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FREE

Quilting grows friendship and community

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

The Ann Arbor JCC's Amster Gallery is pleased to present a collection of intricate quiltwork by Carol Finerman (z"l) and Anita Liberman-Lampear, with a reception taking place on Thursday, July 10 from 6–7:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. These quilts demonstrate a love of the Jewish faith, the importance of trying something new, and the joy in bringing people together.

Carol made her first quilt when she found out she was going to be a grandmother, 27 years ago. Although she had done a lot of sewing, needlepoint, and embroidery, quilting was one thing Carol had never done. "I bought a book and made a quilt with different shapes, using primary colors, not knowing that there were many neat tools on the market to make the project easy," Carol had said. "But I was hooked right away. The fabrics I chose were primary colors, but each had a different pattern. That was what intrigued me and kept me fascinated."

Anita, though she had a strong love of textile art from an early age, took a hiatus in her adulthood. "I have been sewing since I was 10 years old — mostly garments," Anita recalls. "In 1985, I attended my first quilt class, Trip Around the World. Having enjoyed it so much, I attended another class later that year, Log Cabin — Fields and Furrows. Sewing on and off in the following years was sporadic with two children to raise. But I managed an occasional quilt or two."

The two women connected at Beth Israel Congregation when Carol was serving as president, while Anita was on the board. Their friendship blossomed, and they brought together a group of artistic individuals within the congregation. "We combined our talents and made the High Holiday curtains (2005), and the Torah covers (2011). Each of us brought a different style of work to the projects, and they're still being used

to this day," Anita says.

Anita and Carol's friendship and love of quilting continued to grow, and Anita remembers how much they loved going fabric shopping, working together on their many creations. "Carol's quilting took a sharp turn once she became immersed in Art Quilting. While she attended many quilting retreats and courses, one of her favorites was Art Quilt Tahoe," Anita states. "By the time she convinced me to come along, Carol had already been attending this retreat for 14 years. 2015 was the first year that I attended, and I too became hooked on Art Quilting — although I still do a lot of bed quilts, commission pieces and an occasional wall hanging. I attended Art Quilt Tahoe each year afterwards until the pandemic in 2020."

Carol passed away from cancer in 2022, and Anita retired from Michigan Medicine after 46 years. Today, Anita

works at Ann Arbor Sewing, teaching classes to new machine owners. She also teaches two Art Quilt Classes known as AQ-Fish and AQ-Photo. "Fish is the prequel to Photo, where I teach my students to take photographs and turn them into fabric portrait quilts," Anita says.

The works shown here at the JCC are from Carol's studio, which Carol's children turned over to Anita after she passed away. Anita finished 15 pieces that her friend had not been able to complete, including a quilt for Carol's cousin's granddaughter. All of these pieces are for sale (unless stated otherwise) and the proceeds will be split between the JCC and the Ron and Elana Sussman Education Fund at Beth Israel Congregation. "Carol wanted very much to be a part of Ron's retirement party," Anita states. "And so, to that end, this exhibit and sale is in her memory."

Carol and Anita's quilts will be up at the JCC until the end of the summer, coming down on August 20. ■



Carol Finerman



Anita Liberman-Lampear

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From the editor



Subscribe to WJN

Last night (June 21), Trump sent the bombers to Iran. I don't know what will be happening by the time you read this, but a friend of mine said what I was thinking today, "Who the heck knows what the impact of the bombing in Iran will be. ... But here is what we do know, and it should scare the hell out of everyone: the United States is being led by ignorant, inexperienced, political hacks from the president on down, in every department and every key position."

American Jewish organizations have responded in various ways. While the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) sent out a message applauding and thanking President Trump for bombing the Iranian nuclear sites, our Ann Arbor Federation, in gratifying recognition of the diversity of opinion within our community, did not forward the message locally. In contrast to JFNA, T'ruah, J Street, New Jewish Narrative, and Partners for Progressive Israel put out a different sort of statement: *"We have long recognized danger posed by the Iranian regime – to its own people, to its neighbors, to Israel and to the world – as well as by the regime's nuclear program. We worry deeply now that Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Trump have – in resorting to the use of force before diplomacy had been fully exhausted – raised the risk of escalation and of harm to Israelis, Iranians and Americans."*

In the meantime, we, all of us, will continue to create Jewish life here in Washtenaw and everywhere Jews live. I've hired a new staff writer, Ari Smith, whose debut piece is on Charles Eisendrath. I look forward to being able to include more local interviews and profiles in the paper.

I am so appreciative of the Washtenaw community's support for this newspaper and to my commitment to forging an independent container where there is room for the legacy organizations and congregations as well as new and emerging voices.

After nearly a hundred year slide from the cacophonous, iconoclastic, competitive Jewish newspaper heyday, we in the U. S. are now today left with a handful, maybe less, of community based Jewish newspapers that are published independently of the Jewish federation system.

My credo for the WJN is taped to my desk and I read it often:

The Washtenaw Jewish News will continually demonstrate that the lived Jewish creative community is much wider than the legacy Jewish

agencies, organizations, and congregations.

While not excluding the legacy organizations or diminishing their important functions in the community, WJN exists outside of the legacy systems, paying close attention to the creative social and political happenings among Jews who are only marginally involved or are not involved in the legacy systems.

The community of readers and contributors to WJN includes Jews who de-center Zionism and/or are working to create in Israel/Palestine democratic structures for all who live there; Jews working in the creative arts giving form and substance to emerging Jewish practice and culture; Jews incorporating deep awareness of the physical land we currently live on; and Jews with an open attitude toward other religious beliefs, practices, and traditions.

Because most Jews expect a local Jewish community newspaper to be simply a voice for the Federation and other legacy organizations, and because most Jews cannot imagine a Jewish newspaper that would be anything else, I have to aggressively seek news and opinions from Jews in non and anti-Zionist groups, Jews who are remaking Judaism, and Jews who cannot imagine a Jewish community they feel part of. At the same time, the WJN will always publish the events, news, and opinions of the local congregations, agencies, and organizations.

I hope you value this inclusive mix, and will continue to read the WJN.

Something new

I am considering plans to change the distribution model for the Washtenaw Jewish News to a mix of subscriptions for mailed copies while remaining free at distribution sites.

If, after hearing from you, I decide to move forward with this plan, you will need to have a paid yearly subscription in order to receive the paper in the mail. The change could occur over the next 3 months and subscriptions will be good through September of 2026.

If you subscribe and send me your email address, I will also send you the link to the pdf.

Proposed subscriptions will be on a sliding scale of \$18 to \$72 annually.

WJN will still be available for free at

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2935 Birch Hollow Drive
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108
(734) 395-4438
www.washtenawjewishnews.org
CKinbergwjneditor@gmail.com

Editor and Publisher
Clare Kinberg

Advertising Manager
Pat Cowan

Design and Layout
Dennis Platte and Janet Rich

Staff Writers

Hannah Davis, Lonnie Sussman,
Ari Smith

Contributing Writers

Michael Appel, Orit Aviran, Candace Bulkley, Drew Cole, Ron Dermer, Emily Eisbruch, Deborah A. Field, Trina Fuller, Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, Deborah Meyers Greene, Daryl Hafter, Eva Kubacki, Rabbi Asher Lopatin, Murray Rosenthal, Marina Sarafian, Ellen C. Schwartz, Ari Smith, Jenny Traig, Shternie Zweibel, Rachel Wall, Lauren Zinn

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Coming Soon

Cantorial Concert July 20

By Eva Kubacki, Jewish Cultural Arts and Education Coordinator, Ann Arbor JCC

Join the Jewish Community Center on Sunday, July 20, for our 2025 Jewish Music Series! We are thrilled to announce July's event: the Cantorial Concert, featuring some of Ann Arbor's beloved cantors and musical prayer leaders. The concert will be hosted at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor and is part of the organization's new regular music series.



Rabbi Hazzan Gabrielle Pescador

The series features monthly musical events and focuses on fostering Jewish unity and cultural engagement.

The Cantorial Concert was organized by Rabbi Hazzan Gabrielle Pescador, the rabbi of the Ann Arbor

Reconstructionist Congregation. She has worked to gather the musical leaders of the Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC), Temple Beth Emeth (TBE), and Beth Israel to develop a vibrant performance that taps into many aspects of Jewish culture. The performers are Rabbi Hazzan Gabrielle Pescador, Cantor Annie Rose, Cantor Regina, Cantor Emma, Deborah Greene, and Jeff Pickell. They will sing a mix of solos, duets, trios, and some lively whole group numbers! The cantors and singers will be accompanied by TBE's pianist, Casey Baker. The music will be a mix of secular and religious Jewish songs, ranging from Sephardic folk songs, Yiddish ragtime, and old liturgical poems set to modern melodies.

This event will comprise two parts: a concert performed live by the musical leaders that's sure to get everyone's ruach raised, followed by an interactive song circle led by the musicians of the AARC. The song circle will focus on Jewish songs for peace and healing, helping us to come together during tumultuous times through musical connectivity. This event is intended for audiences of all ages. Everyone is welcome at this event and your voice is needed!

Information about future music series events can be found at jccannarbor.org. We look forward to expanding musical programming at the JCC, and hope to see you at this event and many more! ■

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Community

JFS Voices: Marina's Story

By Marina Sarafian, Specialized Programs Manager & Community Health Worker Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County

I was born in Armenia, which was part of the Soviet Union when I was growing up. In the summer of 1995, just 10 days after our wedding, my husband and I moved to the United States so he could pursue his PhD at the University of Iowa. It was a thrilling but overwhelming



experience. I didn't speak English, and we had no family or friends nearby. My husband worked long hours, seven days a week, leaving me alone to navigate a new culture, a new language, and a new life — at

just 21 years old. We couldn't afford English classes, so I taught myself. The early years were incredibly difficult, filled with challenges that I worked hard to overcome.

When I joined JFS in October 2012, I had little knowledge or



understanding of social work or the nonprofit world. My background was in Apparel, Textiles, and Merchandising, and I had been

working in retail — a field I truly enjoyed. However, retail can be a difficult industry for a mother. At the time, my two sons were young and needed my full attention. They have always come first, so I made the decision to leave my job and focus on raising them. While I stayed active and volunteered, I still felt something was missing. I longed for meaningful work — something part-time, where I could make a difference in people's lives.

That opportunity came when I applied for a transportation coordinator position at JFS. I still remember my first visit to the agency. Back then, JFS occupied only the basement level of the building. As I sat in the waiting area before my interview, I looked around and immediately felt something special. The space felt warm, welcoming, and peaceful. It felt like home. That moment marked the beginning of my journey with JFS.

Shortly after joining JFS, I became the New American Club (NAC) Coordinator, working primarily with Russian-speaking older Jewish adults from various parts of the former Soviet Union. With my shared

cultural background and fluency in Russian, I was able to quickly build strong, trusting relationships with my clients — relationships rooted in mutual respect and understanding. I love working with them. Every time I solve a problem or see a smile on someone's face, my heart fills with joy. Some have told me I am doing a mitzvah — and thanked me for it. It is truly my honor to do a mitzvah every day. I've found my calling, and I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world.

Thank you, JFS, for allowing me to be part of this incredible family.

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 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. ■

Genesis wins the battle of the buildings — again!

By Murray Rosenthal

Last year, Genesis of Ann Arbor was presented with a Battle of the Buildings Award for reducing water use by 60.23% (2023 vs 2022). This year, Genesis was again the biggest



Photo Credit: Genesis of Ann Arbor

loser! Our building was awarded in the 2024 Michigan Battle of the Buildings competition, in the Place of Worship category, for a 7.20% reduction in weather-normalized source energy use intensity. This award was presented to Jennifer Wolf on May 8, 2025, at the Michigan Energy Summit in Grand Rapids.



Photo Credit: USGBC Michigan

Genesis of Ann Arbor is a unique and equal partnership between St Clare's Episcopal Church and Temple Beth Emeth. This partnership started 50 years ago. The

idea is that the Church uses the building on Sunday and the Temple uses it on Friday evening and Saturday.

There are hundreds of places of worship in Michigan. And the Genesis building had the biggest reduction in energy use of all of them. Other Biggest Loser awardees included Ford Field, Meijer in Battle Creek, the City of Detroit DPD Training Center and University of Michigan Health Child Care Center. Genesis is not just a building. Genesis represents a special relationship between an Episcopal church and a Reform Jewish congregation. Reducing water and energy consumption is good for the environment and improves sustainability, which supports our shared values for the stewardship of our home, the Earth.

As part of implementing their Building Decarbonization Plan, the Genesis Board actively investigated purchasing new thermostats for the building. However, this proved to be cost prohibitive.

The Genesis building has six Rooftop Units (RTUs), four furnaces, and a boiler. All of these operate using natural gas for heating. As each HVAC unit has at least one thermostat, they were being adjusted "willy-nilly" by building users. Sometimes, building users would switch a thermostat from heating to AC if they were warm, and the RTUs would work against each other, as neighboring zones were still on the heat setting.

After volunteer efforts to program the thermostats proved ineffective, Genesis ended up hiring Steven Kurz in 2023 to act as the Assistant Facility Manager. With Kurz's extensive experience with commercial building management, he took on the challenge of programming the thermostats. In the fall of 2023, Kurz programmed and locked all the thermostats.

Kurz used a weekly program function for each thermostat, based on building area use. He reduced the set points for the

cold months from their random setpoints, based on whoever adjusted the thermostat last, to 66°F when in use and to 62°F when not in use. The offices are set higher when occupied.

Another example is Genesis' weekly food pantry event (The Backdoor Food Pantry), where, on average, 170 families are given food in the Social Hall every Thursday. The doors are propped open to ease access. The thermostats in the Social Hall are set very low (58°F) in colder months, as workers are coming and going in their coats as they serve food pantry patrons.

Secondary Energy Savings Measures were

also completed at the start of 2024. To improve the building envelope, Kurz sealed the area under a large skylight in the social hall with plastic sheeting. Kurz also replaced all the fluorescent lights in the classrooms with LEDs, including removing the ballast energy hogs.

Going forward, Genesis will be taking additional action. We plan to replace the oldest RTU (for the Sanctuary) with an air-source heat pump by the end of 2025. And we will increase the number of solar panels by about one-third. Genesis also plans to seal additional leaks in the building envelope.

We foresee receiving many more Biggest Loser awards in our future! ■

JCOR continues to serve in uncertain times

By Deborah Meyers Greene

Five months after arrival, JCOR's Venezuelan family is thriving. Mother has a full-time job and is looking forward to financial independence that will allow her to pursue her ultimate goal of a cosmetology career in the United States. Following a successful first school year in the States, Son is undertaking a full complement of academic, personal growth, and just-plain-fun summertime activities.

In their established "wrap-around" style, JCOR volunteers have been excited to lend support to this admirable family, providing assistance in critical areas like school communications and programming details, medical care scheduling and transport, shopping, and more.

JCOR also has stepped up to fill the gap left by the abrupt cessation of several federal funding resources, helping to underwrite housing and utilities, transportation to work, and other integral expenses as they arise. Gradually, the very independent-minded Mother is assuming responsibility for these costs.

While thousands of Venezuelan immigrants have been forced to leave the country, Mother and Son's refugee status is providing them

a stable footing here and their risk of deportation seems to be minuscule, if it exists at all.

What lies ahead?

So little is known at this time about policies pertaining to refugees and other immigrants. JCOR, along with JFS (Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County), is watching policymakers and the courts closely and discussing potential service options. Whatever the future brings, whatever JCOR does, it will be done in support of the refugees in our community.

Jewish Congregations Organized for Resettlement (JCOR) is a community collaboration founded by 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 JFS and welcomes others to join our work to help newly arrived refugees adapt and become self-sufficient through their first year of resettlement. ■

Jewish Federation holds annual meeting

By Rachel Wall, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

Every year on the last Wednesday of May, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor holds its Annual Meeting. The meeting offers an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year and debut allocations from the Annual Community Campaign. This year it also featured Federation's Director of Community Relations, Rabbi Asher Lopatin, in conversation with Dr. Mostafa Hussein, a University of Michigan expert on Jewish-Muslim relations in the Middle East.

The presentation wove together a fascinating history of Jews in Syria from Dr. Hussein with photos from Rabbi Lopatin's trip there earlier this year, as part of the first Jewish delegation to Syria in over 30 years. Rabbi Lopatin shared with attendees the powerful experience of meeting five of seven Jews who currently live in Syria, the warmth he felt from the Syrian people he encountered, the significance of visiting a synagogue in need of repair but very much still standing, and the hope he feels for a future in which Jews — and all people — are welcome in Syria following the fall of the Assad regime.

In addition to looking back, the night served as a transition to elect Federation's next Board of Directors and appreciate those who are ending their terms. Heartfelt tributes were paid to Marla Chinsky and Murray Rebner for their years of service on the board, and current president Marla Linderman Richelew delivered an ode, in poem form, to immediate past president Jessica 'Decky' Alexander.

The new board members elected during the Annual Meeting are: Galit Levi Dunietz, David Lauer, Wendy Lawrence, and Joan Lowenstein.

Galit Levi Dunietz was born in Israel and moved to the U.S. in 1995, with her husband Barry, to pursue advanced education. They lived in New York and California and since 2004, in Ann Arbor. Galit and Barry have been active in the

Jewish community as longtime members of Beth Israel Congregation. She is a tenured Associate Professor in Michigan Medicine, where she leads research programs and is engaged in teaching and community service. Galit also has leadership roles on boards of national and international medical societies.

David Lauer attended the University of Michigan and Oakland University with a focus on Entrepreneurial Studies and Philosophy. At Oakland, he received a bachelor's from the Integrative studies Department with Instructional Design and HRD. David has been in the worlds of finance, community organizing, and nonprofit leadership. David felt the call as many in our community have post October 7 to come back to his Jewish roots. David has coordinated logistics for supplies delivered to soldiers and displaced families in Israel, serves as membership chair for the Michigan Democratic Jewish Caucus, and directs the Michigan chapter of a national nonprofit providing leadership development to at-risk youth with support from NCAA football programs.

Wendy Lawrence is the Assistant Director of Student Life Research at the University of Michigan, where she researches organizational culture and student experience and does program evaluation. A recent graduate of Eastern Michigan University's PhD program in Educational Leadership, Wendy has taught leadership courses at both U-M and EMU. She has also led workshops and classes for K-12 school leaders, teachers, and students that focus on leadership skills, wellness for leaders, and combating anti-Blackness in schools. Before entering higher education, Wendy spent most of her career in K-12 spaces as a Middle School Head, Dean of Curriculum, and a science, math, and English teacher. Wendy currently co-chairs the Greater Ann Arbor JCRC and has previously served in leadership roles on boards at Leslie Science and Nature Center, Ann Arbor Hands-On

2025 CAMPAIGN ALLOCATIONS			
National		Local Allocations	
JFNA Fair Share Dues	\$53,000	Ann Arbor Eruv	\$500
Jewish Council for Public Affairs*	\$2,500	BBYO*	\$15,000
Total National	\$55,500	Chabad of Ann Arbor	\$15,000
Collective Overseas		Hebrew Day School	\$132,000
Birthright Israel	\$9,000	Hillel - EMU	\$10,000
JFNA Collective Overseas	\$151,000	Hillel - UM	\$10,000
Total Collective Overseas	\$160,000	Jewish Community Center	\$209,225
Elective Overseas		Jewish Family Services	\$155,000
Ethiopian National Project	\$20,000	Jewish Summer Camp Support	\$25,125
Hand in Hand Schools	\$9,000	Jewish Federation	\$600,000
iRep - religious pluralism advocacy	\$7,500	Recovery Seder*	\$2,650
Youth Futures - Jewish Agency mentorship for at-risk youth	\$10,000	Community Strategic Vision Fund	\$10,000
JDC Welfare Relief in the Former Soviet Union	\$35,000	Community Engagement Fund	\$20,000
Krembo Wings - disability inclusion youth movement	\$11,000	Federation Emergency Cash Assistance	\$15,000
Partnership2Gether	\$46,000	Reserve for Unmet Pledges	\$5,000
A New Way - building shared civil society	\$7,500	Total Local Allocations	\$1,224,500
Ruca's Farm - PTSD services for IDF soldiers	\$2,500	Grand Total All Allocations	\$1,600,00
Brothers & Sisters for Israel - volunteer coordination in the north	\$5,000		<i>*New for 2025</i>
Lone Soldier Center*	\$6,500		
Total Elective Overseas	\$160,000		

Federation debuted its 2025 Annual Community Campaign allocations at the Annual Meeting.

Museum, and Temple Beth Emeth. Wendy is a proud Jew-by-Choice who makes (a version of) gefilte fish by scratch.

Joan Lowenstein was elected as Federation's Vice President and President-Elect. She last served as Federation president from 2002-2004. She has also chaired the Campaign and Allocations Committees. Joan is a retired attorney who also was elected

twice to the Ann Arbor City Council and served from 2000-2008. Currently, she is in her seventh year of an eight-year term on the Jewish Federations of North America National Women's Philanthropy board and is also active with the Michigan Democratic Party and Michigan Jewish Democratic Caucus. Locally, she is on the board of the Washtenaw Housing Alliance, an organization that works to end homelessness. Joan and her husband

continued on page 13

Jewish artists at Gallery 55+

By Emily Eisbruch

Art by two talented members of the Jewish community is featured at the Gallery 55+ at the Turner Center Senior Resource Center through



July 24.

Andy Schiff's colorful paintings are on display along with vibrant iPhone images by Paulo Neuhaus. Andy is a member of Beth Israel Congregation, while Paulo belongs to both the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation and Pardes Hannah communities.

"We are delighted to showcase the work of these two excellent local artists, and the community has truly responded," says Jane Wilkinson, chair of the volunteer committee that manages the Gallery 55+ at the Turner Senior Center. "The opening reception in May was full of excitement and energy, and visitors to the Turner Center frequently

comment on how much they enjoy the art."

Andy Schiff, from her artist statement:

"If I was normal, I would have graduated with a BA in something in 1971, but I wasn't. I left school for travels, came back, fell in love, got married then moved away, again. When I returned to Michigan, I wanted to finally complete my degree. I attended Eastern Michigan University from 2001 to 2004, and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting.

"My favorite medium is watercolor, but it was so challenging, I got frustrated and returned to acrylics for years. Now, to hell with the challenge, I've returned to watercolors and added pastels. I might be 75 but I'm still up for new adventures.

"The year 2005 brought tragedy to my family, as my son died at the young age of 26. My world was crushed, to say the least. It threw me off psychologically and artistically for 10 years. I had no interest in anything. Somehow, I broke through the black hole and joy and color reappeared in my life and in my art.

"Since 2015 I have been creating, exhibiting, and selling my work with much happiness. My travels have made a big impact on my subject matter. A trip to

Costa Rica in 2019 impacted me greatly. The Lipstick Trees in the Tortuguero National Park were my favorite subject till after COVID.

"After COVID I resumed my traveling. All over Europe and Southeast Asia, these memories are just waiting to make an appearance in my work.

"Please visit my website at <https://andyschiff.com/>. Feel free to contact me at 734-239-3789 to discuss ideas for a commission."

Paulo Neuhaus, from his artist statement:

"I was born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, a place radiant with color, rhythm, and visual energy. After earning a doctorate in economics at the University of Chicago, I worked for three decades at a multilateral institution in Washington, D.C. Retirement has opened new doors and ways of seeing.

"Over the past several years, I have been drawn to iPhone photography as a powerful creative tool. My portfolio reflects my strong interest in color and composition. It also draws on my

extensive travels in the U.S., Asia, Europe, and South America, and visual stimulation from my home locations in Sperryville, VA, and Ann Arbor. I am excited about how the iPhone opens immediacy and freedom.

"Domestic and international travel are a source of inspiration, as are the textures and light of my adopted environment in Ann Arbor, where my wife and I have lived for the past few years. To explore more of my work, you are invited to visit <https://www.pauloneuhaus.com/>."

Exhibit

To view the exhibit, visit the Turner Senior Resource Center, 2401 Plymouth Road, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Center houses several Michigan Medicine Community Health Services programs for older adults. For those who wish to do more than admire these works, the art is for sale with a portion supporting the Turner Senior Wellness Program and a majority going to the artists.

The Gallery 55+ committee is currently scheduling artists into late 2026. Interested artists, age 55 and over, and anyone wishing to join the committee are invited to reach out to tswp.info@umich.edu ■

Community

Friendship Circle to launch in Ann Arbor

By Jenny Traig

The recent survey of Jewish life in Ann Arbor revealed that we're a diverse and thriving community. It also revealed that there's one large segment of families who are underserved: those whose members have special needs.

It can be difficult to participate in Jewish communal life, or communal life in general, when a family member has sensory issues, cognitive differences, or other challenges. This, in part, is what inspired Camp Gan Izzy Directors Shternie and Rabbi Zalman Zweibel to start Ann Arbor's own Friendship Circle chapter.

Friendship Circle is an international organization that began in West Bloomfield in 1996 to offer assistance and support to people with special needs and their families. They match participants with volunteers, often teens, for one-on-one interactions and social, educational,

recreational, and vocational programming.

Since then, more than 80 Friendship Circle chapters have opened around the world. There is currently no Friendship Circle in Washtenaw County or the surrounding area, and approximately 2,500 local Jewish families would qualify for its services.

Now, Zweibel is hoping to create a space where these families are welcomed and affirmed. "They are an important part of our community," she says. "We need them in our community, and they need to feel part of the community. If we create a special place for them, they will be recognized."

Zwiebel hopes to launch Friendship Circle programming in Ann Arbor this fall, offering children and teens with special needs meaningful experiences through classes, holiday events, and activities like art, cooking, music, and sports. She is also working toward securing a dedicated space to host these programs.

Programming will start with "Friends at

Home," which matches teen volunteers with participants for one-on-one in-home get-togethers; and "Sunday Circle," which brings all volunteer-participant pairs together monthly for a hands-on musical or artistic activity.

"The idea of Friendship Circle is to create this friendship between typical teens and the participants — real friendships," she says.

One of those teenagers is Community High student Mia Rubenstein, who has been volunteering with the West Bloomfield chapter since 2022. "I've learned a lot about other people, the importance of friendship," she says. "It's truly impactful, it's a real friendship. Everyone deserves that."

She says participating in Friendship Circle makes her feel more connected to Jewishness. "I feel like I'm doing a mitzvah when I do this. It's a way to give back to my community." But, she admits, the drive to West Bloomfield is long, and she looks forward to the opening of

a local center serving local families.

Zweibel expects programming to begin shortly after the fall holidays. In the meantime, she is scouting a location and recruiting participants. She invites the community to join her, either as a participating family, or by donating and volunteering.

"It's a win-win," she says. "It's something positive and meaningful for teenagers to do, and also helps special people in our community."

If you know a child or young adult who would benefit from participating in Friendship Circle, or a teen who would like to volunteer, please reach out to Shternie at director@mycampganisrael.com or call 734-995-3276 #4.

If you'd like to be part of the dream and help support bringing Friendship Circle to Ann Arbor, we'd love to hear from you as well. ■

Chabad Hebrew School open for registration

By Shternie Zweibel

Each Sunday morning, Chabad Hebrew School (CHS) transforms the Chabad House into a vibrant hub of Jewish learning and pride. With singing, stories, mitzvah projects, Hebrew reading, and more, CHS has become a beloved space where Judaism comes alive for local children — and registration is now open for the 2025–2026 school year.

This year's theme, Lamplighters, centered on the message that every Jewish soul has the power to bring light into the world. Through mitzvot like kindness, prayer, Shabbat, and kashrut, students explored how their everyday actions can brighten their surroundings. The curriculum encouraged them to ask not just what we do as Jews, but why — and how one small act can make a lasting impact.

Students were introduced to their "Super Jew powers" — the strengths each of them



has to change the world. From saying a blessing to helping a friend, they learned that their Jewish identity is a powerful

force for good.

One analogy that resonated deeply with students was that of the Torah: just as a Torah scroll is incomplete if even one letter is missing, the Jewish people are incomplete unless all are included. That message of unity and shared responsibility was woven throughout the year's lessons.

A highlight of the program remains Aleph Champ, a karate-style Hebrew reading system that allows children to progress through color-coded levels as they build fluency. Its structured and motivational approach has helped students take pride in their reading progress and celebrate each milestone.

Feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive:

"Our son always exits CHS with a smile on his face and a pep in his step.

He's reminded every week that G-d loves him — and it shows."

"We love that our kids leave each week excited and with new knowledge. The wide array of activities keeps things fun, and the learning is real."

"Every Sunday, my son comes home and teaches me something new. We've already recommended CHS to others. The teachers are warm, the curriculum is creative, and the energy is incredible."

Chabad Hebrew School is open to the entire Jewish community — regardless of affiliation, background, or membership. All Jewish children are welcome to attend.

To learn more or register for the 2025–2026 school year, visit www.chsa2.com or contact Shternie at 734-995-3276 #4 or director@mycampganisrael.com

At Chabad Hebrew School, Judaism isn't just taught — it's lived. ■

Unity of the Jewish people

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, Chabad of Ann Arbor



Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

On the last week of June, we read the Torah portion Korach, which tells about the controversy with Moses initiated by Korach and his followers. His argument went as follows: If every single Jew is a member of a holy nation, then no one person is greater than another. Why are you,

Moses, entitled to special privileges? Jews can only stand united if absolutely equal rights are afforded to all, he claimed.

The Torah teaches that this claim — taken to its logical conclusion — leads to the opposite of unity, so much so that Korach's controversy with Moses became the yardstick by which all dissension among Jews is measured.

Moses alluded to this in his answer to Korach: "In the morning G-d will show who is His." Moses explained, according to the Midrash, that the same way that G-d has created natural divisions between night and day which complement each other and form a cohesive whole, so too has He created distinctions between different types of Jews, all for the sake of the unity of the Jewish people.

The world was created so that each creation has its own natural boundaries

and limitations. These boundaries enhance the world's natural order and give it structure, for everything has its own particular purpose and function to perform. Unity among G-d's creatures is attained only when each one works within its own framework and fulfills its own role. Harmony is maintained only when we adhere to the Divine plan, interdependent, performing our different allotted tasks. If one creation tries to assume the role of another, the result is disharmony and dissonance.

The distinctions between Israelites, Levites, and Kohanim (and even among priests themselves, between ordinary priests and the high priest) are not arbitrary. Each distinction reflects the type of soul given to each Jew, which correlates to his particular

task in life and way of serving G-d. G-d desires that each of us fulfill our own unique mission in life, not that of our neighbor. True unity is only achieved when we respect the differences between us.

Each Jew is blessed with different strengths and qualities, and we are enjoined to pool these disparate resources together for the common good. Every Jew, whether Israelite, Levite or Kohen, is indispensable and is part of this greater whole.

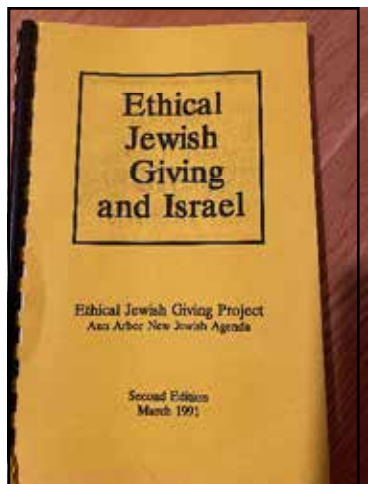
The lesson we learn from Korach is also one which is applicable today. Some think the path to true unity and peace lies with breaking down barriers which exist between men and women, Jews and non-Jews, and different faiths and ideologies. The Torah, however, teaches us otherwise. It is only by maintaining and respecting inherent differences that we can achieve unity and true peace. ■

Op-Eds

More on ethical giving: Giving consciously

By Michael Appel

The recent WJN articles by Benjamin Ben Baruch (“A short history of Jewish communal fundraising in Ann Arbor,” May 2025) and Eileen Freed (“A response to ‘A short history,’” June 2025) touched issues that have been of interest to me for many years. As Ben Baruch outlined, the percentage of Jewish communally raised funds going to Israel — and the recipients of those funds in Israel — have been a focus of community debate since at least the mid/late 1980s when I moved to Ann Arbor and



when the local Jewish community turned to coordinated fundraising to support Jewish causes, both locally and overseas. Since then, Federation support for the UJA, and through it the Jewish Agency, as well as the percentage of funds staying local, have remained a focus of communal discussion.

There is a complicated historic and current relationship between the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), the United Jewish Appeal (UJA), the United Israel Appeal (UIA), and Jewish Agency. Together, they constitute an integrated set of organizational links by which significant contributions from local Jewish Federations end up in the control of a quasi-governmental institution in Israel. While our local Federation funds a number of projects in Israel directly, as discussed by Freed, significant funds, about half of overseas allocations, are still distributed through JFNA and the Jewish Agency.

As a member of New Jewish Agenda (1980–1992), I helped develop the Ethical Jewish Giving Project in the late 1980s — including a nationally distributed booklet that called on Jews in the United States to refuse to send their philanthropy to Israeli organizations that supported the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza or contributed to discriminatory patterns within Israel's borders. Following the booklet's guidelines meant not sending any money to the Jewish Agency.

In Ann Arbor, and in other cities across the country, a variety of concerns have led to changing philanthropic patterns by local Federations over the years. Our local Federation, at various times, has sent funds to: the New Israel Fund, Hand in Hand Schools, and other specific projects in Israel. Along with the general Federation giving there have been structures that allowed donors to select “local only” contributions, and/or coordinated local distributions with a “Flexible Giving Option” that provided more control over overseas contributions. As Freed wrote, in recent years, the local Federation has regularly supported Israeli initiatives that promote coexistence and pluralism in Israel. That support has always

been in addition to support for the Jewish Agency.

To my mind, funds going through JFNA/UIA/UJA to the Jewish Agency remain deeply problematic. Jewish Agency funds may not directly expand settlements. However, the following language, taken from the website of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, highlights a problematic situation:

No core Federation dollars go beyond the Green Line. Federation core dollars provide social services for Jews in need wherever they live in the world, as we have for more than 100 years. UIA does not fund, nor does it build, any buildings beyond the Green Line.

That language allows for the following:

While these funds would not build a Yeshiva building in a West Bank settlement, they could provide scholarships for Yeshiva tuition to be used regardless of location. They could support a food bank program or initiatives that alleviate poverty for Jews in West Bank settlements. The Jewish Agency and local Federations describe it as simply helping Jews, wherever they may live — a politically neutral approach to tzedakah.

This might have more credibility if these same institutions were not closely tied to Israeli politics. Or, as the UIA states on their website: “We, as a national institution and our counterparts, the World Zionist Organization, The Jewish Agency for Israel, and the Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF), comprise the four pillar national institutions of the State of Israel, all of which enjoy a special protected legal status.” This discussion focuses on the Jewish Agency's role, but the Jewish National Fund's actions in coordination with the Israeli government have been documented even more clearly as discriminatory; and the World Zionist Organization's Settlement Division is a significant conduit for settlement expansion.

These institutions cannot credibly dissociate themselves from Israeli politics. As institutions created prior to the formation of the State of Israel, they reflect a time when Jews did not exercise sovereignty and were unable to effectively use the State to discriminate against Palestinians. Today, these institutions work in coordination with the government of Israel — promoting Jewish needs rather than the needs of the citizens of Israel. Quite simply, they represent those aspects of Israeli politics and Zionism that I find most problematic. And I am not willing to participate in their continuation through my contributions.

Of course, your politics may align with the Jewish Agency's. Or you may feel that giving through the community overrides your concerns. You may decide that the best thing to do is to give through Federation. You also may decide to give to Federation and also give directly to groups that align with your personal values.

On the other hand, if, like me, you want to support Jewish organizations, but you don't want to support these problematic Israeli institutions, then your task is more difficult. What local Jewish organizations do you want to support? Write them checks. What Israeli organizations do you want to support? Write them a check. What about Jews who don't live in Israel or the US? There are programs that support them as well.

One of the points of the Ethical Jewish Giving Project was to give *consciously*. Now, more than ever, paying attention to what we give and where we give — in the U.S., in Israel, and around the world — really matters. ■

Antisemitism “awareness” or “encouragement”?

By Deborah A. Field and Ellen C. Schwartz



Why would dozens of Jewish organizations, including T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, Habonim Dror North America, and the Union for Reform Judaism, sign a letter opposing a bill called the Antisemitism Awareness Act (AAA, Senate Bill 558)?

On June 3, seven members of Ann Arbor's Jewish community met with aides to Senator Gary Peters, one of the bill's co-sponsors, to explain what is behind this opposition and to express our fears that this bill might encourage, rather than combat, antisemitism.

Convened by interfaith religious educator and local activist Lauren Zinn, our group included people who are members of Beth Israel Congregation, Temple Beth Emeth, and the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation. We have different religious practices, histories, and views on Zionism; several of us have relatives in Israel, some who are currently serving in the IDF. But we are united in our concern about this bill.

Donna Rich Kaplowitz, a participant who is the Co-Director of the Program on Intergroup Relations at U of M, provided context for our opposition by explaining that many Jews are worried about antisemitism, but also about the weaponization of measures taken to combat it. She noted that despite the truism, “two Jews, three opinions,” a group of 300 Jewish University of Michigan faculty and staff managed to find common ground; according to Kaplowitz, they “signed a letter to then-President Santa Ono, clearly expressing that although we take antisemitism seriously as a threat to Jewish life here and around the world, we are extremely concerned as we witness the exploitation of antisemitism to limit student, faculty, and staff civil liberties. We asked the president of UM *not to curtail free speech for the sake of supposedly stopping antisemitism.*”

This is a frightening time for Jews. As we have seen recently in Washington, D.C., and Boulder, CO, the growing normalization of violent hate can be deadly. However, as another group member, Michael Appel, explained to Senator Peters' staffers Kali Fox and Sari Cureton, “We believe that the AAA is not a constructive response to these threats.”

Critics of the bill have pointed out that it relies on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Non-Legally Binding Working Definition of Antisemitism. This

controversial definition, as evident from its title, was intended for educational, not legislative or legal, purposes. It can be interpreted to characterize criticism of Israel as a form of antisemitism, and can be used to silence discussion of Israeli government policies and suppress free speech in general.

The bill itself includes some problematic provisions. Lauren Zinn noted that an exemption was added to this legislation to reassure conservative Christians that they would not be considered antisemitic if they profess and teach that the Jews killed Jesus. This is ironic as that charge of deicide (blaming Jews for the death of Jesus) has long been a pretext for antisemitic violence. As a religious educator, Zinn is concerned that “this bill gives permission to non-Jewish educators to perpetuate antisemitic tropes in religious school classrooms, not to mention in the pews. Thus, a better name for this bill is the *Antisemitism Encouragement Act.*”

In addition to Kaplowitz, Appel, Zinn, and the authors of this article, Laurie White and Manya Arond-Thomas participated in the meeting. We ended with our reiteration of our opposition to the bill. We suggested that Peters' staff revisit the many concrete proposals offered in 2023 National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, issued during the Biden administration, which garnered support from both parties and a variety of Jewish organizations.

Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) introduced the AAA Senate Bill 558 in February and it currently has 44 co-sponsors, including Michigan's other Senator, Elissa Slotkin. The bill was discussed by the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions in May, where it met with resistance from various quarters. The Committee will take up the Bill again in the near future. It must pass the committee to be referred to the whole Senate for a vote. If you would like to join our effort to oppose this bill, please contact Lauren Zinn at laurenzinn@gmail.com ■

Resources for Further Reading
Joint Letter to the US Senate Regarding the Antisemitism Awareness Act, from the organization New Jewish Narrative.

T'ruah: “Criticism of Israel and Antisemitism: How to Tell Where One Ends and the Other Begins.”

2023 National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, in the Biden White House Archives

For a perspective favoring the bill, see Jewish Federations of North America. ■



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Feature

Michigan to the world, and back

By Ari Smith

At an event for a book written by a world-famous journalist, you expect to hear stories about their career. Perhaps what sparked their interest in the profession, how they became leaders in their field, awards they've won, the celebrities and politicians they've interviewed.

At the May 20 event at Zingerman's Roadhouse for Charles Eisendrath's recently expanded memoir *Downstream from Here: A Foreign Correspondent Discovers Home*, there was very little mention of his 30 years as director of the University of Michigan's Wallace House Center for Journalists, or the founding of the Livingston Awards, often referred to as the Pulitzer Prize for the young. Mr. Eisendrath instead brought guests away from the accolades and into the fullness of his life. He seemed more proud of his Master Canoeist certification from a summer camp as a teenager than any of his scoops, and disappointed that his wife Julia had discouraged him from bringing a commemorative paddle to the event.

That's not to say that Eisendrath's work was ignored — attendees were treated to a story describing how he was the onsite reporter for *Time* during the 1973 Chilean coup, and became the first person to interview the new dictator of the country, Augusto Pinochet. Even that tale, however, spent more time discussing the ways of ensuring your reports made it out of the country than it did the coup or interview. (It turns out that the best method is to bring a suitcase full of ladies' undergarments and stockings to bribe the Telex and telephone operators.)

Instead of reading a chapter or giving a summary of his book, Eisendrath chose to use a slideshow and tell stories about each photograph, with topics ranging from Thomas Jefferson's tariffs and the domestic maple sugar industry, the number of second homes in America (seven million, though this statistic is not broken down by usage), to Elsie, a favorite tree on his farm. A personable, engaging, and dapper speaker, Eisendrath encouraged interruptions and questions, but spun his tales so well that his audience was happy to simply see where he led them next.

All these stories may seem disparate but were woven together through the family's second home in East Jordan, Michigan, named Overlook Farm. Purchased in 1944 by Eisendrath's parents William and Erna in part to get away from Erna's parents, Eisendrath and his young family traveled there following the 1973 Chilean coup. In 1975, the Eisendraths began to split their time between Overlook Farm and their home in Ann Arbor, where Eisendrath worked as a professor. Born in Chicago, Eisendrath's affection for the Midwest and

was the story of Eisendrath's "ancestor room," the playroom at the Overlook Farm where on a rainy spring day, as the family was "trapped in an envelope of moisture," they decided to go into the attic to explore



Charles Eisendrath

the trunks that "go back to God-knows-when." From these trunks, they pulled photographs and heirlooms to cover the walls in a gallery of history. It includes the portrait of Eisendrath's great-grandfather who bears a face you wouldn't want to buy a used car from, and what Eisendrath refers to as a "trash fish," both just as important and part of the family history. "You can't go in [the room] without feeling different about *something*," Eisendrath says.

You may be forgiven at this point for thinking that this event and indeed the book itself are about breaking away from the fame, the career, and the fast-paced nature of daily life to a slow, family-focused existence in Northern Michigan. In reality, however, it's about the richness and depth of life and experience. Eisendrath's journalistic experiences covering three wars, vice presidential campaigns, and the heroin trade are on equal footing with a shoe with a nail in it. They're all memorable days in his life. There is no shunning of one experience over the other, but an embrace of the vastness of who we are and can be. Our society so often focuses on the professional, asking children what they want to be when they grow up and thinking that "so what do you do?" is the best question to get to know someone. Even when a person finds something they love, that they are skilled in, that brings them happiness and satisfaction, they often feel locked in and unable to find new avenues for joy and learning.

In a long and rich life, new paths lead to experiences without losing what has been learned. Eisendrath's memoir is about homecoming in a literal sense, but also about coming home to yourself, and discovering and rediscovering who you are and can be.

Dorsten: An identity and family history that are inextricably linked

Excerpted from Downstream from Here: A Foreign Correspondent Discovers Home by Charles R. Eisendrath (Mission Point Press, 2024), Pages 124–126, originally published in the International Herald Tribune, June 16, 1999.

The letter came from a stranger in a German town I had never heard of. Would I please inform a local history group about my family and an ancestor who had led the Jewish community 160 years ago? It sounded like the sort of study Americans make of long-

lost Indian tribes. Bemused with a new status as anthropological curiosity, I complied — and stumbled into a 10-year reconciliation with history.

My reply did not amount to much. Like most Americans, I knew three sentences-worth about where and what I came from. Anyone named Eisendrath is related because they all — 23, lore has it — came to the United States in 1848, bound for Chicago. By the 1930s, their huge numbers had inspired a sociology thesis and the Eisendrath Cousins Club, 3,000 strong, had taken a complaint directly to President Paul von Hindenburg about an upstart named Adolf Hitler. He was, said the club, giving a bad name to good Germans everywhere — Chicago included.

I did not expect much in return. But what arrived was *Jews in Dorsten*, a 301-page hardback with an entire chapter on "Die Eisendrath-Story" and a family tree going back to the 18th century. The progenitor couple, Samson and Julia, had borne all the children.

German records disputed the number (birth ledgers listed 18, not 23) and also the legend that all had left Europe.

That should have warned me that comfy notions about being completely American, and entirely removed from the Holocaust, were about to dissolve. But for me, denial was a natural extension of a 1940s and '50s upbringing with Christmas instead of Hannukah, Israel as a foreign (unvisited) country, and religious training left to the family maid, a Lutheran. Yet we called ourselves Jewish.

If you happen to be a nonpracticing, "assimilated" Jew with a German background, the Holocaust tends to blot out the idea of a single point of origin, as if blood had obliterated your birth certificate. Only gradually did I realize the huge effort going into not knowing something.

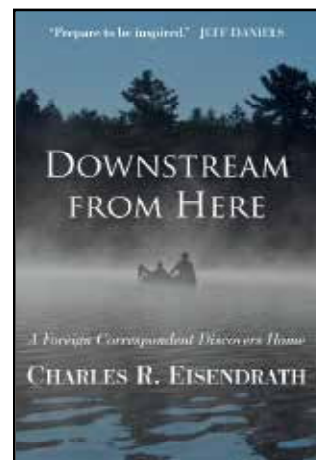
Did I have *Jews in Dorsten* translated? No. Yet the book fascinated me. I spent hours with it — the way a child might, looking at the pictures, puzzling out bits of a language, having parts read to me. Equally oddly, I did not look up the town on a map. I had made at least 20 trips through Amsterdam airport between the day I opened the letter postmarked Dorsten 1988 and last spring. Even then, I went only because business called in Düsseldorf, a half-hour away.

At the door of the Jewish Museum of Westphalia stood an Ursuline nun who had founded it and co-authored the book. Her name was outlandish for someone in her position: Eichmann, as in Adolf.

But Sister Johanna bore no genealogical link to the "angel of death" at Auschwitz. After retiring as revered headmistress of the local convent school, she had mustered a platoon of former students and civics buffs in a cause. They would force the town to amend a planned municipal history to include the 30 or so Jewish families that had lived there.

Her personal story partially explained why. A Jewish mother. A father whose Catholicism had protected the family until 1944, when her mother was packed off to a concentration camp, and Johanna, confirmed Catholic at age 10,

was nevertheless drafted into forced labor. At the end of the war, a harrowing escape from the Russians, who detained her as a blonde, blue-eyed Aryan look-alike just as



the Nazis had enslaved her because she was Jewish enough.

We were sudden, kindred spirits. It forced astonished reappraisal of everything, including a face that wore 74 years with neither apology nor excuse. I had had no intention of imparting my distrust of museums of the Holocaust, slavery, and other tragedies. The belief that while they inform, they also inspire vengeance is unpopular even in America.

Yet here, in Holocaust heartland, the creator of one of the few Jewish outposts volunteered that she would not permit her center to emphasize how Germany's Jews had been destroyed. Instead, it emphasized how they had lived. And there was something familiar about this nun, particularly the eyes. They were Eisendrath eyes.

Then it happened. Would I please add my children to the family tree? "This is where I come in," she said, pointing. "My grandmother married an Eisendrath. I grew up thinking them special because only one family in the world had that name."

It has taken me a year to absorb all that. Personal history no longer begins in North America. Delusional isolation from the Holocaust has been replaced by something like the angst/relief that haunts children (even some Jewish children) after learning the truth about Santa Claus.

But gone, too, is the paralysis. Out of the vapors stepped my new cousin, the nun, who inspired a sad, strong compulsion to feel more Jewish than I had imagined possible, and more German than seemed permissible. ■



the generations of his family who have called it home shines through.

A particular highlight of the evening

Kosher Cuisine

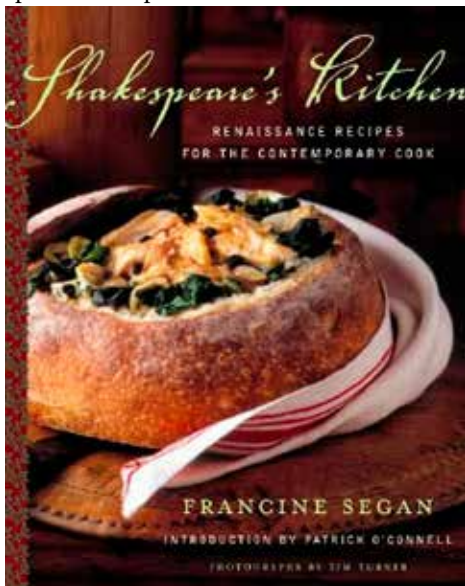
Love and hospitality

By Lonnie Sussman

Last month I felt firmly in the grip of the 1960s and the 1970s. As I thought about this July issue the sense of time hit me again. We are in the middle of the year 2025, which is also the middle of this decade! We are a quarter of the way through this century! Grab gusto and joy every day. Remember to say “I love you” often. Smile and say hi to strangers. Open the door for the people behind you at the store or library and return your shopping carts.

Since it's possible to think of more than one thought at a time, I'm still thinking about 50 years ago. We recently went to the 50-year celebration of the founding of the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor. Such an amazing turnout and so much excitement seeing everyone. We had our three children go to HDS and now three of the grandchildren have also gone. This era for our family is over but the imprint on all our lives continues.

Fifty years ago Chabad came to Ann Arbor with the arrival of Rabbi Aharon and Esther Goldstein. I met them soon after their arrival and have been amazed by the impact they, and now their grown children, make on our community. Have you learned with them? Have your children loved Camp Gan Israel? Did you get a visit in the hospital or a Shabbat challah or flowers or an invitation to Shabbat or holiday dinner? Come join this celebration on September 6, to honor the Goldsteins and to help the next 50 years of Chabad House of Ann Arbor continue its mission to support and celebrate being Jewish. Now, on to some recipes from the past and the present.



Kale Crunch Salad

Busy in Brooklyn (busyinbrooklyn.com) by Chanie

Serves 6

This is a great site for kosher recipes. Thank you to Shternie Zwiebel for sharing it with me.

- 4 cups kale, chopped
- 2 cups shredded red cabbage
- 1 cup pomegranate seeds (or swap in dried cranberries)
- ¼ cup roasted and salted sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds
- ½ cup slivered almonds
- ½ cup crunchy rice noodles (La Choy is kosher)

For the dressing:

- ½ cup olive oil
- 3 tbs balsamic vinegar
- 3 tbs honey
- 1 tbs Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Use a large platter or bowl and mix in the kale and shredded cabbage. Top with the rest of the salad ingredients. Use a small bowl to mix the ingredients for the dressing. It should become thickened. Mix in the dressing just before serving.

Cucumber with Raisins with Coriander Vinaigrette

The Philosopher's Kitchen by Francine Segan
Serves 4

This recipe is connected to Pythagoras (he of the theorem that I think we studied in a math class. That was about as long ago as the sixth century, B.C.E., when he lived) Pythagoras was a vegetarian who stressed diet to live a healthy physical and mental life. He lived to be over 100.

- 1 large cucumber
- 2 oz feta cheese
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 2 tbs fresh cilantro leaves plus more for garnish (or switch to parsley)
- 2 tbs sherry vinegar or muscatel or other fortified wine
- 1 tsp honey
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ tsp ground coriander
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 tbs golden raisins

Cut the cucumber in half lengthwise and scape out the seeds. Coarsely grate the cucumber and reserve in a serving bowl. Use a food processor to puree the cheese, cream, cilantro, vinegar, honey, lemon juice, oil and coriander until smooth. Add the salt and pepper and toss the vinaigrette with the grated cucumber. Top the salad with the raisins and garnish with more cilantro (or parsley).

Bitter Greens with Ginger-Date Vinaigrette

The Philosopher's Kitchen by Francine Segan
Serves 4

This book and recipe is part of my time travel to the past — in this case, way in the past.

Quick story: I belong to the Waterman Lecture Series that raises funds for scholarships at University of Michigan. There are four lunches and lectures a year and all the speakers have been very interesting. Our last lunch and lecture featured Francine Segan, an excellent speaker and, it so happens, a cookbook writer. I found two of her research books on old recipes and quotes from philosophers, poets, and others, and her take on modern ingredients to mimic these recipes. This recipe comes from Apicius, a Roman from the first century C.E. He wrote the oldest known Western cookbook. The recipe for the dressing calls for “liquamen,” a fermented fish sauce. Okay, let's leave that out. He added spices from Ethiopia, Syria, and Libya, and then honey to the dressing. Here's the more modern take.

Use about 6 cups of greens — the author uses arugula and milder lettuces. The dressing consists of 3 tbs red wine vinegar (or your choice), 3 sliced dates, ½ tsp cumin seeds, 1 tbs grated fresh ginger, and 1 tbs honey. Blend in a food processor until well combined. Then slowly add ¼ cup of olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper. If

you like, slice a small red onion into rounds and marinate the rounds in about 2 tbs of the dressing. Add the dressing to the greens and top with the marinated onions.

Herb Tart

Shakespeare's Kitchen by Francine Segan

Serves 4–5

This is another of her books, this one based on Shakespeare's time period, and each recipe has a quote from one of the plays. This quote comes from *All's Well That Ends Well*: “We may pick a thousand sallets ere we light on such another herb.” I don't understand what this means but Segan explains that herbs in that era meant edible leafy vegetables as well as herbs, root vegetables, and salad lettuces. I think it sounds like a fun way to make a salad.

- Pie dough, bought or home made
- 2 medium onions, finely chopped
- 2 tbs olive oil
- 1½ tbs minced fresh ginger
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1½ pounds assorted baby greens, finely chopped (use salad greens, beet greens, spinach, or other tender leaves)
- 1 cup finely chopped assorted herbs like parsley, mint, thyme, and basil
- 1 cup grated semisoft cheese
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1/2 cup currants (or raisins)
- 1 tsp sugar
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Roll out the dough into a pie pan and refrigerate for about 20 minutes

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees and then bake the dough for about 5 minutes. Place the onions and olive oil in a large sauce pan and cook over low heat for about 10 minutes. Next, add the ginger and garlic and cook for another minute. Raise the burner to high heat, add the greens and herbs, and cook for a minute or until wilted. Remove the greens and herbs from the hot pan and add the cheese, beaten egg, currants, and sugar, and mix well. Season to taste with the salt and pepper. Pour the mixture into the pie shell and bake for 30 minutes or until the crust is golden brown.

Seared Tuna with Onion-Raisin Marmalade

The Philosopher's Kitchen by Francine Segan

Serves 4

Another interesting recipe from this book that includes references to ancient philosophers or traditions. In this case the connection is the spice, coriander. It's mentioned in many sources including the Bible. The Romans introduced it into northern Europe, and it was used for both flavoring and preserving meats.

2 large red onions, thinly sliced

1 tbs sugar

¼ cup golden raisins

2 tbs olive oil

1 tbs honey

1 celery rib with leaves, thinly sliced

¼ cup sherry vinegar

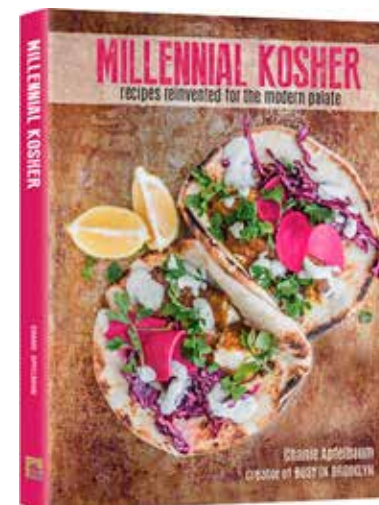
Salt and pepper to taste

4 tuna steaks, 1/2 inch thick, about 8 ounces each (I make smaller portions of about 4 ounces but have lots of side dishes)

¼ cup coriander seeds, coarsely crushed to put on both sides of the tuna steaks

2 large tbs minced fresh parsley.

Sauté one of the onions, the sugar, and the



raisins in the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat until golden, about 10 minutes. Add ½ cup water and the honey, cover and simmer another 8–10 minutes. Add the remaining onion, the celery, and the vinegar. Uncover and simmer for about 4 minutes or until the vinegar evaporates. Cover again and simmer another 8–10 minutes until the vegetables are very soft. Season with the salt and pepper and set aside until the tuna is grilled. Use the grill or broiler, and salt and pepper the tuna, press the coriander seeds into both sides of the steak, and grill for 2 minutes on each side for medium. Arrange either on a large serving plate or individually and top with the marinade. Sprinkle the parsley on top.

Sweet Potato-Walnut Salad on Arugula

Moosewood Restaurant Cooking for Health by The Moosewood Collective, 2009

Serves 4–6

I guess I'm not completely done with the “Hippy stage” of cooking.

Dressing

- ½ cup plain yogurt
- 2 tbs white vinegar
- 2 tbs chopped sun-dried tomatoes, packed in olive oil
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp salt and ¼ tsp pepper

Mix all of these ingredients in a blender until smooth.

- 3 large sweet potatoes (about 2 pounds or 6 cups)
- 2 cups trimmed and halved green beans
- 1 cup toasted and chopped walnuts
- ½ cup minced fresh parsley
- 4 oz arugula (about 8 cups) or a salad blend of your choice
- Salt and pepper to taste

Peel the sweet potatoes, cut into ¾ inch cubes, and steam until tender (I would keep the skin on after washing them and I would roast them rather than steaming). Then steam the green beans until tender. Put the sweet potatoes, green beans, walnuts, and parsley in a large bowl with the dressing and toss. Place the arugula (and/or other greens) on a serving platter, and add the vegetable and dressing mixture on top. Serve while the potatoes are warm or at room temperature, up to you. Feel free to swap out the beans for snap peas. ■

Restaurant review

Day trip dining adventure: Tecumseh Brewing Co. and Hidden Lake Gardens

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.

Many readers of a certain age may remember the family tradition of taking a drive on a Sunday afternoon. It could be to drop in on relatives, or to go on an adventure. Whether with your family or friends, what could be more perfect than driving through pastoral countryside on a beautiful summer day, enjoying a



delicious lunch, and then hiking in the woods? It's time to log off and tune out the noise, turn up the tunes and head out to a new destination. When you have a free afternoon, we encourage you to top off the tank (or charge up the battery) and head out to the Tecumseh Brewing Co. (TBC) and the beautiful Hidden Lake Gardens in nearby Tipton to walk it off.

On the day we visited, it was just warm enough to make us think about dining outside on the patio, but there was still just enough chill in the air to encourage the decision to choose a high-top table inside, across from the bar. Our foursome was promptly greeted by our upbeat server and offered drinks as we settled in. We were thrilled to see cans of old-fashioned Faygo pop on the menu. We indulged in a couple of Rock & Ryes and a can of Red Pop, while our dining companion enjoyed a pint of the brewing company's Long Black Train, a coffee-hued Cascade-hopped India Pale Ale. Tecumseh Brewing Company (TBC) brews all of their beers on-site. While they are known for their beers, they also make cider. After our inquiries, we were offered a sample of their hard cider with blood orange and cara cara orange. It was crisp and tart with the essence of orange — delicious, but one sip was enough for the drivers!

TBC is a casual restaurant with a bar-style menu. We arrived hungry and were ready to jump in and sample the offerings — three appetizers and three entrees to share between our four diners. Our group swooned as our loaded nachos, the classic bar snack, arrived smothered in a smoked gouda cheese sauce, flavorful diced chicken (thigh), black bean corn salsa, fresh jalapenos, and standout smoky tomato salsa. Toppings were fresh and plentiful, with no naked chips left at the

bottom of the basket, thanks to the molten cheese sauce. Next came the Gouda Mac & Cheese, which was offered in a few different meat and cheese versions. We chose the classic to use as a flavor baseline. The pasta was cooked well but it had the same smoked gouda sauce as the nachos. It fell short of our flavor and texture expectations, but kids might enjoy it. A delightful "Greek Bruscetta" rounded out our trio of appetizers. Toasted baguette from Tecumseh Bread & Pastry was topped with garlic sauce, cucumber, tomatoes, red onion, and feta cheese with za'atar seasoning. The toppings on this craveable offering were very fresh and were in perfect harmony. It disappeared as quickly as it arrived.

Just as we finished up our appetizers, our entrees arrived. The Holy Garlic Smash Burger was a messy joy to eat! Two Angus beef patties were smashed into white onion, and topped with Swiss cheese, tomato, red onion, and TBC garlic sauce on a fresh challah bun. Flavor on flavor!

The chipotle turkey Reuben, made with shaved turkey breast, smoky chipotle sauce, coleslaw, and smoked cheddar on toasted sourdough, was surprisingly good. The quality and flavors of the ingredients shined, including the grilled sourdough bread. One highlight of the entrees was the house-made onion dip that accompanied the side of potato chips, which was worth the trip on its own. We finished up with the chicken fajita quesadillas. Fajita-marinated chicken with sauteed peppers, onions, house chipotle sauce, and shredded queso cheese doesn't sound special, but it was, and the leftovers reheated beautifully at home for lunch the next day. It was apparent that TBC puts in the effort of preparing pub fare better. You can't tinker with some things too much, but the flavors, seasoning, and ingredients are a notch or two above expectations without changing the essence of the food. If bar food at a brewery isn't to your liking, we noticed several other nearby spots in downtown Tecumseh, and we will have to go back and try them another day.

With full bellies, we headed about 15 minutes down the road to our second stop of the day — Hidden Lake Gardens. A surprising number of Ann Arborites have never heard of it — a hidden gem just under an hour away. It's Michigan State University's Botanical Gardens, and it's like a mixture between the Arb and the Matthaei Botanical Gardens at U of M. Something different is the Sky Walk, which is a quarter mile bridge walk, suspended in the trees. We chose to have a heartier walk after our big meal, and left the car near the Conservatory, though we could have parked closer to the Sky Walk path. We ambled through the hosta garden that had not yet hit its peak, and made our way uphill to the Sky Walk. It was not extremely strenuous, but walking



on an unpaved trail uphill may be a bit of a challenge for some. Our efforts were rewarded by amazing views from the Sky Walk.

We walked back to the conservatory and visited the Bonsai Collection, along with the domed micro-climates. Our last stop of the afternoon was the gift shop, where we used our admission fees towards a membership, as we will definitely be back again. Admission is \$10 per adult, but a household membership is \$80 and includes up to

6 guests. They also participate in a reciprocal association that includes Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum members. On our 50-minute drive back to the city, the car was noticeably quieter than it had been on the way out. Tired feet, full bellies, a bit of nature in our souls — we were happy.

<https://tecumsehbrewingco.com/>

<https://ipf.msu.edu/hidden-lake-gardens> ■





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Community

Visit to a Jewish tomb in Al-Qosh

Rabbi Asher Lopatin, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

Two months ago, I was invited, along with Eileen Freed, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, to an interfaith conference in Erbil, Iraq, in the autonomous region of Kurdistan.

Our Chaldean friends in Michigan were excited for us to visit their homeland, and, indeed, when we arrived, we met up with about 30 Chaldeans from Michigan. I was excited to be in Kurdistan not only to help deepen relations back home between the Jewish and Chaldean communities, but also because it would enable me to visit the Tomb of the Prophet Nahum, whose burial place had been a pilgrimage site for thousands of Iraqi Jews over the centuries. Every Shavuot, which we just celebrated at the beginning of June, Jews from all over Iraq would pay their respects to the prophet who, at the height of the Assyrian empire (based in Nineve, now Mosul), predicted the empire's fall because of their cruelty to and destruction of the Israelite Kingdom.

In the Book of Nahum (contained in the Hebrew Scriptures as part of the Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets (Trei Asar), Nahum is described as from Al-Qosh, and today his tomb is in the Iraqi city of Al-Qosh. Today's Al-Qosh is a charming



Asher Lopatin says the morning prayers (with tefillin) at the Tomb of Nahum

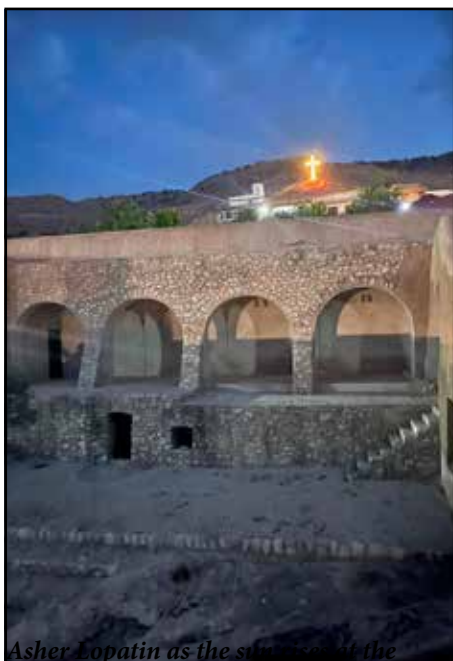
majority area.

The complex contains several rooms, including one dedicated to Nahum's sister Sarah, who is also buried there — according to Iraqi Jewish tradition — and other rooms with information on the site and on the fate of the Iraqi Jewish community which emigrated, almost in its entirety, to Israel by the early 1950s. I was honored to be able to pray the morning prayers at sunrise in the tomb, feeling the spirit of Nahum.

Nahum the Prophet was right: Assyria's cruel empire was destroyed (by the Babylonians). In its place, today, stands an incredibly tolerant and advanced Kurdistan, an autonomous zone within the Federation of Iraq (not as tolerant ...). Nahum would be proud that his tomb is given so much love and dedicated care by the Chaldean community, and that Assyria has given way to a Kurdistan where I didn't think twice about being openly Jewish. Hopefully one day, thousands of Jews will once again come to Al-Qosh to visit Nahum and his sister Sarah's tombs, and to celebrate mutual respect and love with the Chaldean residents of Al-Qosh, and with the millions of Muslims of Kurdistan and beyond. Speedily in our days! In the meantime, this trip to Kurdistan and Al-Qosh will help deepen our relations with the great Chaldean community in Michigan, numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

Looking ahead, the JCRC of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor hopes to establish a Chaldean-Jewish Alliance where we can work together, just as we are hoping to work with other non-Jewish communities, to partner in making this a better Washtenaw County and Michigan for everybody.

Rabbi Asher Lopatin is the Director of Community Relations at the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. To contact him or get involved with the JCRC (Jewish Community Relations Committee), email asher@jewishannarbor.org. ■



Asher Lopatin at the site of the Tomb of Nahum complex

Christian Chaldean city, just 60 miles from Erbil (with modern highways and speed cameras!), with a beautiful monastery built into the mountain, and a wonderful female mayor — the only female mayor in Iraq outside of Kurdistan. Even though Al-Qosh is technically not in the region of Kurdistan, it is controlled and protected by the brave Pashmerga Kurdish soldiers. I felt totally comfortable wearing my kippa as we entered the city early in the morning — an hour before sunrise. The tomb was recently restored in a multi-million-dollar project by ARCH International, a nonprofit that restores and protects heritage sites after a conflict, and it is the pride of the city of Al-Qosh. What an incredible demonstration of interfaith solidarity: a traditional Jewish site, venerated and secured by Christians in a Muslim-

Annual Meeting continued from page 5

Jonathan Trobe moved to Ann Arbor from Miami, Florida, in 1986.

Thanks to the dedicated volunteer service of the Board of Directors, and the more than 660 generous members of the local Jewish community, the Federation announced \$1.6 million in allocations from the 2025 Annual Community Campaign, a record high. The campaign works to enrich Jewish life locally, in Israel, and around the world — to that end, three organizations received allocations from the campaign for the first time this year: in Israel, the Lone Soldier Center, which supports those who come to Israel from elsewhere

to volunteer in the IDF; locally, the Ann Arbor area chapter of BBYO, to enhance Jewish programming for local teens; and the Recovery Seder, which held its third successful event this past Passover and has demonstrated a tremendous and sustaining value to the community. In addition, the Federation allocated funds to join the national Jewish Council for Public Affairs for the first time, allowing access to a vast network of civic and political advocacy resources to address major societal issues pertaining to the Jewish community.

The Federation aims to engage a diverse swath of the local community in all its activities. To learn more about the allocations process, Board of Directors, or opportunities to get involved, visit JewishAnnArbor.org. ■

Donor Advised Funds at the Jewish Community Foundation

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

Did you know there's a simple way to support a charitable organization you care about and the broader Jewish community in greater Ann Arbor with a single donation? The local Jewish Community Foundation makes this process simple through its Donor Advised Fund (DAF) program. A DAF, available to anyone to open, offers a streamlined way for individuals to maximize their charitable giving, while also providing flexibility and tax advantages.

A DAF operates like a philanthropic savings account. Once you open a DAF, you can contribute assets, often as a single large transaction, to receive an immediate tax deduction. Once the funds are in the DAF, you can recommend their disbursement to a charitable organization of your choosing, regardless of whether it's local, or whether it supports Jewish causes. The Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Ann Arbor manages the fund for you and carries out your disbursement recommendations, making the process efficient and hassle-free.

The Foundation's DAF program is an accessible option for those looking to give charitably over time. A DAF can be established with just \$5,000, and those funds can be disbursed over any period of time in increments of \$100 or more — a lower and more accessible threshold than many similar programs.

For those looking to ensure that their philanthropic legacy lives on after their lifetime, donors have the option to establish a succession plan for their DAF. Such plans can

specify that any remaining monies be distributed to specific charitable organizations as a legacy gift, or they can designate family members to continue recommending grants from the DAF. A succession plan not only safeguards the donor's values and intentions but also, if the donor chooses, enables their family to continue their charitable mission with clarity and purpose.

Beyond the benefits to the individual, a DAF offers opportunity to make a difference for the Jewish community broadly. Disbursement grants, issued under the Foundation's name, may be sent to a wide range of nonprofits, promoting a message of Jewish generosity to organizations that may never have thought about the Jewish community before. Additionally, holding a DAF with the Jewish Community Foundation means that the administrative fees from those funds stay in the community. The revenue from the fees is directly re-invested by the Foundation and has supported major Ann Arbor area community initiatives like the Life & Legacy program, the 2023 Community Study, and a new community-wide Jewish event platform called JLive, which is expected to debut locally in fall 2025.

If you would like more information about opening a Donor Advised Fund with the Jewish Community Foundation, or creating a succession plan for your current DAF, please reach out to the Jewish Federation's Life & Legacy Manager, Osnat Gafni-Pappas, at osnat@jewishannarbor.org (734-773-3538). The Jewish Community Foundation is overseen by the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. ■

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Second Sight, poetry by Daryl Hafter

Interview by Ellen C. Schwartz

Daryl Hafter was born in New Jersey and grew up on the east and west coasts. She earned a BA from Smith College and later received a PhD in French history from Yale. She taught in the Department of History and Philosophy at Eastern Michigan University for 35 years, retiring in 2004.

The poems in her new book were submitted to a contest run by the Finishing Line Press. Although they didn't win the contest, the press wanted to publish them, along with the watercolors Daryl had painted to go along with them.

The following is an interview I did with Daryl on May 13, after the publication of her first book of poetry, *Second Sight* (Georgetown, KY: Finishing Line Press, 2025). Daryl and I taught together at Eastern Michigan University for many years; we had a joint bat mitzvah in February of 2023.

Ellen C. Schwartz: Where did you grow up? Did that environment have any part in your writing of poetry?

Daryl Hafter: Yes! Like many other families during World War II, we moved to many places. I had already gone to six grammar schools by the time I got to high school. As an only child, I was always reading. When we landed in Seattle, it was an exciting place. My parents gathered an inspiring group of friends including librarians, writers, and a poet named Alice Frost (no relation to Robert). So publishing was always a goal for me.

We later moved to a utopian colony in New Jersey — rural and communitarian — called Free Acres. Close to New York City, in a time of much artistic and intellectual ferment, Free Acres was a place to which many free-thinkers, artists, and ideologues gravitated. It was an environment which fostered creativity.

ECS: When did you first begin writing poetry? What were your first poems about?

DH: I started writing in fifth grade. Even read today, those poems are not bad! They had punch, rhymes, and sass, about experiences and contradicting my parents.

ECS: Did you study literature in college?

DH: Some French literature and English classics. But not poetry. I felt as if all I needed to do was to read modern poets like T.S. Eliot and W.H. Auden. Sylvia Plath was in the class ahead of me. There was a poetry competition, and she won first place. I got second. Looking back, I think that was pretty good.

ECS: You are trained as an historian and taught and wrote about history for your whole adult life. How does your poetry relate to your other life as an historian?

DH: In both cases I am interested in the lived experience of people. History can be something of a religious enterprise: looking at human activity in society, their inventiveness, something divinely ordained. It is a fascinating endeavor, giving you the need to investigate deeply, explore how people managed, and to put that into context. As I was studying the French Revolution in college, I saw the people come to life. That visualization is the heart of history and poetry

and the tie between them. In both cases my writing has become more spare, more direct, less jargon filled. And more visual.

ECS: What influences on your writing can you identify?

DH: Much influence came from my mentors in history. I have been my own mentor in poetry. I learned from reading modern poets like Auden (whom I heard speak at Smith). These poets wrote in blank verse. While both rhymed and unrhymed poetry is getting at the same thing, rhymed poetry is tighter, fitting into a framework. It restricts you as a writer, giving you discipline that can override meaning. I do like using internal rhymes; that is one of the things that distinguishes poetry from prose.

ECS: What are some sources of inspiration for your writing?

DH: First, nature; it must be a carryover from my days in Free Acres. Second, I also think religion is important, especially sermons. They expand the universe and show the world in its poetic form. And third, the Torah. At this point, I have come to feel that it is mine. This is in part due to my adult bat mitzvah (February 2023). The words of the Torah are fascinating and mysterious; they arouse questions and ideas to wrestle with.

ECS: Some of your poems consider happy events — your bat mitzvah, the dawn of a new year — and tragic ones — a friend's loss of a child, another friend's suicide. Is joy or sorrow more of an inspiration to write, for you?

DH: Both are. Something that moves you so the emotions and intellect are inseparable, speaking as one voice.

ECS: Which poem in the book is your favorite? Why? Which one do you consider the most successful? Why? Are they the same poem? If not, why not?

DH: The best, technically, is "The Old Ones." It is imaginative and focused and has a message. My favorite is "the theological debate"; it jumps off the page, and deals in an unsolved way with a very profound dilemma. It is engaging, and seems to speak aloud because of its dialogue form. Other favorites are "The Happy New Year," because of the imagery of the trees dancing, and "Learning the Torah," which I wrote as I was preparing for my bat mitzvah.

ECS: What else would you like readers to know about you and your poetry?

DH: I have winnowed my poetry down to essentials. The descriptions need to fit the theme and make it deeper. The phrases should be clear and focused, not just decorations for their own sake. I guess I've come to the same conclusions about my history writing: no digressions to show off or muddy the point. Some people have said, "I'm not going to get your book because I can't understand poetry." But everyone who reads it is pleasantly surprised that they, themselves, enter into the poems, and see a new connection or perhaps confirm an old belief. I say, "Think of a poem as a thing in itself. You don't say about a flower, 'I can't appreciate it because I don't understand it.'"

Daryl will do a reading from *Second Sight* at Beth Israel Congregation on Friday July 18. ■



Daryl Hafter

The Old Ones

By Daryl Hafter

The old ones
live scattered through towns
buying bread and morning papers from the neighborhood grocers
and pacing out the small advantages that come to hand.

What have they to do with graves
placed close as bricks upon a wall
and tenements of gravestones bounded by an iron fence
that separates uncaring factories
from an oasis of the past?

The weighmaster calls:
Who has eighty? Who has ninety?
And the old ones flinch,
pretend they did not hear.
But he sees the telltale owning of that burden.
He calls them
and they find their path.
Frowning and resentful, they go where beds are laid,
each drawn to a narrow couch,
and on the mound sink down,
still muttering through sunken cheeks, their white hair wild with anger.

They lay themselves upon the ground,
and as their spirits filter through the earth,
the brown grains soothe their mouths' complaints
and form a poultice for the brow like earth refining sugar,
and they can reconcile themselves to the snug berth.

Above,
tall gravestones shimmering with Hebrew words
shift slightly and accept another to the City of the Dead.
We look on and see that they belonged, not to us,
but to their generation
and their memories.

HDS 50th

Nearly 300 community members gathered last week as Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor marked its 50th anniversary with a gala celebration honoring the school's legacy and future.

The event recognized Eve and Richard Primus as Dedicated Leaders, Ari and Robert Axelrod as Distinguished Alumni, and Josh Lauffer with the Inspirational Faculty award.

"For 50 years, Hebrew Day School has been a cornerstone of Jewish education in Ann Arbor," said Rav Will Keller, Head of School. "We are committed to



strengthening that foundation for the next 50 years and beyond."

Board President Dr. Monica Woll Rosen outlined the school's vision for expanding enrollment, enhancing facilities, and deepening community connections. The school also announced its recent acceptance into Prizmah's prestigious endowment building program.

Founded in 1975, Hebrew Day School offers a dual-curriculum program integrating general studies with Hebrew language immersion and Jewish studies for kindergarten through fifth-grade students. As it enters its next half-century, the school continues its original mission of blending excellent academics with strong Jewish identity — demonstrating undoubtedly that the Ann Arbor Hebrew Day School is here to stay. ■



The graduate voices: What our fifth graders taught us

By Orit Aviran

Dan Senor recently argued that Jewish day schools are "some of the strongest contributors of a solid Jewish identity." He's right, and what strikes the most about our graduates isn't just that they have Jewish knowledge — it's that they have Jewish confidence.

Each year our fifth graders take it upon themselves to craft an original essay — "I Am Jewish." They try to capture and share their acquired wisdom, while exploring their own forming identity. Reading their essays this summer revealed these are not just academically successful students, but also articulate young people developing into what we call Menschen, embodying the theme (Mensch Qualities) that we explored in depth this year.

At our recent 50th anniversary celebration, distinguished alumnus Robert Axelrod shared how Hebrew Day School became his "second home — a place that was always there no matter what else was happening." He described teachers who "recognized, encouraged, and supported" his creativity, ultimately shaping his career as a screenwriter in Los Angeles. Most telling was his reflection: "The best stories start with strong beginnings, and a strong beginning is exactly what HDS has given my life's story."

That foundation appears clearly in our current graduates' voices.

Yarden, who lived in Israel, sees Jewish identity as opportunity, not obligation: "Being Jewish is a gift and as long as you're alive you should enjoy everything it offers you." His classmate Sara captured the community of Jewish peoplehood: "I think of my Jewish community like a giant family, cheering each other on."

Like Robert Axelrod, who transformed Torah stories into living

room productions with sleeping bags and stuffed animals, Ariella, at 11 years old, grasps the spiritual dimension of Jewish practice: "When I kiss the Torah on Shabbat I am saying thank you to God for everything God has done for me. Being Jewish makes me feel like I have a purpose."

Seth understood Jewish diversity: "Each and every Jew is different and unique ... each Jew can decide how they want to be Jewish, and what is right for them," as did Elie, who appreciated learning from differences: "My classmates are all Jewish in different ways, it's interesting to learn how other people are Jewish."

Parents often tell us how their children bring Hebrew Day School home — teaching siblings Hebrew songs and phrases, asking thoughtful questions about holidays, or bringing home a mitzvah to practice together.

Judah finds simple joy in Jewish traditions: "Dreidel and singing are the main reasons I like [Chanukah], but it's also just a calm and fun holiday." Rose shares this celebration of Jewish experiences: "I have done some extraordinary things because I am Jewish ... Knowing when holidays are near brings me joy," while Eli chose additional meaning beyond ritual observance: "I do celebrate the holidays that are meaningful to me ... because I like to see family and friends."

This summer, as our graduates enter middle school, they carry both academic preparation and something deeper: the understanding that being Jewish connects them to community, purpose, and joy. They know who they are and have the tools to write their own chapters with confidence. As Lilah expressed beautifully: "being Jewish is much more than just a religion; it's a way of life."

These are the graduates we are proud to send into the world — "May they go from strength to strength!"

For more information about the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor visit: hdsaa.org or contact office@hdsaa.org. ■



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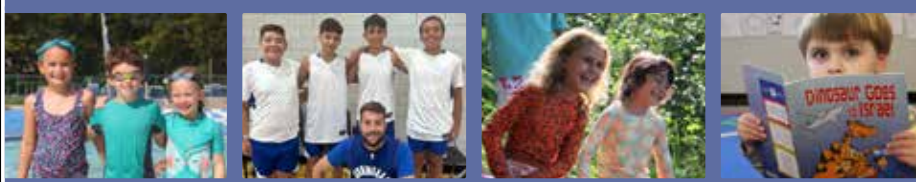
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Feature

Getting Unstuck: Interfaith engagement initiates spiritual growth

By Lauren Zinn, special to the WJN

This is the second installment of a series from Lauren Zinn's book, *Belong to the World, Bring Your Tribe: Reimagining Judaism in the Interspiritual Age*.

I agreed to speak at “The Unstuck Conference: Reviving the Movement for Social Justice, Human Dignity, and the Environment” (organized by Pastor Joe Summers in 2016) because I thought I had a



Lauren I. Zinn, Ph.D., Rev.

lot to say. But when I sat down to write, I was “stuck.” Here’s what I learned about getting “unstuck.”

I grew up in a Conservative Jewish household. I went to a Hebrew School every Monday, Wednesday, and Sunday. My family attended Sabbath services, so I was at the synagogue on Saturdays, too. When I joined the Jewish Youth Group, I was there Saturday evenings as well. I went to Jewish camps in the summer. I lived on a religious kibbutz in Israel during high school. I attended Hebrew University in Jerusalem for a year of college. I thought I would join the Israeli army, marry an Israeli, and live on a kibbutz. Would you be surprised if I told you it didn’t work out that way?

So, what happened?

I fell in love with a man who is not Jewish. God has a sense of humor. As a result, I was exposed to a different way of thinking about the world and my place in it. My marriage led me on a path of interfaith experiences. I led a Jewish-Interfaith congregation, ran an alternative Hebrew School for children of interfaith families, served on the board of an Interfaith Round Table, designed interfaith multi-locale programs, officiated interfaith weddings and b-mitzvahs, organized religion tours and interfaith movie nights for students, coached interfaith couples, and more. Along the way, my relationship with religion and my ideas about teaching developed in unexpected ways.

One such experience occurred at a special conference for Interfaith Educators that included Jews, Christians, and Muslims, “Emerging & Aspiring Religious Educators,” in 2012. In one session, we were asked to go around the circle and each share our biggest fear about “interfaith.” My immediate thought was: “I don’t have any fear.” Until David spoke.

David was 30 years old, training to be a rabbi, and the father of a one-year-old. His biggest fear was that his daughter might not

identify with Judaism, that if she learned about other faiths, she might be attracted to them and identify with a different religion, different from his. When I heard David speak, I realized, “Uh-oh, I do have a fear.” So I spoke up.

My fear is just the opposite, I said. I fear that if I don’t expose my children and my students to interfaith opportunities, they’ll identify too much with Judaism and get stuck; stuck in one religion and stalled in larger interspiritual development. For if there’s one thing I learned, it was that interfaith engagement initiates spiritual growth. Learning about other faith traditions helps us get unstuck from our own. Sometimes we have to cross the line and look at ourselves from the other side.

And, the corollary is also true. This process can work the other way around. Sometimes when we’re out gathering spirituality from different traditions, we need to step back to interpret it. That’s when our own religious roots can be helpful. Maybe they are strengthened by what we see that’s different. Maybe they’re challenged. Maybe we have changed.

At the same conference we were also asked to meet separately with people from our own religion. All the Jews meet here, all the Christians there, and all the Muslims somewhere. Since the Muslims were the most under-represented, if you weren’t sure where to go, you were allowed to go with the Muslims. I almost did.

See, I was upset. In my experience, Judaism was so “we-they” and “us-them” oriented, so over-identified with itself that the Jewish community always seemed to be threatened, not just by the world outside but from within as well. Growing up, my Jewish community was threatened by my parents’ divorce. Threatened by my brother’s sexual orientation. Threatened by my marriage. Threatened by any Otherness. I wasn’t sure I belonged in an “all-only” Jewish group. But I went.

In that circle, I shared my disappointment in the Jewish community for not embracing interfaith education, interfaith marriage, and interfaith dialogue as assets rather than liabilities. Then something unexpected happened. Immediately after, five people rushed over to me offering support and wanting to understand how I saw Judaism.

Later, it hit me.

The very thing for which I’d been disappointed in my tradition — its reluctance to know and accept the Other — was keeping me from Judaism itself. Without realizing it, I’d been stuck in Interfaith, but the willingness of fellow Jews to hear me, released me — just as I released them from their fear of Interfaith.

So how do we keep from getting stuck in religion (whether it’s one, two, three, or none)?

Psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva, who studied “the stranger” both as an outsider and an insider, writes, “Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder. By recognizing him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself, a symptom that precisely turns ‘we’

into a problem ... The foreigner comes in when the consciousness of my difference arises, and he disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners.”

Over-identifying with any one religion, combination of religions, or the exclusion of all religions can keep us from seeing the Other in ourselves. If we keep the walls so high, that we only see the foreigner on the outside, then we rob ourselves of acknowledging the foreigner within, and of growth as a result. We need not throw away religions but more often than not, religion educators are consumed with ensuring continuity and securing identity whenever they feel threatened. And they always feel threatened. Thus, they encourage what I call over-identification, an obsession with religious and ethnic identity that can tend toward nationalism and extremism.

People with an ethnocentric worldview often feel persecuted; it is part of their worldview.

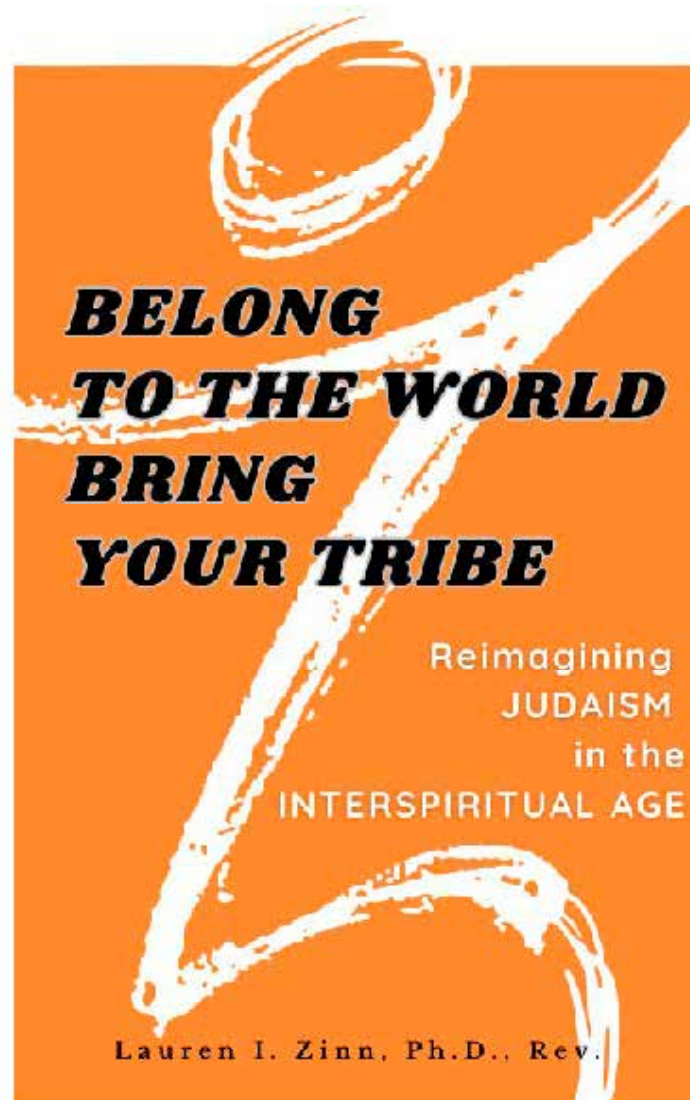
One way to counter over-identification is to shift (not replace) the value placed on “identity” to something else. I propose that it shift to “integrity.” Paradoxically, our religious traditions provide the wisdom for doing so.

To be a person of integrity is to be responsible and more. Jewish sages taught that the Hebrew word for responsibility, *achrayut*, gives clues to its deeper meaning. Alan Morinis, in *Everyday Holiness*, tells us the root *achar* means “after,” implying that responsibility

asks us to consider the consequences of our decisions and actions before we make them. The same root but with a different vowel, *acher*, means “other.” It implies that responsibility is bearing the burden of and caring for the Other. If we emphasize integrity over (not instead of) identity, we come closer to what religions are good at — allowing us to make the world better for everyone with justice and mercy for all.

A class I was teaching read a study on Jewish identity whose authors defined being Jewish as someone who stands up against antisemitism. In response, one of my students said, “Standing up against antisemitism doesn’t make you Jewish, it makes you a good person.” That is what I mean by integrity over identity.

Living in an Interspiritual Age calls for teaching and upholding religion with new forms and embracing a wider set of values, where something like integrity gets more weight than identity. Of course “identity” matters, but its responsibility is focused on the tribe, whereas “integrity” opens our responsibility to our tribe and other tribes. “Others” include ourselves, our tribes and all people, of all religions and ethnic groups. Integrity over identity strengthens world-centric thinking. This is a feature of the new consciousness emerging where religious/ethnic identity is included and valued but also transcended. ■



TBE events in July

Events and services are both in person and/or virtual. July has a reduced summer schedule. Please see www.templebethemeth.org for full details, location information, and links.

Wine & Cheese Shabbat Reception

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

Lay-led Shabbat Service

Fridays at 6:30 p.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.

Shabbat morning Torah study

Saturdays at 9:30 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

Fridays at 5:30 p.m.

Washtenaw County's only Judaica Shop!

Coping with Chronic Illness and Pains

Tuesday, July 1, at 4 p.m.

WTBE Historical Novel Reading Group

Wednesday, July 9, at 1 p.m.

Bereavement Group

Tuesday, June 15, 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.

LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck

Friday, July 18, at 5:30 p.m. ■

July events at Beth Israel

Beth Israel welcomes Melanie Gorman, Director of Engagement & Programming

Beth Israel is pleased to announce that Melanie Gorman will be our new Director of Engagement and Programming effective June 11. Melanie comes to us with a wealth of experience, knowledge, and enthusiasm for planning and implementing meaningful programs and building relationships in the Jewish community.



Melanie Gorman

Melanie has previously served at the Membership Engagement Director at Temple Kol Ami, Program Director for Congregation B'nai Moshe, and Program Coordinator at Meer Senior Apartments (part of Jewish Senior Life), all in the Metro Detroit area. Most recently, Melanie has worked for the William Davidson Foundation, where among other things, she was responsible for planning team-building programs, outings, and Jewish Holiday programs. Melanie is also an active volunteer with Hadassah, helping them to build and grow their younger women's group in the Detroit area.

Melanie has a degree in Elementary Education from Michigan State University, and she taught at Hillel Day School early in her career. She lives in West Bloomfield with her husband Scott (of 29 years) in their recently empty nest (during the school year). They have two grown sons, Noah and Max, who both live in the Ann Arbor area. In her free time, Melanie enjoys spending time with family and friends, hiking Michigan's beautiful trails, reading, and singing.

Tot Shabbat

Saturday, July 12, at 11 a.m.

Tot Shabbat is for children through first grade and is held in the Krickstein Youth Library. This session will be led by John McLaughlin.

Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday, July 25, 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.

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.

In Person and Online Services

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.

Minyan

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

Sundays–Thursdays at 7:45 p.m. online only

Friday Evening Services — in person and virtual

Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services — in person and virtual

Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. ■

July Calendar

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

Tuesday 1

Wednesday 2

Thursday 3

Friday 4

Candle Lighting 8:56 p.m.

Saturday 5 Chukat

Havdallah 10:06 p.m.

Sunday 6

Monday 7

Tuesday 8

Wednesday 9

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). 2:00 p.m.

Thursday 10

Playing with Fabric 2: Amster Gallery Quiltwork by Carol Finerman z'l and Anita Liberman-Lampear. At the JCC. 6 p.m.

Friday 11

Candle Lighting 8:54 p.m.

Saturday 12 Balak

Havdallah 10:02 p.m.

Sunday 13

Monday 14

Tuesday 15

Wednesday 16

Yiddish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group, see above): Zoom. 2:00 p.m.

Thursday 17

Friday 18

Candle Lighting 8:49 p.m.

Daryl Hafter reads from Second Sight, BIC. 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 19 Pinchas

Havdallah 9:56 p.m.

Sunday 20

Cantorial Concert at the JCC. 2 p.m.

Monday 21

Tuesday 22

Wednesday 23

Yiddish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group, see above): Zoom. 2:00 p.m.

Thursday 24

Friday 25

Candle Lighting 8:43 p.m.

Saturday 26 Mattot-Massei Rosh Hodesh Av

Havdallah 9:49 p.m.

Sunday 27

Monday 28

Tuesday 29

Wednesday 30

Yiddish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group, see above): Zoom. 2:00 p.m.

Thursday 31

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

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

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

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Quiet Encounter in Kerestir: Remembering Sergeant Omri Cohen

By Shifra Epstein

During a recent visit to Kerestir, Hungary — a town steeped in Jewish history and pilgrimage — I came across something I wasn't expecting. Tucked quietly on a wall of the renovated shrine of Reb Shaya'le, the Kerestirer Rebbe, among centuries-old stones and signs of spiritual life, was a small memorial sticker. It bore the name of Sergeant Omri Cohen, a young soldier from the Givati Brigade of the Israeli Defense Forces, born in 2004, killed in Gaza in 2024.

It stopped me in my tracks.

I was in Bodrogkeresztur, a town in northern Hungary, known to Jews as Kerestir, on March 23, 2025. It was my first visit to Hungary. Kerestir was the last town among cities and towns I visited as part of the nesiah, "the trip," a four-day tour organized by the Hasidic Travel Agency, Reichberg Travel of Brooklyn, New York. The nesiah was for women only and was led by Rebetzen Sara Meisliah, the daughter of the late Bobover Rebbe, R. Shlomo Halberstam. Participating in the nesiah were 24 Hasidic women, mostly young and not married. My sister Dalia and myself were the only non-Hasidic women in the group.

In Poland we had visited the cities of Kozienice, Lublin, Lyzansk, Krakow, and Novy Zanz. In Hungary we also visited Sátoraljaújhely, known to Jews as Ohel.

Reb Yeshaya Steiner (1831–1925), affectionately known as Reb Shaya'le, or "the Righteous One of Kerestir," was the founder of Kerestirer Hasidim, and served as rabbi in the town. One hundred years after his passing, his home in Kerestir was renovated, welcoming guests from all over the world, fulfilling the prayers of those seeking spiritual refuge, and filling the bowls and pockets of those in physical need. Reb Shaya'le's everlasting message of elevating food to a holy place and utilizing simplicity to achieve greatness were the inspiration behind renovating his old home downtown Kerestir into an inn and a restaurant.

His image has been used as an amulet by Jews who believe that it wards away mice and offers protection against misfortune. The curved watermelon on which the

painting of Reb Shaya'le is placed best illustrates how Reb Shaya'le continues to attract folk artists.

The renovated shrine where R. Shaya'le is buried is in the old Jewish cemetery of the town several miles outside Kerestir. A special charter bus took us to the shrine. Around the grave of R. Shaya'le were the graves of wife and his descendants. When we arrived the shrine was full of people.

It was there where I discovered the memorial sticker for Omri.

There, in this remote European town, hundreds of miles from Israel, far from the front line and the families in mourning, was this simple, powerful reminder of a life lost just 16 months ago.

I don't know who placed it there. Maybe a fellow traveler. Maybe someone from the community. But it struck me deeply — the way grief, memory, and solidarity travel silently across oceans and borders, carried by those who remember.

Omri Cohen was only about 20. I couldn't help but think of what he had already seen, and what he might have become. His name, his face, and his service were now etched into my journey, woven into a quiet moment in Kerestir. A town known for spiritual healing and pilgrimage had become, for me, a place of unexpected remembrance.

This sticker was more than a memorial — it was a bridge between past and present, between a European town known for its tzaddik and a modern soldier whose story has now reached across generations and continents.

May his memory be a blessing. And may we continue to carry these names forward, even — and especially — in the quiet places where the world is still listening. ■



AARC welcomes new staff

By Emily Eisbruch

The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC) welcomed Tiara Hawkins as its new program manager, in charge of AARC communications, event coordination, and more.



Raised in Ferndale, Tiara has a background in human resources, office management, and legal assistant work. She graduated from University of Michigan-

Flint in 2023 with a major in history, earning her degree while raising a young family.

"I'm excited to bring my skills into this role with the AARC, and I'm truly looking forward to doing the best job I can while learning from each of the individuals in this incredible congregation," Tiara says. "My husband Scott and I have three amazing kids: Ryan, who's five and turning six in July; Aurora, who will be three in just a few days; and our youngest, Harlee, who just turned one. All three of them attend the Early Childhood Center at Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, and it's been such a wonderful experience for our family. I converted to Judaism in 2019, right before Scott and I got married, and it's been such a meaningful part of my life ever since. My hobbies are

reading, swimming, and spending time with my family."

The AARC extends warm appreciation to the previous program manager, Emily Ohl, who will remain in the AARC community.

The AARC 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.

AARC Events for July

You are invited to visit <https://aarecon.org/> or email info@aarecon.org to learn more about the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation.

July 12

Meditation led by Anita Rubin-Meuller, 10–10:20 a.m., followed by a hybrid Shabbat Service led by our Rabbi, Gabrielle Pescador at the JCC and on Zoom. Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event. Shabbat morning service is 10:30a.m.–noon.

July 16

Pop-in teaching by Rav Gavrielle. 7 p.m.

July 20

Cantorial Concert at the JCC

July 25

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. ■

My eulogy of my mother

By Ron Dermer, from a post on social media, edited for length

As news of my mother's passing spread, friends and family sent condolences and shared memories of her. They called her a force of nature, one-of-a-kind, a powerhouse, a matriarch. Yaffa Rosenthal, Yaffa Dermer, or as she was usually known, just Yaffa, was all of those things, and more. She was an extraordinary woman who lived an extraordinary life and left an extraordinary mark on so many of those who were privileged to cross her path.

That path started right here in Gadera in 1936. She was born the second of three children to Joseph and Rivka Rosenthal, a proud Zionist who stayed true to the faith and traditions of our people and passed them on to her only daughter.

My mother had what she described as an idyllic childhood, with few possessions but a bounty of everything important: a loving family, close friends, great teachers, and a sense of purpose that matched the Jewish state that was coming into being. Her childhood stories are seared into my memory. Plucking the feathers of a chicken on the way back from the shochet and kashering it with her mother; spending summers in the communal swimming pool, eating corn on the cob; celebrating the UN partition vote by dancing the debka with Arabs from the neighboring villages; and so much more.

At the age of 15, my mother immigrated along with her family to the U.S., with the scarce dollars left to them by a deceased relative braided into her pigtails. When she arrived in America, her heart remained in Israel. But she dedicated herself to learning the language and customs of a new land — a land to which she was forever grateful for giving her the same opportunity it had given to so many millions of immigrants.

After graduating high school and beginning college, she made a decision, like so many throughout life, out of pure selflessness. She put her education on hold to move to New York in order help her older brother Amnon. Amnon had taken a full-time job as a Hebrew school teacher to pay for medical school. He soon discovered that this dual workload was too demanding, even for him. So Yaffa came to the rescue. She did it, she told me, not for Amnon, but for her beloved father Joseph, by whose side she will be put to rest today. He was a construction foreman, the trade he learned when he moved to Israel from Germany. My mother knew that her father would work himself to death to pay for Amnon's medical school. So at the age of 18, she decided to put Amnon through medical school instead.

That selflessness would have many beneficiaries. Amnon went on to become one of the world's most renowned pediatric cardiologists. He helped save the lives of countless children, including the daughter of someone here today. Yaffa's selflessness still echoes.

Though she moved to New York to help Amnon, it was soon obvious that my mother was a natural born teacher. She was named teacher of the year, and for decades to come, former students would tell her that she was the best teacher they ever had. When Amnon finished medical school, my mom was determined to finish

her own education and returned to Miami. Soon after she got her degree, a man who had once unsuccessfully tried to court her himself said: "Yaffa, I know I'm not good enough for you, but let me introduce you to someone who is." That someone was my father. It was love at first sight when they met in May 1961. Three dates later, my father proposed, and they were married that same

She was always center stage, running the show. Part ballabusta, part teacher, always larger than life. After my father's tenure as mayor ended and a congressional bid fell short, he returned to his successful law practice, and life returned to normal. My mother, now with three children, was active at the Jewish Day School, shlepped Esther back and forth to ballet classes, continued to



June. Two years later, David was born, and my grandfather Joseph built his daughter the home in Miami Beach in which she would live for nearly six decades, and which would become the center of our lives.

My parents had purchased an empty lot one block away from the Hebrew Academy, the Jewish Day School to which my mother was determined to send her children. Several years later, my father decided to run for mayor of Miami Beach. My mother opposed the decision, but as always, put others first, campaigning tirelessly for him across the city. In June of 1967, on the fourth day of the Six Day War, with a Sabra wife by his side, my father defeated the son of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to become mayor.

This Sunday, when my mother died, it was Mother's Day in America. Fitting, not only because she was an extraordinary mother, but as the mayor's wife, she decided to open her home to all the mothers of Miami Beach on Mother's Day. With only her own mother and mother-in-law as assistants, she fed hundreds of people in that annual event. It was a sign of what was to come. My childhood was filled with large Rosh Hashana meals, massive Seders, and overflowing Shabbat dinners. All were welcome at her table, especially surprise guests. And my mother did everything — shopping, cooking, cleaning — with little, if any, help. When I was in kindergarten, my teacher described slavery in Egypt as getting up early in the morning, working all day until exhaustion, and then collapsing to sleep. I told the teacher that I knew a slave — my mother. Mom always loved telling that story. But she loved living that story even more. She loved celebrating our Jewish tradition and passing on to her children and grandchildren what had been passed on to her. She saw herself as a link in a chain of 200 generations, and she believed that her most sacred duty was to continue that chain. At these large Jewish gatherings, Yaffa radiated.

volunteer for countless things related to Israel — Hadassah, Ort, JNF, and others — and travelled extensively with my father every summer, sending her children away to Massad, a Zionist sleepaway camp.

My childhood, like my mom's, was idyllic. I had a wonderful father and an extraordinary mother, who was always there for me but never coddled me, was both my biggest fan and biggest critic and by far my greatest teacher. Then, on April 5, 1984, three weeks before my bar mitzvah, my father died of a massive heart attack. The scene I remember from that dreadful day is of my mother walking into the kitchen and telling me and Esther, "Daddy died this morning." It was the only time during my childhood that I saw my mother cry. From that moment on, my mother was not focused on her pain but ours. She wrapped me in her arms and said

we would get through it. And we did. I am often asked how is it that I overcame the loss of my father at such an early age. The answer is simple: my mother, who had the strength of 10 parents, let alone two. A teacher of all things, perhaps her greatest lesson was how to overcome adversity. At the age of 50, my mother decided to go back to school to get a business degree. Even though she didn't need the money, she worked preparing tax returns and became something of an expert. Later, she and her brother Jack decided to go into business together, with him building and her managing warehouse properties in Miami. For 30 years, their partnership was a huge commercial success. But she *always* prioritized family, which began to expand

Eight years ago, at the age of 81, my mother had a stroke. The doctor who saw her soon afterward thought she was fine, a typical 80-year-old. But those who knew her before the stroke, knew better. A woman who never needed help now did. A person who was so fiercely independent now had to rely on others. Five years ago, as I was ending my tenure as Ambassador to the U.S., we thought it best for her to move back to Israel. 70 years after Yaffa Rosenthal left Israel, Yaffa Dermer made Aliyah. She spent her last years living close to two of her three children and nine of her 12 grandchildren. We saw her often. We loved listening to her fantastic jokes. We spent Shabbat dinners and holidays together. As her health declined, we sang with her and tried to bring her as much joy as possible in the latter years of her life. Today, she returns to the place where her story began, on the exact day when Israel declared its independence 77 years ago. That is also fitting. Because in Judaism, 77 represents strength. And on this 77th anniversary of Israel's independence, the strongest person I have ever known, who raised her children to love the Jewish people and support the Jewish state, is laid to rest. ■

Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to the families of:

Shelly Cooke, mother of Sarah and Rebecca Cooke. Tuesday, May 13.
Howard Schwartz, brother of Harriet Charson. Monday, May 5.
Allen M. Goldman, father of Rachel Goldman (Ernie Behringer), and grandfather of Hannah and Josh. Friday, May 16.
Yury Karnovsky, husband of Dora Karnovsky, and father of Leon (Alla) Karnovsky. Tuesday, June 10.
Yaffa Dermer, sister-in-law of Prue Rosenthal, May 11.
Melvyn Levitsky, May 17.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

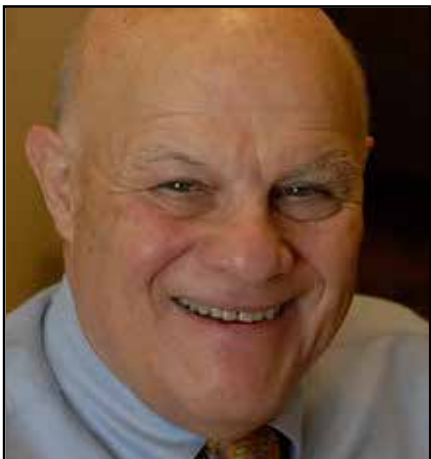
Liz and Mike Fried on their 60th wedding anniversary.
Amy and Andrew Paberzs on their 50th wedding anniversary.

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.



Rochelle "Shelly" Cooke, age 61, of Ann Arbor, died on May 13, 2025. Cherished mother of Sarah Cooke and Rebecca Cooke. Dear daughter of Arlene and the late Jerry Baronick. Loving sister of Julie Peters. Interment at Washtenaw Memorial Park Cemetery. Contributions may be directed to National Organization for Rare Diseases, United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation, or a charity of choice.



Melvyn "Mel" Levitsky passed away May 17, 2025, at his home in Ann Arbor. He was 87. Mel was born March 19, 1938, in Sioux City, Iowa, where his parents, Dave and Molly, lived and raised their family. Mel was the oldest of two children. His younger sister, Sharon, passed away in 2020.

He graduated from the University of Michigan (BA 1960) and attended the University of Chicago Law School from 1960 to 1961. He later received an MA in Soviet Studies from the University of Iowa in 1963. Ambassador Levitsky joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1963. He acted as Foreign Service officer general in Frankfurt (1963–1965) and later moved on to his first assignments in Brazil, as consular and political officer in Belém (1965–1967) and political officer in Brasília (1967–1968). In the U.S. Department of State, he worked at the Office of Brazilian Affairs (1968–1969) and in the Executive Secretariat (1969–

1971). He later worked as political officer at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow (1972–1975), at the Office of Soviet Union Affairs (1975–1978) and at the Office of United Nations Political Affairs (1978–1982).

He was Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (1982–1983) and worked for the United States Information Agency (1983–1984). From 1984 to 1987, Ambassador Levitsky was the United States ambassador to Bulgaria. He later served as executive secretary and special assistant to the secretary at the Department of State from 1987 to 1989 and from 1989 to 1994. He then became assistant secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters.

In 1994, he returned to Brazil as United States ambassador — his final assignment, before retiring from the Department of State in 1998, after 35 years of diplomatic work. Mel was fortunate to develop a second career in academia after retiring from the State Department in 1998.

His first stop was as a professor at Syracuse University at the Maxwell School, where he worked from 1998–2006 as a professor of practice in public administration and international relations.

As Mel and Joan had always maintained a love for the University of Michigan, in a true homecoming, Mel was able to continue his academic career at the University of Michigan as a professor at the Ford School. This lasted from 2006 until his passing. From the many colleagues and students he interacted with, taught, and mentored, Mel earned the highest respect and admiration; his legacy will not be forgotten. A scholarship at the Ford School to help students travel internationally was established in Joan's name.

Mel was an avid reader and someone who truly appreciated the cultural elements of society, especially art, movies, theater, sports, comedy, and music. Further, he was a lifelong student and teacher/mentor of world politics and history. Finally, Mel was an enthusiastic University of Michigan football and basketball fan and spent many seasons cheering on his alma mater. Mel lived his later years appreciating these things and spending time with his Interna family and friends. He will be remembered as a loving husband, father, grandfather, uncle, and friend.

Mel is survived by his sons, Adam and Ross; daughters-in-law, Sara and Rachel (Josh); grandchildren, Abby, Michael (Sherry), Dani, Max, Mason, Mia, Phoebe, and Ben.

The family will celebrate Mel's life in the coming months; they request, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Joan Levitsky Scholarship fund at the Ford School at the University of Michigan, link on the IKC website.



Howard Jules Schwartz, age 82, passed away on Monday, May 5, 2025. Beloved husband of Hylah (nee Wymar) for 56 years; cherished father of Meredith Goldstein (Danny) and Lisa Schwartz (deceased); grandfather of Jordyn and Jake; son of the late Lucille and Bernard Schwartz; dear brother of Harriet Charson (the late Gary) of Ann Arbor; uncle to many nieces and nephews. Howard was born on March 22, 1943, in Fairview Park, Ohio. He was a graduate of Fairview Park High School and then earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts and Photography from the Rochester Institute of Technology. While a student at Rochester Institute of Technology, Howard and Hylah were fixed up by her cousin and began dating. They married on June 9, 1968. After graduation from RIT, Howard worked at WKYC. He was the Producer/Director of the Montage documentary series. After leaving the station, he opened his own video production company, Video Genesis, which produced corporate training videos and commercials for which he went on to earn three local Emmy awards.

Memorial contributions in Howard's honor may be made to InMotion which offers free community-based exercise and wellness programs for people with Parkinson's disease at www.beinmotion.org



Allen M. Goldman, Regents Professor Emeritus of the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Minnesota, passed away on Friday, May 16, while surrounded by family and caregivers at Sholom Home East. Allen was born in the Bronx, New York, to Louis and Mildred Kohn Goldman. He graduated from the Bronx High School of Science, earned a bachelor's degree in physics and chemistry from Harvard University and a PhD in physics from Stanford University, where he met and married Katherine Darnell who was an undergraduate. He spent his career as a faculty member at the University of Minnesota and was the recipient of many

awards including being elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

Allen was an avid runner with a passion for physics and politics. He is survived by his loving wife of nearly 65 years, Katherine; children, Matthew, Benjamin, and Rachel (Ernie Behringer); grandchildren, Hannah and Josh; sister, Linda (Sam Chororos); several cousins; nieces; nephews; grand-nieces; and grand-nephews. Graveside memorial service 10 a.m. on Monday, May 26, at Mount Zion Cemetery, 1670 Payne Avenue, St. Paul, and also on Zoom: www.hodroffs.com/AllenGoldman (direct link below). Reception to follow at Sholom Home East, 740 Kay Ave, St. Paul. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Sholom Foundation are encouraged: <https://sholomfoundation.org/>. Allen will be sorely missed by his family, friends, and colleagues. May his memory be a blessing.



Yury Karnovsky passed away on June 9, 2025, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He is survived by his wife Dora, son Leonid, daughter-in-law Alla, granddaughter Sonja, and grandson-in-law Kip. Yury Karnovsky was born on February 24, 1926, in Moscow, Russia. Yury was a lifelong scholar and educator — a man of knowledge whose life spanned continents, disciplines, languages, and eras. His resilience, intellect, and strength of spirit left a lasting impression on all who knew him. Yury graduated from the Moscow State Economic Institute with an MS in Economics in 1950, followed by a PhD in Economics from Moscow State University in 1970. Yury served as a Professor of Economics at the Moscow Power Engineering Institute from 1971 to 1993. He actively participated in the implementation of major economic reform across the Soviet Union in the late 60s. He also helped the stated-owned enterprises transition to a market economy in 1987–1993.

Yury immigrated to the United States in 1994. In the final decades of his life, he turned his passion toward Jewish history. His most cherished achievement was founding the School of Jewish History for Russian speakers in Denver, Colorado. He also shared his insights widely through Russian-language newspapers in New York, Denver, and Detroit, bringing historical understanding and cultural connection to countless readers. Yury married Dora Zlotnik on June 29, 1957. They were happily married for almost 68 years. Their son, Leonid, was born in 1958. Yury's priority was to protect and support his family. He worked tirelessly to ensure his family had everything they needed throughout their lives.

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