

Jewish Observer

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

of Central New York

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JANUARY 2021 | TEVET-SHEVAT 5781



Tu b'Shevat 5781/2021

Date trees in the Jordan Valley pollinated by Blue White Robotics of Syracuse and Dropcopter Drone (See page 8)

(Photo courtesy of BWR)



DON'T MISS:
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SUPER SUNDAY!
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January 2021

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

In celebration of *Tu b'Shevat*, the New Year of the Trees, this issue of the *Jewish Observer* focuses on ecology and highlights the work some in our community are doing to help our planet.

"Human beings have been altering natural processes ever since they learned how to make fire," writes Fareed Zakariah in Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic

World. "But the changes have intensified, particularly in the past few decades. The number of people in the planet has risen fivefold since 1900, while the average life span has doubled." We see the consequences of this in the collapse of ecosystems, the disappearance of biodiversity, increasing desertification, global warming and pandemics. *Tu b'Shevat* is a reminder that we need to think deeply about the consequences of how we live and take steps to reverse these catastrophic trends.

Hazon, which means "vision," is the largest faith-based environmental organization in the United States. *Hazon* has put forth positive suggestions for change to help the planet. Perhaps you will find some that can become part of your 2021 New Year's resolutions.

The Brit Hazon Commitments:

Transition to a Plant-Rich Diet: Industrial production of meat and dairy is one of the largest contributors to climate change today. The crops produced to feed these animals degrade soil and create dependency on chemical inputs derived from petroleum products. The animals produce enormous amounts of greenhouse gases. Swaths of rain forests are clear cut for cattle grazing, and industrial farming of animals is destroying ecosystems and directly causing a rise in global temperatures. Transitioning to a plant-rich diet can significantly reduce the impact you have on planet Earth.

Reduce Food Waste: Around the world, almost a third of all food produced is not eaten. This wastes resources like water, fertilizer, labor and land and the methane released as food decomposes accounts for almost 8% of all global emissions. While we might not individually be able to address systemic waste issues, we can control how much food we buy, how much we let go to waste and what we do with that waste.

Get Growing/Buy Local: Refrigeration and transportation of food products exhaust are major causes of greenhouse gas emissions. By choosing to grow your own produce and/or buying from local vendors, you support the local economy and lower your carbon footprint.

Buy Less Stuff: The United States has 5% of the world's population but consumes 30% of the world's resources and creates 30% of the world's waste. By buying less stuff we can significantly decrease our environmental footprint.

Reduce Household Waste: By reducing our consumption of single-use items and responsibly disposing of them, we prevent harmful waste from entering our water system and harming delicate ecosystems.

Reduce Energy Use: Electricity from non-renewable sources taxes our aging infrastructure and produces toxic pollution contributing to a rise in global temperatures. Reducing the amount of energy, we use by adjusting our thermostats, hanging our clothes to dry or enjoying Shabbat can significantly decrease our carbon footprint.

As we all confront the plague that has disrupted our lives so dramatically, the words of Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:28 acquire special resonance: "Now all that I have created, I created for your benefit. Think upon this and do not corrupt and destroy My world, for if you destroy it, there is no one to restore it after you."

May the year 2021 bring healing to our lives and to our planet, and may we see the restoration of health, peace, justice and prosperity to all.

D'var Torah

by Rabbi David A. Kunin



About ten months ago, students across the world planned a virtual strike as they called on world leaders and decision-makers across the globe to take responsibility for climate change and environmental degradation. This is especially timely in the era of COVID-19, massive brush fires and an extra-long hurricane season.

I was awed by the courage shown by the students who participated in the strike. It is very encouraging to me when young people take up the mantle of leadership for positive change in the world, whether about climate change or any of the other existential issues that challenge our future. We often ask where young people are, yet when they answer with peaceful but vocal action expressing their appropriate concerns, we turn away from them with fear. Skipping school, we shout, is inappropriate and even illegal, but what tools have they left? Adults make all the decisions and rarely care what younger generations think. How can they force us to listen? Instead, we need to hear their voices, even if we don't always agree with their solutions. They are the inheritors of the messes that we have largely created. They want to act for change, and it behooves us to listen.

As we approach Tu b'Shevat on January 28, we are reminded of our tradition's appreciation of nature and our dependence upon the world we share with all life. Although the environmental focus of Tu b'Shevat is quite modern, it fits within a long trajectory in Jewish tradition. The Torah, for example, in parshat Bahar, presents a very different idea of ownership than that which we embrace today. Every fiftieth year, the Jubilee, land was returned to dispossessed families and freedom to those that were enslaved. The message of Torah is clear: a human truly cannot be owned by another, and land also cannot truly be owned. Indeed, the Torah explicitly states, "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity for the land is Mine." To our Torah, we are stewards for a world that we did not create and do not own.

Our rabbis explicitly understood the human responsibility to care for the earth and the repercussions if we fail in the responsibility. The Midrash teaches, "When the Blessed Holy One created the first human, God took him and led him around all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him: "Look at My works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And all that I have created, it was for you that I created it. Pay attention that you do not corrupt and destroy My world: if you corrupt it, there is no one to repair it after you." This Midrash reminds us that it is far easier to destroy than create. It is also a graphic reminder that God will not be there to pick up the pieces if we destroy our environment.

The greatest idolatry of humanity is our propensity to see ourselves as separate from the rest of creation and as absolute masters of the world. Yet, the self-same threats with which we are quickly destroying the animal kingdom threaten our future as well. Sadly, even the thoughts that our descendants will suffer (and also vanish) due to our decisions does little to motivate action. When we fail to take up the obligation of "repair," and instead continue to destroy the earth and forget that we are not alone, then all will suffer, not only those who actively destroy. As Tu b'Shevat approaches, it is time for us to listen as the world's youth courageously challenge us to continue the work of tikkun olam.

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Michael Balanoff

President/CEO



With this issue of the Jewish Observer, we are broadening our coverage to include Israel and world Jewry. The inauguration of this page is a further fulfillment of Federation's mission to build a strong Jewish future in Central New York, Israel and worldwide through philanthropy, engagement, education and advocacy. As the JO's deadlines occur a month before the paper goes to press, the articles we present will be timely but not "breaking news" and will not generally appear in other media. We hope you will enjoy this new addition to the paper and welcome your feedback.

There is much to celebrate in news about Israel. It is exhilarating to see the list of countries in the Middle East that are beginning to change their stance and engage with it: the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco. Israel is still a miracle and still a cause for celebration.

Another exciting development is that our own community is part of a unique partnership that links us to Israel and


to important work in ecology. Syracuse is now host to Blue White Robotics, an Israeli company that is engaged in important environmental work in Israel linked to technology in Central New York. Though headquartered in Tel Aviv, Blue White Robotics has developed technology that allows a single command center in Syracuse to operate multiple remotely piloted drones used by the agricultural, public transportation, energy and mining industries and first responders in Israel and eventually around the world. This is surely a glimpse into the future.

Jews have always risen to support future generations. This is our moment to do the same. On January 10, 2021 we will hold our annual Super Sunday fundraising event. Your gift to the 2021 Federation Campaign for Jewish Life sends a powerful message to family, friends and future generations about the importance of sustaining the Jewish people, both at home, in Israel and around the world. Our theme this year is Super Heroes. We hope you will be one through generous support of this effort.


Your commitment will sustain what you care about: Jewish life. When you get a call on Super Sunday or a pledge card in the mail, please give as generously as you can. Our future depends on it.

Our goal this year is to move forward and to add LIFE to our campaign and our community. Whether you get a call from a volunteer or call Spider Man yourself to make a pledge or donation, we hope you'll add at least \$18 to your gift, because 18 in Hebrew signifies chai and chai is LIFE.





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 - Send a photo and two sentence description of YOUR Super Hero to jo@jewishfederationcny.org before Super Sunday.
 - Make your very first pledge! Or double your pledge!
 - Win one of the Super Sunday contests — one every ten minutes!

SCAVENGER HUNT! GUESS WHO SPIDERMAN IS! SUPERHERO TRIVIA

Jews Around the World

The Jewish Observer is pleased to bring readers a new page of stories about Israel and the global Jewish community. For those who wish more information than can be provided on this page, links to articles that provide greater depth are included where possible.



Photo by Miriam Alster/Flash90

Bahrain And Israel Agree to Open Mutual Embassies. The foreign ministers of Israel and Bahrain announced that the two countries, which signed normalization agreements in September as part of the Abraham Accords, will open embassies in their respective countries by the end of the year. Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani met with his Israeli counterpart, Foreign Minister Gabi

Ashkenazi, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem, to make the announcement. <https://www.jns.org/bahrain-and-israel-agree-to-open-mutual-embassies-by-years-end/>

UN adopts Israeli “green” resolution. An Israeli-led resolution, “Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development,” was passed by an overwhelming majority of 144 nations by the United Nations Second Committee. The resolution calls for efforts to incentivize environmentally and socially sustainable solutions. <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/291546>

Making the future accessible.

Israel’s Wheelshare provides mobility and independence to people with movement issues. It has installed wheelchair lending stations at most Israeli hospitals, accessible through a multilingual digital app. Its aim is to extend the service globally to include airports, shopping centers and more.

Preventing suicide. Researchers at Israel’s Technion Institute and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have developed an innovative technology for early detection of suicidal

tendencies based on automatic text analysis of social network content. They check for negative words and other factors. <https://jewishbusinessnews.com/2020/11/11/israeli-scientists-developed-ai-technology-to-detect-early-suicidal-tendencies/>

Israeli charity Save A Child’s Heart just performed its 5,555th life-saving heart operation. The patient was Mahmad, a two-year-old Palestinian Arab boy from Gaza. <https://saveachildsheart.org/news/save-a-childs-heart-conducts-its-5-555-lifesaving-procedure-on-a-2-year-old-palestinian-boy-from-gaza>

Recycling dirty plastics. 91% of plastic put into recycling bins ends up in landfills because it is dirty. But Israel’s KB-Recycling (being rebranded as Alkemy) has developed a method of turning dirty plastic into plastic sheeting used in construction to seal surfaces, for protecting floors during renovation work and much more. <https://www.israel21c.org/the-company-solving-the-dirty-secret-of-recycled-plastic/> <http://kb-recycling.com/> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZYGWvB6rNO>

Cyber skills for African refugees. Israeli cybersecurity startup Cybint has partnered with Southern New Hampshire University to provide a free 12-week on-line cyber education training

WHEN TRUST IS CRITICAL, SAY,
**“TAKE ME
 TO CROUSE.”**

Lissa Diaz, DO, ER Physician



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course for refugees in Africa to find employment and reduce the shortage of qualified cyber professionals in Africa. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-startup-cybint-equips-african-refugees-with-cybersecurity-skills/>

Saudis reroute Israeli plane via Mecca. Saudi air traffic controllers helped an Israil plane enroute from Tel Aviv to India avoid a storm in the Red Sea by re-routing it on a flight path close to the Muslim holy city of Mecca. The Saudis even said passengers could take aerial photos of Mecca at night. <https://unitedwithisrael.org/saudi-arabia-saves-israeli-plane-from-storm-reroutes-it-over-mecca/>

Educating for peace. Just two weeks after the peace agreement between the UAE and Israel was announced, the UAE adapted its school textbooks to include the new treaty. A young ambassadors program between Emirati and Israeli children is also being developed. <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/editorials-columns/special-uae-and-israel-building-a-better-future-for-children>

Fighting locust epidemic in Ethiopia. Israel has sent a task force of locust fighters and experts to Ethiopia to help control the spread of locust swarms in the country. They brought equipment and advanced appliances and will train hundreds of Ethiopian locust fighters, governmental agencies and international NGOs. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202011100748.html>

Aid for storm-hit Guatemala. Volunteers from the Israeli relief aid agency IsraAID are helping in Guatemala, hit hard by tropical storm Eta. They are providing medical first aid, psychological

support, relief items, hygiene kits and water filters. <https://www.israel21c.org/israaid-guatemala-brings-relief-in-wake-of-storm-eta/>

Two Israelis selected in NBA draft. 19-year-old Israeli Deni Avdija was ninth overall in the prestigious first round of the National Basketball Association draft of new players. He will play next season for the Washington Wizards. Israeli Yam Madar was drafted 47th overall and selected in the second round by Boston Celtics. <https://worldisraelnews.com/israeli-basketball-sensation-deni-avdija-picked-in-nba-draft/>

How will it smell? Researchers at Israel's Weizmann Institute can now predict how any complex odorant will smell from its molecular structure alone. It will revolutionize the perfume industry and could lead to digitizing and reproducing smells on demand. <https://wis-wander.weizmann.ac.il/life-sciences/measure-smell>

Israel-Indonesia Futures Program. A new program will connect young Israeli and Indonesian leaders from different sectors to develop solutions in the spheres of health, food security and education, to address challenges in the post-pandemic era. <https://nocamels.com/2020/11/program-partner-israel-indonesia-tech/>

Hannah Senesh Museum. A new heritage museum honoring hero and poet Hannah Senesh has opened just south of Haifa at Kibbutz Sdot Yam, the kibbutz that Senesh belonged to. Hannah was only 23 years old when she parachuted into occupied Europe to help Hungarian Jews during WWII. <https://www.loveloveisrael.com/post/new-hannah-senesh-museum>



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CBS-CS' Annual Tu b'Shevat Seder - An Intergenerational "Tree"dition

by Joanne Villegas

Tu b'Shevat has become extremely important to the members of Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas (CBS-CS), including three generations of the Jezer family. Congregants and guests feast, sing, and celebrate the bounty and beauty of life-sustaining trees in our area and around the world at an annual *Tu b'Shevat seder*. In the middle of long and harsh Syracuse winters, *Tu b'Shevat*, "the birthday of trees," marks the change of seasons in Israel, when the earliest blooming trees begin to awaken from their winter slumber.

Rabbi Daniel and Dr. Rhea Jezer annually lead participants in singing English and Hebrew songs and reading passages that remind us of our dependence on and responsibility for the natural world while feasting on a four-course *seder* "meal" with a wide variety of fruits, nuts and wine or juice. "Each year, my dad and a few others gather to cook wine-drenched apricots, filled dates with sesame seeds and many fruits from four different categories," says Ora Jezer. "The joy I have working with my dad looking through ancient recipes are cherished times."

Sometimes seen as an early version of Earth Day, *Tu b'Shevat* is an opportunity for all ages to appreciate Israel's coming spring while awaiting our own. "As I grew, this holiday became increasingly important. With our long grey winters and now with the added need to shelter from COVID, it gives me the needed boost to imagine the day that I too will be in my garden," noted Ora. "Seeing the almond trees blooming in Israel at *Tu b'Shevat* reminds me of the glory of the cherry blossoms in Washington, D.C."

Climate change is devastating our world, increasing the amount

and ferocity of hurricanes, fires and floods. Rabbi Jezer reminds us that the consequences of this will lead to hunger throughout the world, emphasizing all the more the importance of celebrating trees. *Tu b'Shevat*, originally started by Jewish mystics, then taken over by Jewish environmentalists, is no longer just for the Jewish community. Members of the Turkish-Islamic community regularly attend the CBS-CS *Tu b'Shevat seder*.

"We owe our lives to the trees, and we are a part of their world as much as they are of ours," points out Leah Eve Jezer-Nelson. "There is no better time to remember the role we have, the responsibility and honor of playing in the world than at the *Tu b'Shevat seder*."

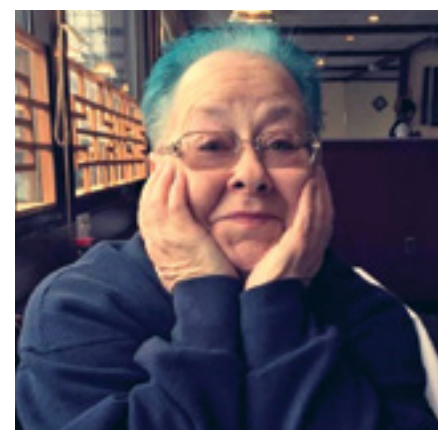
This year, the *seder* is scheduled for Tuesday, January 26 at 6:30 pm via Zoom and will be joined by students from the Epstein School of Jewish Studies. The online celebration is open to anyone in the community who would like to participate. **Email admin@cbcs.org for the Zoom link.**



IN MEMORIAM: Judith Stander

The people who called her "Bubbe" were not all her grandchildren. They were her coworkers, colleagues, friends of her family. They called her "Bubbe" because she personified a beloved Jewish grandmother. She was warm, friendly, open and caring. Judith gave of herself to her synagogue, to her community and to people in need. She was often outspoken and stood up for what she believed. She had her finger in many pots: the Knesset Shalom Singers, *KlezFest/JMAC*, the resettlement of Russian Jews, camperships for Jewish kids, the community calendar and *Community Happenings*. "For all the years that I led the Federation," said Linda Alexander, former executive director, "I was so fortunate to have Judith working side by side as a member of the Federation staff. Her dedication and work ethic were second to none. I relied so often on her writing skills and knowledge of the Jewish community. Judith's combination of organizational skills, empathy, and love for our Jewish community made her a wonderful Federation professional."

Bette Siegel, former editor of the *Jewish Observer*, wrote of Judith, "Everyone is unique, but Judith Stander had her own brand of uniqueness – and it wasn't only because of her desire to help anyone or any organization, or her heart of gold, or her blue or purple hair, or her sense of humor or a dose of encouragement to anyone who needed a push. We shared the same office space at the Federation for some time and had many a good laugh. A consummate optimist, she found good in almost everything and everyone and gave freely of her opinion – even when not asked. She volunteered freely of her time and could be found



sitting at the check-in table at most Jewish community events, and she knew everyone who walked in the door! A Syracusan through and through, and my own personal encyclopedia of Jewish Syracuse history, she was a pillar of strength to her family and the Syracuse Jewish community, and she will be truly missed. Her biggest pride and joy was her family – her children, grandchildren and great-grandson. It is they who will suffer the greatest sense of loss."

"When Judith received the Heart and Soul award at Temple Concord a few years ago, the humble smile and shock on her face caught everyone's attention," recalled Rabbi Fellman. "Truly no one poured their heart and soul into community like Judith. She loved bringing people together and loved watching as new connections occurred. Even as we mourn and miss her, Judith's blessings will long endure at Temple Concord." Michael Balanoff, President/CEO of the Federation, said, "In addition to all the wonderful things she stood for and believed in, she would give up mah jongg if we needed her at the Federation office. Doesn't that say it all!"

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Menorah Park's "Employee of Distinction" Award Winner

by Molly Lane

Jim Valenson began his career at Menorah Park at the age of 16, working in food services. At 18, he transferred to groundskeeping and then into the facilities management department, steadily working his way up to the position of facilities manager, where he has served for 33 years.

On December 2, Jim was one of 16 New York State recipients of LeadingAge New York's prestigious "Employee of Distinction" awards, in recognition of his decades-long commitment and dedication to the residents of Menorah Park. "The relationship that Jim fosters with our residents and their families enables us to create an atmosphere of warmth, security and family," said Mary Ellen Bloodgood, Menorah Park's chief executive officer. "Jim is extremely deserving of this award. He represents all that we, as providers of senior care, hold true."

Jim received his award via Zoom from Jim Clyne, LeadingAge New York



Michael Svendsen, Menorah Park COO, and Eli Wolford, Director of Facilities, flank "Employee of Distinction" award winner Jim Valenson

President and CEO, who noted that "the 'Employee of Distinction Award' recognizes the extraordinary dedication of direct service and indirect service staff, not part of upper management. Recipients have positively affected the quality of life of those served, significantly improved a service or program or have exhibited a strong commitment to the organization and dedication to caring for others."

Jim is very humble about his award.

"For the past 33 years, I have been lucky enough to be a part of this place and witness its growth," he says. "Every day I am honored to be able to help residents call Menorah Park their home and bear witness to their love for this place and our staff."

Jim's own story, like Menorah Park's, is one of legacy. He followed in the footsteps of his father, the former director of facilities, and his brothers to become a member of the Menorah Park family. "Jim is kind to the residents. He comes to work each day and puts forth effort to not only complete his tasks but to also make Menorah Park a better place to live and work," said Eli Wolford, director of facilities. "He is a model employee, valued member of the facilities staff and an all-around good person."

LeadingAge New York represents more than 600 not-for-profit, mission-driven and public continuing-care providers, employing 150,000 professionals serving more than 500,000 New Yorkers annually.

Hillel Combats Antisemitism on Syracuse University Campus

by Colby Yablon

The fight against antisemitism is ongoing and there is much work left to be done, but with help from Syracuse University, Hillel International, and student leaders, as well as support from the local community and partner organizations, Syracuse Hillel is working to create a community free of hate. Last November, the Syracuse University community experienced multiple hate incidents targeted towards minority students, including Jews. Although these events created fear and tension on campus, they also acted as a catalyst for change. Students, faculty members and administration have all played an integral role in implementing new policies and procedures in response to bias-related incidents. Hillel, along with many on-campus departments and organizations, has been working to make Syracuse University an inclusive community for all.

Hillel works with Syracuse University administration, faculty and staff to create systemic, positive change. An antisemitism education and preventive

training workshop was piloted to various student leaders, with a plan to offer this training to a broader campus audience in the spring. The training focused on antisemitic tropes, microaggressions, anti-Zionism and empowering students to recognize and stop antisemitism when they encounter it. Hillel student leaders have been educating their peers about antisemitism, brainstorming ways to connect with other groups on campus to increase understanding, learn from one another and develop authentic community relationships.

With the help of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, work is also being done to bring a speaker to campus to discuss issues concerning antisemitism. Hillel is also working with Hillel International's Campus Climate Initiative to receive additional resources to assess campus climate and better communicate with administrators about Jewish student needs. Along with updates to programming, Syracuse Hillel has partnered with the University to implement new security features at the Winnick Hillel Center.

As a Jewish community, Syracuse Hillel instills in students that it is important to confront antisemitism head-on and

not be bystanders. When incidents occur, students are encouraged to report it to STOP Bias, a University-wide tool to notify the administration of a bias-related incident. "The Hillel staff has been so supportive of Jewish students during incidents of antisemitism on campus," said junior Julia Schwendeman. "It's meant a lot to me to see a team of staff that genuinely cares for its students and is actively on the frontlines fighting with them against injustice."

In June, Hillel was notified of anonymous antisemitic and anti-Israel posts on Instagram, and the staff at Hillel responded immediately. In the wake of the incident, staff first reached out to students to check in on them and offer support. They then spoke to a variety of stakeholders to hear their concerns regarding antisemitism on campus and shared their concerns with the highest levels of the administration.

With antisemitism on the rise globally and of great concern on college campuses, Syracuse Hillel will continue to take deliberate actions to combat antisemitism going forward. Hillel is committed in this space to educating and informing the greater campus community while working to ensure safe spaces for Jewish students.

Colby Yablon is a senior at Syracuse University, studying Broadcast Digital Journalism.

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Delivery at Temple Adath Yeshurun • Jan 6TH

New at Temple Adath Yeshurun

by Sonali McIntyre

Temple Adath Yeshurun has announced three new initiatives: the Programming Committee, the Social Action Committee and a weekly contemplative service.

The Programming Committee develops and implements innovative programs at Temple Adath Yeshurun. The committee looks to think outside the box to engage congregants in truly purposeful ways. Cantor Esa Jaffe said, “If we know what we are creating a program for and what we want people to come away with, that will drive our decision-making as we plan and will create programs that people find meaningful.”

The Social Action Committee focuses on *tikun olam* - making the world a better place. The committee’s first initiative was a winter gear drive to support We Rise Above the Streets, a recovery outreach program that encourages people to live up to their full potential by breaking the cycles of homelessness and crimes many face daily. The committee sent out a call-to-action to the congregation for donations of hats, gloves, socks and hand warmers, offering warmth and care to those who are most vulnerable this winter.

Each Saturday evening, Rabbi Yehoshua Zehavi leads a contemplative service, which begins with the evening prayer (*ma’ariv*). The service continues with time for gathering and conversation, prayers for those who are ill and to mark the *yahrzeit* of loved ones, and *havdalah*. The service concludes with meditation and chant. Rabbi Zehavi said, “My hope is that these services will be an intimate and warm opportunity to come together at the delicate transition time between Shabbat and the week, an opportunity to draw the glow of Shabbat into the days that follow.”




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Early registration for JCC’s early childhood program starts February 1

It’s not too early to start thinking about preschool enrollment for the next school year. The Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center’s Jerome and Phyllis Charney Early Childhood Development Program will begin its early bird registration for the 2021-2022 school year on Monday, February 1. Early registration is open to current JCC members. Families looking to register early who are not currently members can simply join the JCC by February. Registration opens to the public on March 1.



From left, Will Cannon and Anand Memula are busy building a colorful structure.



Evan Thompson is hard at work coloring his masterpiece.



From left, JCC early childhood pre-K students Owen Lewis and Hazel Chefalo enjoy a snack together.

The JCC’s Early Childhood Development Program is a comprehensive childcare facility and preschool rooted in Judaic teachings and traditions, serving infants six weeks old through pre-K children. **For more information, call 315-445-2040, ext. 120, or visit www.jccsy.org.**

Temple Concord Offers Programming for Young Children

by Diane Sacks

Gan, Temple Concord’s monthly preschool program, led by Rebecca Oppedisano, will meet on Sunday, January 24 from 10:30 am to 12noon on Zoom. Parents and preschoolers are invited to participate in learning through Jewish-themed stories, music and art. The January program theme is *Tu b’Shevat*. **For more information, contact the Temple office (315) 475-9952.**

Tot Shabbat with Temple Concord on Zoom will take place on Friday, January 15, 2021 at 5 pm. Parents are invited to experience the wonder of *Shabbat* with their little ones, ages 2-5 (although older or younger siblings are also welcome). “*Tot Shabbat* is a wonderful way to celebrate *Shabbat* with singing, dancing, and stories,” said one past participant. “Rabbi Fellman and Cantor Eglash welcome wiggles and giggles!”

SHDS and Sexagesimalism

by Jay Sinclair

I just learned a new word: sexagesimal. It means related to the number 60. Sixty has many connotations in Judaism and other faith traditions. Isaac was 60 when Jacob and Esau were born; 60 warriors escorted King Solomon; 60 is the proportion of kosher to non-kosher ingredients that can render an admixture unkosher, and reaching age 60 means that one has escaped an early death.

So when the Syracuse Hebrew Day School reached the age of 60 in 2020, it was cause for lots of excitement and planning for a reunion and celebratory dinner. Then COVID-19 hit, and we pivoted so quickly and so completely that our 60th anniversary plans flew out the window. There would be no in-person reunion, no anniversary dinner, no bringing together of alumni and former teachers, principals and parents to celebrate six decades of wonderful educational achievement and phenomenal alumni success. And, of course, we had hoped to raise sixty thousand dollars to recognize this milestone in our history.

But SHDS hasn't survived for 60 years without being ingenious. Just as SHDS classes became virtual, so did our fundraising, the one thing we didn't need to do in person. Thanks to the incredible generosity of 40 alumni parents and three benefactors, we raised over \$57,000 and then we reached out to our alumni. Within days, through the miracle of email and social media, fifty of our alumni donated \$60 and more apiece, generating an additional \$3,000 and putting us over our fundraising goal.



Our gratitude to our donors knows no bounds, and while we cannot thank them in person, we honor their commitment and support, which has always been one of the strengths of the Day School.

Numbers play a fascinating role in Jewish tradition. It is said that Moses lived 120 years, which is why "May you live until 120" is a Jewish blessing. As the Day School looks back on its sixtieth year, it will inevitably be remembered as the year of the pandemic, the year we learned to learn remotely but synchronously, the year our enrollment increased dramatically, the year we wore masks, checked our temperatures daily and sat in plexiglass "offices" in our classrooms. But it will also be the year we again experienced the generosity of those who recognize what a unique jewel this school is in our community's crown. The 60th year is now history. May SHDS live until 120!

Jay Sinclair is the president of the Board of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School.



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Jewish Cook of the Month



Elyssa Rosenbaum

Elyssa Rosenbaum is a physical education teacher and wanna-be cake decorator, who lives in Manlius. She was recently elected to the Federation Board of Directors and is co-chair of the Young Leadership group.

Where did you learn to cook?

I learned to cook from my parents, my nana and grandma and from watching entirely too much Food Network on TV!

Why do you like to cook?

I love making delicious, nutritious meals to fuel all of my triathlon training and other activities. I also love cooking and baking for others, because seeing people enjoy what I made brings me so much joy.

What is your favorite dish to prepare?

My favorite dish to prepare is my Chocolate Nutella cake. It's a lot of steps and so many ingredients, but it always turns out great, and people always rave about it. It's a really special treat.

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



My favorite hack or shortcut is probably setting aside time over the weekend to prep: chopping vegetables, making lunches and prepping as much of dinner as I can. It makes the rest of the week go so much more smoothly and stops me from wanting to eat out after a long day!

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

When I lived in Israel my roommate's mother taught me how to make mujadara, which is a dish of rice and lentils. It's really good served with fresh tomatoes and some plain Greek yogurt.

Thinly slice a red onion and fry in olive oil until crispy. Save half to top the finished dish with.

In a medium pot over medium heat add 1tbsp olive oil, 1 cup basmati rice and 1 cup small green lentils. Sauté until lightly toasted (a few minutes).

Add enough water or stock (vegetable or chicken) to cover by about an inch. Add cumin (~1/2 tbsp) and salt to taste. Add half of the crispy onions.

Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer and simmer, covered, until the water is evaporated.

Top with the remaining crispy onions, plus tomatoes and yogurt (or labneh!) if you like.

» Community Businesses

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Israel Partners with Central New York to Develop the Future of Agriculture

Bees are big business in Israel. There are over 500 beekeepers caring for over 120,000 hives around the country, which boasts over 1,100 species of bees. In order to protect Israel's diverse and extensive bee population, Israeli companies work to protect crop yield rates while helping bee populations, using techniques such as artificial pollination, beehive trackers and robot beekeepers.

The bee population around the globe is declining precipitously. In Israel, the decline has impacted the country's production of dates, a fruit dating back to Biblical times. Israeli date plantations total around 15,000 acres. Pollination was typically done using low-efficiency fans attached to tractors. Each tree gets pollinated four times during the pollination period. This requires a great deal of manpower, currently in short supply due to the impact of COVID-19. In addition, heavy rain and flooding in the Jordan Valley is making ground pollination very difficult.

Israeli ingenuity has come to the



rescue. The Times of Israel recently reported that "Blue White Robotics, a drone-maker founded by Israeli Air Force veterans, has teamed up with a Syracuse, New York-based aerial crop pollination firm to carry out a large-scale pollination project in the Jordan Valley and help date growers cope with a shortage of manpower due to the coronavirus. The joint venture between Tel Aviv-based BWR and Syracuse's Dropcopter will enable the artificial pollination of the dates using aerial drones."

Blue White Robotics, an autonomous vehicle company based in Tel Aviv,

established a command and control center at the Tech Garden in Syracuse. "We are continuing to invest in Central New York to grow the high-tech industry and attract businesses to the area," said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul. "Blue White Robotics' new operations center in downtown Syracuse will further advance tech innovation and create new jobs and opportunities in the region. This partnership will spur collaboration among local companies and strengthen the local economy as we continue to build back better as part of CNY Rising and reimagine the future of New York State."

BWR developed a platform for the operation of multi-autonomous systems which enables command and control of complex data-driven operations using multiple air and ground unmanned vehicles from one central location. Dropcopter specializes in aerial artificial pollination of orchard crops via unmanned aircraft systems. The company conducts research into artificial pollination efficiency with the help of researchers from Cornell University. It has developed a pod to store and dispense pollen from the air. Using BWR's operating system and command and control centers, multiple pollination drones can fly simultaneously.

The mission of CenterState CEO's Tech Garden is to stimulate high-tech entrepreneurship, foster the development of emerging growth companies and support technology commercialization throughout the region.

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David A. Sonnenfeld

David A. Sonnenfeld is Professor of Sociology and Environmental Policy in the Department of Environmental Studies at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. He has a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, with an emphasis on environmental sociology and the sociology of development.

After completing his bachelor's degree at the University of Oregon's Honors College, David explored aspects of life unknown to him as a scholar, including working for several years as a laborer/machine operator in Oregon's forest products industry. Forest policy issues became the basis for his doctoral research, and he began to work with a network of scholars studying Indonesian forestry issues and social



and environmental transformation in Southeast Asia and beyond.

David enjoys collaborative, multi-disciplinary research and sharing results and observations from field studies with people around the world. In 2018-19, he was Lady Davis Visiting Professor

with the department of geography at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus campus, where he focused on transboundary water governance in Israel and the Middle East. In addition to his international activities, David tries to stay abreast of important social and environmental dynamics closer to home, including social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability, deterioration and 'greening' of social infrastructure and conservation and preservation of the natural environment.

Asked what he sees as the major environmental challenges today, David responds: "There are so many, it is easy to become discouraged! So our first challenge is to remain hopeful that, with hard work and perseverance, we can contribute to *tikun olam*, to repair or heal the Earth. Our next challenge is to gain perspective, to identify priority areas where we can make a difference. This may vary from individual to individual, and community to community. Water is essential for all life. Its quality and quantity are threatened for many, whether it be by invisible pollutants,

by overextraction in arid parts of the USA and other countries or by prolonged drought. Global warming is having devastating impacts around the globe, from unprecedented forest fires across the western USA, to rising ocean temperatures, the melting of polar ice caps, an explosion of superstorms and increasingly devastating coastal flooding. Biodiversity loss threatens global agriculture and ecosystems."

Asked what the ordinary citizen can do to help the environment, David suggests "identifying at least one environmental or natural resource issue that resonates particularly strongly for you. Seek to understand that issue, its interconnection with other issues, what advances and progress are being made to address it, what may be holding back its resolution. Look for leverage points to make a difference on that issue, whether through individual or collective action. Seek others with common interests and reach across social divides to find meaningful collective responses and solutions. Celebrate small successes! And gird yourself for the long haul."

Rhea Jezer

Rhea Jezer is a noted environmentalist, educator, policy advisor and consultant. She is the president of Energy 21 and founder and director of the Symposium on Energy, an award-winning conference of national and international experts on the most cutting-edge topics in renewable energy, now in its seventeenth year. When she began the Symposium, Rhea recalls, "we actually had to bring a solar panel for people to look at, and they were amazed because no one knew what a solar panel looked like. We've come a long way since then." This year's Symposium, which was held virtually, attracted 400 attendees from as far away as Asia and Europe.

Rhea stated, "We are resilient, as is our ecosystem, and we will not allow adversity to limit our quest for solutions to the climate crisis in which we find ourselves. Although now, we need to deal with the devastating coronavirus, we must not forget the longer-term threat to our world: global warming. The information and tools we derive from the Symposium each year give us hope and a path forward to decarbonizing our environment to curb climate change. We must learn how to help create a carbon free and healthy world."



Rhea served as an environmental advisor for Senator Hillary Clinton for nine years and chaired the Central New York campaign for the 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act. She sits on the board of the NY League of Conservation Voters and chaired the Iroquois Group and Atlantic chapter of the Sierra Club. She lectures for the Al Gore Climate Project and is an adjunct associate professor at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

Dr. Jezer has a Ph.D. from Syracuse University, an M.A. from Columbia University and a B.A. from Brooklyn College. She has penned major legislation for the encouragement of women and under-represented minorities to enter the fields of science and math. Rhea Jezer is also a noted musician, harpsichord soloist and choir conductor.

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» Book Review

Two Books About the Environment

reviewed by Jackie Miron

We Are the Weather

by Jonathan Safran Foer

Jonathan Safran Foer, an American author who is well-known for his fiction, *Everything is Illuminated* and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, has also penned extremely intense non-fiction. In 2010, he published *Eating Animals*, a shocking and revealing picture of factory farming. His most recent book, *We Are the Weather*, continues the topic in a compelling mix of facts, statistics and his own personal history and struggles with his food choices. It is a call to action, pushing us to stop eating meat and dairy from factory farms. The factory farm industry is criticized for cruel animal practices, straining natural resources and contributing to climate change, land degradation, pollution, waste and harm.

There is an ever-growing body of literature and scientific studies presented daily to us about global warming, but this book will convince even the most well-read person of the ethical and moral obligation to do what is necessary to stop the damage we are doing to our planet, namely, change our diet.

There are many people who feel hopeless about the damage to our planet, but Foer empowers and encourages us to believe that we can control more of what we eat and how we get our food in order to reverse the damaging trends. The planet's dependence on fossil fuels and global warming are overwhelming and discouraging, but he offers some hopeful contributions we can make.

Foer establishes firm groundwork and background on his own dietary challenges and family anecdotes, but his basic argument is that "animal agriculture is making the planet uninhabitable for the very humans who have domesticated it." If you have thought about giving up the backbone of your diet and making changes, this book will put you over the edge, or at least have you thinking with every meal.

Some alarming statistics: 99% of all meat is from factory farms; if cows were their own country, they would emit the third most greenhouse gases after the United States and China; 24% of all emissions are from agriculture and farming practices.

If you have not read *Eating Animals*, you can still read *We Are the Weather*. Both offer thought-provoking discussions and lead to inner turmoil. Foer's non-fiction writing is as good, if not better, than his fiction writing, and you will be deeply hooked. He presents the

human contradictions that we live with every day and emphasizes that even if you think your contribution may be middling, considering the size of the population, you can make a difference. "It doesn't take much," he says, "but it takes ALL of us."

Troubled Water: What's Wrong with What We Drink

by Seth Siegel

Sometimes an author writes a book so informative there is no question you pick up the next. In 2017, Seth Siegel published *Let There Be Water: Israel's Solution for a Water-Starved World*. Two years later, he wrote *Troubled Water: What's Wrong with What We Drink*, another book that begs us to consider again the deterioration of the water supply,

specifically concerning America.

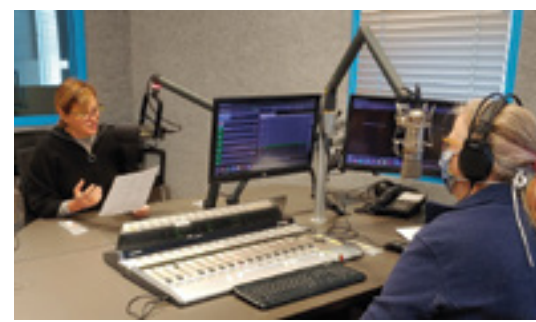
Siegel's expertise in water has evolved over a long career as a professor and researcher. In addition to the books, he has written regular columns on business, politics and culture for *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and others publications. Politicians around the world consider Siegel an expert and have increasingly heeded his warning about where we are headed with the water problems we face as a global entity. The newer book is more specific and technical than his first, describing water challenges from the Flint crisis to many broken water systems. He explains how government is to blame for lethargy in fixing the challenges. He discusses the role of the Environmental Protection Agency, cities, mayors and public versus private water systems. He reminds us of the dangers of pollution from pills to plastics, from contaminants to farming.

The book will awaken you, if you are not "woke" already. It gives a concrete

example of a good water system in Orange County, California. Israel is touted as a model of which Jews can be proud. Israel has been called "The Start-Up Nation," a "Technical Hub" and is seen as a leader in innovation and planning. The country has a unique ability to solve large problems in living and urban planning and set an example for the rest of the world. It is "the little country that could."

Water is in the news on a regular basis as one spoke in the wheel of environmental and global concerns. *Troubled Water* offers an analysis of the past, present and future of our water supply and details how you can play a role in securing its quality going forward. It shows how we are going backwards in many ways and is disturbing in the way it makes citizens feel helpless. Occasionally, the book becomes somewhat boring and tedious, but we need to learn about what is coming. We are in crisis. You may want to consider the earlier title from 2017 with more about Israel and how it finds explanations and solutions.

The Making of a Major Gifts Event



Debbie Rosenbaum was live on air. Michael Balanoff prerecorded his closing, and Pamela Davis recorded the audio track for the Federation video.

"Major donors are the pillars of our campaign," said Debbie Rosenbaum, 2021 Campaign Chair. "Their magnanimity deserves the recognition and thanks of all of the many agencies and organizations that Federation supports and sustains." Each year, the major donors are recognized at a dinner. This year, they were acknowledged at an exclusive premiere showing of "Fiddler: Miracle of Miracles" at a Zoom event produced in association with WCNY.

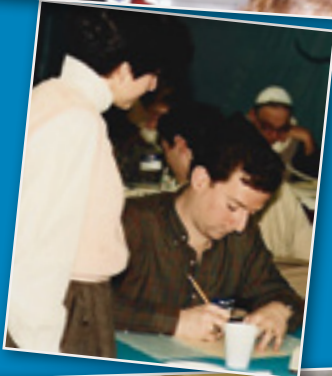
"'Miracle of Miracles' seemed like the perfect film to premier," Debbie said, noting that "Jewish community is so often about wonderful people doing wonderful things." The film, part of the Great Performances series on PBS, is the first documentary to chronicle the story of the blockbuster musical "Fiddler on the Roof," exploring the unexpected richness of its themes as well as its extensive reach across time and cultures.

The evening featured a slide show of Federation photos from years past and a video highlighting the work of the Federation. The theme of the evening, and of the 2021 campaign, was "It's Because Of You." Federation President/CEO Michael Balanoff explained the significance of the theme: "Tonight we celebrate you, our major donors. Because of you, the Central New York Jewish community has a Jewish Community Center, day school, community school and high school. Because of you, we have a Jewish Family Service, a Jewish newspaper, kosher Meals on Wheels, a mikvah, a Jewish music festival and so much more. Because of you, we help people in Israel and around the world. You are making the world – our world – a better place. Because of your generosity, our community is strong and vibrant. Your commitment gives us the financial resources to assure that the causes and community institutions you care most deeply about will thrive for generations. Thank you."

At the start of the evening, the 2021 campaign stood at \$119,835. By the time the program came to a close, an additional \$127,000 had been raised. Debbie Rosenbaum expressed her deep appreciation to the event's attendees, saying, "the coronavirus pandemic hit our Jewish organizations hard. Your generosity is vital to our survival. We are very, very grateful for your continuing support."

Super Sundays Past

Super Sunday is a powerful day when volunteers, donors, and community members come together to make a difference. The 2021 Super Hero Super Sunday, the largest one-day phone-a-thon fundraising effort of the year, continues a tradition that is decades old.



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EZKERA / REMEMBERING

SCOTT T. SAROFF

November 11, 2020

Scott T. Saroff, 65, died Wednesday, November 11th at Menorah Park.

Born in Boston on May 17, 1955 to Leonard and Irma Saroff, he came to Syracuse to attend SUNY ESF in 1973, then continued his education at Syracuse University where he earned a degree in geology, a master's degree in geology, and also did PhD level course study in geology as well.

Scott had been an adjunct professor of contaminated hydrogeology and contaminated waste management at SUNY ESF.

While in graduate school he also was the head paramedic for Eastern Ambulance. He served on the boards of Temple Concord and Menorah Park.

During his professional career Scott first worked for the New York State attorney general's office in Albany where he investigated Onondaga Lake and Love Canal. He then worked for the EPA, at The Roy F. Weston Company. He was a former partner at the environmental consulting firm Blasland, Bouck & Lee of Syracuse. Subsequently, Scott was a senior consultant at several other national environmental consulting companies. Most recently he was a senior project manager at FPM Remediations Incorporated of Oneida, NY.

Scott will forever be remembered for his love of science and the environment and of making the world a better and cleaner place to live.

His family includes his wife Deborah, children Jeremiah, Bridget, Monica, and Katrina; his brother David Saroff; uncle Lester Saroff; and a large and loving extended family.

Contributions in his memory may be made to Menorah Park.

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GARY ALLEN HERSHDORFER

October 28, 2020

It is with sadness that the family of Gary Allen Hershendorfer announces his sudden passing due to heart attack at age 81 on October 28, 2020 in Aventura, FL.

Gary was born in New York City on Nov. 30, 1938 to Symie and Benjamin Hershendorfer. He grew up in Syracuse, NY and graduated from Nottingham High in 1956. He earned a BA in history from Columbia University in 1960, then spent several years as an officer in the Navy aboard the aircraft carrier USS Franklin D Roosevelt. He obtained his Master's in Economics from the University of California, Berkeley, where he met his former wife Marilyn Hershendorfer. They lived in Berkeley for 30 years, while Gary worked for the US Army Corps of Engineers in San Francisco as Chief Economist. He transferred to the Corp's New York office in 1996, where he retired as the Chief Economist of the North Atlantic Division. In 2002, he moved to Florida with his partner Phyllis Salzman.

Gary was an avid skier, and not even knee and hip surgeries got in the way of his annual trips to Vail. He played tennis in college and beyond, practiced yoga for decades and most recently threw himself into golf. Friends and family will miss his wit, his dapper style, and his annual holiday newsletters, which were often accompanied by political commentary and hand-drawn illustrations. Some of his paintings can be found framed in his daughters' homes. Gary is survived by his daughter Alexandra Colacito, who resides in North Attleboro, MA with her husband Mark and son Milo; his daughter Mary Hershendorfer, who resides in Bishop, CA with her husband John Hays Jr. and their daughters Amaya and Hazel; and his brother Victor Hershendorfer, who resides in Syracuse, NY with his wife Celaine.

Donations can be made to The Columbia College Fund (<https://www.college.columbia.edu/alumni/columbia-college-fund>) or the Metropolitan Museum of Art (<https://rsecure.metmuseum.org/donate>). Arrangement by Levitt-Weinstein Blasberg-Rubin-Zilbert (305) 932-2700.



JUDITH ZELDA (LEVY) STANDER

November 14, 2020

Judith Zelda (Levy) Stander, aka "Bubbe" passed away at home on November 14th, surrounded by her family, and on her own terms. We wouldn't have expected anything less from her. Judy was born on September 13, 1940, in Rome, NY, to Harvey H.



and Sara (Slutzker) Levy. Her parents moved to Syracuse and she graduated from Nottingham High School in 1958, and Cortland State College in 1962.

She earned a degree in education and taught elementary school in the Solvay School District for several years. In 1968 she married Karl M. Stander and shortly after, she started working with her husband in running Stander Advertising Agency in Manlius, NY.

During this time, she also was a volunteer coordinator for WCNY-TV, Public Broadcasting. Following the death of her husband in 1983, Judith returned to teaching, working with adult students as part of the Cortland County Employment and Training Office. She worked in the same capacity for Syracuse University. She served on the Village of Manlius Zoning Board of Appeals, and as Coordinator of the 1200 Volunteer team for TelAuc, the local public television annual fundraising event.

Instead of retiring, she colored her hair and kept busy. She was a blonde when she was a community grant writer and NARA Director overseeing resettlement of refugees from the former Soviet Union. She then alternated between coloring her hair purple and blue (settling on blue)

when she went to work at the Jewish Federation of Central New York where she was responsible for maintaining the Federation's *Community Happenings* newsletter and community calendar. During this time, she also staffed the annual *Yom Hashoah* Program and *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* celebration. She was an active member of Temple Society of Concord, which was the beneficiary of much of her volunteer spirit as she served as vice president, secretary and member of the Board of Trustees and as a singer in the Kneseth Shalom Singers Choir. She also coordinated the annual Hanukkah dinner for many years.

Judy was predeceased by her husband, Karl and her brother, Lawrence Levy. She is survived by her son, Rabbi Seth Stander (Margot) of Houston, TX, her daughter, Sara Mahony (Robert) of Fayetteville, NY, granddaughters Macy (Jonathan) Leonard of Charlotte, NY, Mara Mahony of Syracuse, NY, Elisheva Stander of Houston TX, and great grandson, Liam Leonard of Charlotte, NC. Funeral arrangements will be private. A memorial service will be planned at a later date.

In her honor please wear something blue and remember Judith fondly.

The family would like to thank Hospice of CNY for their wonderful support in honoring Judith's wishes. Donations in her memory may be sent to Temple Society of Concord, Jewish Federation of Central New York or Hospice of CNY.

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