. Schmooze and have a nosh while exploring over 30 original paintings that highlight themes of faith, love, and deep Jewish roots.

A licensed attorney in both Michigan and Minnesota, Genia immigrated to the United States as a child refugee from the former Soviet Union. “I am deeply grateful for the tremendous opportunities afforded to me in America,” Genia states. “Today, I am living my American dream and expanding on that dream every day.” She is a proud graduate of the University of Michigan and Minnesota Law School. Genia is also the founder and creative force behind YGazm Art, LLC, where the motto of her company is “Good Through Art Together.” She seeks out and creates campaigns to balance phi-

lanthropy and profit for organizations and causes aligned with her driving values of diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

While working towards her dreams, Genia picked up painting at different times in her life, most recently returning to art in 2019 and continuing through COVID to balance mental health and stability. Though she has no formal education in art or design, Genia notes how painting has been a way for her to combine her love of art and Judaism.

“Painting is deeply spiritual for me,” Genia says. “I love to explore the power of words and symbols across languages. I also, in many ways, let go of control as I paint. I have an idea of where I would like to start and then lean into the experience and embrace the creative process. For me, painting is quality time with HaShem and is unquestionably a process of creation.”

In addition to selling her pieces, Genia will also be selling tote bags with her designs on them at the JCC until the exhibit closes on March 28.

We hope to see you at the reception on March 6! ■





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Community

JFS response continued from pg. 1

Most refugees require significantly more time and assistance to fully integrate into their new communities. The over 1,600 refugees resettled by JFS in recent years — many of whom remain in our care — are now at risk due to potential policy changes and additional funding freezes.

Refugees arrive not only with the need for housing, employment, and financial stability, but also carrying profound trauma and unimaginable losses. Many have endured war, persecution, displacement, and the heartbreak of leaving behind loved ones. Their challenges do not end upon arrival — they need long-term support for:

Mental health and trauma recovery: Many refugees face PTSD, anxiety, and depression as they process their experiences and adjust to a completely new environment.

Medical care: Refugees often require ongoing medical treatment, including for conditions worsened by years in conflict zones or refugee camps.

Employment assistance and job training: Finding stable employment that matches a refugee's skills and qualifications can take months or even years.

Language and cultural integration: Learning English, navigating healthcare, and understanding legal and financial systems are significant hurdles that require extended support.

Without adequate funding, the very programs designed to help refugees overcome trauma and rebuild their lives are now in jeopardy.

How You Can Help

JFS is committed to standing by our refugee clients, but we cannot do this alone. Without immediate community support, we will be unable to sustain the critical services that uphold the dignity, security, and well-being of the refugees and SIV holders who rely on us.

Advocate: Contact your elected officials and demand the restoration of funding for refugee resettlement and post-resettlement support. The government must honor its commitments, especially to those who risked their lives working alongside U.S. forces.

=Donate: With federal funding now frozen, we urgently need emergency funds to continue providing housing assistance, job placement, trauma-informed case management, and mental health services. Every dollar makes a difference.

=Spread the word: Share this message with your networks to raise awareness and mobilize community support.

=Volunteer: With our resources stretched thin, we need volunteers more than ever across all our pro-

grams, including resettlement, employment assistance, nutrition services, and support for older adults.

Now is the time to act

This is a defining moment for JFS and for our community. Together, we must ensure that JFS remains a place of refuge and hope, providing stability and care to those seeking safety and a new beginning. The road ahead is uncertain, but with your support, we can continue to serve the individuals and families who need us most.

At this point, we urgently need to raise significant funds to bridge the gap and sustain uninterrupted safety net services for refugees, SIV holders, and other vulnerable community members.

To donate today, please visit www.jfsannarbor.org. For questions or more information, please don't hesitate to reach out. Thank you for standing with us in this critical time. ■

He never forgot those who helped.

Welcome to "JFS Voices." At Jewish Family Services, every person who walks through our doors has a story to tell. "JFS Voices" is a monthly letter that brings those stories to life — through the words of the people who make our mission possible. From staff and volunteers to newcomers and longtime clients, each edition will highlight the real, personal impact of JFS's work in our com-

Shadin's Story

I have been involved with Jewish Family Services since 2011 — as a volunteer, intern, case manager, programs manager, and programs director. There are many reasons to be proud to be part of an organization with the mission of creating solutions, promoting dignity, and inspiring humanity. I'll share two reasons why JFS is specifically important to me.

ferent backgrounds and the act itself of receiving help from someone of another background can squash negative stereotypes. I've seen clients question what they previously thought about groups of people based on their experiences with their case managers and volunteers who were Jewish, Muslim, Black, Arab, etc.

In the past 14 years of being involved with JFS, I have also witnessed our commitment to reshape our agency to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our community. When people needed healthy, culturally appropriate meals delivered, we built a kitchen. When Iraqis who helped our armed forces overseas were arriving with professional degrees but working in entry level jobs, we built a recertification program to help them work as engineers, interpreters, and other professional jobs better suited to their skills and the needs of our labor market. When the pandemic forced everyone to stay home, we delivered computers and provided services over Zoom and expanded a small business program to help people earn income from home. When Afghans who supported our armed forces had to evacuate Afghanistan, we built up an infrastructure to do emergency resettlement services and led the state in time between arrival and permanent housing.

I'll ask you now to support us as we respond to the current crises in our community. We face a mental health crisis, global refugee crisis, and a housing crisis. I don't doubt JFS' commitment and expertise in alleviating suffering for those who come to us for help. Please help us sustain the resources needed to continue serving our mission.

To show your support of JFS, please make a donation or volunteer with us. Visit www.jfsannarbor.org to learn more. ■



Shadin Atiyeh, Senior Director of Employment and Economic Programs Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County

community.

Join us as we share moments of resilience, kindness, and transformation. These are the voices of JFS — stories of hope, dignity, and the power of human connection. Thank you for being part of our journey.

My father came to the U.S. as an immigrant from Syria at the age of 18. He never forgot the people who helped him get started in a new country. The person who gave him his first job was a Jewish business owner. My father told us the story many times about how this person helped him. People come to JFS from all dif-

Our strength as an agency has been in the diversity that we've fostered. Those who wish to work against hate in all its forms — antisemitism, islamophobia, xenophobia, and racism have the opportunity now to ensure that JFS can continue its welcoming work.

An island in the storm

By Amichay Findling, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

This is a summary of an interview conducted between Amichay Findling of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and Dr. Arik Cheshin, a University of Haifa professor currently visiting at University of Michigan. The interview was the first community program in a series exploring Jewish-Arab relations within Israeli society, particularly post-October 7. It was hosted by the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, which prioritizes financial support in Israel to shared society organizations. This conversation's focus was on navigating Arab-Israeli relations in academia.



demia.

The next engagements in this series will take place online on the mornings of Sunday March 9 and April 6. Visit www.jewishannarbor.org/events to register.

The setting

The University of Haifa sits perched above a city known for its diversity, a melting pot where Jewish and Arab students come together in a unique academic environment. But beyond its striking views, University of Haifa tells a compelling story of coexistence, resilience, and the delicate balancing act of managing cultural tensions in times of conflict.

A campus like no other

University of Haifa is home to one of the most diverse student bodies in Israel, with close to 40% of its students coming from Arab communities. Unlike many Israeli universities, where Arab students remain a small minority, here, Jewish and Arab students share classrooms, coffee lines, and research labs. The campus hums with a blend of Hebrew and Arabic, a rare microcosmos of shared society within an otherwise deeply divided country.

But this diversity is not without its challenges. Language barriers persist, as many Arab students are less proficient in Hebrew due to Israel's separate education systems. Social divides remain, with Jewish and Arab students often forming separate friend groups. And in moments of national crisis, such as the war that erupted on October 7, the strains become palpable.

Enter Dr. Arik Cheshin

Dr. Arik Cheshin, a professor at Haifa University and director of the Emotions in Organizations Lab, has spent years studying social dynamics in diverse spaces. His own journey — growing up with minimal exposure to Arab communities and then finding himself teaching in one of Israel's most mixed academic institutions — has given him a front-row seat and a meaningful role in the complexities of Jewish-Arab relations.

"When I arrived at Haifa, I was struck by how much Arabic I heard around me," he recalls. "It was a stark contrast to my previous experiences in Israeli academia. And yet, despite the proximity, real social integration remains a challenge."

The war changes everything

October 7 threw an already delicate balance into turmoil. With Jewish students called up for reserve duty and Arab students suddenly under a microscope for their political stances, the university faced an existential question: Could it continue to function as a shared space amid a war that deepened national divides?

Some Arab students were arrested for social media posts deemed sympathetic to Hamas. Others withdrew, fearing hostility from their Jewish peers. The usual bustling campus felt subdued, tense, uncertain. University leadership knew they had to act.

The University's response: Bridging the divide

Determined to keep the university from fracturing, University of Haifa launched initiatives aimed at fostering dialogue and mutual understanding. Faculty members — both Jewish and Arab — produced video messages emphasizing the importance of education and coexistence. A symbolic campaign that distributed wristbands reading "We Continue Together" in Hebrew and Arabic sought to reinforce solidarity.

Behind the scenes, professors like Cheshin worked to ease tensions in classrooms. "We had to prepare for the moment when students who had been in uniform — some literally coming straight from the frontlines — sat next to Arab students who had spent the past months fearing discrimination and might have relatives in Gaza," he explains. "It was an unprecedented situation."

An historic election amidst the tensions

In the midst of this turmoil, University of Haifa made history by electing its first Arab rector, Professor Mona Maroun, an Arab-Christian neuroscientist. Maroun's election, while celebrated by many as a triumph of meritocracy and inclusion, was also met with skepticism. Some questioned whether the timing — during a war when Arab-Jewish relations were at a breaking point — was ideal. Others saw it as a powerful statement of what University of Haifa stands for.

"For most of us, her Arab identity was secondary to her qualifications," says Cheshin. "But we can't ignore the symbolism. In a time of division, her election showed that this university remains committed to shared society."

Lessons for multicultural organizations

University of Haifa's handling of this crisis offers valuable lessons for any organization navigating cultural or political divides: Create Spaces for Dialogue: Open, facilitated conversations can help prevent misunderstandings and build trust between divided communities.

Offer Institutional Support: Providing additional resources — language programs, mental health services, mentorship — ensures that all members of a diverse community can thrive.

Balance Neutrality with Action: Avoiding political engagement may seem like the safest route, but sometimes, institutions must take a stand for inclusion and coexistence.

Use Symbolism Wisely: Actions like elect-

ing an Arab rector or distributing bilingual wristbands may seem small, but they send powerful messages about belonging and equality.

Acknowledge and Manage Emotions: People bring their emotions into shared spaces. Recognizing and regulating these emotions can prevent conflicts from escalating.

Dr. Cheshin emphasized the role of both channeling and regulating emotions. "One should find a place to let your emotions manifest and feel them and use them, but be conscious of where and what the goal is. Emotions are not just felt inside but also manifested outside and affect people's behaviors. There's also a chance of people getting angrier. So really be conscious of the emotions that you want to bring in because it has an impact on others as well. Not only on yourself, but what those emotions might cost you."

"There are action tendencies associated with emotions. So you act in certain ways when you feel specific emotions. Try to think of which emotions you should bring to your shared space of society or work that would be good for you and for others, and try to regulate your emotions accordingly because they do have a lot of social impact."

Conclusion: A model for the future?

University of Haifa is far from a utopia. Social divisions still exist, tensions still flare, and the road to genuine integration remains long. But in a country often defined by its conflicts, this campus represents something rare: a space where Jews and Arabs continue to learn, work, and — against all odds — find ways to move forward together.

At a time when division feels inevitable, University of Haifa stands as a testament to the power of education in bridging societal gaps. It is an "island in the storm," a place where hope for a shared future still flickers, even in the darkest of times.

As he closed the interview, Dr. Cheshin left participants with one final important message for the Ann Arbor area Jewish community: He hopes to strengthen the relationship between both of his universities — his alma mater (University of Michigan) and his academic home (University of Haifa). Please feel free to reach out to him for additional inquiries: acheshin@univ.haifa.ac.il

To learn more about Israel-related programming locally or to get involved with allocating Annual Community Campaign funds to Israeli and other overseas organizations, contact Amichay Findling at amichay@jewishannarbor.org.

Federation to award over \$1 million for Jewish life

By Rachel Wall, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

Jewish communities are constantly growing, changing, and addressing new challenges, and the greater Ann Arbor community is no exception. Addressing these changes is one of the main goals of the Jewish Federation's Annual Community Campaign.

"Whether it is sponsoring the Jewish Community Study, so we can plan for the future; supporting our community's safety net, Jewish Family Service, in times of crisis; or combating antisemitism in our community, the Jewish Federation is working for us," says Larry Adler, volunteer Chair of

at UM and EMU can provide the programs and services needed to build and sustain an engaged and connected Jewish community. It also enables Federation to lead the community in addressing vital communal needs, including security, local antisemitism, supporting Israel and other global communities in crisis, community relations through representing Jewish communal issues and concerns in the broader community, and planning for the future.

The success of this year's campaign, which began September 2024 and will end in May of this year, is due in large part to exceptional volunteer leadership from Adler and Campaign Co-Chair Sierra Imwalle. These two community members tirelessly volunteer their time to lead a team of 40 Campaign Volunteers, reach out personally to potential donors, and help shape messaging around the funding needs of the community.

Adler, who recruited Imwalle as co-chair for the 2025 campaign, says he is "grateful to have the opportunity to chair the Campaign and work alongside Sierra and the incredible Federation staff."

Adler and Imwalle were also instrumental in the success of this past November's Main Event, which featured NYT columnist David Brooks and raised over \$230,000. The event was attended by 450 people — the largest showing at a Main Event in over a decade.

While the Campaign has seen success so far, Adler knows there's more to do. "We are 80% to our target for the 2025 Annual Campaign," he says, "and I am confident that the generous Jewish community of Washtenaw County will once again step up and that we will reach and exceed our goal."

To learn more about the impact of the Jewish Federation's Annual Community Campaign, visit JewishAnnArbor.org/donate or contact Rachel Wall at rachel@jewishannarbor.org.



Federation's 2025 Annual Community Campaign Co-Chairs Larry Adler and Sierra Imwalle

the 2025 Annual Community Campaign.

The 2025 Annual Community Campaign has already raised over \$1.3 million from 550 generous members of the local community, significantly outstripping the 2024 Campaign at the same time a year ago, and well on the way to this year's goal: raise and distribute \$1.6 million to Jewish organizations and initiatives making a difference locally and around the world.

The Annual Community Campaign is how the Jewish community cares for one another. It ensures organizations in greater Ann Arbor like the JCC, JFS, and Hillels

JCOR has a new family & a whole lot of jazz!

By Deborah Meyers Greene

Jazz for JCOR is here!

Gershwin, Bernstein, Weil, Mann, and Previn — Jewish jazz composers and lyricists all! And there are more! The ever-popular Cliff Monear Ensemble will play the tunes and jazz singer Sarah D'Angelo's mellifluous voice will lift the words right off the page and all through the room. Monear also will share tidbits about the music and its creators.

Jazz fans and JCOR (Jewish Community Organizing for Resettlement) allies will share a couple hours of some of the world's biggest and best jazz numbers created by Jewish composers and lyricists on Sunday, March 16, 1 to 3p.m., at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. See the ad in this issue for the QR code or go to <https://bit.ly/4ftGG7Z> for tickets.

And this is why we party ...

JCOR has a new refugee family!

JCOR greeted its new refugee family, a Venezuelan mother and her teenage son, the first week of February. Already moved into their first home in the United States, their top priority is to enroll the son in school so mom can begin her job search in earnest. JCOR volunteers are helping to facilitate both important endeavors and to round out the family's needs for household goods, seasonal clothing, and so on.

JCOR managed to break through the federal maelstrom of decrees, stop work orders, and funding cessations with the critical assistance of Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County which invited JCOR to provide its customary financial and wrap-around programmatic support for this family.

The generalized chazerai of current federal government decrees reaches beyond this family's arrival. In this unstable situation, even JCOR's fully documented refugee family is vulnerable to unexpected and unpleasant experiences related to their immigrant status. JCOR will stand beside them to provide reassurance and guidance as political storms continue to buffet documented and undocumented immigrants alike.

Also due to the cessation of refugee-related federal funds, JCOR is stepping up to fill the gap left by customary levels of financial assistance for necessities like housing, groceries, transportation, and more that have been terminated.

So many Jewish families arrived in the United States as immigrants. We know the struggle. We know the perseverance required to adapt and become self-sufficient. JCOR is determined to help these families thrive. We are committed to help repair their world and by relationship, the greater world around them.

JCOR is a community collaboration founded by six Jewish congregations: Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan, Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation, Beth Israel Congregation, Jewish Cultural Society, Pardes Hannah, and Temple Beth Emeth, with fiduciary support from the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. JCOR partners with Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County and welcomes others to join our work to help newly arrived refugees adapt and become self-sufficient through their first year of resettlement.



JAZZ FOR JCOR

3RD ANNUAL JCOR BENEFIT CONCERT

THE CLIFF MONEAR ENSEMBLE
WITH VOCALIST SARAH D'ANGELO

FOLLOWED BY KOSHER NOSH!

Sunday, March 16th
1:00-3:00PM
Jewish Community Center
2935 Birch Hollow Dr.

Admission levels of giving:
Afikomen \$108
Charoset \$72
Matzoh balls \$36
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12 and under Free

REGISTER

online or
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All funds benefit JCOR, a community collaboration
founded by six Jewish congregations organized in
partnership with JFS to help newly arrived refugees
start their lives in Ann Arbor
JCORAnnArbor.org

Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival will return in April

By Marie Pattipati, Director of Adult Programming, Ann Arbor JCC

Join us for an immersive journey into Jewish culture through cinema. The Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival is back, bringing a diverse and compelling lineup of films to the big screen from April 21 to May 9. This year's festival promises to be a rich tapestry of stories, exploring Jewish life, history, and identity through the power of film.



The Stronghold

Prepare to be gripped by *The Stronghold*, an intense siege drama based on actual events from the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Featuring Michael Aloni, the acclaimed star of *Beauty Queen of Jerusalem*, *The Stronghold* plunges viewers into the heart of the Sinai Desert, where a company of Israeli soldiers is trapped and facing annihilation. Aloni delivers a captivating performance as a young doctor and lieutenant who must confront a soul-shattering choice: a desperate last stand against overwhelming odds, or a perilous gamble that could compromise their values. This powerful film explores the stigma of surrender and the long-delayed recognition of these soldiers' heroic actions, offering a moving tribute to their courage and resilience in the face of impossible choices. *The Stronghold* is a harrowing and thought-provoking exploration of leadership, sacrifice, and the human cost of war. *The Stronghold* is sure to resonate deeply with audiences, leaving a lasting impression long after the credits roll.



SODA

Prepare for a complex and emotionally charged drama with *SODA*, a film set in 1956, where a beautiful seamstress's arrival in a neighborhood of Holocaust survivors ignites a firestorm of suspicion and conflicting loyalties. Starring Lior Raz, the acclaimed star of *Fauda*, *SODA* delves into the gray areas of morality and survival during the Holocaust. Raz portrays Shalom, a former resistance fighter and leader of the survivor community, who finds himself torn between his growing passion for the newcomer and his unwavering commitment to uncovering her past. Rumors swirl about her alleged role as a Kapo, a prisoner who collaborated with the Nazis, shaking the foundations of the close-knit community. As the seamstress faces intense harassment, she must decide whether to stay and fight for her place or flee. Meanwhile, Shalom is forced to choose between his newfound love and his lifelong comrades, who fought alongside him as partisans. *SODA* raises difficult questions about complicity, the choices people made under unimaginable duress, and the enduring scars of trauma, prompting viewers to consider the complexities of survival and justice.



Matchmaking 2

Get ready for a heartwarming and hilarious return to the world of love and matchmaking with *Matchmaking 2*. This delightful romantic comedy, a sequel to the Israeli box office hit, stars Maor Schwitzer (*Valley of Tears*, *Shtisel*) as Baruch Auerbach, a 28-year-old graduate student still living at his yeshiva in Jerusalem. Baruch, now the faithful assistant to the matchmaker Malchi (Irit Kaplan, *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem*), finds himself under pressure to find his own soulmate. When Malchi tasks him with picking up her younger daughter, Shira (Omer Nudelman), from the airport, sparks fly, but navigating the complexities of modern Orthodox dating proves to be a challenge. With matchmaking meddling, personal doubts, and societal expectations standing in his way, Baruch must find a way to win Shira's heart. Featuring a stellar supporting cast, including Reymonde Amsallem (*Seven Blessings*) and many fa-

miliar faces from *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem*, *Matchmaking 2* offers a playful twist on traditional matchmaking, blending humor and heart with sharp insights into identity, prejudice, and the clash of secular and religious values. Director Erez Tadmor delivers a fun and engaging film that can be enjoyed by both newcomers and fans of the original. In a time when we all could use a lighthearted escape filled with laughter, *Matchmaking 2* is the perfect cinematic treat.

Jewish Film Fest explores Jewish experience

Beyond these highlights, the Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival offers a diverse range of films that explore the breadth and depth of the Jewish experience. From historical dramas that shed light on the past to contemporary stories that reflect the complexities of modern Jewish life, the festival has something for everyone. Look forward to films exploring:

Intergenerational trauma

Explore the profound and lasting impact of trauma — both past and present — on Jewish families and communities across generations. Delving into how trauma, displacement, persecution, violence, cultural flourishing, migration, and community building shape identity, relationships, and perspectives, these films examine the complex ways in which both historical and contemporary trauma continue to resonate. They demonstrate the remarkable strength and resilience of Jewish communities in the face of adversity. These films consider the broad tapestry of Jewish experience and its ongoing influence, exploring how these traumas are remembered, navigated, and woven into the fabric of Jewish life and cultural memory.

Complexities of Jewish life

This collection of films offers a comprehensive look at the multifaceted complexities of Jewish life. Some films

explore the unique experiences of Israelis, showcasing the diverse communities and cultural expressions within Israel's complex historical and political landscape, illuminating the nation's challenges, celebrating its triumphs, and highlighting its remarkable resilience and strength. Others delve into the rich tapestry of Jewish identity in its many forms, exploring the diverse experiences of Jewish individuals and communities around the world, examining questions of belonging, tradition, faith, and the ever-evolving definition of what it means to be Jewish in the 21st century.

The power of the arts

Discover the profound impact of the arts on Jewish life and culture. These films celebrate the contributions of Jewish artists, showcasing how their work shapes and reflects the Jewish experience. They explore the lives and legacies of these artists, from the challenges of persecution to the joys of celebration, revealing how their personal lives are often complexly interwoven with their art.

The Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival is more than just screenings; it's a community gathering built around a shared appreciation for film and the exploration of Jewish values. Connect with fellow film enthusiasts, engage in discussions with filmmakers and experts, and celebrate the power of film to connect us all through storytelling and shared human experiences.

Stay tuned for the full film lineup, screening schedule, and special events. Get your tickets early and prepare to be moved, inspired, and entertained at the Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival 2025!

This incredible festival would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors and committee members. We are deeply grateful for their commitment to bringing Jewish stories to the screen and fostering community through film. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities and how you can help support the Ann Arbor Jewish Film Festival, please visit our website at <https://jccannarbor.org/film-festival/>. Your support is vital to our continued success! ■

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Night of Comedy and FUNdraising benefiting PJ Library

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

Join the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor for our Third Annual Night of Comedy and FUNdraising, benefiting PJ Library, at the Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase on Thursday March 20. This year's headliner is Detroit-born come-



Robert Mac

on NBC's *Last Comic Standing* and has two specials on Dry Bar Comedy. In addition, he has performed alongside several well-known comedians, including Robin Williams and Adam Sandler.

All proceeds from this year's event will help support PJ Library Ann Arbor. PJ Library sends free award-winning books that

dian Robert Mac, the 2001 Grand Prize Winner of Comedy Central's "Laugh Riots," a national stand-up competition. Robert has also made appearances

celebrate Jewish values and culture to families with children from birth through 12 years old. With your support, the JCC will be able to continue providing 5,300 free books a year to the greater Ann Arbor area.

Become a sponsor today and reserve your seat for a night of Comedy and FUNdraising by visiting our website at jccannarbor.org. Sponsorship opportunities start at \$200, and all sponsorship levels include recognition on our website, priority seating, and drink tickets. Individual tickets are \$36 and include 2 drink tickets (21 and up). If you call Comedy Showcase directly at (734) 996-9080 to purchase your ticket, you will not incur a processing fee. With questions, please contact Drew Coel, Marketing and Program Associate at drewcoel@jccannarbor.org.

We hope to see you for a Night of Comedy and FUNdraising on March 20!



A Freedom Journey: The African American and Jewish communities share a seder

By Deborah Meyers Greene and LaTina Saba

Unity is a rare and precious asset in today's world. Not surprisingly, hostile forces like antisemitism and racism thrive in the current environment of acrimony. On March 25, local African American and Jewish communities will unite to invoke shared histories and traditions that can bridge divides.

Ceremonies adapted from the traditional seder, a collaboratively crafted Haggadah, songs from the Jewish and African American traditions, and food from both cultures will carry the evening. And it will be very good food, a menu built on the sustenance available to our ancestors on their respective journeys to freedom: matzoh, bitter herb, eggs, and roots vegetables; succotash, sweet potatoes, greens, and much much more.

A Freedom Journey is not just an event — it is a reaffirmation of the enduring connections between two communities that have faced hardship and continue to seek justice together.

"I am very pleased to see this event occur again," said Nancy Margolis, who staged several 1990s iterations of this event during

her tenure as JCC's inaugural executive director. "It is so important for our two communities to sit together, share food and tradition, and reinforce the intrinsic bonds we share."

The kosher vegetarian meal will be prepared in the Jewish Community Center kitchen under the supervision of Rabbi Will Keller. There is no charge for this joyful event which will convene on Tuesday, March 25, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, Birch Hollow Drive, Ann Arbor 49108. Reservations are needed by March 20 (<https://www.jewishannarbor.org/news-events/events/>). For additional information contact Rabbi Asher Lopatin, asher@jewishannarbor.org.

A Freedom Journey is co-sponsored by the African American Cultural & Historical Museum of Washtenaw County; Embracing Our Differences; Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor; Memorial Baptist Church of Ypsilanti; | The Network: Jewish People of Color of Greater Ann Arbor. ■

Monthly Pop-Ins with Rav Gavrielle focus on teshuvah

By Janet Kelman

Every month, the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC) hosts a "Pop-In" learning session on Zoom with Rav Gavrielle. The overarching theme that she chose for the Jewish year 5785 explores different ways of doing teshuvah, of turning to God and refining character. Drawing inspiration from the wisdom of one of the verses from Aleinu, the concluding prayer of our evening and morning service — *Vahasheivota el l'vavecha, ki Adonai hu ha-Elohim* (Turn to your heart for there you will find God) — Rav Gavrielle wanted to offer programming that is heart-centered. Especially now, in these tumultuous and uncertain times, it is important for us to find a sense of knowing, centering, and meaning, that runs deep inside and cannot be swayed by events of the day and the world around us. Understanding this sets us free. It keeps us from getting hooked and being distracted by the chaos of extremes and deceptions.

When most people think of teshuvah, they think of the High Holy Days, perhaps the month of Elul (in preparation for the High Holy Days) and even the counting of the omer. Rav Gavrielle teaches that Judaism has many different practices for turning to God, tapping into our essential goodness, for refining the character and for checking in with ourselves to see how we are doing on that journey.

Some of us approach teshuvah through various forms of self-care — psychotherapy, being in nature, exercise, poetry, chi kung, yoga, cranial sacral, etc. But there are many opportunities in Jewish tradition to help us align with the Source of Being and our essential goodness. Some of those opportunities or spiritual technologies are:

Daily bedtime Shema

Tachanun (Supplication): a set of prayers containing confessions and petitions for God's grace and mercy, which is recited on weekdays (except on Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and holidays)

Weekly pre-Shabbat (Thursday night) practice

Monthly Rosh Chodesh (new moon) practice, particularly the day before Rosh Chodesh known as Yom Kippur Katan (Little Yom Kippur)

Counting the Omer between the 2nd day of Passover and Shavuot

Elul practice in preparation for the High Holy Days

High Holy Days and the 10 days in between

The Pop-In Sessions with Rav Gavrielle follow this map of approaching teshuvah. Session 1, which was offered in November 2024, focused on practices to prepare for entering Shabbat, to settle the heart and mind beforehand to allow space for a richer and fuller Shabbat experience. Session 2, which was offered in December 2024, focused on daily prayer practice, with special concentration on the weekday Amidah. Participants were invited to explore the themes of the 19 blessings of the Amidah as a pathway of self-reflection, to basically reconstruct the traditional liturgy into a more accessible meditation ritual.

Session 3, which was offered in January 2025, focused on the daily practice of the bedtime Shema. Rav Gavrielle began with an overview of traditional prayers and then shared her own version of the bedtime ritual which included neo-Hasidic breathwork, a review of the events of the day, a forgiveness meditation, recitation of the Shema, and a few handpicked verses from the traditional liturgy.

In the February session, the focus was on Rosh Chodesh, a practice that is particularly meaningful for Rav Gavrielle. She shared teachings from Kabbalah which associate particular powers of perception with each of the Hebrew months. In addition to the five senses, the Kabbalists expanded their

understanding of the powers of perception to include speech, movement, dreams, and other qualities. During the February session, participants were prompted to explore how to develop each of the 12 "senses" to be more present to what's going on internally and externally.

In session 4, on March 12 at 7 p.m., we will dive into Rosh Chodesh practice more deeply and explore the special lessons of the month of Adar. During Adar, we celebrate Purim, not only by reading the megillah but also by doing fun things like dressing up in costumes and performing Purim shpiels. There is a saying in the Talmud — "mish-enichnas Adar marbin b'simchah" (as we enter Adar, we are to increase our joy) — so it may come as no surprise that the power of perception of that month is focused on joy and laughter. "Joy and laughter provide much needed medicine during these hard times," comments Rav Gavrielle.

In addition to monthly Pop-In learning sessions, the AARC also offers a monthly Rosh Chodesh minyan, to celebrate the new moon of each Hebrew month. The Rosh Chodesh minyan provides an opportunity for people to reflect more deeply on each of the 12 powers of perception within this system. Rav Gav begins each service with a Rosh Chodesh teaching and weaves the essence of it into the liturgy and her D'var Torah. The service also includes guided meditations, harp music, poetry, and celebrates contemporary feminist interpretations of traditional liturgy.

"We welcome any interested community member to join us in our online learning sessions and Rosh Chodesh services" comments Rav Gavrielle. "We are enriched by each participant who joins us." Monthly Pop-in Learning sessions and Rosh Chodesh morning services are open to the entire community. To find out more information, sign up for our newsletter on the AARC website at <https://aarecon.org/> or contact info@aarecon.org.

The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Con-

gregation is a caring, inclusive, and music-loving community of people who want to practice and study Judaism — or simply be around people who share a commitment to Judaism's values. The AARC's spiritual leader, Rav Gavrielle Pescador, is known for her warmth, her collaborative spirit, and her incredible voice and harp playing. You are invited to visit our website or email Emily Ohl at emily@aarecon.org to learn more about the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation.

AARC Events for March

March 8

Second Saturday Morning Shabbat Service. Meditation led by Anita Rubin-Meuller, 10–10:20 am, followed by a hybrid Shabbat Service led by Rav Gavrielle Pescador at the JCC and on Zoom. Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event. 10:30 a.m.–noon.

March 12

Pop-In Adar Teaching on Zoom. This is an hour led by our rabbi. 7–8 p.m.

March 16

Beit Sefer Purim Spiel at the JCC. 11 a.m.

March 28

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat. This is a hybrid service led by Rabbi Gabrielle Pescador in person at the JCC and on Zoom. Everyone is welcome! Followed by a nut-free potluck Oneg. 6:30 p.m.

March 30

Rosh Chodesh Nisan Minyan on Zoom. 10 a.m. ■



Rav Gavrielle

Feature

From molecular biology to Judaic Studies, and back to both

In Fall 2024 the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies was pleased to welcome Dr. Cara Rock-Singer to our faculty. Dr. Cara Rock-Singer is the Lama Shetzer Professor of Contemporary Jewish Life and Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies.

How did you first become interested in this area of research?

I am a scholar of Judaism, science, and technology, with particular focus on gender and American Judaism. I certainly didn't take the most conventional path to the humanities, though. I was a molecular biology major and



Dr. Cara Rock-singer

took a religion class to fulfill a humanities requirement, and I fell in love. I took more and more religion classes in parallel to my science classes until a mentor suggested I study the intersections of religion and science. My increasing interest in gender and reproduction, on the other hand, reflected both encountering scholarship that I found compelling as well as my own experience of becoming a mother.

What's your favorite thing about this research?

The thing I love most about my area of research is that it is exploratory and creative. As an ethnographer, I am able to immerse in new communities and places, but also inhabit my own worlds in new ways. My research and writing are creative outlets for understanding American Jewish life and I get to draw on the tools of multiple intellectual traditions — including rabbinics, feminist thought, and modern science — to do so.

Why did you choose to come to the University of Michigan?

I was excited to come to a place with such a vibrant intellectual community, including faculty whose work I've long admired, and incredible support for scholarship and teaching. I was also excited to be able to live and raise a family in a lively small city like Ann Arbor.

Why do you think it is important to study this area of research?

At a pivotal moment for the future of reproductive freedom in the United States, public discussion over how religion, science, and technology shape American law and politics are acutely visible yet narrowly focused on religious freedom and abortion access. My research offers a broad understanding of the role of reproductive bodies in religious and political communities and helps us understand the broader stakes of these debates.

Why do you think it's important to study Judaic Studies and Humanities in general?

I often think of James Baldwin's oft-quoted line, "We made the world we're living in, and we have to make it over." I think the humanities offer us tools for analyzing the world, so as we navigate, reimagine, and remake it, we can do so knowledgeably and intentionally. My ethnographic research has afforded me deep immersive experiences in feminist communities that are wrestling with pressing contemporary social problems. I have watched these groups use Jewish texts and rituals to address gender, racial, and economic power imbalances in Jewish and American society. These are tools we desperately need, especially in times like these.

How has your work evolved since you first started your career?

Since I started my career, my engagement with Jewish texts has significantly expanded. Much of my work now takes the form of what I call "ethnodrashy," my mix of ethnography — a qualitative study of human life and behavior — with midrash, a rabbinic interpretative technique. I rely on midrash as a textual technology whose rhythm, cycles, and telescoping of time create a disruptive effect on common Euro-American narratives about gender, politics, and religion.

What courses do you teach and what do you want students to take away from them?

I have been indelibly shaped by my undergraduate experience studying STEM in an experimental integrated sciences program, which challenged me to learn through problem solving and collaboration. I strive as a teacher to "make the familiar strange," which I do by exposing students to a wide range of genres, perspectives, and sensorial experiences. I also work with students to develop critical skills for reading and writing, and in particular, want students to learn how to ask open, generative questions. This year I am teaching three courses that are new to the University of Michigan. In the fall, I am teaching a lecture, cross-listed with Gender and Women's Studies and American Culture, called "Women, Gender, and Religion." I am also teaching a first-year seminar in Judaic Studies, "Jewish Women and the Body of Tradition." In the winter term, I will be teaching "The American Jewish Life of DNA," which examines the intersections of genetics with Jewish religion and culture.

What is going to be your next project?

I have begun work on my second book project, *Inherited Futures: The American Jewish Life of Genetics and Epigenetics*, which incorporates my undergraduate research on genetics and epigenetics into my research on contemporary Judaism. Specifically, *Inherited Futures* investigates how modern science and technology have created novel forms of Jewish religion: new kinship practices that aimed to eliminate Tay Sachs, ritual communities that lend spiritual support to BRCA carriers, and popular media that has inculcated belief in epigenetic inheritance of Holocaust trauma. This book will shed new light on the role of biological science in imagining Jewish collective identity in 20th-century America.



Passover Sale

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MARCH EVENTS

Visit lsa.umich.edu/judaic for more information



Wiesneck Symposium on Queer Israeli Culture
Wednesday, March 19
Rackham Graduate School, 4th Floor
10:30 AM, Public Manuscript Workshop
2:00 PM, Roundtable: Anti-Trans Rhetoric in Israel
4:00 PM, Roundtable: Queer Temporality in Arab-Jewish Poetry
7:30 PM, Spoken Word Performance by Yossi Zabari (pictured left)



Queer Belongings and the Jewish "Homeland": Israeli and Jewish American Lives Between Home and Away
Dr. Hila Amit (Thomas Mann House Fellow)
Tuesday, March 24 | 4:30 - 6:00 PM
2022 South Thayer Building
A conversation about intersections of queerness, migration, and identity in the context of Israel/Palestine and the Jewish diaspora.



35th Annual David W. Belin Lecture
Guest Lecturer: Joan Nathan, Author
Thursday, April 3 | 5:15 PM Catered Reception, 6:00 PM Lecture, 7:30 PM Book Signing
Rackham Graduate School, Assembly Hall

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/concerns.

Community

March at Beth Israel

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 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.

Refugee Shabbat

Saturday, March 1, at 9:30 a.m.

Join us as we come together in solidarity for refugee protection and welcome. The morning includes a little poetry, a little music, a D'var Torah by Michael Appel, and a beautiful Middle Eastern kiddush. Come and meet our very special guests, the Aldaye family, one of our JCOR families.

Family Fun Raiser at Pizza House

Sunday, March 2, at 12:15–2 p.m.

Join us for another Family “Fun Raiser”! We’re meeting at Pizza House in Ann Arbor right after BIRS for lunch. Sit near other BIC families and enjoy a great meal! By telling your server that you’re with the Beth Israel group, 15% of all proceeds will be donated back to our synagogue to support future youth and family programming!

Volunteer Appreciation Brunch

Sunday, March 9, at 10 a.m.

Please come to our volunteer brunch on March 3, 10 a.m.–noon. There will be delicious food and also a wonderful program. 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 meirabtpinchos@gmail.com.

Understanding the Constitutional Big Picture: Politics and Governing in 2025

Monday, March 10, at 6:30 p.m.



Richard Primus, the Theodore J. St. Antoine Collegiate Professor of Law at the University of Michigan and an active member of Beth Israel Congregation, will speak and host a Q&A session covering the sweeping changes, executive orders, and other issues that have occurred at the federal level since the inauguration. Please submit questions about these topics beforehand.

Richard is a former Rhodes Scholar, a former clerk for Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and, for his work on the relationship between history and constitutional interpretation, the co-recipient of the first-ever Guggenheim Fellowship in Constitutional Studies. He is also a founding member of the Academic Freedom Alliance, a senior editorial adviser of the Journal of American Constitutional History, and a member of the Board of Advisors of Protect Democracy, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to fight-

ing threats to free and fair self-government. From 2011 to 2013 he served as legal advisor to the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan, and from 2012 to 2014 he served as President of the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor.

Celebrate Purim at Beth Israel Congregation

Thursday, March 13

BIRS Purim Celebration, Purim Play & Teacher Appreciation at 4:30 p.m.
Purim Schpiel and Megillah at 6 p.m.

Come to Beth Israel Religious School's Purim carnival led by Ben Brent, followed by Morah Carol's Purim play and Teacher Appreciation. Everyone is invited, whether you are a BIRS student or not. Beginning at 6 p.m. we will have a mini Megillah for kids as well as a traditional Megillah reading with schpiel. Bring a food donation and get a grogger.

Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday, March 14, at 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.

Youth Services (Tot Shabbat & Mini Minyan)

Saturday, March 18, at 11 a.m.

Preschoolers begin to learn and love Judaism through storytelling, singing, and hands-on activities. Families join for songs, stories, and more in an interactive service for tots. Tot Shabbats are led by either Katie Shelef or John McLaughlin. Mini Minyan is a slower learner's service for elementary school age children. The service will include Shabbat prayers and a “D'var and Discussion” in place of the Torah service. Mini Minyan is led by the Youth and Family Director Ben Brent.

Chodesh Chadash, a BIC Women's Group

Sunday, March 23, at 2:30 p.m.

Join us for an evening of crafts and learning. The women of BIC will have topical discussions, make craft together, and discuss the latest book club choice. Contact Barb with questions at Barbm@bethisrael-aa.org.

Blood Drive at Beth Israel

Sunday, March 30, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Help us save a life at our annual Red Cross Blood Drive. Sign up to donate blood at www.redcrossblood.org and enter Sponsor Code bic13. You can also volunteer to assist at the blood drive or help make phone calls by contacting Diane Wilson at dclonezer@aol.com.

Youth Group Events in March

Chaverim (third–fifth Grade)

Launch Trampoline Park
Sunday, March 9, at 12:15 p.m.

Gesher (sixth–eighth Grade)

Krav Maga Lesson
Sunday, March 16, at 12:15 p.m.

USY (ninth–12th Grade)

Kabbalat and Kibbutz
Friday, March 21, at 6 p.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin (via Zoom)

Mondays at 4 p.m.

The class meets on Zoom on Monday afternoons from 4–5:15 beginning February 3. We will read the text in the original Hebrew or Aramaic with an accompanying English translation and discuss the

text in English. No familiarity with Hebrew or prior experience studying Talmud is required. This winter and spring, we will study from chapter 1 of the tractate Megillah, which deals with laws and traditions relating to the reading of the Megillah on Purim, but addresses many different subjects including midrashim on the book of Esther and traditions relating to the reading of the Torah, among others. All are welcome! Zoom link is on the BIC website.

Theology Book Club — Online

Wednesdays at 7 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.

Braver Angels: Depolarizing Ourselves

On January 26, Beth Israel Congregation hosted facilitators from Braver Angels for their introductory talk, Depolarizing Ourselves. Emily Twanmo and Bonita Singal, introduced by Ellen Abramson, taught participants how to break down personal biases for better understanding with those we disagree with politically. Participants included members of Beth Israel Congregation and the larger Ann Arbor community. This event was an incredible first step for those seeking to cross bridges with those across the aisle.

Braver Angels, a national nonprofit, is dedicated to helping people see the humanity in each other in order to have tough conversations and share viewpoints. This talk was the first in a series that works through internal and external bias and supports those who seek to understand and empathize with people who are in a different age range, from a different socioeconomic background, and even differing religious backgrounds.

Beth Israel Congregation is especially thankful to Ellen Abramson for bringing this event to our community, and the presenters, Emily Twanmo and Bonita Singal. If you are interested in attending any future learning sessions with Braver Angels at Beth Israel Congregation, please reach out to Barb McAnelly, Director of Engagement and Programming at barbm@bethisrael-aa.org. For more information on Braver Angels, please visit braverangels.org.

In Person and Online Services

Minyan
Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in the M&M Chapel and online

Sundays at 7:30 p.m. online only
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Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services — in person and virtual

Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

Last year I fasted for Ta'anit Esther

By Shifra Epstein

With Ta'anit Esther (Fast of Esther, this year on March 13) arriving soon, I find solace sharing with you my online participation in the “Fast on My Behalf” gathering that was held last year on March 21, 2024. There were many concurrent events connecting Purim with efforts to free the hostages. The Fast on My Behalf took place in Jerusalem while many other events took place in Hostage Square in Tel Aviv.



Go gather all the Jews ... and fast for me

Ester 4:16

Fast on My Behalf

When the people of Israel faced a real threat, Esther the Great declared

a day of fasting and national fasting to break the decree. Since then,

the Fast of Esther has been associated with solidarity in times of trouble.

This year we will fast together to identify with the 134 men and women

held captive by Hamas in the hope of their release.

On the Fast of Esther, 21.3, Second Adar, from morning

until the stars appear, we all fast on them and for them.

This extraordinary feminist event was devoted to Esther, the heroine of the story of Purim who fasted for three days before approaching Ahasuerus, risking her life to ask for mercy for her people (Esther 4:16).

“Fast on My Behalf: A Female Cry,” was the initiative of women from all facets of Israeli society, calling for a fast for the kidnapped, inspired by Queen Esther's call to fast for her. The organizers' idea was to create a contemporary homage to Esther by coming together as a community, religious and non-reli-

Continued on page 17

Winter adventures

By Danielle and Lahav, the Ann Arbor ShinShinim

Danielle and Lahav came to Ann Arbor to strengthen the connections between the Ann Arbor Jewish community and Israel, sharing the Israeli atmosphere through informal education — interactive lessons that include music, culture, Israeli childhood games, and even food.

They arrived in Ann Arbor in August 2024 for a service year as Israeli emissaries between their high school graduation and military service through the ShinShinim program of the international Jewish Agency for Israel. They share here what they've been up to around town recently.

Hebrew Language Month

To celebrate Hebrew Language Day at the end of January, we led an exciting monthlong project at Hebrew Day School (HDS), turning the entire school into a vibrant Hebrew immersion experience. The hallways were adorned with interactive word games, letters hanging from the ceiling, and posters featuring fun Hebrew slang, all designed to create a dynamic and engaging Hebrew environment.

In our lessons, the students explored the incredible revival of Hebrew, from being a language of prayer to becoming Israel's modern spoken language, with a special focus on Eliezer Ben Yehuda's important role. Each grade level took on a different theme: kindergarten children and first graders learned winter clothing names, second and third graders explored Hebrew opposites, and fourth and fifth graders discovered Hebrew idioms incorporating body parts (lakahat lalev, lehat'hil beregel yemin, etc).

The highlight of the month was our school-wide Hebrew Language Day assembly, in which we brought our shared learning to life with an interactive performance. Through a skit, songs, and riddles, we engaged students in a fun and dynamic review of everything

a special baking activity, making Hebrew letter shaped cookies — because learning is always better when it's delicious!

For Danielle, this project was particularly meaningful, as she fondly remembers participating in a similar Hebrew Language Month event as a child in her elementary school in Israel. Bringing this experience to HDS and seeing the students' enthusiasm was truly special.

Storytime sessions

Our Storytime sessions have been a huge hit! So far, we have hosted four engaging readings, with the next one scheduled for March 16.

One of our favorite sessions featured the beloved Israeli children's book *The Lion Who Loved Strawberries*. Since this story holds a special place in our hearts, we translated it into English so more children could enjoy its message. The story follows a lion who refuses to eat anything but strawberries, teaching lessons about persistence, teamwork, and the unexpected joys of new experiences. During the session, the children learned to say "lion" and "strawberry" in Hebrew and created adorable lion-and-strawberry-themed crafts.

TBE special classes

At Temple Beth Emeth (TBE), we led a unique drumming session during a music lesson, featuring an Israeli winter song with a special drumming arrangement designed by an Israeli teacher.

We also introduced the Hebrew letters in a music class where children

Community summit on antisemitism

At 4:30 p.m. on March 16, the Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies and Temple Beth Emeth are partnering to host an Antisemitism Summit that will be held at Temple Beth Emeth (JCRC and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute are co-sponsors of this event). Dr. Susannah Heschel (Dartmouth College) is the keynote speaker for this event, and there will be a moderated discussion with Dr. Heschel and Dr. Jeff Veidlinger (University of Michigan). The summit will also host a panel of community members from across

the political spectrum to reflect upon the state of antisemitism locally, with particular attention to the environment post-October 7, and the subsequent war in Gaza. Panelists include Alice Mishkin, Deborah Meyers Greene, Beth Bashert, and Elliot Ratzman.

This summit seeks to create a space for genuine and civil dialogue to happen within the community on this very important issue. It is free, open to the public, and security will be present. Advanced registration will be required— you can do it here: <https://www.templebethemeth.org/form/2025-Antisemitism-Summit> ■



language learning in a fun and interactive way.

For the seventh-grade class at TBE, we organized an Amazing Race themed activity focused on Jewish communities in Israel. Students rotated through stations representing different cultural groups, each offering hands-on experiences related to their heritage. At the Bedouin station, for example, we all sat inside a "traditional Bedouin tent," drank authentic Bedouin tea, and learned how to say "ahalan wa sahalan" (a traditional Arabic Bedouin greeting).

Strengthening connections with local teens

In recent months, we've been working on deepening our connection with Jewish teens in Ann Arbor. We've visited Greenhills School twice and participated in their Jewish club meetings. If you know of any other Jewish clubs at local high schools that could be interested, please let us know — we would love to get involved!

Homeland vacation and meeting the next shinshinim

After six fulfilling and exciting months in Ann Arbor, we returned to Israel for a two-week homeland vacation at the end of February. Before leaving, we collected notes from children in the community with their personal wishes and went to visit the Western Wall to place them in it.

One of the most special moments of our trip was meeting the next Ann Arbor ShinShinim! The new ShinShinim will arrive in August this year when our year of service has finished. We spent a day with them in Jerusalem, getting to know each other and sharing insights about the community. They are incredibly excited about their upcoming journey and asked us to share this message with you: "We can't wait to arrive, meet everyone, and start our adventure. We've already heard so many wonderful things!" There is so much to look forward to!

Beyond reconnecting with our families and friends, we cherished the opportunity to enjoy our childhood home-cooked meals, revisit our favorite spots, and soak up Israel's warmer weather. Most importantly, we returned re-energized and ready for the next six months of meaningful experiences with our amazing Ann Arbor community. We can't wait to see you all at the upcoming spring holiday events! ■



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they had learned about Eliezer Ben Yehuda, new Hebrew words, and idioms. We also led

practiced yoga poses shaped like Hebrew letters, combining movement and

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Youth leadership at Camp Tavor

By Eliana Adler, Etta Heisler, and Mira Sussman

In an era when many summer camps are run by career administrators, Camp Tavor stands apart. At this Jewish summer camp in Michigan, the head counselor might be just 23 years old, and campers as young as eight participate in community-

cleaning up, cooking food — like all of that stuff — we do it ourselves." This approach teaches responsibility while fostering a deep sense of community ownership.

The camp's commitment to youth leadership extends far beyond basic responsibility.

cludes young staff members on its board of directors.

This trust in young people's capabilities has profound effects on campers' development. "Hadracha (leadership) isn't about being at the front of the room," Heisler emphasizes. "It's about being able to offer your most valuable, most unique contribution to the greater community." The camp environment nurtures these contributions in a collaborative rather than competitive atmosphere.

Adler, who recently completed her first year as a counselor, describes how this approach shapes young people: "I attribute so much of the way that I communicate with people, and the way that I know how to have

serious conversations, to my time at machaneh (camp)." She notes that the camp's collective decision-making process gives everyone space to develop leadership skills in ways that feel natural and meaningful to them.

The impact of this leadership model extends beyond camp boundaries. Adler shares how her camp experience influenced her political engagement during a recent election season: "I worked for a campaign and was very politically involved. I would see my kids from this past summer around Ann Arbor, and check in with them, and see how they were feeling about all the crazy stuff going on."



wide decisions. This distinctive approach to youth leadership has been creating confident, capable leaders for generations.

"We take kids seriously," explains Mira Sussman, a longtime camp participant and current board chair. "There is so much more that kids can do — they just need opportunities to do it." This philosophy manifests in every aspect of camp life, from daily avodah (work/chores) to major policy decisions.

Unlike traditional summer camps where adult staff handle maintenance and cooking, at Camp Tavor, everyone pitches in. "It's crazy to explain to people," says Eliana Adler, a recent counselor. "Feeding,

ties. Camp Tavor is part of an international youth movement called Habonim-Dror, which has been in existence for 90 years. Tavor is one of six Habonim-Dror camps throughout the U.S. and Canada. "We have 16 to 24-year-olds as the governing body of the organization," explains Etta Heisler, a Camp Tavor board member. "They have a meeting where the rules of the organization are decided, and it happens without anyone over the age of 25 in the room." This level of youth autonomy is so unusual that when Sussman described it at a Jewish camping conference, other administrators were stunned to learn that Camp Tavor in-



Continued on page 22

Cheers to 50 Years of HDS

By Rav Will Keller

It was an evening of simcha (joy) and celebration as generations of the Hebrew Day School supporters gathered to mark the school's 50th anniversary. The event, "Cheers to 50 Years," brought together devoted supporters spanning the school's rich history — founding families, past board presidents, current parent and grandparent supporters,

ers, whose dedication ensures a joyful and dynamic learning environment. At a time when many schools face teacher shortages, our educators feel valued, supported, and deeply committed to their students and community.

In a touching display of hakarat hatov (gratitude), current students prepared



and Life & Legacy circle members — all united in their commitment to Jewish education. Current Board President Dr. Monica Woll

handwritten notes for the school's supporters and donors, expressing their appreciation for making their Jewish education possible. These personal messages served as



Rosen and first-grade parent Aaron Willis shared inspiring reflections on the school's profound impact on their families and the broader Jewish community. Their heartfelt words highlighted how Hebrew Day School continues to nurture both academic excellence and Jewish values in each new generation of students.

A major highlight of the evening was the exciting announcement that we had reached our \$500,000 goal for the Annual Campaign — a remarkable achievement that will directly benefit our students in meaningful ways. Support for the school translates to the ability to provide students with excellent teachers in general and Judaic studies, modern classroom technology, and a priceless educational foundation for Jewish students in Ann Arbor.

The school's dedication to innovative education was on full display as we shared updates on exciting new initiatives, including an enhanced science curriculum designed to engage students in hands-on learning. Our supporters were thrilled to hear about the passion and creativity of Hebrew Day School teach-

ers, whose dedication ensures a joyful and dynamic learning environment. At a time when many schools face teacher shortages, our educators feel valued, supported, and deeply committed to their students and community.

The community is invited to join the celebration of this milestone at a special 50th-anniversary event on Thursday, May 15, at Cobblestone Farm. This gathering will be an opportunity to honor HDS's legacy while looking ahead to an even brighter future of educational excellence and Jewish continuity. The school will be honoring dedicated leaders, Eve and Richard Primus, distinguished alumni Ari Axelrod and Robert Axelrod, and inspirational faculty Josh Lauffer. Visit HDSAA.Org/RSVP50 for event details. For more information about the upcoming celebration, please contact Tamar Jacobson (tjacobson@hdsaa.org). ■



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Bringing our community together for climate action

By Donald Levitt and Annie Wolock

Most Jews in the Ann Arbor area believe that climate change is a very important issue — perhaps the most significant challenge of our generation. And most of us also understand that Jewish tradition calls us to improve the world for future generations.

But it is difficult to know what each of us can do to address this challenge. Recycling, installing solar panels and heat pumps, adding insulation to our homes, eating less red meat, driving an electric vehicle, and screening fossil fuels out of our investments all help to reduce climate change. Yet we know that our personal actions alone will not be enough to stop climate change because there are larger societal, political, regulatory, and corporate issues at play.

We cannot get there by just “doing our own thing.” That won’t do it.

We have to do it together.

The A2J Climate Circle

The greater Ann Arbor Jewish community has the resources, the talent, and the sacred obligation, to come together as a community to address climate change. Our Jewish community can lead the way for climate action in Ann Arbor.

The A2J Climate Circle is a new initiative designed to bring our community together in climate action. It is designed to create momentum and support for climate action.

Started by the Jewish Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, with Annie Wolock as the leader, the A2J Climate Circle Planning Committee also includes Rena Basch, Donald Levitt, Mike Shriberg, and Michael Simon.

The Planning Committee reached out to local Jewish organizations to join in this initiative. The A2J Climate Circle initiative now includes the following partners: Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation, Beth Israel Congregation, Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies, Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, Temple Beth Emeth, and the *Washtenaw Jewish News*.

The first initiative of the A2J Climate Circle will be to provide monthly information to the *WJN* on climate related topics. These topics will include what local Jewish organizations are doing for climate action, tips for taking climate action, monthly Climate Heroes, Jewish perspectives on climate change, and a monthly calendar of local climate action events. Each partner organization will also be distributing this information directly to their members on a monthly basis, and the information will be available at www.A2JClimateCircle.com.

Anya Abramzon, CEO of Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, one of the local Jewish organizations partnering with the A2J Climate Circle, said, “Our tradition calls on us to care for the world and protect it for future generations. Jewish Family Services is proud to join the A2J Climate Circle to harness the power of our collective re-

sources, creativity, and commitment to tikkun olam — repairing the world. Together, we can turn shared concerns into meaningful action.”

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, also one of the A2J Climate Circle partners, has been very proactive in implementing a comprehensive recycling program. David Stone, Executive Director of the JCC of Greater Ann Arbor, said, “Recycling isn’t just about saving the planet; it’s about creating a sustainable future where resources are valued and waste is minimized.”

Turning climate distress into climate action



Solar panels at Temple Beth Emeth

It is easy to feel overwhelmed and discouraged by the enormity of the climate challenge. Here are some tips to help us maintain our energy and focus on climate action:

Pay attention not just to disasters in the news but also to climate activist successes. Be inspired by others taking action and making a change.

Recognize how our stories and “catastrophe thinking” can limit our actions.

Seek out leaders who are taking action, so you can join them.



Members of TBE's Dayenu Circle

Negative energy travels fast, and so does positive energy. Find time each day to be present, and express positive emotions about climate successes.

Share feelings of grief regarding the climate.

“Action absorbs anxiety.” Select one initiative, join with others in collective action, and recognize that small changes can add up to quantum changes.

Turn to our faith and traditions to remind us of tikkun olam — our obligation to repair the world.

A Shabbat service at Beth Israel Congregation



It is now time for the greater Ann Arbor Jewish community to come together to lead the way on climate action.

If not now, when?

A Jewish perspective on climate change and climate action

By Rabbi Nadav Caine



Rabbi Nadav Caine

At the end of the Torah, the Israelites enter the Promised Land through two mountains. On one, “blessings” are chanted, and on the other “curses” — future consequences that will depend on human collective behavior. The blessings begin with a healthy abundance from the earth: “Blessed will be your offspring, your crops, and your cattle; your cowherd, and your shepherd. Blessed will be your daily bread in your basket and in your kneading trough.” Similarly, the curses are rooted in environmental consequences: “plagues” (yes, the same word as the Ten Plagues) will come upon the people, from strange new human and cattle diseases (mad cow disease? Bird and swine flu?) to crop disease, insufficient food, an increase in familiar diseases, drought, and climate change: “the skies above you will be like copper and the earth beneath you like iron ... until you are destroyed.” (Deut. ch. 28)

Some read this finale of the Torah as merely some archaic threat in a pre-scientific religion, that if one doesn’t keep Shabbat or if one worships idols, God will punish you. Such simple readings do not align with the central message of Torah, a message humanity continues to ignore: We are in collective covenant with God, not individual: when our collective behavior falls short, the natural consequences affect everyone, the innocent along with the guilty.

The “curses” of the Bible are not the capricious punishments of an anthropomorphic king; rather, they are the natural environmental consequences of collective human behavior.

The greatest limitations of human beings are that they fail to see how their individual actions can have global consequences, and that they seek individual over collective salvation. So what if I burn fossil fuels? So what if I throw out tons of plastic? What effect could it possibly have? Or another self-centered pivot: “I’m doing pretty well compared to the next guy. God will favor me.” When the Torah continually asks us to pray that God favors us.

Jewish religion is meant to shift consciousness in two ways. First, we are to understand that religion is not about an individual’s relationship with the Universe, but rather our collective relationship with the Universe. We are judged together on Yom Kippur, because it’s not good enough to say, “Well I live off the grid and compost everything” as if you alone get to go to heaven. God judges the people as one and God is beseeching us to think that way in our intertwinedness with each other and the earth. Second, God is a fair and not capricious Ruler. When we hear melekh ha-olam, “king of the universe,” we should think of God not as a king from a fairy tale deciding on the spot what he feels like doing, but as a “Ruler of the Universe,” the author of a universe that operates according to a fixed and fair scientific and moral structure.

So of course the Torah ends with a warning about climate change. Our ancestors were not fools: in many ways they were closer to the earth and its ways than we are today. A society that is not in sync with the ways of the earth, but instead fosters greed, inequality, waste, consumption, exploitation of resources, disrespect for the holiness of the life-sustaining forces of Nature, and a focus on short-term profit, will lead to “curses” — that is, long term natural consequences of drought, diseases, changing climate patterns, and societal collapse that affect the innocent as much as, and likely more than, the guilty.

And thus as we pass between the two mountains, we are reminded to Choose Life, not as a wish for ourselves in this moment, but as a determination to behave in a way that will bring Life to a future and collective we may never meet. That is the essence of Torah.



Beth Israel Congregation's Green Team emblem

Continued on page 17

Climate Cicle continued from pg 16

The Green Legacy of Beth Israel Congregation

By Michael S. Simon for the Beth Israel Congregation Green Team

Beth Israel Congregation's Green Team emblem

For our children, grandchildren, and generations to come. Once upon a time, Ann Arbor still had winters with a seasonal cold chill, snow days, the fragrance of flowers in the spring, cool summer evenings, and a colorful collection of fall leaves. Our ancestors, members of Beth Israel Congregation (BIC), used to walk to and from their shul, partaking in ancient rituals and delighting in the wonders of the world. Slowly, they noticed that their world had changed. Summers went on and on, winters passed without reliable snow, prevailing winds brought smoke from Canadian wildfires. Extreme weather events happened.

A group of members realized that human activity was changing the weather, and that they were in part responsible. They looked back at their tradition and understood that their faith consisted of both prayers and rituals as well as meaningful actions to improve the world. They formed a "Green Team," and one of their first acts was to create a community garden, which yielded about 300 pounds of fresh vegetables each year. All the produce was donated to area food banks.

Over time, members investigated other groups with similar ideas. They joined the Ann Arbor 2030 District, which led to a free ASHRAE level II energy audit. From this they consulted with environmental engineers who created a plan for mapping out a clean energy future. Along the way, they decided that it was wise to take care of their food waste, and as well to waste as little food as possible. They set up a system at their Kiddush lunches, where uneaten food was available for members to take home, and the rest, including plant-based tableware, was composted. With the goal of illuminating the way towards a brighter energy future, they converted 415 light bulbs and fixtures to new LED luminaires, providing cost savings and lowering their carbon footprint.

Over time, the Green Team extended their connections and met with groups both locally and nationally, including the A2 Jewish Climate Circle, the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice Green Groups, Detroit Adamah, the Jewish Earth Alliance, and the Masorti Environmental Movement. They were fortunate to work with a synagogue leadership who provided ideas, expertise, and financial support. Through their expression of Jewish social conscience and acts of Tikkun Olam and Yishuv Olam, the BIC Green Team helped to foster an environmentally sustainable community, both within Beth Israel, and within the lives of congregants and the community at large. ■

Interfaith collaborations honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By Rebecca Rich, Graduate Student Intern, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

On Sunday, January 19, in honor of Martin Luther King Day weekend and in collaboration with Ypsilanti faith leaders, the Jewish Communal Relations Committee (JCRC) of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor collaborated with the Metropolitan Memorial Baptist Church and Olive Tree Church of Christ for a communal, inclusive meal, especially for those who face food insecurity. It was a great showing of solidarity and unity. Organized through Pastor Carnel Richardson and Pastor Arnold Sheard, people of all ages gathered in the basement of the Metropolitan Memorial Baptist Church to eat a freshly cooked chicken lunch while Dr. King's speeches and some music played in the background. A group of volunteers from the Jewish Federation, including several children, helped in the kitchen and with passing out food. There were also volunteers from the American Red Cross present, who were offering their services to install smoke alarms in people's homes.

Each of the faith leaders present, including Federation's Director of Community Relations Rabbi Asher Lopatin, had an opportunity to introduce themselves to the attendees. In his introduction, Pastor Richardson emphasized the importance of feeding everyone for free regardless of their circumstances, acting on Dr. King's values. There was palpable excitement among the volunteers to provide such a meaningful meal to all of the approximately 100 attendees. Rabbi Lopatin echoed this sentiment in his introduction, expressing excitement and pride for the burgeoning partnership between the Greater Ann Arbor Jewish and Black Christian communities.

In showing up for each other, the two communities were able to find joint meaning in the holiday.

The following day, Monday, January 20, the Jewish Community Center put on an event commemorating Dr. King and his legacy, co-sponsored by the Federation's JCRC. Attendees of all ages were treated to a performance from the Ypsilanti Youth Choir and a

part of the program, breakout sessions included an art station, a poetry workshop hosted by members of the Jewish People of Color Network, and a workshop on having difficult conversations. This program offered a wonderful opportunity for the Black and Jewish communities to come together with a spirit of joy and learning.

Throughout both events, feelings of unity were front and center. On March 25,



A group of volunteers for the event at the Metropolitan Memorial Baptist Church

sing-along led by JCC Early Childhood Center teacher Matasha Allen, who pushed through a case of bronchitis with energy and grace just a week before her tragic passing. After the main

the JCRC will be hosting a Freedom Seder further celebrating Black-Jewish unity. Please save the date.. ■

Fast of Esther continued from page 10

gious, and remembering together the moments of danger experienced by Queen Esther.

The name Fast on My Behalf was chosen by the organizers to personalize the event. It consisted of discussion circles, joint study, fasting, and prayer for the speedy return home of the hostages. In preparation for the event, the leadership of 120 companies participated in a yearlong initiative to build a cadre of young multicultural national political leaders.

Activist creator Tali Dvir Livnat, one of the founders of the "120 Women Writers Forum," joined Fast on My Behalf because "Queen Esther taught us that even one single action can have an impact and create change. In this spirit, I call on everyone to join us

on this important day with full intention of freeing the kidnapped."

Dr. Aliza Lavie, former MK and one of the founders of the 800-member group the 120 Women Leadership Council, said, "In the spirit of unity demanded by Queen Esther, I call on all to join us on this important day for a joint women's cry and a joint fast with full intention of freeing the kidnapped. There is no doubt that in this difficult hour, this is a noble goal shared by all the people of Israel — religious and secular alike." She gave a lecture on the topic of "I Will Establish Them for Generations: The Prophecy of Esther and the Temporal Commandment Connecting the Raped and the Kidnapped." In her lecture she addressed female leadership in times of crisis, responsibility, and shared destiny.

Also participating in the event was Rebbetzin Yemima Mizrahi, one of the most influential women in Israel and one of the most sought-after speakers today. Women whose family members were still captive in Gaza also took part in the event, including Noam Dan, cousin of Ofer Calderon, who was recently released from captivity, Sarit Sussman, who lost her son in the Iron Swords War, social activist Tehila Friedman, and Racheli Frankel, whose son Naftali was among the three boys kidnapped and murdered in June 2014.

I hope my description of my online participation in "Fast on My Behalf" reflects the defiance, unity, and hope of the participants, even in the face of unimaginable pain. ■

Restaurant Review

Exceptional dining at the end of a bumpy road

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.

Take a drive down I-94, and a step back in time to a place where the professional servers write down your order on a spiral notepad and know the menu inside and out. Nary a QR code or kiosk to be seen. This month marks the first in a quarterly series where we venture outside of Washtenaw County, to destination restaurants in the surrounding area. We realized that we hadn't covered much in the way of Italian food over the last two years (this issue marks our second anniversary!) and decided to look for something worth driving for. Giovanni's certainly fits that description. It's a restaurant for special occasions — we were asked more than once what occasion we were celebrating. Our answer was simply "friendship" and it's perfectly fine if that is your excuse to try it out too.

This review comes with a location disclaimer though — the restaurant is situated in a heavily industrial pocket of Detroit that is surrounded by countless lots housing semi-trucks waiting to haul their next load, the Marathon Oil refinery, and the Ford Rouge Plant. We are in Michigan after all — the roads are a little rough thanks to wear and tear from the big rigs. Tucked into this landscape, you will find a gem which no doubt caters to executives and vendors who serve the local industry, but has also won legions of fans since Giovanni's opened their doors in 1968.

Upon our arrival on an especially blustery evening, we found a nearby parking spot (although valet parking was available),

were greeted warmly and shown promptly to our comfortable table in the full dining room. We perused the menu while we settled in and enjoyed our drinks — a glass of chianti and a house special blood orange cosmopolitan.

Our meal began with an order of bistecca al calamari fritti — pan fried calamari steaks served with a lemon butter sauce and briny capers. Our server expertly split the appetizer for us at the table and impressively did not waste one drop of the luxurious butter sauce. The calamari steaks were lightly breaded and beyond tender and the sauce was rich yet bright with the flavors of capers and lemon. This was pure perfection and easily some of the best calamari we have eaten. Taking in our surroundings while we nibbled and drank, we noticed photos covering the walls with Detroit and family history. Also, we could hear each other without straining. There are heavy drapes between sections of tables that absorb noise and add to the ambience for an evening out. The restaurant is dimly lit, and each table sparkled with its own oil burning candle. Just as we noticed that our candle had burned out, someone was there to replace it.

Usually, we try to order a wide variety in order to be able to better serve our readers. This time, we had to restrain ourselves a bit as the prices at Giovanni's are higher than our normal. A dinner for two, with one drink each, appetizer, two entrees, and a dessert was \$150 with gratuity. We decided to share everything so we would both get to

taste more. Entrees are served with a choice of salad or soup. On this chilly evening, we both chose the soup — chicken noodle with a richly flavored broth and homemade noodles and a comforting bowl of pureed pasta e fagioli. They were accompanied by a basket of warm garlic bread which was happily refilled when emptied.

Our entrees were Giovanni's famous lasagne and pollo marsala. Non-pasta entrees came with a choice of sides, and we opted to have pasta added to accompany the marsala sauce. Other options were a vegetable, or a pasta side with marinara sauce. Often when splitting a meal, it is an awkward exchange of passing things back and forth. None of that at Giovanni's. Our entrees arrived already split, with a lovely presentation on individual plates. We wondered if this level of service came with a shared plate upcharge, but it did not.

The lasagne was simply amazing. We counted twelve layers of thin pasta sheets which were delicately layered with cheese, creamy bechamel sauce and an all-beef Bolognese sauce. This was an elegant lasagne, assembled with restraint where no one ingredient overpowered another. The meat sauce had a delicious balance of acidity and sweetness from the tomatoes and just enough heft from the beef to feel indulgent. The pollo marsala was everything it should be. The sauteed chicken was fork tender and arrived on a bed of linguini with sauteed earthy mushrooms and a deeply flavored marsala wine sauce. We were glad to have

chosen the pasta as a side so we could enjoy every drop of the delicious sauce.

We were most definitely full. But then our server brought over the dessert tray and somehow we found a little more room. We were tempted by the tiramisu and the dark chocolate flourless cake, but ultimately chose a Detroit classic — the hot fudge cream puff. The eggy cream puff cradled a large scoop of Ray's vanilla ice cream and the exceptionally delicious hot fudge sauce. Our server explained that when Sanders hot fudge was discontinued, the chef worked relentlessly until he created this recipe for the closest representation. What a way to end our meal. A throwback to childhood, sitting at the counter at Sanders sharing a hot fudge cream puff as a special treat.

There was a palpable pride from our seasoned server who answered our many questions and explained everything at Giovanni's from the pasta, sauces, and bread, to the desserts, are made in house. Pride and care were apparent in all of the dishes we tried. This is one restaurant that deserves support and reminds us that every once in a while we deserve an exceptional dining experience too. The road to get there is a bit bumpy and surroundings unfamiliar but dining at Giovanni's is well worth the trip.

Giovanni's Ristorante 313-8-0122

330 S. Oakwood Blvd., Detroit//

<https://giovannisristorante.com/>

More ways to advocate for immigrants and refugees in Washtenaw

By Ruth Kraut

With the current federal administration, immigrants of all stripes have been a focus of attack. In the first few weeks of the administration, funding for refugee services was abruptly ended and directives were given to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to arrest and deport as many people as possible.

Locally, this has had a devastating impact on immigrant-supporting organizations and has terrified immigrants, even those with documents and on a path to citizenship. Refugees with scheduled flights to come to the United States saw their flights cancelled. The policy where ICE would not come into "sensitive locations" like schools, congregations, and hospitals was abruptly cancelled. Our local refugee-serving agency, Jewish Family Services, is threatened with the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Many of us grew up on the stories of our own families, immigrating for a better life. Some of us are ourselves immigrants. Just like immigrants today, our immigrant family members came fleeing war and hunger, and they came in search of a better life for themselves and their children. For many of us, these memories — as well as our own sense of morals — have fueled an-

ger and concern. In addition, immigrants boost communities economically, increase our community's diversity, and in general are lovely additions to our communities.

Things are changing very quickly and I want to give some detail, but not so much that this information will be out of date by the time the WJN goes to press!

So is there anything we can do?

Why yes, there is.

As Rabbi Sharon Brous wrote recently, "Reach out in your strength, step forward in your vulnerability. Err on the side of presence."

Events

By the time you read this, Temple Beth Emeth will have had their first presentation where people could learn about what immigration organizations are doing, and how to volunteer.

On March 1, Shabbat morning, Beth Israel is holding Refugee Shabbat, and the family that JCOR (Jewish Congregations Organized for Resettlement) has supported for the last year will be present. On March 9, the Beth Israel Volunteer Appreciation Brunch will also focus on immigration. On March 16, JCOR is having a concert to raise funds for the newest family they will be supporting. Other organi-

zations in the broader community are also holding events.

Listserv

The Jewish community has a listserv focused on immigration issues. It's called Ann Arbor Jewish Sanctuary, and if you are interested in being added to the listserv, email: ruthkraut@gmail.com.

Volunteer

Organizations like WICIR (Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, wicir.org) and Freedom House (in Detroit, freedomhousedetroit.org) and Jewish Family Services have volunteer opportunities. You may need to go through a training.

Advocate

There are lots of opportunities to advocate with our elected representatives about the things we care about. You can call the Congressional switchboard at 202-224-2131 and ask to talk to our senators (in Michigan, Gary Peters and Elissa Slotkin) or representative (for most of us, that would be Debbie Dingell). Or you can choose to use a phone app like Five Calls. You can also get legislative alerts from groups like the National Immigration Law Center.

You can also let our local (city, county,

and state) officials know that immigrant rights are important to you, and that you want immigrants to be welcome here.

Fund

Donations to groups like JFS, WICIR, Freedom House, and the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center will all be put to use supporting immigrants. With extensive funding cuts, your donations are even more important.

Eat out at immigrant-owned restaurants and patronize immigrant-owned grocery stores

Yes, that's right. A recent MLive article pointed out that many immigrant-owned restaurants and grocery stores are seeing the number of people patronizing them drop. By patronizing immigrant-owned restaurants and grocery stores you support immigrants in the community and you also have the chance to thank them for being here. There are restaurants in both Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor that will welcome your business.

Welcoming immigrants is a powerful thing to do, and each of us can play a part.

Purim brings joy and hope

By Lonnie Sussman

It's still quite dark in the morning but every day the sun stays up a little longer. I choose to think about this as an omen of hope. Purim begins in Adar, the Jewish month, which is in March this year. It's a holiday that brings joy and hope. A few weeks ago, when we read the Parshiot (portions of the Torah) that had to do with the 10 plagues in Egypt that led to the Jews leaving slavery and heading to the dessert to receive the Torah, I tried to rise above my worries. You can listen to a sermon of Rabbi Hannah Jensen on YouTube about being in the dark and being afraid and how to help ourselves and our communities to find the light. I found it very powerful and very helpful, and I hope you do too.

Let's think about the joy of Purim and how to share it with others as we listen to the Scroll of Esther, give gifts of food to neighbors and friends, donate to charities of our choice, and share a meal. Whatever helps you look ahead with courage, positivity, and hope will be good for you and those around you.



Haluski or Hungarian Cabbage and Noodles

This is a traditional recipe that Miriam Szokovski, a member of Chabad.org editorial team, published in The Noshers

Serves 4-6 as a side dish
1 large onion or 2 smaller onions
1 small head of green cabbage
4 tbs oil or butter
12 oz wide egg noodles
Salt and pepper

Slice the onion into very thin rounds. Core the cabbage and slice it very thinly. Heat a large frying pan over medium-high heat and then add the onions and the oil. Sauté for 5-10 minutes and then add the cabbage. Keep at medium heat for another 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Reduce the heat to low and cover the pan. Cook for about 45 minutes, stirring every 10-15 minutes to make sure the vegetables don't stick to the pan. Cook the egg noodles according to the package and then drain, but don't rinse. Add the salt and pepper to taste. Some people add a little sugar as well.

Chicken Paprikash, Kosher style

Another traditional Hungarian Jewish dish from Chabad.org

Serves 4-6
3 onions cut into thin quarters or diced
½ cup olive oil
1 red pepper, diced

1 green pepper, diced
4-5 cloves garlic, sliced
4 tbs sweet paprika (Hungarian)
4-6 chicken thighs
Salt and pepper to taste

Use a Dutch oven or other deep pot. Heat the pan over high heat and then add the onions (dry fry the onions for a few minutes), then add the oil and about 1 tsp of kosher salt. Sauté until the onions are translucent. Add the diced peppers and the sliced garlic. Cook just until softened. Transfer the onion mixture to bowl and mix in the paprika. Return the pan to heat and season the chicken with salt and pepper and place skin-side down to brown for 5-7 minutes, uncovered. Then add the onion mixture back into the pan and add 2 cups of water and cover the pot. Simmer for about 90 minutes. The chicken should be falling off the bone. Uncover and let simmer another half hour until the sauce thickens.

Poppy Seed Cookies

Like Mama Used to Make by The Women of the Ann Arbor Hadassah

This is the 1952 revision and includes the names and recipes of women well remembered in our community. This recipe was donated by Anya Finkel (z"l). Ron, my husband, is excited about this recipe because his Auntie Nellie used to make them.

4 cups flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 cup oil
1 cup sugar
3 eggs
½ cup poppy seeds
Juice of 1 large orange
1 tsp grated orange rind

Cream the sugar and eggs, add the oil and juice and then the poppy seeds, and mix well. Add the dry ingredients gradually, mixing well. Roll out a small amount at a time on a well-floured board or counter to ¼ inch thickness. Cut with cookie cutter or glass (This is how I cut the dough because this is how my mom and my bubbie cut the dough). Use parchment paper and bake in a 350-degree oven for 10-15 minutes or until nicely browned.

Vegan Hamantaschen

¾ cup Earth Balance (or butter, but not vegan)
1½ cup + 2 tbs all-purpose flour
½ cup powdered sugar
Filling of your choice.

Let the butter or vegan butter sit out until it softens. Then cream with hand mixer or standing mixer until smooth and fluffy. Whisk and sift together the flour and sugar and add it slowly to the butter. Add just 2 tbs or ¼ cup at a time. As you get to the end use your hands to mix until the dough stays together without sticking to your hands. You may have about ¼ cup left of the flour/sugar mixture. Use parchment paper on a baking tray and sprinkle or just use a little more flour if there is none of the mixture left. Place the ball of dough on the tray and sprinkle a little more flour on top of the ball. Use a rolling pin to roll out the dough to about ¼-inch thickness. Place in refrigerator or freezer for 20 minutes. Remove from the refrigerator and use cookie cutter or glass to make 2-inch circles. Use a second tray and line it with parchment

paper and place the circles on it. Fill the circles with 1 tsp of the filling of your choice and fold up the 3 sides, pinch together until the sides touch to make a triangle. Pinch or seal the edges well and place the tray in the freezer for 20 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and when it reaches the temperature place the tray in the oven. Bake for about 15 minutes or until the bottoms of the circles turn brown. Immediately transfer to a cooling rack.

Cauliflower Salad with Dates and Pistachios

Adapted from the blog Smitten Kitchen
Serves 4-6

I made this salad for a Shabbat family dinner, and it was a big hit. Thankfully there were leftovers so we could enjoy it the next day as well.

2 large heads of cauliflower
3 tbs olive oil plus more for the baking sheet
Kosher salt and pepper to taste
8-10 dried dates, chopped (dates without pits)
½ cup shelled, salted pistachios, or any other nut you like but the pistachios were great.
Juice of 1 lemon

Heat the oven to 450 degrees and add the olive oil and salt and pepper to a large baking sheet. Chop up the cauliflower into bite-sized pieces, including the core if you like, but into smaller pieces. (You can also use the leaves chopped up). Add the chopped cauliflower and smear the oil, salt, and pepper all over it. Roast for about 15-20 minutes or until nicely charred. Chop up the pistachios and the dates. Make a very lemony vinaigrette with the olive oil and lemon juice. Add salt and pepper to taste and more olive oil or lemon juice for your taste. Use a large bowl for the cauliflower, pistachios, and dates and toss with the dressing while everything is warm. The original recipe uses scallions as well, which are also charred for about 10 minutes while you are roasting the cauliflower.

Apple-Spinach Salad

The Gourmet Jewish Cook by Judy Zeidler
8 servings

I made this salad at the same Shabbat dinner as the roasted cauliflower. I had a real craving for spinach and this salad quenched the craving. This is so easy that you don't even need instructions, but I'll include them.

Baby spinach — I used a whole package (about 3 cups)
2-3 apples, depending on the size of the apples. I liked using Honeycrisp for the color, but Granny Smiths would work as well, or maybe one of each. Peel and cut into bite size, or don't peel, your choice.
3 scallions, sliced thinly
3 celery stalks, diced (the crunch was lovely)
Juice of 2 lemons
¼ cup mayonnaise

Put the chopped apples, sliced scallions, and the diced celery stalks into a bowl. Mix the lemon juice and the mayonnaise

together and add to the bowl, mixing the dressing into the other ingredients.

Spinach with Raisins and Pine Nuts

Vegetarian Cooking by Linda Fraser
Serves 4

This is very much like recipes for spinach in the Sefardi style.

½ cup raisins
1 thick slice crusty white bread
3 tbs olive oil
½ cup pine nuts
1¼ pounds baby spinach leaves
2 cloves garlic, crushed
Salt and pepper to taste

Soak the raisins in a small bowl with boiling water. Add 2 tbs of the oil in a pan and sauté the bread cubes until golden. Add the rest of the oil and sauté the pine nuts until they begin to take on color. Quickly add the spinach and the garlic and cook until the spinach wilts. Toss in the raisins (drain the water out) and season with the salt and pepper. Serve hot.

Thinking about (the price of) eggs...

Because the availability of eggs and the high price is a challenge to lovers of eggs, I'm including egg substitutes for baking. There are lots of baking recipes on the internet for more ideas.

1. Unsweetened applesauce. This is good for light and fluffy baked goods like quick breads, brownies, and cakes. Replace 1 egg with ¼ cup applesauce
2. Mashed bananas. ¼ cup equals 1 egg. It's best used for pancakes, muffins, and quick breads as the banana flavor will come through.
3. Flax seed. 1 tbs flaxseed in 2½ tbs water, let sit for 5-10 minutes. Great as a binder, like in vegetarian burgers.
4. Aquafaba, the liquid found in canned chickpeas. It can be whipped into a foam and sugar and vanilla can be added
5. All nut butters. 2 tbs equal 1 egg.





FREEDOM SEDER



Join us as we bring together the Jewish and Black communities of Greater Ann Arbor for a night of stories, songs, and good food.

Tuesday, March 25 | 6-8pm

at the JCC of Greater Ann Arbor

LET'S CELEBRATE!

JEWISH PEOPLE
OF COLOR
NETWORK
| הרשת



African American Cultural
& Historical Museum of
Washtenaw County



Ann Arbor NAACP



Metropolitan
Memorial Baptist
Church

COMMUNITY-WIDE YOM HAZIKARON (Israel Memorial Day) CEREMONY

**TUESDAY,
APRIL 29
6:30PM**

Location:
Beth Israel Congregation



Yom Ha'Atzmaut
(Independence Day)

ISRAELI BLOCK PARTY

Thursday, May 1, 5-8pm
at the JCC of Greater Ann Arbor



Details and
registration for
all events at
**JEWISH
ANN
ARBOR
.ORG/
EVENTS**

Spring is for art and food with JCLP

By Karla Goldman and Megan Bernard

The Jewish Communal Leadership Program (JCLP) at the University of Michigan School of Social Work will be presenting two programs this spring — inviting campus and community to come together after a tumultuous year and a half on campus and in the world. Join JCLP students on Sunday, March 23, from 3 to 6 p.m. for a unique and meaningful public art event led by JCLP's future social workers in partnership with Michigan Hillel. After a year marked by tragedy and tension, renowned Jewish art-

that reflects the strength and resilience of our community over the past year and half. Together, we will explore creativity, connection, and community through art. The final product will be a lasting tribute to the resilience and hope manifest in this moment — finding its permanent home at the University of



ist Hillel Smith (www.hillelsmith.info) will guide us in curating a collaborative art piece

Michigan Hillel. This event is an oppor-



tunity to engage in a hands-on art session that promotes expression, unity, and connection with others in the Jewish community. No prior art experience is necessary! All materials will be provided. Come as you are and leave as a part of something greater. Please register to attend this event at ssw.umich.edu/r/JCLP2025.

Taste the World

And don't miss the Inclusive History Project and the Jewish Communal Leadership Program's conversation with

world-renowned food writers and U-M alumni Joan Nathan, Ruth Reichl, and Ari Weinzwieg: "Come to Ann Arbor and Taste the World!" The three will be in conversation on Wednesday, April 2, from 7–8:30 p.m. at the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA) discussing the rich cultural encounters they experienced as Jewish students in Ann Arbor and sharing how their time at U-M shaped their career trajectories. Reichl and Nathan were on campus in the 1960s and Weinzwieg in the 1970s — criti-

cal and prolific decades when experimentation and innovation were being fostered from multiple vantage points through multiple senses, including taste! The conversation will explore how food and identity are tied together and how those ties have been experienced and explored by our special guests as students and in their careers. Nathan will also be delivering the annual Belin Lecture sponsored by the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies on Thursday, April 3, at 7 p.m. in the Rackham Assembly Hall.

Following the Wednesday panel discussion, a dessert reception will be held in the UMMA Apse with catering by Zingerman's. This event is free and open to the public. To attend in person, please register for this event at ssw.umich.edu/r/tastetheworld.

This event is presented by the U-M Inclusive History Project and the Jewish Communal Leadership Program at the U-M School of Social Work and co-sponsored by the U-M Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, the U-M Department of History, the U-M Department of American Culture, and the U-M Jewish Life and Antisemitism Initiative. ■

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 Shabbat Service & Dinner

Fridays at 5:45 p.m.

Join the Clergy to celebrate Shabbat with fun activities, stories, songs, and age-appropriate learning for children ages 0–5. Registration requested.

Elementary Shabbat Service & Dinner (every second Friday of the month)

Fridays at 5:45 p.m.

A short service, song session, and community building! Most appropriate for children ages 5–10 and their parents, grandparents, and other adults. Everyone is welcome! Registration requested.

Wine & Cheese Shabbat Reception

Fridays at 6 p.m. (except the second Friday of each month).

Shabbat Service

Fridays at 6:30 p.m.

Every second Friday at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Shabbat service

Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Weekday morning blessings

Weekdays at 9:15 a.m.

Join TBE lay leaders each weekday morning for a short service of song, poetry, and meditation.

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.

Back Door Food Pantry

Thursdays, 4 to 7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner

Thursdays at 5 p.m.

Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session.

Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Whinston

Fridays at 12 p.m.

Shabbat morning Torah study

Saturdays at 8:50 a.m.

Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion.

Weekly Mahj

Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open

Wednesdays at 4 p.m. and Fridays at 5:30 p.m. | Second Friday of every month open at 6:30 p.m.

Washtenaw County's only Judaica Shop!

Death and Legacy in the Tanach

Mondays, March 3, 10, and 17, at 12 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle

Monday, March 3, at 6 p.m.

Jewish Book Club

Thursdays, March 6, 13, 20, 27, at 11 a.m.

Skills for Disagreeing Better

Sunday, March 9, at 3 p.m.

WTBE Fiber Arts

Monday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m.

Monday, March 24, at 7:30 p.m.

WTBE Historical Novel Reading Group

Wednesday, March 12, at 1 p.m.

Family Camp

Friday, March 14, at 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.

Purim Carnival

Saturday, March 15, at 10 a.m.

Antisemitism Summit

Sunday, March 16, at 4:30 p.m.

Bereavement Group

Tuesday, March 18, at 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.

Brotherhood Guys Night Out

Thursday, March 20, at 6 p.m.

LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck

Friday, March 21, at 5:30 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!

A Good Death: Tough Decisions, Touchy Discussions

Sunday, March 23, at 3 p.m.

Refugee Shabbat

Friday, March 28, at 6:30 p.m.

Renaissance Group Second Annual Game Night

Saturday, March 29, at 6:30 p.m.

Passover Sale

Sunday, March 30, at 3 p.m.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle

Monday, March 31, at 6 p.m.

Rabbis corner



Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

Moses' name is missing!?

By Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, Chabad Ann Arbor

The Torah reading we read on Saturday, March 8, is Tetzave. This is the only portion in the entire Torah following Moses' birth in which Moses' name does not appear. (It is also, incidentally, the portion usually read during the week in which the anniversary of Moses' passing, the seventh of Adar, falls.)

Our Sages explain that the reason for this omission was Moses' own request, made of G-d after the Children of Israel sinned with the Golden Calf: "And if not (if You will not forgive them), blot me out, I pray you, from Your book which You have written." The words of a tzadik, a holy and righteous person, are always fulfilled, even if spoken conditionally. Thus, we find that Moses' wish was granted in this week's Torah portion, for his name never appears in the entire portion.

However, when we delve into the text itself, we find an interesting phenomenon: This chapter, which specifically does not mention Moses, begins with a direct address to the very person whose name it omits! "And you shall command (ve'ata tetzave)."

A name is of lesser importance than a person's essential nature. It is a means of identification, but a person is an independent being from the moment they are born, while they only receive their name after several days. From this we learn that the use of the grammatical second person, "you," expresses an even higher level of relationship than calling a person by their given name, which was only bestowed on them secondarily. If such is the case, then it follows that the omission of Moses' name only serves to underscore the very special essence of Moses, which was even higher than the mention of his name could express.

Moses' whole life was Torah, to the extent that we refer to the Torah as "The Five Books of Moses." But his greatness was best illustrated when the lowest elements among the Children of Israel sinned with the Golden Calf, explicitly expressing their desire to separate themselves from the Torah. Yet, Moses was willing to sacrifice that which he held most dear on their behalf. "Blot out my name from Your book," Moses pleaded with G-d, if You will not forgive them even this grave sin.

Moses and the Jews formed one entity, each of whose existence was dependent upon the other. The commentator Rashi explains; "Moses is Israel, and Israel is Moses." When even some Jews sinned, Moses suffered a spiritual blow. Even though Moses was up on Mount Sinai when the Golden Calf was actually made, he was still affected by the actions of the others.

It was Moses' self-sacrifice and his desire to forgo that which was most important to him that express a unity that is beyond mere names. It is therefore precisely the portion Tetzave, in which Moses is not mentioned, that reveals his strength and his greatness. The willingness to sacrifice oneself for every fellow Jew, even one who sins, is the mark of every true leader of the Jewish People.. ■

Youth Leadership continued from pg 12

This sense of responsibility and leadership carries forward into all aspects of life. "Camp was a place where I went to be part of a community where I was just a member," reflects Heisler. "I was just a person who did my part, and everyone else did their part." This early experience with community responsibility prepared her well for college and beyond.

The camp's approach to youth leadership also influences its Jewish identity. Campers and counselors shape religious practices and celebrations, creating meaningful Jewish experiences that evolve with each generation. "Camp has changed as well," notes Adler, describing how religious observances have evolved during her time there. "Those conversations are so important. I have learned a lot from those conversations at camp."

What makes this youth leadership model particularly special is its inclusivity. "When everyone is developed as a leader, then you have a community full of leaders that can rise to the occasion," explains Heisler. "Stepping up and stepping back with the natural ebb and flow of things — that's kind of what's magical."

The success of this approach is evident in the deep respect that permeates camp

relationships. "It humbles me to come to camp and watch the way that teenagers and adolescents and young adults interact with younger campers with the deepest possible respect," says Heisler. "The level of respect that children have for each other at camp is like this piece of olam habah (the world to come)."

While this level of youth autonomy might seem risky to some parents, camp leaders emphasize its transformative power. "Adults have to sort of learn to be humble and give up some control, and that can be very, very hard. But I think it's worth it," reflects Sussman. The result is a summer camp experience that doesn't just occupy children's time but empowers them to become thoughtful, capable leaders who understand the value of community and collective responsibility.

As Adler notes, while the people change, "the ideals and structures and ways that we interact have been so consistent." It's this consistency in valuing youth leadership that has made Camp Tavor a unique and powerful force in developing the next generation of community leaders.

Registration for this summer at Camp Tavor is underway! For more information, please visit www.camptavor.org or contact Randy Lubratich at randy@camptavor.org. ■

PETER BEINART

Monday, March 10
Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Metro-Detroit Book Tour

BEING JEWISH AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF GAZA
A RECKONING
PETER BEINART

Photo: Joe Mabel

Join us for two days of provocative discussions with acclaimed columnist/political commentator Peter Beinart about his new book, *Being Jewish After the Destruction of Gaza*. His bold, urgent appeal to his fellow Jews will resonate to all with concerns about our future. "The book is about the stories Jews tell themselves that blind us to Palestinian suffering. It's about how we came to value a state, Israel, above the lives of all the people who live under its control."

Once an outspoken defender of Israel, Beinart now challenges "the idea that it [Israel] can be both Jewish and democratic" and confronts the Jewish narrative of persecution, victimhood, and the Holocaust that have been deployed to justify mass slaughter and starvation in Gaza.

In *The New York Times* he states: "Gaza's destruction serves as a horrifying illustration of Israel's failure to protect the lives and dignity of all the people who fall under its authority." He explores a future where Jews have the right to equality, not supremacy, and in which Jewish and Palestinian safety are not mutually exclusive but intertwined. Searching for a new meaning to being Jewish, Beinart hopes for a future of collective liberation and full equality for Jews and Palestinians.

Beinart is a frequent contributor to *The New York Times*, an MSNBC analyst, professor of journalism and political science at City University of New York, and the editor-at-large of *Jewish Currents*.

- Monday, March 10 at 3 PM: University of Michigan, Rackham Amphitheater (4th Floor), 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor, in conversation with Prof. Juan Cole
- Monday, March 10 at 7 PM: St David's Episcopal Church, 16200 W. 12 Mile Rd., Southfield, in conversation with Rev. Chris Yaw
- Tuesday, March 11 at 12 noon: St. Matthew's & St. Joseph's Episcopal Church, 8850 Woodward Ave., Detroit, in conversation w/Abayomi Azikiwe
- Tues, March 11 at 7 PM: Congregation T'Chiyah/First United Methodist Church, in conversation with Rabbi Alana Alpert, 22331 Woodward Ave., Ferndale

Tickets & info:
tchiyah.org/beinart
Book signing & refreshments at all events

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HAMANTASHEN

HAMANTASHEN DOUGH
Ada Margolis

2 1/2 C. Flour
2 t. baking powder
1 t. salt
1/2 C. Sugar

1 egg
1/4 C. melted butter
3/4 C. Milk

Mix well the flour, baking powder, salt, sugar, butter, egg and milk, and knead well. Roll the dough out thin, and cut into rounds 2 inches in diameter. Place a spoonful of Hamantashen filling in center of each round, draw up three sides, and pinch sides together in the form of a triangle. Place on a buttered cookie sheet, and bake at 375 degrees for 30-45 minutes or until delicately browned.

HAMANTASHEN COOKIE DOUGH
Ada Margolis

1/2 C. Butter
1 C. Sugar
2 C. Flour

2 t. baking powder
2 Tb. Milk
Vanilla or lemon flavoring

Cream together the butter and sugar, and add the egg. Mix and sift flour and baking powder, and add a little of this mixture to the creamed butter and sugar. Add the milk. Add remaining flour mixture. Add flavoring extract. Roll dough out, cut into rounds, fill with a spoonful of filling, form into triangles and bake at 375 degrees for 15-30 minutes until delicately browned.

Any sweet yeast cake dough can be used for Hamantashen. Some people prefer an unsweetened Challah dough. When using yeast dough, roll as thin as possible, shape and fill, and then allow cakes to stand a while to rise before baking. Use oven temperature recommended for the type of dough used. Bake until lightly browned.

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HAMANTASHEN POPPY SEED FILLING I
Ada Margolis

1 egg
1/4 C. sugar
1/4 lb. poppy seeds

Four boiling water over poppy seeds, let stand until seeds have settled at bottom, and drain. Put seeds through finest blade of food chopper. Add egg, stirring it in well, add sugar, and mix thoroughly.

HAMANTASHEN POPPY SEED NUT FILLING
Ada Margolis

1 C. poppy seeds
2 Tb. butter
1/2 C. chopped nuts
1/2 C. raisins

2 Tb. corn syrup
1 C. milk
1 Tb. chopped citron
1 t. vanilla

Put poppy seeds through finest blade of the food chopper, and mix with remaining ingredients, except vanilla. Let mixture cook over slow fire until thick, stirring often. Let cool and add vanilla.

HAMANTASHEN PRUNE FILLING
Ada Margolis

Grated rind of 1 lemon
2 t. lemon juice
1/2 lb. prunes

Soak prunes over night. Cook in water in which they were soaked until soft. Drain well. Remove stones from prunes and cut into small pieces. Mix with grated rind and juice of lemon.

GRANDMA SADIE'S HAMANTASHEN

7 C. flour - measure, then sift 4 eggs - beaten
1 lb. butter or oil
2 C. sugar
2 t. baking powder

2 t. vanilla
1/4 C. milk

Cream butter and sugar until light. Add eggs, vanilla and milk. Sift baking powder with flour and stir into batter. Chill until firm enough to handle.

Roll out on floured pastry cloth. Cut in rounds and fill with a teaspoon of ready-to-use poppy seed, apricot or almond filling. Press 3 edges to middle to form a 3 sided cookie. Bake at 375 degrees 15 minutes or until brown.

The Future of the Past:

Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age

IN-PERSON PROGRAM

Wednesday, March 12 | 7:00 PM

Register at HolocaustCenter.org/March

As Holocaust memory and education increasingly transition to digital formats, Dr. Kate Marrison will explore how social media, artificial intelligence, and other innovative technologies can help institutions like The HC preserve the stories of the past.

Admission: \$10 per person, or free for members of The HC

**THE ZEKELMAN
HOLOCAUST
CENTER**

28123 Orchard Lake Rd
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
248.553.2400
holocaustcenter.org

ANTI SEMITISM SUMMIT

Join us to discuss antisemitism in our current moment. Distinguished scholar and public intellectual, Susannah Heschel, PhD, will serve as the keynote speaker. Dr. Heschel will also have a conversation with Jeff Veidlinger, PhD.

The summit will also include a panel session that will bring together community members from across the political spectrum to reflect on antisemitism locally.

 **March 16, 2025**

 **4:30 P.M.**

 **Temple Beth Emeth**

This event seeks to create a space for genuine and civil dialogue to happen within the community on this very important issue. It is free, open to the public, and security will be present. Advanced registration is required.

REGISTER NOW

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Susannah Heschel, PhD



Chair of the Jewish Studies Program at Dartmouth and the Eli Black Dartmouth's Eli Black Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies

Q&A WITH:

**Susannah Heschel, PhD
Jeffrey Veidlinger, PhD**

PANELISTS:

**Alice Mishkin
Deborah Greene
Elliot Ratzman
Beth Bashert**

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at Shaarey Zedek
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*please come at the time you select when placing your order



March Calendar

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

Saturday 1 Terumah, Rosh Chodesh Adar

Havdallah 7:07 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services. Pardes Hannah. In-person and online. 10 a.m.

Wednesday 5

Yiddish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture, no matter what level of proficiency. For more information, to get the link, and to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please email Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu at least one day before scheduled meeting day every Wednesday (except major Jewish holidays). 2 p.m.

Thursday 6

Artist Yevgeniya Gazman reception at Amster Gallery: JCC. 6 p.m.

Friday 7

Candle Lighting 6:14 p.m.

Welcome Shabbat with Jewish Cultural Society. At the JCC. 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. Advanced registration on our website is available to help with planning: www.jewishculturalsociety.org. 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 8 Tetzaveh

Havdallah 7:15 p.m.

Sunday 9

Jewish-Arab relations in Israel. Fed. Zoom only event with A New Way. 10 a.m.

Monday 10

Peter Beinart in Conversation with Juan Cole: Rackham Amphitheater. 3 p.m.

Understanding the Constitutional Big Picture, Richard Primus: BIC. 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday 12

Yiddish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. 2 p.m.

Pop In Adar Teaching on Zoom: AARC. This is an hour led by our rabbi. 7 – 8 p.m.

Thursday 13 Fast of Esther

Friday 14 Purim

Candle Lighting 7:23 p.m.

Purim at the Circus: Chabad. 4:30 p.m.

Saturday 15 Ki Tisa

Havdallah 8:23 p.m.

Study Session: Pardes Hannah. 3 p.m.

Sunday 16

Jewish Storytime at AADL. Mallets Creek. Various times for different age groups.

Jazz for JCOR: At the JCC. 1 - 3 p.m.

Antisemitism Summit: EMU and

TBE. At TBE 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday 18

Symposium on Critical Transgender Studies: Frankel Center. Michigan League. All day.

Wednesday 19

Yiddish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. 2 p.m.

Wieseneck Symposium on Queer Israeli Culture: Frankel Center. Rackham Graduate Center. All Day

Thursday 20

A Night of Comedy: JCC. 7:15 p.m.

Friday 21

Candle Lighting 7:31 p.m.

Saturday 22 Vayak'hel

Havdallah 8:32 p.m.

Sunday 23

A Collaborative Community Art Experience with Hillel Smith JCLP and JCRC. 3 p.m.

Entrepreneurial Artistry Showcase: JFS. At the EMU Student Center. 3 – 5 p.m.

Tuesday 25

Queer Belongings and the Jewish "Homeland": Israeli and Jewish American Lives Between Home and Away: Frankel Center. Dr. Hila Amit in conversation about intersections of queerness, migration, and identity in the context of Israel/Palestine and the Jewish diaspora. 202 S Thayer. 4:30 p.m.

A Freedom Journey Seder: JPOC and others at the JCC. 6 to 8 p.m.

Friday 28

Candle Lighting 7:39 p.m.

Saturday 29

Havdallah 8:40 p.m. Pekudei

Sunday 30 Rosh Hodesh Nissan

Rosh Chodesh Nisan Minyan: AARC. On Zoom. 10 a.m.

Monday 31

Rosh Chodesh Nissan Circle: Pardes Hannah. 7 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, jewishculturalalso-ciety.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

Obituaries

The WJN prints obituaries, memories, and eulogies free of charge for family members of Washtenaw Jewish community members as a service to the community and to honor the lives of those who have passed away. When local congregations send condolence notices to the WJN, the editor searches for obituaries online. Also, community members are invited to send obituaries to the editor.

Allan M Lowe of Silver Spring, Maryland, died on Sunday, February 2, one day prior to his 91st birthday. He was born February 3, 1934, in Union City, New Jersey. Beloved husband of 59 years to the late Sara Tema Lowe. Son of the late Kenneth and Essie Lowe. Devoted father of Helen Lowe Metzman (Eric), Mitchell Lowe (Joy Jartman) and Janice Lowe Lieberman (Andrew). Dear brother of the late Loretta Kiron. Loving grandfather of Elise Lowe McCauley (Christopher), Jonathan Metzman, Nicholas Lowe (Marie Gomes), Elana Metzman Pasquale (Paul), Scott Lieberman, Matthew Lieberman, and Ryan Slaven. Cherished great-grandfather of Thomas McCauley and Galena Pasquale. Dear friend to Jane Handler.

A Washington and Maryland resident since age three, Allan was a graduate of Calvin Coolidge High School, the University of Maryland School of Engineering, and George Washington University Law School. Allan was proud to start his own law firm and practiced as an intellectual property attorney for decades. Allan was an avid cyclist into his late 80s, a tree farmer on his Taneytown property, and an enthusiastic world traveler.



Patricia Ruth (Jarrard) Levine passed away on Friday, January 17, 2025 in Columbus, Georgia, with family at her side. Patsy, Patricia, or Pat, as she was called by the different people who knew her at various times in her life, was born in Pontiac, Michigan, on June 29, 1938, to the late James and Ruth (Kelly) Jarrard. She lived most of her life in Michigan. The city of Ann Arbor, where she spent close to 40 years, remained her home in her heart even after she moved to Pinckney, Florida, and eventually Georgia.

In her youth, Pat was a competitive roller skater, winning her first national championship in speed skating at the age of 10. After that, she focused more on artistic skating, winning numerous medals at the state and national levels in pairs figure and dance. She gave lessons to younger skaters to help pay her training and educational expenses.

Pat spent her later adolescent years caring for her ill mother and helping to raise her younger sister, Sandy, through infancy and toddlerhood. She balanced these tasks with her skating, education, and teaching, taking time off from each as needed. Her mother was determined to survive to see Pat graduate from high school and hid the seriousness of her cancer diagnosis from her daughter.

When she was 19, after her mother had passed, Pat received substantial assistance from the Kresge family to attend Albion college. She took then four-year-old Sandy to school with her. The two stayed with a family off-campus for the entirety of her college education.

Pat graduated from Albion in 1961 and moved to Ann Arbor for graduate study at the University of Michigan. She received her Master of Social Work degree in 1963 and began a short career at Washtenaw County Juvenile Court.

Pat also met and married her husband, Michael Robert Levine, in Ann Arbor in 1963. Two children, Ruth and Matt, soon followed. The couple adopted a third child, Molly, through Spaulding for Children, an organization founded to provide adoption and fostering services for children who are otherwise considered hard to place. Passionately committed to finding families for such children, Pat served as an active member of Spaulding's Board of Directors for several years.

For the first decade of her marriage to Mike, Pat determined to live as frugally as possible in order to support the family as her husband put most of his earnings into an eventually successful business. The majority of her time was spent raising children, sewing and mending their clothes, and growing the family's vegetables in a backyard garden. Although trips to the Pontiac Rolladium were infrequent for her son and daughters, they have fond memories of those outings, holding her hands as their mom skated backwards, gliding them around the rink.

Once her life permitted more leisure time, Pat enjoyed a variety of hobbies. She became a Master Gardener and spent hours each week nurturing what friends considered her "mini botanical gardens," considering those days her "play days." She tended to her dogs, happy to have at least one, if not several, around the house at all times. Always the athlete, she played tennis several times a week until she could no longer do so physically.

Pat was profoundly affected by having to devote so much of her young life to caring for a loved one without palliative support. She was grateful to see the foundation and establishment of hospice care in the last decades of the 20th century. She supported the organization and ensured that hospice was a part of end-of-life care for her father and in-laws. Pat's own illness was too brief to enlist the support of hospice services.

In addition to her husband, Michael Robert Levine of Boca Raton, Florida, Pat is survived by her children Ruth Dickens (Andy) of Fortson, Georgia; Matthew Charles Levine of Boca Raton, and Molly Richardson (Jerry) of Chelsea, Michigan; her sister Sandra Colleen (Jarrard) Hesano

obituaries continued on page 25

of Leesburg, Florida; her sister-in-law Judith Levine Greenbaum of Ann Arbor; 10 grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews. Pat's family would like to express their deep gratitude to her caregivers and the staff at Spring Harbor in Columbus, Georgia, which was her home for the past seven years.

In later life, Pat lived with a variety of medical conditions, including heart failure and Alzheimer's. So in lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to one of the following: an organization whose aim is to fund Alzheimer's or heart disease research, your local hospice, an agency that provides fostering and/or adoption services, or your local humane society. A memorial service will be scheduled at a later date according to McMullen Funeral Home and Crematory, 3874 Gentian Blvd. Columbus, GA 31907.



Evelyn Ruth Neuhaus passed away on Sunday, February 16 at Brookdale Ann Arbor. Evelyn was born February 14, 1949, in New York City where she also grew up. At age 16, she enrolled in college at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY where she majored in biology. Evelyn moved to Ann Arbor in 1970 and received a Master in Public Health and a Master in Business Administration, both from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. With these professional degrees, Evelyn worked as a health care and hospital administrator, at both the University of Michigan and St. Joseph (now Trinity) Health Systems, during a career that lasted over 30 years.

Both Evelyn's parents, Hugo Neuhaus and Hannelore (Jean) Weil Neuhaus, were born in Germany, arriving in the United States as Jewish refugees from Nazi rule. Evelyn's childhood home was "shrouded in secrecy," as she told a reporter for a 2012 Ann Arbor Observer article, contributing, Evelyn thought, to her later interest in documentary filmmaking. Evelyn's mother died unexpectedly during surgery when Evelyn was 7, possibly due to complications associated with Gaucher's Disease, a genetic disorder most common among Ashkenazi Jews, and which Evelyn inherited. Hugo remarried to Ilsa Neuhaus and they had a daughter, Evelyn's sister Tammy.

Although Evelyn was diagnosed with Gaucher's Disease at a young age, she was not told, and only learned of the diagnosis at college because it was in her health records. Beginning in her 20's, the consequences of Gaucher's became more noticeable, including multiple bone fractures and multiple hospitalizations. Evelyn decided that using a wheelchair provided her the most control over these symptoms. As the disease progressed, Evelyn continued to have lifelong symptoms, including pain and fatigue, while also participating in new treatments. Evelyn was frank in discussing the anger and frustration she felt concerning the constraints this put on her life, and equally assertive in describing how she responded with resilience and strength.

Evelyn was an active member and leader

in many organizations and communities. She credited the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living (AACIL, now the Disability Network, Washtenaw Monroe Livingston) with helping her organize her life once she started using a wheelchair, and introducing her to a strong and resourceful community of persons with disabilities—she later served on the Board of AACIL. She was a member and served on the Boards of Beth Israel Congregation, the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, and she sang with the choir at Temple Beth Emeth. She was active in New Jewish Agenda, playing a leading role as a local organizer for that organization's national convention, hosted in Ann Arbor in 1985. Evelyn became an adult Bat Mitzvah in 1987. She was also a regular participant with Aleph, the Havurah Institute, and the Awakened Heart Project. Evelyn's spiritual and meditation practices also took her to participate at retreats at Awakened Heart and to study and practice with Sylvia Boorstein. Evelyn was a regular swimmer at the UM North Campus Recreation Building for many years. Evelyn loved to sing, particularly Broadway musicals and most particularly Stephen Sondheim. Her knowledge of song and lyrics was phenomenal.

Evelyn was also an accomplished documentary filmmaker. She was on the board of Minerva Projects, a non-profit that supported several documentaries. She was a co-producer of "Refusing to Be Enemies - the Zeitouna Story." And she was the writer, producer and director of "Never a Bystander" -- a documentary about Irene Butter that premiered in 2014 at the Michigan Theater. "Never a Bystander" was awarded as a runner-up for the Special Jury Award at the 2015 San Diego Film Festival. Evelyn used her documentary skills to interview participants at a New Jewish Agenda reunion in 2016, and contributed to the Living Oral History Project for the African American Cultural and Historical Museum of Washtenaw County.

As remembered by family and friends, Evelyn lived a full and varied life. She was married to Jon Kreuger for 4 years. She joined and helped lead a wide variety of organizations and left her community richer for her presence. She willingly shared her opinions, was a teacher to many, and a role model in many ways. In a 1992 edition of Bridges, A Journal for Jewish Feminists and Our Friends, Evelyn contributed an essay for a section titled Loving Across Differences of Dis/Ability, in which she wrote: "I am often angered when the media praises the courage of some handicapped person being profiled in an article. I do not believe it takes courage to make the best of what one has, it takes common sense."

Evelyn is survived by her sister Tammy Neuhaus, Tammy's wife Paula, Tammy's daughters Tanya and Naomi Kim, and many loving friends.

A funeral will be held at Beth Israel Congregation, 2000 Washtenaw Ave., on Tuesday, February 25 at 12:30pm followed by interment at Beth Israel Memorial Garden at Arborcrest Memorial Park. Friends and family will gather that same evening starting at 7:00pm at the Jewish Community Center (2935 Birch Hollow Dr., Ann Arbor) for a short service and to share stories and memories.

Donations in Evelyn's memory can be made to the National Gaucher Foundation, the Reconstructionist Congregation of Ann Arbor, Beth Israel Congregation or a charity of your choice.

Tribute in memory of Matasha Allen

Matasha Allen first came to the JCC in the fall of 2011 to interview for a position in the JCC's Early Childhood Center. She had recently started an early childhood credentialing course, and needed a placement for her practicum work. Peretz Hirshbein, Director of Child and Family Services at the JCC, says, "I remember being struck by the way she carefully considered her words as she answered our questions. Matasha paused for a moment before answering, and I recall thinking that this was the hallmark of an incredibly thoughtful person, who could be a great addition to our staff."

Matasha's first placement at the ECC was as a teacher in the Baby Bunny Room, a classroom of infants. She brought to her classroom kindness, calm, and a tremendous amount of music. As a professionally trained singer, song and rhythm became part of every classroom Matasha touched. Over the next few years she would work with a number of infant and young toddler groups. But one summer, as Matasha transitioned her charges to the Zebra room, the ECC's older two-year old room, something just clicked, and it was clear that this was the age group that she could best bring her unique gifts to. This is a group that needs someone who can allow the children the room to still be toddlers, while supporting the new cognitive development characteristic of preschoolers. Someone with patience, humor, and creativity who is intentional in their every interaction.

Matasha was a valued colleague and friend. So many of her teammates speak of her Matasha-isms. Saying "Oh, grits" when frustrated. Referring to her students as "threenagers."

Over the many years Matasha was with the Zebras, the room was full of rhythm and song. After having some Hebrew-speaking children in her class, Matasha started taking Hebrew lessons in order to support her families better. She had a deep understanding of Jewish culture and traditions, and related them to her own deeply held faith. Her voice was of course a mainstay of the ECC's Friday Shabbat Sings, and her students often accompanied the group with rhythm sticks.

But perhaps the greatest lesson she imparted to her students was Tzelem Elohim — that all are created in the image of the divine, and that all are deserving of dignity and respect. She set the example of both demanding dignity and giving respect every day. Hirshbein says that "the way Matasha lived Tzelem Elohim had a profound effect on the culture of the ECC."

In January 2020, on the MLK Jr. day right before the COVID-19 pandemic, Matasha



presented her first Freedom Songs Sing Along, with a fellow teacher accompanying her on guitar. About 25 people gathered in a small lounge at the JCC to sing along with Matasha. The next two years of the pandemic, Matasha kept her Freedom Songs going online. But as time went on, Matasha brought her amazing ability to help people connect into play. As ECC and HDS parent Rachel Jacobson says, "Matasha was so skilled at bringing people together in joy. She was attuned to how people would feel, how they would want to engage, and she planned concerts and events with an arc that would hold people so they could learn and grow together, while always leaving with a sense of joy and fulfillment that would make them want to keep coming back."

In 2023, in person again, Matasha began to recruit more collaborators, and in that year she would be joined by the Ypsilanti Youth Choir. In 2024, she brought even more people together, collaborating with even more partners to add the instruments of the Ypsilanti Youth Orchestra (of which she was President), and a family voting rights workshop developed by friends at Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor. But the most special Sing Along she led was the one held the MLK Jr. day shortly before her passing. In addition to everyone who had already been involved, she recruited volunteers from many community partner organizations to lead activities ranging from Freedom poetry reading to mural painting. Esther Terry, another one of her HDS collaborators, says of her, "she lived her dream of a better Ann Arbor-Ypsi-Washtenaw by bringing communities together who otherwise may never have had an opportunity to interact with each other and learn from each other."

Outside of her work at the JCC and the Jewish community, Matasha was called to take on major leadership roles in other parts of the Washtenaw County Community. Always incredibly active in her church, Matasha was named an Associate Pastor of the Lifetouch Ministries Church of God in Christ, only a few months before her passing. She was also a longtime teacher in the Ypsilanti Youth Orchestra, and again, she was called to lead as she became the YYO's Director of Operations several years ago as well.

Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to the families of:

Mary Beth Doan, mother-in-law of Ketl Freedman-Doan (Peter Freedman-Doan z"l), and grandmother of Rachel and Anya Freedman-Doan. Wednesday, January 29.
Carol Milett, sister of Marci Feinberg, January 20.
Allan Lowe, father of Janice Lieberman, February 2.
Hank Seider, father of Rabbi Sara Adler, February 9.
Mark Higbee, husband of Kate Levin, February 14.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

Max Fine on his bar mitzvah, March 22.
Andrew and Karen Brenner on the birth of their grandson Jacob Li Brenner. He was born January 28 to Benjamin Brenner and Megan Li, in San Francisco.
Dave and Susan Gitterman on the birth of their grandson, Miles Alexander Gitterman, son of Adam Gitterman and Emily Fridman. Miles was born on January 21 in Washington, D.C. Also celebrating are his big brother, Leo, and Uncle Daniel, Aunt Lizzy, and cousins Ayla and Naomi Bigham. ■



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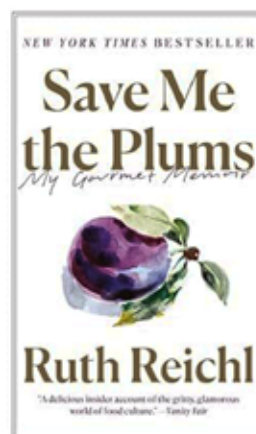
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