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Jewish Observer

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

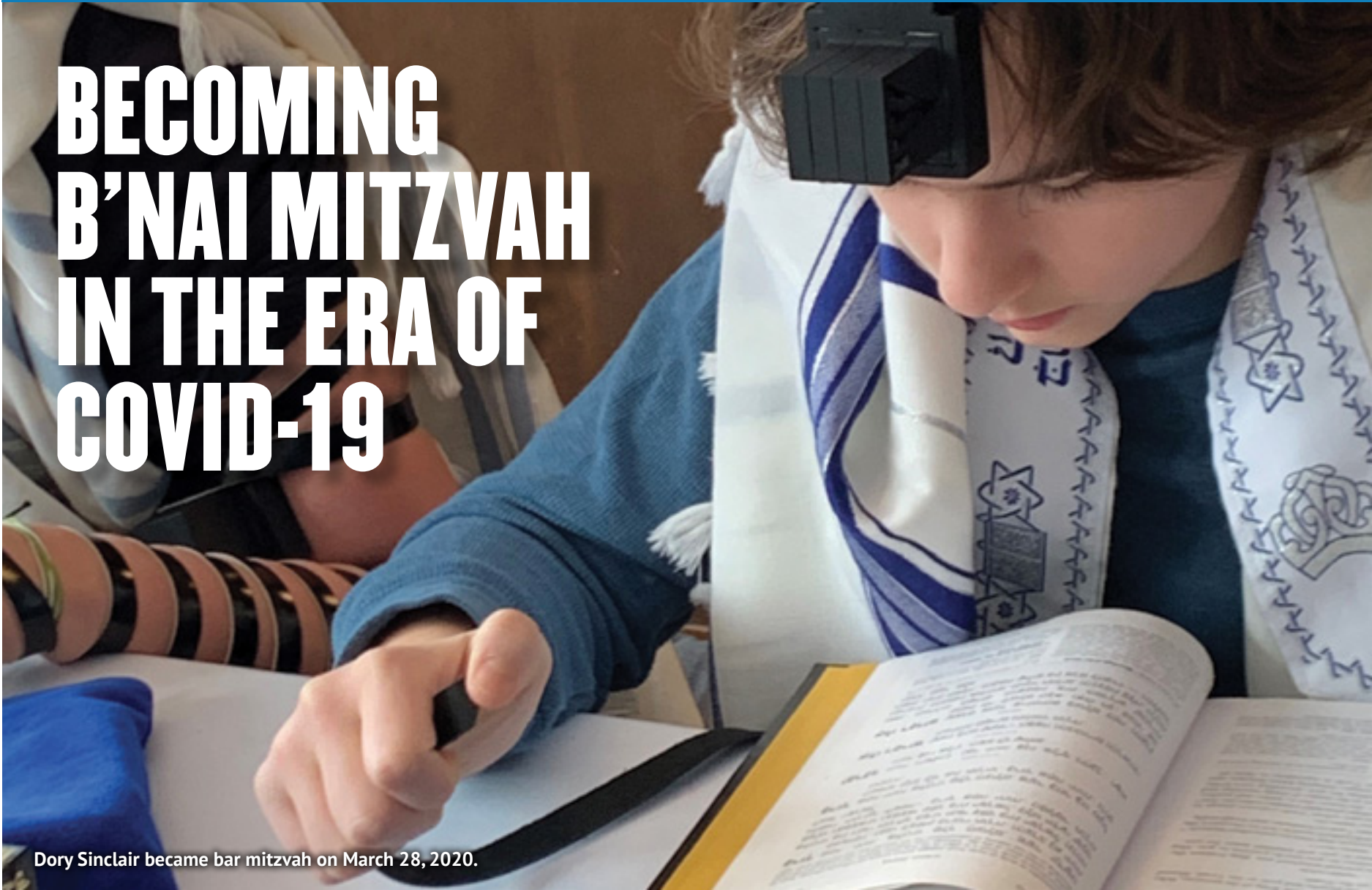
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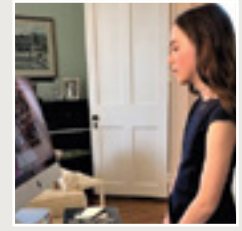
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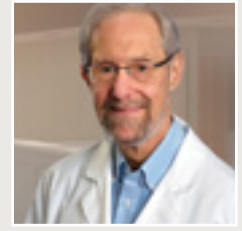
BECOMING B'NAI MITZVAH IN THE ERA OF COVID-19



Dory Sinclair became bar mitzvah on March 28, 2020.



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From the Editor



Barbara Davis

We have seen wonderful things happening through the use of technology during the COVID-19 pandemic: virtual birthdays and baby showers, online classes, concerts by socially-isolated musicians concertizing, Zoom seders and shivas, watch parties, quarantini cocktail virtual gatherings. We have been able to “attend” services in many synagogues in our town and also in other places, led

by different rabbis, including some who used to be ours. We have listened to cantors we have never heard before and have been taught songs we never knew before. We have witnessed acts of chesed and bravery; neighbors have reached out to neighbors; we have discovered that things we used to complain about – school, crowds, commutes to work, jobs – are things that we really miss when they're missing.

There's a lot we do not and cannot know about the future. What we do know is that the present crisis has inspired creativity, innovation and kindness. Optimism and courage will get us through the current darkness and into a brighter future. As individuals, organizations and institutions, we need to do absolutely everything we can to help those in need as well as the lionhearted souls who are on the front lines of fighting this invisible, implacable enemy. We also need to assure that our Jewish community survives to meet our communal needs.

But optimism cannot blind us to the reality of our situation. How can we assure that the entities that inspire, educate, connect, nurture, and provide care for all of us are able to recover from the realities of lost revenue and a near cessation of all fundraising activities?

Even before the pandemic, we knew the Jewish world was changing, but COVID-19 accelerated the pace. The distressing news of the demise of the great Jewish newspaper of Canada and near-demise of Great Britain's Jewish Chronicle after decades of publication, sent a chill down our editorial spine. We know that Jewish newspapers, and the *Jewish Observer* in particular, are a highly valued resource for longtime readers. We want our readers to know that we intend to stay in business, publishing news about the people in our Jewish community who are making a difference, about the work of our Federation and its partner agencies, and about our synagogues and schools. We hope you enjoy reading the *JO* every month and we invite you to let us hear your thoughts and to write a book review for us or be our Jewish Cook of the Month. You can reach us 24/6 at jewishobservercny@gmail.com with your ideas and suggestions.

Our June issue was to have featured “Celebrations,” and we anticipated filling it with news of graduations, galas, annual meetings, reunions, anniversaries, weddings and b'nai mitzvah celebrations. Well, as they say, “we plan, God laughs.” But there is still much to celebrate this June, albeit in a very different way. We will tell you the story of two milestone celebrations that took place in unexpected ways. We will profile three professionals who are on the front lines of providing medical and mental health care. We have an article about “Unorthodox,” a book and video series that is currently a hot topic of conversation. And we will feature some talented local Jewish artists, tell you about lots of activities going on despite the pandemic, including the Federation's annual meeting and its Roth Award recipient. Sadly, we will report to you on too many deaths, including some who succumbed to COVID-19.

It is our hope that you will read this issue, which focuses on both coping with coronavirus and celebrating, in safety and good health. *L'chaim!*

ERRATA: The ending Biblical quotation in Richard Wilkins' article (“Make known to your children and children's children ...”) is not in Shmot, but, as noted in the original text, in Deuteronomy (4:10). *The JO* regrets the error.

Letter to the Editor

On Monday, April 20, 2020 at 7:30 pm, I joined, albeit remotely, with eighty-two members of our Syracuse community, including our local Federation representatives and our rabbis and cantors, to honor the memories of those who were murdered in the Holocaust, and of those who through internal fortitude and the grace of G-d managed to survive, come to Syracuse, and begin again.

I knew those survivors. Many of them lived in my neighborhood when I was growing up. I remember their faces. I went to school with their children, celebrated in their homes, and in later years prepared their grandchildren for becoming b'nai mitzvah.



I also heard the names of people who did not survive, including members of my own family. When my parents went to Israel a lifetime ago, they stumbled upon a tiny building run by an old man who spoke only Yiddish. My dad spoke to him in German, which he'd studied at Nottingham High School and the man understood the gist of what Dad was saying and answered in Yiddish. My mother, who understood Yiddish but could not speak it, translated. This museum was dedicated to shtetls that were razed by the Nazis and existed now only in memory. It featured four walls that were covered with bricks carrying the names of the lost shtetls. Dad took pictures of “our” bricks; we had so many bricks.

Thank you to our rabbis and cantors for reaching our souls with their voices and compassion, to our Federation President and CEO Michael Balanoff for his coordination and support of this event, to Board Chair Ellen Weinstein for her heartfelt remarks, and to Dr. Barbara Davis, who somehow put us all in one room together.

May the memories of the righteous be a blessing.

Karen J. Docter
DeWitt Town Councilor

COVID-19 EMERGENCY FUND

With a pandemic threatening our lives, everyone needs assistance. Those served by our local Jewish beneficiary agencies, synagogues and senior facilities are suffering in this time of crisis. The loss of income, canceled fundraising events and stretched resources have greatly impacted the ability of organizations to meet exigent needs and will continue to impact their ability to fulfill their respective missions in the future. The Federation is working with our partners to coordinate community efforts to anticipate needs that may arise as the pandemic progresses. A COVID-19 Emergency Fund has been set up to help organizations meet current and evolving needs. Your help is crucial and your contribution, in any amount, is needed now more than ever. Donations to the Federation for this designated fund may be made online at www.jewishfederationcny.org. Your dollars will enable us to provide the maximum amount of assistance at a time when the needs are greater than ever.

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Ellen Weinstein

Board Chair



It is with humility and gratitude that I share this message. As my final term as Chair of the Board draws to a close, I thank you all for the opportunity to have served you and our Jewish community. I was fortunate to have co-partnered with the best professional leaders possible: President/CEO Linda Alexander and Michael Balanoff, who succeeded Linda just months into my first term. I thank them both for their guidance, passion, wisdom and overwhelming commitment to our community. Their thoughtful and reasoned counsel enabled me to zealously represent our Jewish community's best interests, striving each day to ensure that the vision of Jewish identity and continuity is realized.

Thank you to our exceptional, dedicated Officers, Directors and Committee Chairs who, through hours of active participation, thoughtful and robust discussions and collaboration, have positively impacted the quality of Jewish life in our community. After all, an organization is only as good as its board members and I have been supported by the best. I also extend my personal thanks and appreciation to the Federation staff. Under Michael's great leadership, they have nimbly and seamlessly adapted to our new normal and are successfully executing their duties with the same high level of dedication and purpose. Space does not allow for me to name all of these wonderful individuals therefore, I invite you to visit our website where all our Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs and Staff are listed.

Reflecting upon this past year's actions and accomplishments, I'd like to highlight for you some of the outstanding initiatives taken by our Board and the many collaborative/jointly sponsored events held with our community agencies and organizations, all made

possible by the generosity of you, our donors.

We convened a very productive Board "advancement" this past September during which we examined in depth the role of Federation now and in the future. One of the outcomes was the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee tasked with updating our Mission, Vision and Values Statements which were subsequently recommended to and adopted by the Board this past Spring. Having surveyed our community as to how best to communicate our messaging and transmit information, and with the welcomed input of our Young Leadership Committee, Federation has upgraded its website, reformatted the Community Happenings weekly emailing to be more visually pleasing and informative and has made exciting changes to the format, nature and frequency of the *Jewish Observer*. We enjoyed a well-attended, fun filled Hanukkah Party at the JCC and a highly successful Super Sunday. And most recently, despite our social distancing, Federation was able to honor the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust in a moving, meaningful and memorable virtual *Yom HaShoah* program.

Federation has and will continue to rapidly respond to the needs of our community. In the aftermath of the virulent anti-Semitic incidents taking place across the country, Federation has taken a lead, along with our law enforcement partners, in developing a comprehensive, active security program which serves as a model of communal cooperation. And given the harsh reality of the COVID-19 epidemic and its repercussions, Federation is now focusing on the immediate and long-term needs of the community for connection, communication and funding. We are presently reexamining our allocation process and prioritizing our financial support of the Jewish community, all the while being consistent with our Mission and Vision and true to our Values.

I am so proud of the work Federation does and so privileged for the opportunities afforded these past three years. My interactions with so many dedicated people, young and old, give me great hope for our future as a thriving Jewish community. Their commitment to our local Jewish community and to Jews around the world is the hallmark of who we are and what we do. Again, thank you.

Michael Balanoff

President/CEO



This is a supremely challenging time for everyone. We don't know what the coming months hold for our community, our country and the world. We know that there will be pressures and difficult circumstances that we will need to overcome, and that it won't be easy. But we can do it. Even in the precarious present and in the face of the uncertain future, we still have much to be thankful for and to celebrate in June 2020. As Ron Wolfson writes in *Relational Judaism*, "What really matters is that we care about the people we seek to engage. When we genuinely care about people, we will not only welcome them; we will listen to their stories, we will share ours, and we will join together to build a Jewish community that enriches our lives."

One of my major goals this year, as Federation President/CEO, has been to make Federation an exemplar of connection, connectivity and relationships. We wanted the members of our community to feel one with our mission and more aware of Federation and its work and achievements. We acted upon what people told us they wanted: a less wordy website; a more community-focused newspaper; a more robust women's philanthropy program; greater involvement of young leaders; enhanced security for our communal institutions; greater transparency and a vision for the future. And then the plague of COVID-19 descended upon us.

Suddenly the JCC shut down, the Day School switched to online instruction, synagogues and religious schools held services and classes by Zoom, and the Jewish Family Service was called upon to step up its social services to meet new and unanticipated needs. The rapidity with which most of our Federation and its partner agencies began to use technology was impressive. SHDS's sta-

tus as a Google school equipped it to begin face-to-face teaching on day one; the JCC offered fitness programs online; Federation held its regular and emergency meetings via Zoom; JFS reached out to the synagogues to identify and help those who were in need of food support and social support; Federation added to its established interest-free loan program a new COVID-19 Emergency Fund and helped our communal organizations become informed about emergency funding available from the federal government.

Throughout the crisis, Federation's goal has been to stay true to our mission. We want to assure that our community remains strong and sustainable. We want to meet the needs of our community members and our communal agencies not only today but tomorrow and in the years to come. Because there will be a future. We will never go back to the way we were, pre-pandemic. Businesses which were shaky before the pandemic may not survive it – think department stores, malls and shops – but others will thrive – online retailers, cleaning services, videoconferencing providers, supermarkets and grocery stores. Who would have thought that drive-in movie theaters would become trendy in 2020?

Perhaps the best lesson we can learn from our present circumstances is summed up in the words of Ziporah Heller, an American-born Haredi educator and author: "One question is always relevant: How can I use this to move forward?" We cannot know how our economy will fare, how the stock market will do, or if a vaccine against coronavirus will be developed soon. But we do know that, with patience, strength, and the strong support of one another, we will get through this together and go from strength to strength.

A Glimpse into Jewish History at TAY

by Sonali McIntyre

"If you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you're going." (Maya Angelou) A recent class series, offered by Rabbi Zehavi of Temple Adath Yeshurun, entitled *How Did We Get Here? The Emergence of the Modern Jewish Movements*, gave such a glimpse into the past.

Around 200 years ago, a number of forces radically reshaped Jewish life, leading over time to the modern movements we recognize today. "So many of the challenges our recent ancestors faced are mirrored in our lives, while other aspects of Jewish life have changed so radically that it is hard to imagine how far we have travelled. In both cases, we cannot know ourselves without encountering those who came before us," Rabbi Zehavi commented.

The class began with accounts of autonomous Jewish communities before the Emancipation, when Western European Jews gained citizenship but lost self-governance. These changes made possible the birth of Reform, Ultra-Orthodoxy, and Modern Orthodoxy, each a different response to the inclusion of Jews in the new states of Western and Central Europe. The course traced the growth and development of denominations in the United States, primarily Reform, Conservative, and Modern Orthodox. Rabbi Zehavi then steered



the conversation toward Eastern Europe, from Hasidism to secular, cultural and political identities.

The second-to-last session surveyed versions of Zionism, with particular focus on their manifestation in contemporary Israeli culture, identity and religious division. The course concluded with Middle Eastern Jewry, including their encounters with Arab nationalism, colonialism, and Zionism as well as the experience of Middle Eastern immigrants to Israel and their struggles for equality. "It is my hope that this exposure will open new vistas and give us a larger canvas on which to paint our Jewish future, as individuals and as a people," concluded Rabbi Zehavi.

Celebrating despite COVID with Temple Concord

by Diane Sacks



It was one thing to have to hold a seder via Zoom, but what if you didn't have a seder plate with the special symbolic items the holiday requires? Temple Concord solved that problem for its congregants by setting up a drive-through pick-up *Pesach* seder plate distribution. Manned by the Waldman family, Aaron Spitzer and Rabbi Fellman (all appropriately socially distancing themselves) they handed out the seder plates to all who need them. For those

unable to leave their homes, deliveries were made by these same volunteers and Alex Steiger. The program was made possible thanks to a few generous and anonymous sponsors, and The Oaks made up the plates. Participation in the distribution was a meaningful addition to Passover observance. "We jumped at the opportunity to participate in the seder plate distribution," said Josh Waldman, "as it gave us another way to help during this time of need. We treated it like a family project, discussing with our children why we were participating and having them make signs to display during the distribution. The event even allowed us to connect to the community and see some people we hadn't seen in a while. We also knew that the seder plates would enable so many to fully participate in Temple Concord's virtual seder or their own seder, as we can personally attest to not having all the 'ingredients' handy to create a seder plate this year."

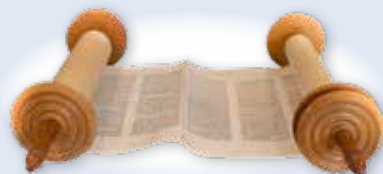


D'Var Torah

Rabbi Andrew Pepperstone, Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevra Shas

Since my family and I are relocating in July, I wanted to thank the Syracuse Jewish community for welcoming us and making this community our home. As a parting thought, I want you all to become multi-dimensional Jews. Cultivating a multi-dimensional Jewish life is one of the keys for a strong Jewish community.

Know what is behind you: your family and the Jewish people all the way back to Abraham and Sarah, your Jewish heritage and traditions. Learn



your family's history while you can. Learn Jewish history and all of its complexities. Our past is what brought us all to the current moment. All of this is at your back, guiding you forward.

Know what is around you: your friends and family, congregation, community and all of the interlocking aspects of the present day. Become aware of the intercon-

nectedness of our lives in the present. Seek to understand how what impacts one affects all, how the actions of some have ripple effects far beyond them.

Know what is in your heart, mind and soul: cultivate your inner spiritual life through regular prayer, study and meditation. Make regular Torah study part of your life. Become familiar with the Torah and its many commentaries. Become a commentator yourself. Make fixed times for regular prayer, daily and weekly.

Know what is above and beyond: connect to God in whatever way you understand that word. Seeing the world from God's perspective helps us decenter ourselves from the world. Reaching towards God transcends the present and connects us to what is eternal and unchanging.

Know what is ahead of you: the next generation and all its potential, both the known and the unknown. All of that is contained in the future, which is multi-layered and complex.

Every dimension of Jewish life is accessible, available now. When someone cultivates only one dimension, should that dimension fail, they have nothing to fall back on. But if someone cultivates most or all of these dimensions, their connection to Jewish life is far richer, far more resilient.

May everyone in our Jewish community cultivate their multi-dimensional lives, for their sake, for their families' sake, for their congregations' sake, for the sake of the Jewish community and for the sake of the entire Jewish people.

Saying Goodbye to the Pepperstone Family

by Joanne Villegas



The impact that the Pepperstone family has had on the Jewish community of Central New York is incalculable. Since they moved here in July 2011, each member has dedicated their unique talents to bettering our community.

Rabbi Pepperstone brought an innovative spirit to CBS-CS, incorporating his passion for technology, science, science fiction and fantasy, cooking, board games, comedy and the written word into synagogue life. His dedication to innovation included the design of over fifty innovative congregational holiday celebrations, and the implementation of a potluck policy that empowered more than seventy members to bring food to monthly Shabbat dinners. His passion for interfaith engagement has been extensive. He served on the Round Table of Faith Leaders of Interfaith Works of Central New York, ACTS Clergy Caucus and co-chaired several World Interfaith Harmony Celebrations.

Rabbi Pepperstone prides himself on meeting people where they are. "My goal is to help people cultivate an interconnected multi-dimensional Jewish life that is a path to meaning, purpose and blessing," he says. CBS-CS member Arel Moodie says, "The Pepperstones have been the cornerstone to my Jewish identity. Rabbi Pepperstone is always down to answer my thousands of random questions."

Cantor Paula Pepperstone is the outgoing director of the Epstein High School of Jewish Studies. "Cantor Pep-

perstone has been part of the heartbeat of the Syracuse Jewish community," says Fran Ciardullo, board president. "Her love of sacred music, enthusiasm and commitment to Jewish education, personal warmth, amazing talent, Jewish experience and knowledge will be missed by all of us who have worked with her, learned from her or simply enjoyed listening to her lovely singing voice." The cantor also served CBS-CS in a variety of capacities, and the congregation will miss her beautiful arrangements for holiday services as well as her inspiring classes for adults and children.

The Pepperstone children have also left their mark. Hadar was the Achla USY vice-president and Social Action regional vice president. She is a talented service leader and Torah reader. Aviyah, a *madricha* at the CBS-CS religious school and the Community Hebrew School, used her musical and artistic talents to inspire her students. A passionate Achla USY vice president, she excels at recruitment and engagement and fostered an inclusive community among her peers at Epstein and CBS-CS. Matan is an active Kadimanik who recently earned second place in the Jewish Federation's *Yom Hashoah* student writing contest.

CBS-CS is dedicating the weekend of June 12 - 14 to the Pepperstone family. There will be several tributes including a *Kabbalat Shabbat* service on June 12, *Havdalah* service on June 13, and a Trivia Event on June 14. Details will be sent via Community Happenings.

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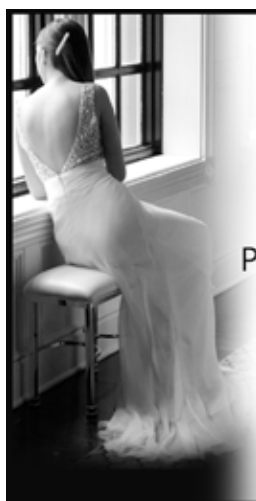
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Dory's Bar Mitzvah

by Anick Sinclair

This week has been one that I am sure I will never forget. My second child became a bar mitzvah. He laid tefillin for the first time. He gave his d'var Torah to the community and he will read his portion on Shabbat. And I know that every Jewish mother gets emotional when a son reaches this milestone, but that's not the only reason I'll never forget it.

We were not celebrating in synagogue. We were at our kitchen table. My son Dory, draped in a tallit, was flanked by his brothers and his parents as he performed the mitzvah of laying tefillin and at the end of prayers we sang "Mazel tov" and showered him with sweets, kisses and hugs. There was an open laptop at the end of our table. This was the technological vehicle that streamed the grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins into our home from all over the world. His d'var Torah was read to the community via the same vehicle. So they were all part of the simcha, albeit not physically. Strange description of a bar mitzvah? Welcome to the age of corona!

It all began about three weeks ago, with every viewing of the news a niggling, uncomfortable feeling would creep in. We could see the coronavirus was creating havoc across Europe, so surely it would make its way across the Atlantic to the US. My husband and I started talking to family and friends who were to fly in for the occasion. Travel plans were crumbling as people were beginning to talk about quarantining. We had many arduous phone calls with our rabbi: should we cancel the weekend's activities? Are we seriously going to have to write THAT letter to all our invitees? Cancel the caterers? The florist? What about all the kippot that had been printed with the date of the upcoming occasion? And all the other countless details? Most importantly though, what would this mean for our son, Dory?

He had worked so hard over the past year, countless bar mitzvah classes and cantillation sessions. The rabbi was reticent to cancel completely and suggested we keep the date but only for actual shul members. OK, I could wrap my head around that, so there wouldn't be a huge crowd. At

this point large gatherings were beginning to be disallowed anyway, but Dory would still have his moment. He would still get to read his portion from the Torah, sing his haftarah, give a sermon in front of his congregation - it's not about the party after all, right? At least the spiritual and religious side of things would remain untouched. Or so we thought!

We wrote the heartbreaking letter to all our guests. And tried not to be overwhelmed with disappointment. Now we needed to tell Dory. Not an easy conversation to have but he took it in his stride, with a little sadness but an impressive dose of pragmatism and maturity. In fact, he set the tone for our own behavior and reactions to all that was happening. We had to stay calm through all of this, be sensible, unemotional and make the right decisions for all involved.

When the rabbi was given the directive to close the synagogue down completely, we felt that we'd already been over the worst emotionally, the wretched decision-making and the constant to-ing and fro-ing was over. All set against the surreal backdrop of this mad virus that was ravaging the world and coming closer and closer hourly. There was no choice. We were going into lockdown and the celebration of a bar mitzvah

seemed almost perverse at a time like this. Schools were closing, supermarket shelves were empty, masks and gloves were becoming not only a necessity, but the norm.

So back to our kitchen table, where on his Hebrew birthday, Dory laid tefillin, with just us present but 9 cameras (family) streaming in to see him and cheer him on and envelope him in warmth and love. Even through a screen, the pride and joy was palpable. It was a bittersweet experience, but we were doing the best we could under these bizarre circumstances.

The next day, our rabbi arranged for Dory to read his dvar Torah on Zoom (our new best friend) to the entire community. So many people took the time to log in to hear him and the rabbi speak. The shouts of "Mazel tov" and the singing were amazing, and loud, we really felt that we were part of a great community here in Syracuse. Dory himself was showered with praise and congratulations (and sweets, bought prior to this new reality) and was genuinely made to feel special. His brother put him atop his shoulders and we danced around our kitchen and we felt the joy. Finally, some joy!

In a weird twist of fate, through Yad Vashem (The World Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Israel), Dory had been "twinning" with a boy from the Balkans who'd lost his life in the Holocaust before he reached his bar mitzvah. Leon Alharabi would have been called by name to the Torah with Dory and he would have been honored, remembered and bar mitzvah'ed by proxy. This would be the second time that Leon did not get the chance to reach this milestone. But he will certainly be in our thoughts this Shabbat.

As Dory says, "Although not for the regular reasons, this is one bar mitzvah nobody will ever forget!" And I suspect he might be right. On Shabbat Dory will read his portion to us at home and we will celebrate with him one final time, before we get on with the serious business of surviving corona. I'm not going to wax lyrical about the importance of community and about how brilliant technology is at keeping people connected, we are all aware. What I was not aware of, or prepared for, was the overwhelming feeling of support we've had from everyone this week. It's amazing how in a time of complete isolation, people are willing to celebrate, sing, be happy for the sake of someone else. It's heart-warming. And I believe this will be the overriding memory of Dory's bar mitzvah for us all.

And as for those "dated" kippot, I guess they will always be a memento of a bar mitzvah that didn't go off as planned, but was beautiful, fulfilling and emotional in its own, unique way.

Annabel's Bat Mitzvah

by Allison Wells

Annabel was eagerly waiting for her bat mitzvah at the end of April. She had been preparing for over six months. She is the third of our three children and we were all enormously proud of her hard work and study. It was so hard to believe our little Annabel was going to reach this milestone. I had done a lot of planning for her party. We decided on a Greatest Showman theme and figured we would go all out for our youngest - from Cirque performers to smoking kiddie cocktails.

When we started hearing about the coronavirus back in January and early February we thought, like most people, that although scary and sad for those affected, it was something far away, not something that would affect us directly and certainly nothing that would interfere with the bat mitzvah. But by early March, that was not the case. More and more cases were popping up. We had a lot of family coming in from out of town and we wanted to give them time to change their plans and trav-



el arrangements. We thought, "OK, things look uncertain now, but we don't need to rush into cancelling. We don't know what tomorrow will bring, let alone the end of April!" We decided we would make a decision at the end of March.

But then everything changed. Cases were exploding downstate and across the country and we knew we had to shift gears. On March 12 we made the decision to move the party to September and just have Annabel participate in Shabbat services by chanting the *haftarah*. We contacted family and friends to let them know

that we would be moving the party to September. The actual service would be open only to immediate family, spread out in the shul, the six feet needed to be appropriately distant. Shortly after that, all gatherings of ten or more people were banned. So it was clear that Annabel would not be having her bat mitzvah service on April 25.

Annabel was sad but accepting, saying, "I am disappointed but I would rather my bat mitzvah date be moved and for people to stay healthy than take that big risk of having it." But then Temple Adath added Saturday morning Shabbat Services to their Zoom programing. As a result, Annabel was able to chant her *haftarah*, as well as give her *d'var Torah*, on her originally scheduled bat mitzvah date. It was a wonderful experience. She spoke about how *tzara'at* (leprosy) and evil speech are deeply connected and noted that, "Being together should be a blessing and evil speech and *tzara'at* both make it dangerous to be together. In a way, we can all connect to that by what is happening now."

Since there was not technically a *minyan* and there weren't any *aliyot*, it did not serve as Annabel's formal bat mitzvah. She will be called up to read Torah at some point in the fall. But for now, we are so happy that Annabel was able to share her hard work with friends and family and the TAY congregation on Zoom. It was certainly an event we will not forget!

Celebrating The Day School Class Of 2020

by Laura Lavine

When students age from one school to the next, they transform from being “seniors” to the being the youngest students in their new school. They begin the new year with excitement and apprehension about making friends, learning their schedules and navigating their new buildings.

What prepares them for that transition, what prepared this year’s Syracuse Hebrew Day School seniors for their move, is a combination of determination, love, and maturity.

Matan Pepperstone’s, Benjamin Resig’s and Remy Sinclair’s thoughts and actions have individually and collectively contributed to the betterment of our school. The adults seek their opinions and our younger students emulate them. They clearly are the elder statesmen of SHDS.

Some people show their finest qualities only in time of need or crisis. Not so with this year’s graduates. On a daily basis, Matan, Ben and Remy demonstrate their

commitment as students with a strong desire to learn and perform well in school. They are smart and engaging. They have learned to step outside of their comfort zones and take risks. Each has a wonderful sense of humor but, most important, they engender respect by treating others with kindness, patience and maturity.

Sadly, no finer illustration of these qualities is seen than in how the boys handled the many disappointments created by the pandemic. After an elementary school career during which the boys learned about and looked forward to their own sixth grade culminating trip, serving as color wars team captains, the talent show, presenting at the annual meeting and a graduation ceremony, they handled disappointment after disappointment with class and comportment befitting seasoned adults. They conducted themselves in a way that set fine examples for our younger students, and made their families and the entire SHDS community proud beyond measure.

Even though the Class of 2020 will not be able to enjoy our school’s traditional culminating events, they will become their new schools’ youngest students with the knowledge that they have confronted challenges that would devastate the best of us, have handled their disappointment with grace and are ready for anything else that life sends their way.



Matan Pepperstone

“I will miss the SHDS dearly, and will always remember the memories I made there. There won’t be a moment where I wish I couldn’t stay in the SHDS.”



Ben Resig

“It was an amazing seven years at SHDS and it is too bad that the end of our time had to be taken from us by COVID-19, but I still had some amazing experiences. I will never forget my teachers for everything they taught me and my friends for everything that we got to do together.”



Remy Sinclair

“I am incredibly proud to be graduating SHDS. It’s been an amazing journey, even though it’s ended in isolation!

I want to thank my teachers and classmates for making it one of the best experiences of my life.”

The Epstein School Goes Virtual



Since its founding in 1960, the Epstein School has been the place where Central New York’s Jewish teens have come together to learn, to share, and to build a community. But there has never been a year like this one. Classes in Ethics, Hebrew, Jews and the Presidency, Torah, Jewish Humor, Jewish Peoplehood and the Holocaust began in the usual fashion in the fall, but suddenly, right after Purim – they went online. Each Tuesday thereafter, Cantor Paula Pepperstone, Epstein’s director, opened Epstein’s “doors” (by Zoom of course) at 6:15 so the teens could hang out. They then followed links to their individual classes, rejoining an hour later for the traditional and much-loved break between core and elective courses. Unfortunately, the snacks that were traditionally consumed became a casualty of the virtual environment.

The eleven students who graduated in May from Epstein’s sixty-plus student body thus became the first graduates ever to experience Epstein in a virtual environment. The last time they were together in person was for a Purim celebration, when they examined the four mitzvot of the holiday and heard from Al-Amin Muhammed, director of We Rise Above the Streets. After that, they worked together on a related activity for *tikkun olam*/repairing the world. Memories of their final Epstein School year will be unique for Natalie Eisen-son, Nicole Engel, Anthony Fischer, Sara Garrow, Shai Jaffe, Benjamin Oppedisano, Caleb Porter, Colby Porter, Eva Schooler, Alethea Shirilan-Howlett, and Nathan Sonnenfeld. Their Zoom classes and graduation exercises were a tribute to their desire to stay connected to their Jewish learning, coronavirus notwithstanding.

The Community Hebrew School salutes the following students who are moving up this year:

Jeremy Albert, Olivia Clark, Iris Horowitz, Noah Hyde, James Kuss, Lauren Malec, Samantha Shapiro, Nathan Snell, Isaac Stoogenke, Cameron Tallerico and Jacob Temes.



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Coping with COVID



Dr. Richard Steinmann is the Associate Medical Director and Vice Chief for Emergency and Urgent Care Services at Crouse Hospital. Asked how the coronavirus is impacting the work he does, he replied simply, “It’s turned everything upside down.”

The hospital has prepared for what Dr. Steinmann characterized as “a great tsunami” of desperately ill COVID-19 patients as happened in New York City, but that level of surge has not yet come to pass. It is unclear if it will. Ironically, the actual volume of patients in local hospitals has markedly decreased, particularly since elective procedures have been cancelled. “The potential was very ominous, but that hasn’t yet happened,” he explained. That created another problem. People having other serious medical problems, like heart attacks and strokes, are afraid to come to the hospital “They’re riding it out at home and not doing well.” Dr. Steinmann points out that the number of non- COVID-19 medical emergencies has not diminished, and that “if it made sense in January to go to the emergency room, it still makes sense now. People who have chest pains or other symptoms should get advice from their doctors, but they shouldn’t stay home with something bad.”

One of the most psychologically unnerving aspects to the coronavirus pandemic is the effect it has on medical personnel. Dr. Steinmann explains, “Most emergencies are not things that are going to get *me*. I won’t get hurt, I will be calm and professional. But with COVID-19, what’s hanging in the air is that every time I walk into a patient’s room, I may be putting myself and my family at risk. That doesn’t happen under normal circumstances, and it’s an extra element of the whole situation that’s emotionally and psychologically wearing for practitioners.”

“What we need is information,” Dr. Steinmann emphasizes. “And we also need to know how to interpret the information

– the studies, anecdotes and reports. The interpretation of data is Talmudic. The discipline of poring over the research data and interpreting its meaning feels very much like interpreting scripture. Does it mean what it says it means? Are the data reliable? What does reliable mean? We need to look at information line by line, as opposed to reading the headlines. For me, this process very much derives from the atmosphere in which I grew up. Analytic thinking was (almost literally) in my mother’s milk (she went to the Jewish Theological Seminary before women were ordained and got her degree in teaching.)”

“Sometimes things in the Emergency Department get overwhelming,” Dr. Steinmann notes. “It would be easy for doctors to say, ‘I can’t do enough. Why do anything?’ But Judaism teaches us that someone who saves a single life, it is as if they saved the world. So you take it one at a time, and you do what you can do, and it makes a difference.”



Dr. Kathleen Steinmann is a nurse practitioner and the Director of Education and Professional Practice at Crouse Hospital. Part of her work involves educating the hospital staff about the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). The coronavirus pandemic has significantly impacted that work. “We have to assure that people are meticulous in donning and doffing PPE,” she says. “We have to treat this situation as we would measles or tuberculosis.” In collaboration with infection prevention, sterile processing, and senior leadership, she and her teams have created

Dr. Wendy Evers Gordon is a clinical psychologist at Upstate Medical University’s Department of Psychiatry, providing direct clinical services to adults and children. She also teaches seminars to psychology doctoral interns, psychiatry fellows, and social work interns. She is used to meeting with patients and students face-to-face, in her office or in a classroom. Since the quarantine, her activities have been switched to telehealth, via a secure, HIPPA-compliant site. For patients who do not have access to the internet, telephone-only services are currently the only option. “Anxiety increases when we feel that our world is unpredictable and out of our control,” she notes. “But there ARE things we can control and can make predictable. That’s why routine and decision-making activities are especially important at this time. We are social creatures. We need and benefit from social interactions and supports. We miss those we cannot visit with, touch or hug. But the advice of health officials, to stay apart now so we can be together later, is great advice.”

Dr. Gordon has felt the impact of the pandemic on her counseling practice. “The importance of always putting patients first has never been clearer,” she says, “as it can require sacrifices few of us have been asked to make before. Not only does this represent a sea-change in how I provide service and training, it required an immediate education in using the latest technology to deliver telehealth services. No longer can I directly interact with patients or students; for those who only have access to telephone, we can’t even see each other when engaged in therapy. I think that something is lost in the connection and feelings of warmth and engagement with others.”

The most stressful and challenging part of her work now “is trying to remain engaged with individuals who, in addition to the specific concerns which led them into therapy, are having to deal with the current stress of isolation from others, lack of previously-accessible family



and community supports, and anxiety about their own health, as well as that of friends and family. The need to provide ongoing support, reinforce coping strategies, and ensure that they are following safety protocols is both crucial and challenging.”

“Jewish law teaches us that being a good person is not defined simply as not doing bad things or hurting another; rather it is a person who actively does good deeds,” she notes. “By doing my best as a professional and as a human being, I strive to be a good person in the Jewish sense. In this way, I find comfort and a sense of purpose, particularly as we all are called to manage this uncharted territory. I hope that, when this crisis has, eventually, subsided, we won’t forget what we have learned from it: that kindness, compassion, and decency always trump ignorance and denial; that we are at our best when we work together, because, in this situation, as in many others, we truly are one people, members of the human race.”

posters to illustrate proper infection prevention protocols, have instituted special sterilization processing so that N95 masks can be reused, and have provided ‘just in time education’ throughout the hospital as CDC and Department of Health protocols have rapidly changed. Their goal is keeping the patients, community, and staff safe through the optimization of protective equipment and knowledge expertise.

The most stressful part of her position right now is not knowing what is coming next. “As a country, we’re storming,” she says. “It’s continuous change and chaos. How do you manage chaos? As an organization, we must be agile and manage the chaos.” She is coping with many workforce management issues, including furloughs and reassignment of nurses from surgical services to the bedside and other settings throughout the organization. What she wants people to know is that “this is really real. The virus is very much alive and well. Social distancing and sanitation protocols are really helping. We cannot let up on that. We’re learning something new about this

virus every day, hour by hour, minute by minute. We need time, and we need to pay attention.”

Another enormous challenge is helping patients who come to the hospital with COVID-19. “We greet them with masks, face shields, gowns, gloves; they are placed in an isolation room away from family and friends. They are physically isolated, but we don’t want them to feel emotionally and spiritually isolated. We have an obligation to provide the best care we can for them. This is the art of nursing. Our commitment to them is to make them feel that they are loved and cared for and to help them get better.”

Dr. Steinmann emphasizes the continuing need for people to focus on their health and to do what is necessary – washing their hands, eating well, sleeping enough, getting exercise – to stay healthy. She cites an ancient piece of Jewish wisdom, from the medieval *Sefer Hasidim*: “Who is a wise doctor? He who knows to warn his patients how to avoid becoming sick.”

JCC Thanks the Community

Dear Members, Families and Friends,

We hope that you and your family are well and staying safe during these uncertain times. Since mid-March, this new coronavirus “reality” has certainly been an adjustment for everyone. As we write this, the JCC remains temporarily closed. We are encouraged that the situation will continue to improve and we can reopen shortly, if we’re not already there by the time you read this.

Throughout this time of “staying at home to stop the spread,” so many of you have stepped up to help the JCC after we put a hold on billing for all accounts. It has been amazing. We’ve been floored by the outpouring of generosity from those of you who still made your membership and program payments or made a one-time donation. Thank you very much for your outstanding support. We are truly humbled and grateful for your kindness.

While uncertainty has been the “new normal” for a while now, one thing that we’re certain of is that things will be very different once the JCC reopens. Continued social distancing, wearing face masks, good handwashing/hygiene practices and more will be a part of our lives at the JCC and elsewhere. As we work through these new ways of doing things, please know that safeguarding everyone’s health and safety is our top priority.

If you are in a position to help support the JCC at this time, we welcome your assistance. To make a tax-deductible donation, please visit www.jccsy.org or contact Erin Hart at 315-445-2040 ext. 112, or ehart@jccsy.org.

Once again, thank you very much for your support and for your wonderful sense of community. We will continue to get through this together.

Sincerely,

Marci Erlebacher Steven Siskind
Executive Director Board President

JCC Looking to Start Up Senior Kosher Dinners Again June 29

Many seniors had to do without the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center’s senior kosher lunch program this spring because of the coronavirus. However, the JCC is looking to the future when seniors will be able to enjoy a hot, nutritious and well-balanced kosher dinner on Monday evenings—with necessary safeguards in place, of course. These will likely include social distancing, wearing face masks, good handwashing/hygiene practices and more.



Karen and Herb Roberts enjoyed a JCC’s senior kosher dinner last summer.

The JCC’s Dr. Morton and Mrs. Libby Maloff Summer Senior Dinner Program is looking to kick off June 29. The dinners are held on Mondays at 5 pm, with live entertainment slated each week. This JCC summertime tradition will run through August and is open to seniors 60 and older for a suggested contribution of \$5.50 per person. Registration is required by the Wednesday before each dinner by calling 315-445-2360.

“After what everyone’s been through this year, I am so excited that we are planning to have our senior dinner program start up again this summer,” said Marci Erlebacher, JCC executive director. “It will be wonderful to see our seniors come together on Monday nights and socialize—at a safe physical distance, of course—over a delicious and affordable kosher meal.”

The summer dinners are a component of the Bobbi Epstein Lewis Senior Adult Dining Program, renamed four years ago after the late Dr. Morton and Mrs. Libby Maloff, thanks to a generous gift from their family. The Senior Adult Dining Program is the only senior nutrition

program outside of New York City serving kosher meals five days per week. The program is funded by Onondaga County Adult and Long-Term Care Services, New York State Office for the Aging and the Jewish Federation of Central New York.

As of May 1, the plan is for senior lunches to continue at noon Tuesdays through Fridays through August. Nutritious and well-balanced kosher meals are offered for a \$4.25 suggested contribution, with special event and holiday luncheons for a \$5.50 suggested contribution. For more information, and to register for a lunch or dinner, call 315-445-2360.

Volunteers are sought to help serve Monday evening senior kosher dinners at the JCC starting on June 29. Volunteers age 13 and older are welcome and should be available starting at 4:45 pm. Flexible weeks are available. Students seeking to fulfill community service requirements will receive confirmation of volunteer hours served. For more information and to sign-up to help with this worthwhile community program, call 315-445-2360.



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JCC Maintains Connections Virtually

At home in the family room with her poodles, Roma and Paris, Paula Pacini, group exercise coordinator and instructor with the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center, teaches a Senior Strength and Balance class. Nearly two dozen seniors are working out in their own homes along with Pacini. They all see each other on their computer or tablet screens. It's not the same as being at the JCC, but Zoom has allowed many to exercise together again.

The JCC continues to connect with its members and families online. The Fitness Center posted online exercise videos and some instructors created and shared their own workout videos. Judging by the number of views, Line Dancing is the most popular offering.

JCC preschoolers, dance and gymnastics students, and PJ Library® families have been able to stay connected thanks to the internet. The JCC's Jerome and Phyllis Charney Early Childhood Development Program filmed several videos before the



Pictured in this video screenshot is Rebecca Wojtanowski, JCC early childhood teacher, reading a story. The video is posted on the ECDP Facebook page.

Center temporarily closed. Posted on the ECDP Facebook page, the videos allowed students to see their teachers again, singing along to a song or listening to a story.

Sherri Lamanna, director of gymnastics, dance and ECDP physical education, held Zoom video meetings with some of her gymnastics classes. The students had a great time connecting and even held an online handstand contest. JCC dance instructors made videos so that students could practice at home.

For Carolyn Weinberg, PJ Library® in CNY coordinator, reaching out to families online was easy, thanks to PJ's already strong Facebook presence. Sharing videos of songs, stories and other creative activities offered families options for



Pictured on the laptop screen are the seniors present along with JCC instructor, Paula Pacini, for the start of a virtual Senior Strength & Balance class via Zoom in April.

staying busy and connected. Weinberg even set up a Zoom meeting with PJ families and some Israeli scouts who recently spent the summer at the JCC camp.

Although nothing can replace in-person interactions at the JCC, connecting virtually has been helpful and welcoming. The videos can be seen at www.jccsyr.org. Now that the JCC has "been there and done that," they can't wait to see you all back at the JCC!

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Jewish Observer
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» Book Review

“Unorthodox” Is Causing Controversy

Review by Jackie Miron

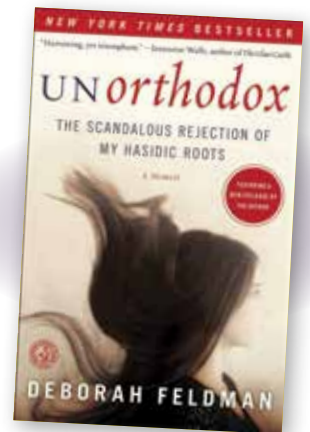
Perhaps the most difficult part of reviewing a memoir is dealing with doubts as to its veracity. *Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots*, Deborah Feldman's memoir of her escape from the strict religiosity of the Satmar sect of Hasidic Judaism, has come under fire for its perceived falsity. There is even a blog entitled “Exposing the Lies and Fabrications of Deborah Feldman.”

But let's shift the focus from the noise around the book's accuracy, and point out that it is intriguing, interesting, transporting, illuminative, and beautifully written.

Deborah Feldman entered an arranged marriage at 17, and bore a son at 19. Unlike most in the Satmar community, Deborah did not have a large and close-knit family. Her grandparents and aunt raised her due to an absentee mother, and a father with mental incapacity. Her book derives from a diary she kept to chronicle her life until, at the age of 25, she escaped with her son to Berlin.

The Satmar sect was founded in the early 20th century in Hungary and reestablished in New York City after World War II. Its adherents number between 65,000 and 75,000. The group is characterized by, strict religious adherence, rejection of modern culture, and anti-Zionism. Yiddish is its primary language and the basis for a comprehensive educational and media system for men. The leadership dictated how Deborah dressed, what she read, and how she interacted with others.

A number of books have been written by and about members of Hareidi groups. Deborah's is no different. Extremely independent-minded, she craved knowledge of the outside world. She risked learning about it from stolen moments with library books, especially those with empowered female characters. She says “reading could make everything else in my life bearable, if only I could have books all the time.” Deborah challenged established principles, rules and customs, and she writes eloquently about her journey.



Deborah shows her strength when she states that she “stopped believing in authority just for its own sake and started coming to my own conclusions about the world I live in.” She often illuminates her thoughts with humor. It is possible that some truth-bending was due to emotions, circumstances, differing interpretations, and her desire to protect some of the people in her life. Yet hers is a solid depiction of anyone who tries to question the establishment, lacks basic freedoms, struggles with desires, and wishes to gain freedom and independence.

Unorthodox was recently released as a 4-episode Netflix show. Deborah filmed a short explanation about the making of the series, and we learn about her involvement in its development. The series departs further from the book than some fans would like, but the large audience who watched the series were moved and entertained. Again, controversy swirled, with one critic commenting, “*Unorthodox* is a major embarrassment. Like a three-dollar bill created by a master counterfeiting artisan, it first looks authentic, but it is quickly revealed as phony.”

Whether you read or watch *Unorthodox*, you will not be able to put it aside. It is readable, heartwarming, and detailed. You feel as though you are inside Deborah's head and her heart. It is also important to know that Deborah firmly states, “No matter how you live, it seems you need faith to get by, get ahead. I am proud to be Jewish, because I think that is where my indomitable spirit comes from.”

Coping with Quarantine at Menorah Park

It has been weeks since the federal government banned nursing home visitors in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Shelly Werner and her daughter Kate wanted to celebrate their mother/grandmother's 95th birthday, so they made a sign and stood on the lawn outside The Oaks to send their love and birthday wishes to Grandma Rose.



Rabbi Shore, chaplain at Menorah Park, is no longer allowed to visit the residents. He recorded himself leading Friday night services and kiddush and asked four SHDS sisters to record songs for *Kabbalat Shabbat* for the residents who wish to welcome the Sabbath.

Each week Menorah Park features a message from a resident on social media and in their e-newsletter, *A Menorah Park Minute*. They want to let family and friends know that, even during this difficult time, love and hope will keep us



connected. The Menorah Park Activities Team provides bundles of encouragement and glitter to keep the residents' creativity flowing.



Federation Provides \$50,000 to Menorah Park

At its May 14 meeting, the Board of the Jewish Federation of Central New York voted to give a \$50,000 grant to Menorah Park to help cover the extraordinary costs of personal protective equipment and other supplies necessitated by COVID-19. Federation Board Chair Ellen Weinstein explained that "due to the current coronavirus pandemic, Menorah Park has experienced an enormous increase in expenses in order to keep its residents and staff safe and secure. Federation is making this significant donation to help address this emergent need because we are all in this together. By taking this action, we are not only supporting the most vulnerable members of our Jewish community, but also the most vulnerable members of the larger community. Federation is all of us, working together, to make things better." Menorah Park Chief Executive Officer MaryEllen Bloodgood said, "We gratefully welcome these funds on behalf of the residents and staff of Menorah Park. The incredible expense of keeping everyone here safe is unprecedented. Through your altruism, the Jewish Federation assists us in bearing this fiscal burden."



Masks to Keep Us Safe

Cecelia Ellis sews masks for Jewish Family Service, Menorah Park and others. Federation distributed over 200 masks at no charge to members of the community.

Federation's 102nd Annual Meeting

The Jewish Federation of Central New York's 102nd annual meeting will be held via Zoom on Thursday, June 4. The Federation's three partner schools, the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, the Syracuse Community Hebrew School and the Epstein School of Jewish Studies will be part of the evening's programming. Leaders and volunteers will be recognized for their service and the Federation's Esther and Joseph Roth Award for Outstanding Community Leadership will be presented to Dr. Alan Goldberg, professor emeritus at Syracuse University's School of Education and director of the Holocaust and Genocide Initiative.



As the first coordinator of the Spector Warren Fellowship program for Future Educators, Alan delved into the field enthusiastically, reading, learning and making connections. Dean of the School of Education Corinne Smith said, "As a result of Alan's leadership, the Spector/Warren fellowship not only educated future teachers in how to teach the Holocaust, but supported Holocaust education programming in the local school community. Children learned that they had a responsibility to be 'upstanders,' rather than 'bystanders' when faced with injustices; that they carry individual responsibility for helping to create a more just society."

Alan's work has impacted not only Warren fellows and scholars, but all those who engage with him in the study of the Holocaust. The Holocaust Museum Houston recently recognized his leadership as director of the Spector/Warren Fellowship by naming the education library in the Boniuk Center for the Future of Holocaust, Human Rights and Genocide Studies in his honor. He was honored by InterFaith Works as a person who "advocated for equity, educated youth, broke barriers, crossed divides and advanced the community through innovative programs and projects."

Also on the program will be the election of new members of the Federation board, and the presentation of the Federation annual report by president/CEO Michael Balanoff and tribute to outgoing Federation board chair, Ellen Weinstein. The community is invited to attend, and a Zoom invitation will be forthcoming.

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Jewish Cook of the Month

Lon Lowenstein

Lon Lowenstein is an Inspector with the Onondaga County Health Department who was born and raised in Dewitt. He lives with his wife Joan, also a Dewitt native, their teenage daughter Peri and their dog, Lev.

Where did you learn to cook?

I learned to cook initially at my mother's side and in many fine dining restaurants locally, in New York City and in California. I worked professionally as a chef until I met my wife and decided I no longer wanted to work restaurant hours.

Why do you like to cook?

Cooking for me is love. I enjoy feeding people and it is a wonderful creative outlet for me. I enjoy cooking all cuisines. I love experimenting and discovering new foods and recipes.

What is your favorite dish to prepare?

I don't really have one favorite dish; there are too many that I enjoy making.



If I had to narrow it down to a genre, I would say that I enjoy making Asian street food the most.

What is your favorite cooking secret/trick/hack/shortcut?

The most important thing about cooking is *mise en place*, which is French

for "everything in place." You want to do all of your prep work before you start cooking, all of your chopping, peeling, slicing, your seasonings at hand, and

proper cookware selected. Also, there is nothing more important than a good, sharp knife. And finally, clean as you go. This will help in the long run.

Could you please share a favorite kosher recipe that isn't terribly complicated?

Potato Gateau

INGREDIENTS

4 or 5 large russet potatoes peeled and thinly sliced
1 large onion thinly sliced (optional)
[Tip: a mandolin or Japanese slicer helps greatly but is not necessary]
Whole milk, light cream or half and half
Salt and Pepper to taste
Butter

DIRECTIONS

Layer potatoes and onions in a buttered 9x9" or 9x12" or oval coquette dish, putting salt and pepper between each layer. Fill dish with milk, light cream or half and half, leaving top layer uncovered. Dot with butter. Bake in a 350° oven for approximately one hour until browned, but not dry. You want the potatoes to be creamy. We love to serve it with grilled fish and a tossed salad. Decadent and fattening, but a nice treat!

Matan B'seter - Giving In Secret



As our community continues to battle the current public health crisis, we cannot forget the continuing strength and courage of frontline healthcare workers, including the staff of Menorah Park, who care for our seniors and other vulnerable persons. They are working very long hours and displaying true devotion to their isolated and lonely clients. To help them out, Federation set up a *Matan b'Seter* - Giving in Secret - food cabinet, which they can access at any time. It is based on an ancient Jewish tradition -- the room in the courtyard of the Temple, where donors would deposit gifts and others would take what they needed, all in secret. The cabinet is located near the mikvah at Menorah Park on the right-hand side as you pull up the driveway. Anyone may donate to the box and anyone may take from it.

Federation's *Matan b'Seter* cabinet will provide Menorah Park staff and others with basic food items. The Jewish community is joining with Federation in stocking it with food in cans and plastic jars (no glass, to prevent breakage), and packaged non-perishables and treats (no chocolate, to prevent melting) for the Menorah Park staff and their families, the seniors in the Achavath Achim

apartments and anyone suffering food insufficiency.

So many in our Jewish community have asked how they can help. This is a way to show compassion and concern for those who are in the front lines in this difficult time. If you would like to help alleviate food insufficiency during this crisis, please feel free to donate at any time or take, if you need it.

Our Community's Artists



Alec Erlebacher always had a passion for science, technology and the creative process. He seeks out new ways of expression in a variety of artistic mediums and materials and produces work that is unique to his vision. Alec majored in media studies and minored in fine arts at the University at Buffalo and earned a master's degree in photography at the Newhouse School at Syracuse University. Among his recent photographic projects is the exploration of a technique he developed called "Cubism-Lighting," which uses long exposures and colorful lighting to reveal the vicissitudes of time in surreal and ethereal photographs.

Alec's work as a portrait photographer had led him to acknowledge "the many differences between how someone looks physically and how they act." He says, "The world is full of variety, and that variety is both natural and beautiful."

At a young age, Alec was taught that "Judaism says it's okay to question things." This philosophy, he says, "definitely was a driving mind set whenever I created art over the years. It spawned a curiosity in me at a young age that has never diminished." Alec also worked at the JCC for many years which gave him experience working with children,



especially those diagnosed with autism. He used those skills to build his master's project, "The Spectrum." Alec recently started his own business, Smart Alec Support LLC., which offers media, marketing, and IT support for households and businesses.



Sarah Saulson started weaving as a child in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and has pursued fiber arts as a full-time profession for almost four decades. She earned her undergraduate degree in anthropology from Wellesley College. Her interest in ethnic textiles and processes led her to work with weavers in Ghana, India and Guatemala. "Teaching in a variety of contexts has become an important part of my weaving life," she says. In addition



to working with adult learners in many parts of the country and children in local schools, Sarah taught weaving at Syracuse University for nearly two decades. "I am fascinated by the process of making cloth," she says, "and I want the bones of the process to show in the finished work. Weaving is nearly unique among mediums in that the structure and the surface are one. Thus, there exists the opportunity to preserve the history of the making of the piece in its final form."



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In her studio practice, Sarah has focused on one-of-a-kind Jewish prayer shawls woven on commission. She sees the *tallitot* as combining original woven patterns “along with the deepest respect for the long-standing, beautiful traditions so intrinsic to Jewish ritual objects.”



Marc Safran is an area ophthalmologist who has maintained a creative photographic studio at the Delavan Center for the past decade. As a self-taught photographer, Safran has worked to produce strong, dynamic and creative images that primarily feature actors, models, dancers, and figure subjects. His work has been given juried awards by Graphis Magazine and others and has been fea-



tured in a variety of publications.

Marc appreciates the difficult circumstances of those in the arts and has always done his work free of charge for creative subjects. He has been fortunate to recruit talent from a wide variety of organizations including actors in Syracuse Stage, dance companies including Paul Taylor, Diavolo, Rochester's Garth Fagan and PUSH, Cirque du Soleil

and Moulin Rouge (Paris). “I try to find emotion and expression in my subjects. Creative lighting and trying new modalities of experimentation are important to me,” he says. His work is followed by a large group on Instagram (@marcsafranphotography) and his website at www.marcsafran.com.



Katya Krenina is an award-winning artist with a passion for book illustration. Her mixed media works have illustrated over fifteen books including *The Cloak for The Moon*, *Who Took My Hairy Toe?*, *Tooth Tales from around the World* and three Jewish children's books:

How Yussel Caught the Gefilte Fish, *The Mysterious Guests: A Sukkot Story* and *The Magic Dreidels*. Katya loves creating characters and translating written work into images. She explains that “To me, the beauty of being an illustrator is the ability to see relevance to my art in everyday happenings.” Katya emigrated from Ukraine to the United States in 1989 and graduated from Syracuse University with a B.F.A. in Illustration and a B.F.A. equivalent with highest honors from The National Art Academy in Lvov, Ukraine.

She currently teaches in the visual arts program at LeMoyne College. Her unique artistic style is influenced by different cultures and storytelling traditions. She muses that “The journey can get difficult sometimes, but in the amazing world of talking cats, winged creatures, magical spells and ladders that lead to the moon there is always hope for a happy ending.” Silk & Soul, her own line of illustrated silk scarves and accessories features a Tree of Life collection, influenced by the art of Jewish papercutting.

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ISRAEL IRA ZAMES

April 25, 2020

Israel Ira Zames, known to all as Ira, passed away peacefully on April 25, 2020. His early years were spent with his large extended family, many of whom were well-respected Jewish leaders during the time of the Nazis' growing power in Europe. Ira's parents, Mendel and Hela Znamirovski, came to the United States in 1939 and were at the World's Fair in New York when the Nazis invaded Poland. Ira's parents quickly made plans to rescue him. Hela traveled alone to Trieste, Italy, and Ira's grandmother smuggled him, without legal papers, from Poland to Trieste. Hela, who spoke many languages, was able to sneak Ira onto a ship back to the United States, where Ira was detained at Ellis Island for three months because he had no passport. Eventually, he was released, and the family put down roots in New York, changing the parents' names to Martin and Helen, and the family name to Zames.

Ira grew up on the West Side of Manhattan, and attended Brooklyn Technical High School, graduating at 16 years old. Ira attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology on an ROTC scholarship. He graduated from MIT in 1957 with two degrees: one in industrial engineering and the other in electrical engineering. Shortly thereafter, Ira began his active duty service in the US Air Force, serving from 1957-1960. Following his active duty, he attended graduate school at Harvard, receiving his Masters of Business Administration in 1962. He was in the Air Force Reserves until 1969, attaining the rank of Captain. It was his honor to serve his country, and his family always loved the stories that he told about his experiences while stationed in Biloxi, Mississippi, and the Aleutian Islands, Alaska. In addition to his dedication to the United States, Ira was also devoted to the country of Israel, where his European family found

safe haven.

Ira approached and captured the heart of the love of his life, Kayla, at a "sixish" (cocktail hour) on Fire Island, after noticing her in a blue bikini on the beach. The couple married in 1967, and after a few years in New York City, settled with their young family in Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, in 1972. Ira took over his father's company when Martin died unexpectedly, and thereafter ran many businesses in and around New York City. The soccer, basketball, and baseball players that Ira coached for 10 years will always remember how he prepared them to win championships, wearing black and maroon sweaters and chomping on his cigars. Ira's main focus was ensuring that his family was secure, well-educated, and prepared for the future. Ira retired about 15 years ago, so that he could spend time doing what he loved most: reading, studying history, completing the New York Times crossword puzzle, enjoying fine meals and wine, and "working on" (otherwise known as "mangling") his computer. Ira's first priority was his family; he took tremendous pride in his ancestry as well as in his children and grandchildren.

Ira is predeceased by his parents, Martin and Helen Zames. He is survived by his wife Kayla, his sister Rebecca (Marcel) Margulies, his sons Jonathan (Karen), Matthew (Jill), Adam (Ellen), and Mark (Phyllis), his beloved grandchildren: Emily, Talia, Jessica, Annie, Henia, Brett, Leora, Charlotte, Justin, Julia, Jared, and Leo, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Because of current social distancing regulations, a private family burial was held. In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that donations in Ira's memory be made to Chabad of Northwest Bergen County, 375 Pulis Avenue, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417, or to Henia Zames' team of the Moving Day Walk of CNY to benefit the Parkinson's Foundation: http://www3.parkinson.org/site/TR/MovingDayEvent/PFGreaterRochester?fr_id=3147&pg=personal&px=2043437.

ELINOR JACHLES LYNNE

April 25, 2020

Elinor Jachles Lynne of Dewitt, NY, a devoted mother and grandmother, and beloved aunt died April 25th, 2020. She was 86.

She was born December 27, 1933 in Syracuse, NY to the late Gussie and Harold Jachles. Elinor was raised in Syracuse where she was a graduate of Nottingham High School and worked at General Television in downtown Syracuse.

Elinor married Solomon Lynne of the Bronx, NY in 1960, and they settled in DeWitt, where she worked as a cafeteria cashier in the Jamesville-DeWitt School District. In the years since her retirement in 1996, many past students and teachers went out of their way to express to Elinor their fond memories of their days together.

Elinor was an avid cook and baker, especially known for her world-class lemon meringue pie and Snickerdoodle cookies. Her house was always a place of vibrant activity, with the neighborhood kids walking right into her kitchen to enjoy her treats. Her family was her

passion, with large holiday gatherings holding a special place. Elinor had a love of music, enjoying the talents of a very musical family.

A member of Temple Adath Yeshurun, Elinor was also an avid Syracuse University sports fan. She and her husband had basketball season tickets for many years.

Elinor was predeceased by her beloved husband, Solomon, who died in 1997; her sisters Marian Rifkin and Harriet Gardner; her brother Louis Jachles; her brothers-in-law Irving Rifkin and Morton Gardner.

She is survived by her devoted children: son Howard and his wife Margo, daughter Debra and her husband Andrew Hoffman; four adored grandchildren Caleb Hoffman, Samuel Hoffman, Matthew Lynne, and Stephanie Lynne. Elinor is also survived by her sisters-in-law Harriet Jachles and Harriet Altschuler (Morris); brother-in-law Herbert (Pessie) Linchitz; along with many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A private funeral service and burial will take place in Syracuse, New York.

Contributions can be made to Temple Adath Yeshurun, 450 Kimber Rd. Syracuse, NY, 13224.

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Honoring Jewish War Veterans on Memorial Day



For the past fifteen years the 5th and 6th grade students of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School under the guidance of Rabbi Shore have placed flags, with honor and respect, at the graves of veterans from our Jewish community. This year was no different in spite of the pandemic. In addition to the SHDS students, families of both current students and alumni participated, including the Jaffe, Pepperstone, Resig, Scheer, Seidman and Zames families. The Siskind family also placed flags at the Jewish Cemetery in Norwich and Steve Nathan, a retired veteran, placed flags at Temple Concord's sections within Woodlawn Cemetery. More than 600 flags are provided every year by Steven Siskind and Steve Nathan.



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MAX FISHMAN

May 4, 2020

Max Fishman, 98, died peacefully early Monday morning at home surrounded by his loving family. He was born in Starachowice, Poland to Yitzchak and Nechama Fishman.

Max was a survivor of the Treblinka and Auschwitz concentration camps and the Holocaust. Most of his family died in the Holocaust. After the war, he met his wife Gertrude. While searching for their families they found each other and married soon after. In 1950, they came to Syracuse.

Max was a gifted craftsman who earned a fine reputation for the custom homes he built. He was a member of Temple Beth El and Temple Adath Yeshurun.

Max was a loving and devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He treasured his family and they treasured him. His family will always remember him for his wisdom, advice, gentle presence, and appreciation of life.

Max was predeceased by his loving wife, Gertrude, of over 70 years; his beloved grandson Scott Bryan Dubnoff; his parents; his siblings, Esther, Sarah, Yehudith, Rachmiel, Rachel, Leibel, and Jacob.

He is survived by his daughter Estelle (Ira) Dubnoff; his son Steven; his grandchildren Neil (Judy Goldfarb) Dubnoff, Tracy (Neil) Seligman, Haley Dubnoff, Rachel Fishman, and Hannah Fishman; and great-grandchildren Samantha, Eliana, and Gabriel Seligman, and Gabriella and Zachary Dubnoff; and his nieces Rachel and Nechama.

Graveside funeral services were conducted at Beth El Cemetery. Contributions in Max's memory may be made to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: www.ushmm.org

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ROBERT FINKEL

May 3, 2020

Robert Finkel, 76, of Syracuse passed away Sunday evening after a long illness and contracting COVID-19.

A graduate of Nottingham High School and Syracuse University, he worked for many years as the manager of Henry Wilson Jewelers in Shoppingtown Mall and on Erie Boulevard. Known to his friends as Bob, he enjoyed traveling especially on cruises and watching SU football and basketball. Bob was a member of Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas.

Bob was predeceased by his mother Thelma, and his father Abraham. He is survived by his son Alexander (Lori) of Orlando, Florida, and his sister Joanne (Glenn) Lystad of Syracuse.

Private graveside services in Poiley Tzedek Cemetery are for the immediate family. A memorial gathering will be held at a later date. Contributions in Bob's memory can be made to the Alzheimer's Association or Syracuse University.

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ADELE LUCAS

April 24, 2020

Adele Lucas, a longtime Syracuse resident and member of Temple Society of Concord, died on April 24, 2020. She was 93.

Mrs. Lucas was born in Auburn, N.Y., and graduated from Ohio State University. She married Murray P. Lucas in 1948 and the couple settled in Syracuse. Mrs. Lucas was deeply involved in the school PTAs and activities of their four children. She and her husband traveled the world and loved opera and classical music concerts. She volunteered for many charities, including the Humane Association and Meals on Wheels. Mr. and Mrs. Lucas were honored as Volunteers of the Year by Crouse Hospital's Auxiliary. Long active in the Democratic Party, they considered a highlight meeting Hillary Clinton at a fundraiser.

The Lucases moved to Riverside, California in 2005 to be near family. After her husband died in 2009, Mrs. Lucas continued to live independently in their apartment until May 2017, when blindness forced her to move into assisted living.

She is survived by her four children: Laurie Lucas (Ezra Greenhouse) of Riverside; Bonnie Lucas of New York City; Gary Lucas (Caroline Sinclair) of New York City; Stewart Lucas of Syracuse and a grandson, Max Greenhouse.

Burial will be beside her beloved husband Murray in the Temple Concord section of Woodlawn Cemetery.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Food Bank at Temple Society of Concord.

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