

Jewish Observer

of Central New York

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JANUARY 2022 | TEVET-SHEVAT 5782

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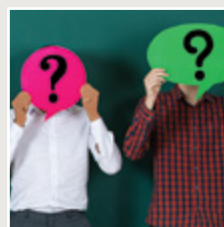
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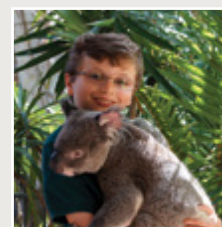
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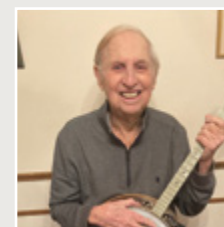
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January 2022

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

While a rabbinic workaround was developed to avoid the economic hardship that *shmita* imposes on farmers, the ecological and social justice basis for *shmita* seem particularly relevant to our time. As we confront issues such as climate change, economic and social inequality, pandemic illness, food insufficiency and growing political divisiveness, maybe we can find wisdom in *shmita* to guide us. We need a breather.

The "Great Resignation" of 2021 is perhaps a sign that people, both older and younger, feel at some level the need for respite and a reconsideration of the place of work in their lives. Just a few short years ago, we were bemoaning a lifestyle that had greatly unbalanced work and home and that created tremendous tension and stress as we, like farmers, were tied to our labors no matter what time of day it was and no matter where we were. *Shmita* can have more than one application.

As in January we celebrate both Zoo-per Sunday and *Tu b'Shevat*, the new year of trees, this issue of the *Jewish Observer* focuses on animals, trees and climate change. The Talmud tells us (*Berachot* 9) that when we see a lovely animal, we should recite a special blessing, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, who created beautiful animals in His world." We are sharing some wonderful photos of community members engaging with other species and a fascinating article about Jews and zoos, a topic that has more depth than one might expect.

Other articles address climate change, which affects all of God's creatures, both fauna and flora. And our schoolchildren wrote lovely poems about trees, reminding us that in *Kohelet Rabbah* we are taught: "When God created the first man he took him and showed him all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him, 'See my works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are. And everything that I created, I created it for you. Be careful not to spoil or destroy my world—for if you do, there will be nobody after you to repair it.'"

Climate change is definitely a Jewish issue. More and more, Jewish organizations and communities are becoming

5782 is a *shmita* year. During *shmita*, the land in Israel is to be left uncultivated, and no agricultural activity, such as plowing, planting, pruning or harvesting, is permitted. Any fruits or vegetables which grow of their own accord are considered ownerless and may be picked by anyone. During this year of fallowness, all debts, except those of foreigners, are to be remitted. What an amazing concept! What would our modern world be like if we were to devote a year to rest, recuperation and recovery, remit debts and allow those who need food free access to it?

aware of and involved with issues of climate change. Britain's Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis spoke forcefully of the religious imperative for Jews to band with others and take systemic action, saying, "No one is an island, no one can say this has got nothing to do with me – we have to bear the responsibility individually and collectively for this horrifying situation which threatens our world and which threatens our grandchildren and our great grandchildren. All of us together must play our part in guaranteeing that we fulfill our religious obligation to do what we can."

National Jewish organizations such as *Dayenu* and the Jewish Earth Alliance are organizing a Jewish presence in this global effort. *Hazon*, the Jewish environmental organization, ramped up involvement in climate education and activism. The national Jewish Youth Climate Movement now has 36 branches coast to coast, and the recently launched *Einayich Yonim* Fellowship works with Jewish high school students on a spiritual exploration of Judaism's deep connection to the environment.

Climate change affects the Middle East particularly hard, spiking temperatures to 120 degrees and higher. In Israel, a group of 37 Orthodox rabbis recently issued a statement exhorting the government to enact policies to fight climate change, saying, "We believe Jews should be on the forefront of efforts to help avert a climate catastrophe. Making this even more important is that Israel is especially threatened by climate change. The Middle East is a very hot, dry area and projections are that it will become hotter and dryer, making instability, violence, terrorism, and war more likely. Also, much of Israel's population and infrastructure are threatened by a rising Mediterranean Sea inundating Israel's coastal plain." Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection presented an overview of the expected impacts of climate change on agriculture, public health, energy use and sea level rise and Israel now has a special envoy for climate change and sustainability who works on climate diplomacy with other countries.

Other highlights in this issue include the work of our Presidents/Executive Directors/Rabbis group and the institution of an exciting "6 Under 36" program. In our RAV Properties column on local businesses, we are thrilled to publicize the opening of Central New York's first kosher dairy restaurant: the K Spot.

Today, *shmita* challenges all who learn about it to think about what our obligations are to the land and to people in general, and to the land and people within the Jewish world and in Israel in particular. Perhaps *shmita* can show us the path to addressing global environmental problems and economic instability by challenging contemporary expectations of continual economic growth, development and individual gains. As we enter 2022, we wish everyone a safe and happy year with the hope that we can find solutions to the many serious challenges that we face.

ERRATA The *Jewish Observer* regrets that the following donors to the 2021 Campaign were either listed incorrectly or were omitted. Our appreciation of their generosity is in no way diminished by the errors. Additional donors to the campaign through the end of 2021 will be reported in the February issue.

We are very grateful to the following generous donors: \$2500-\$4,999: Ann Rothschild. \$100-\$249: Stephen and Rebecca Lerman, Alan z"l and Esther Strauss. \$99 and under: Celia Silverbush, Linda Stone.

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COUNCIL**

From the Federation President/CEO

Michael Balanoff

Thinking Outside The Box



To start 5782 off in a new direction, I challenged the Presidents, Executive Directors and Rabbis group at its September meeting to think “Outside the Box.” “Don’t worry about money, what people will think, why it won’t work,” I urged. “Think divergently. Think creatively. Think revolutionarily.”

The result was 33 “Out of the Box” ideas that demonstrated thought and initiative. The 33 ideas were ranked in order of feasibility, and the list of the highest-ranked ideas was distributed to the Pres/Ex/Rabbis group at its meeting in October. I challenged the group again. “We all pivoted during the pandemic, and some of the changes were for the better. Now we have a choice: to go back to the ‘before’ times or to continue to accelerate change and innovation.”

Participants then split up into breakout rooms to develop concrete action plans to make things happen. The reports of these sessions were consolidated, and a clear consensus of the need for community planning emerged.

This exercise clearly demonstrated the truth of the adage we used when we started: “As soon as you open your mind to doing things differently, the doors of opportunity practically fly off their hinges.” It was a delight to experience the positivity and creativity of our community’s leaders, and Federation looks forward to working with them to implement the following plan:

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Goal:

To create more community-wide events with less siloing of the shuls. “We should get to know each other better. There needs to be a global checking of egos. The senior population often pulls the ‘but it has always been done this way’ and the younger population feels they know better, but we need to work *together* for the future success of this community.”

Who:

- 1) Think outside the shul, pull in other entities (Hillel, Menorah Park, Epstein)
- 2) People should not be locked into their constituent group. Remove the fear mentality: we will not pull from each other; we will strengthen each other.
- 3) Engage as many people as possible, not just those who are usually engaged. Include fringe groups and to find a way to get them to the event.
- 4) Provide accessibility.
- 5) We need to work fast and efficiently to get to the doers and connectors, but we also need to get people involved who have not already been engaged. How to frame it: “You’ve been chosen.”
- 6) Teens want to be with their friends, and that crosses synagogue affiliations.

What:

- 1) What people are comfortable doing jointly: service projects/social action projects/community book club/lunch hour for leaders
- 2) Quarterly event
- 3) Don’t focus on *chagim* with strong religious component. Holidays such as *Chanukah*, *Tu b'Shevat*, *Purim*, etc. are better as is *Yom HaAtzmaut*.

How:

- 1) Convene a community planning group with one representative for each organization.
- 2) Members should be a part of the planning committee at their own organization so that work is not duplicated.
- 3) Group members would be responsible for communicating both ways between the group and their organization.
- 4) Build consensus on goals, and then launch planning for community events.
- 5) Have all entities that participate/sponsor the event listed so that all get “credit” but also so that individuals that see the event posting can identify with one or more of the entities on the list. This reduces the possibility that someone wouldn’t participate because they don’t feel that their organization is a part of it.

When:

- 1) Do something immediate and visible that begins the collaboration process and shows the community that this is important.
- 2) Start planning about one year out. We tend to do our planning too late on community.



“SIX UNDER 36” PROGRAM



The Marjorie Oberdorfer Bronner Pierson and Theodore Pierson Family Endowment for the Jewish Future “Six Under 36” program celebrates six noteworthy Jewish Central New Yorkers, all 36 years old or younger, who make Central New York and the larger community better by bringing remarkable energy and new ideas to religion, philanthropy, the arts, learning, social action and inclusion. These talented young adults are changing our community for good by building a more just society and creating community in innovative ways.

Six young Jewish Central New Yorkers, chosen by a panel of community members from nominations made by the community, will each be awarded a donor advised fund of \$1,000 at the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York to be used to support an organization with which they have worked or a cause they support. The “Six Under 36 Program” is run under the auspices of the Jewish Federation of Central New York.

The Central New York community is invited to nominate their favorite Jewish movers and shakers, advocates, entrepreneurs, philanthropists and community organizers using

<https://jewishfederationcny.org/six-under-36/>

no later than February 1, 2022.

Self-nominations are accepted.

Foundation’s Teen Funders Make Meaningful Donations

On a Sunday afternoon via Zoom, eight members of the Linda Alexander Teen Funders group met to pool their resources and allocate donations to three community organizations whose work they believed met the criteria under which the program operates: to provide financial support to organizations in both the Jewish and general communities of Central New York and Israel that directly impact children with special needs, children with limited opportunities, or children and their families by promoting self-sufficiency, self-empowerment, health and wellness.

Danielle Alpert, Rachel Alpert, Jonah Jaffe, Myah Pettiford, Owen Reckess, Jonah Sahm, Rose Scheer and Emma Waldman voted to allocate \$511 to the Diaper Bank of Central New York, the JCC programs including Early Childhood, After School and Summer Camp that serve children with special needs and the Jewish Family Service Kosher Meals on Wheels program.

IMPACT

SAVE THE DATE!!

Tikkun olam, the repair of the world, is a value that guides both the Jewish community and all who love animals. The Jewish Federation of Central New York will present a celebration of the creatures with which we share the Earth in a unique collaboration with *National Geographic* photographer Joel Sartore and the Rosamund Gifford Zoo. The free program will take place at the Zoo on June 26 at 10 am.

Sartore's Photo Ark Project is a multiyear effort to document every animal in captivity, with a focus on the growing list of endangered species and those facing extinction. With the accelerating pace of climate change and its devastating effect on wildlife habitat, his work offers an urgent argument for saving all the species of our planet. The Zoo likewise has a commitment to ensuring the survival of threatened and endangered species, as demonstrated by its new state-of-the-art Animal Health Center.

To celebrate the success of Zoo-per Sunday, held at the Zoo this year, and to thank volunteers, supporters and the community, Federation will host a free virtual presentation of Sartore's



work, spotlighting animals of Israel and of the Bible. Additional sponsors of this very special program are RAV Properties, M&T Bank, Key Bank, Seneca Savings Bank and Financial Quest, and Geddes Savings Bank.

The goal is to raise awareness of the need to repair the world by saving endangered animals and combatting climate changes threatening the Earth. Federation will thank the community, especially the program sponsors, and express the hope that together we can fulfill the responsibility given in Genesis: "Every beast of the earth, and every fowl of the air, all that move upon the earth, and all the fishes of the sea: into your hand are they delivered."

D'var Torah

Once Upon a Donkey

by Rabbi Sarah Noyovitz



There once was a man who bought himself a donkey. He had goods to sell in the marketplace and wanted the donkey to carry his goods for him. He loaded the goods onto the donkey's back and was all ready to go but the donkey did not move. It just stood there and ate grass. The owner did not know what to do.

A person walked by and saw the donkey standing there, and said to the owner, "What a stubborn beast you have there! You should beat it and make him move!" But beating the donkey did not make it move.

Another person walked by and saw the donkey standing there and said to the owner, "That donkey thinks that all there is to life is eating grass. His burden is too light so he doesn't know what's required of him. You should load him with more goods."

So the owner gathered more goods and loaded them onto the donkey's back until the donkey collapsed under the weight and, well, still did not move.

A third person walked by and saw the donkey lying there under the pile of goods, and said to the owner, "Clearly that animal is of no use to you. Why bother with it? Forget the donkey. Just bring your goods to the marketplace yourself."

The owner was not able to carry all the goods himself. That's why he bought the donkey in the first place. He didn't know what to do.

Then a fourth person walked by and saw the donkey lying there, and said to the owner, "You need to help your donkey."

"Help him?"

"Yes, don't make him do all the work for you, while you just reap the benefits. Share the load with your donkey and show him that you're in it together. Help your donkey."

The owner began to remove goods from the donkey's back and load them onto his own back. He helped the donkey to stand up. And the donkey walked with him to

the marketplace.

Obviously, there are problems with the first three suggestions in this story: to punish, to overwork and to ignore the donkey. They are all terrible ideas. Why then, do humans do this to each other *all the time*??

When we treat our fellow humans in these ways – berating them, making them work for our affection or attention, or else completely ignoring them – we might get what we want from them, but it doesn't help our relationship and it doesn't help them succeed. And it's usually because we assume we know why they are behaving the way they are.

This month we will be reading *Parashat Mishpatim*, in which the Israelites are given a series of laws, including those of moral conduct. The text tells us: "When you see your enemy's donkey lying under its burden, and would tend to refrain from helping him, you shall absolutely help him." (Exodus 23:5)

Not only are we urged to help our own donkeys, but we are also bound to help *our enemy's donkey* if we see him struggling.

One of my favorite quotes from *Pirkei Avot*, *Ethics of our Ancestors*, is the phrase: "Who is wise? The one who learns from everyone." (4:1)

If we put the Exodus verse in conversation with the *Pirkei Avot* verse, an important lesson starts to emerge for us: that we be open to learning from all people, including those we don't particularly like.

It is easy to learn from people you like, whose knowledge seems valuable to you or who are good speakers. But over the years, I've been cultivating a practice of finding teachers in people I didn't expect to learn from. People I don't enjoy listening to. People I don't enjoy spending time with. People who know less than I about certain things. People who frustrate me.

We are human, and we're not going to like everyone. But we can learn *something* from *every* person.

Perhaps the biggest difference between a donkey and a human is that we can speak with the human. When we approach from a place of respect and curiosity, with the intent to learn, we may find that there is a whole world of knowledge someone is just waiting to share.

May we approach every person we encounter with respect and curiosity, and may we treat everyone with more love than we even treat our enemy's donkey.

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Dr. Laura Davis

The *Jewish Observer* is presenting columns featuring businesses owned by members of our community. The column is generously sponsored by RAV Properties.

The K Spot – “*Hakol b’seder*”

“The K Spot” has a certain suggestive ring to it. “Let’s meet at the K Spot.” “Let’s eat at the K Spot.” “Let’s get takeout from the K Spot.” They all sound right. They suggest friendly, fun and food. And that’s what the K Spot provides, since Syracuse’s first dairy kosher kitchen opened to the public in December 2021. Pizza, falafel, malawach, bourekas, challah and dips are the first offerings in this new establishment, which owners Ran Aharon and Neil Glasser hope will put delicious kosher food within everyone’s reach.



Located at 3006 Headson Street, the short thoroughfare that veers right from Erie Boulevard to join Thompson Road, the K Spot began operations by offering its wares to those who walk in and those who order online at their website, www.kosherspotsyr.com. Three delivery services (UberEATS, GrubHub and DoorDash) will deliver to those who don’t want to leave the comfort of their homes or offices to savor K Spot’s fare.

The story behind K Spot is as intriguing as its very existence. Neil Glasser, a native New Yorker who made *aliyah* to Israel in 2011 and returned to the United States in 2013, lived in Brooklyn on the same street where Rosie Cohen lived. Despite Neil’s passing her house almost on a daily basis, their paths had never crossed until they met online through BBM Chat, a group chat for singles. Two years later, they were married and beginning a family. Just as Neil was moving to Israel, Ran Aharon was moving to the United States, settling in Brooklyn where he worked as a photographer and general handyman.



He had pretty much given up on finding a nice Jewish girl to marry and decided to give it one last try on a Jewish dating app. There he met a Syracuse native, who was also giving online dating one last try. Marriage and a daughter followed, and in short order the Aharons were living in Brooklyn near the Glassers, neighbors who became friends.



Ran and Neil wanted to experiment with some creative entrepreneurship. They marketed puzzles of Ran’s beautiful photographs (many on display now at the K Spot) and, when COVID hit, made masks based on the photos. But COVID in New York City was not a happy experience. The Aharons decided to



move to Syracuse. They were expecting a second child and living the pandemic life in a crowded apartment with two small children was not an appealing prospect. The Glassers, who had always thought they would leave New York City, decided to join them on their trek north. “But where do you eat out in Syracuse?” asked Neil of his friend. “I don’t,” replied Ran. And so an idea was born.

“We were told it wouldn’t work,” says Ran. “We were told that this is Syracuse and things like this can’t happen here. But we didn’t listen. We hit a bunch of bumps in the road on the way to our opening, but we overcame the challenges.” “They said we would never get kashrut certification from both the Va’ad Ha’Ir and Chabad,” adds Neil. “But

both Rabbi Shore and Rabbi Rapoport came here, same day, same time, and both were 100% satisfied with what they saw.” The health department and the fire department were similarly pleased, and when the delivery services signed on, K Spot was ready to go.

“We have to start with take out,” explained Ran, “but our plan is to expand into a grocery store featuring specialty kosher foods and lots of Israeli items. Then we will add table service and eventually, catering. We want the K Spot to be a gathering place, a community-friendly place. We want to help grow the Syracuse Jewish community. This is an amazing opportunity. Unlike Rochester, where most of the Jewish people live in one neighborhood, in Central New York the Jewish community is spread out. We want to bring them together. We want to bring people *to* the community. To do that, you have to give them great food.”

And that is what K Spot does. Its menu



includes such delicacies as a malawach sandwich with hardboiled egg and hummus, potato and cheese bourekas, falafel pita and Israeli salad. And, of course, there is pizza, sold by the slice or whole with toppings such as green olives, mushrooms and onions. There is also pizza malawach, French fries and onion rings. Its food is tasty and unique, as well as being kosher. Photos can tell part of the story, but the aromas and flavors that come from the kitchen need to be experienced firsthand. K Spot is open Sunday through Thursday from noon to 9 pm and on Friday for pickup orders only. Right now, the K spot is only offering challah for Friday pickup but promises a full Shabbat menu for online ordering soon.

The K Spot’s menu is accessible online, and orders can also be placed by phone at 315-870-9191. “Hakol b’seder. It’s all in order,” says Ran. “Now we just need people to come and see how good we are,” adds Neil.

Climate Change and Jewish Thinking

by Mark Field

Regular readers of the JO might be surprised and wonder why an article about climate change is in our community paper that normally focuses on local Jewish issues and events. This is a fair question, and an answer will be offered. A related question — does climate change have anything to do with traditional Jewish thinking? — will also be considered.

Most know that climate change has been an issue for decades now. At first, doubters questioned the reality of climate change, suggesting that the earth's warming is part of a benign cycle. As that question was resolved by measurable events, the next debate centered on the human responsibility question. The correlation between greenhouse gases produced by man and temperature change has put to rest those doubts. The skeptics also claimed that climate change predictions greatly exaggerated the risks and that the cost to mitigate climate change far exceeded any benefits. Once again, the evidence shows that, if anything, the dire predictions and warnings of drought, fires, floods, sea rising, more hurricanes, were all too accurate. No place is immune from the effects of climate change. Changes in the ocean affect us all and our food supply. Violent storms and high wind and rain do damage everywhere. In our area, harmful algae blooms (HAB) risk our water supply, and the potential for massive migration will create more social pressures, not to mention the tragic human costs. This is a real problem that most people and world leaders recognize is the single greatest challenge our generation faces.

What does our Jewish tradition have to say about climate change and our community? We can and should start with the Book of Genesis (1:26) where humanity is given dominion over the earth and all that is living on our planet. An accepted understanding of this passage is that we are expected to be good stewards of creation. Exploitation, with no regard for consequences to the environment or future generations, is contrary to the idea of stewardship implied in this passage. Jacob Bronowski in his wonderful book, *The Ascent of Man*, points out that man exclusively has

the means to change the landscape, (sorry, beavers, you do as well, on a much smaller scale) but that power should be used wisely to maintain the balance of nature. The idea of *l'dor v'dor*, from generation to generation, central to Jewish thinking, reminds us that we should always think about the well-being of future generations. We have a responsibility not only to ensure continuity, but to provide for a safe, well-educated and secure future for our children and their children. The sages of old advised that we are not to be held responsible for completing a task, but we are required to do all we can to improve a problem when we come upon it. This idea, combined with the idea of *tikkun olam*, to repair the world, makes clear our urgent need to address the climate crisis before us.

The great Talmudic Rabbi Hillel said it best when he posed the basic moral question, "If I am only for myself what am I?" And his urgency for moral action ("If not now, when?"), Jewish values with their profound appreciation of life and creation, and Jewish concern for the wellbeing of future generations, mandate our commitment of time and resources to acknowledge mistakes of the past and to chart a course of sustainability for future generations.

Individual behavioral change is helpful and sets an example. Consolidate errands and use less gas, turn off lights and insulate your home. Eat less meat and fly less. This will help. In the end, though, for us to succeed will require changes in government policy and actions by large corporations. For this to happen, the public must speak loudly and clearly. As David Wallace writes in *The Uninhabitable Earth*, when individual voices build enough political pressure, "once impossible to imagine solutions will be the key to saving our future." Our Jewish community must be a part of the chorus calling for change. Just as we are thankful our grandparents or great grandparents had the courage to leave the old country for a better life, we need to be the generation that our children and children's children look upon with gratitude for the good and difficult choices we made on their behalf.

Mark Field is a member of the boards of the Federation, the Jewish Community Foundation and the Menorah Park Foundation. He has served as coordinator of SAMED, president of the JCC, and president of Temple Beth El and is a recipient of the Federation's Roth Award for community service.

We Love Animals!



Dominion Over Creatures

By Robert H. Linn

Jewish teachings in the Torah connect people to animals, and that connection is seen throughout the Bible and in Jewish literature.

In Genesis 1:28, God said unto man “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creepeth upon the earth.” Jewish scholars have read the word “dominion” to mean that man is not solely to have control over other species but rather man should have responsible stewardship over animals and provide for their health, safety and replenishment.

In other areas of the Bible, the Lord warns against destroying nature and wildlife and makes it man’s responsibility to protect the earth and the environment. I’ll leave environmental considerations of protecting our fragile planet to others to discuss, and I will focus on wildlife and how “accredited” zoos, including the Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park, work to protect many species of endangered animals.

My wife Zalie and I moved to Syracuse in the early 1970s, and after getting established in our profession, visited the City of Syracuse Burnet Park Zoo. For many different reasons, some likely budgetary, the zoo was not a proper habitat for the care and well-being of its residents nor was it much of an educational facility. The zoo was closed in 1982 and taken over by Onondaga County. It went through a massive renovation and reopened in 1986 to become, after additional renovations and expansion, what is today one of the finest zoos in the nation as a zoo accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). While there are over 2,000 “animal exhibitors” in the United States, there are only 241 accredited zoos.

The AZA accreditation process, which is no small task for the AZA and the local zoo, “evaluates every zoo or aquarium to make sure it meets AZA’s standards for animal welfare, care and management, including living environments, social groupings, health and nutrition.” The AZA also makes sure that “animals are provided with enrichment, which stimulates each animal’s natural behavior and provides variety in their daily routine.” The accreditation process also “evaluates the veterinary program, involvement in conservation and research, education programs, safety policies and procedures, security, physical facilities, guest services

and the quality of the institution’s staff.”

Over the years, we visited the Rosamond Gifford Zoo frequently. I became a volunteer board member of the Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and ultimately became Chairman of the Board of the Friends. We have visited other zoos on travels to Toronto, Philadelphia, New York and San Diego as well as visiting aquariums in Boston and Mystic, Connecticut. Some years ago, we spent three weeks in Kenya observing animals in their natural habitats.

During all these visits and travels, we learned the importance of zoos in a community to complement other educational and arts organizations that make up the fabric of a community and make a community a good place to live, learn and raise a family. That is why we have given financial support to the creation of specific Rosamond Gifford Zoo exhibits – penguin, elephant, Amur leopard and more recently the new animal health center, as well as annual general support.

Many people find zoos to be inappropriately housing animals that should be in the wild. We believe that zoos can, if appropriately managed, maintained and accredited, play an important role in the education of young and old alike as to the importance of man having, in the Jewish tradition, “dominion” over wildlife and protection of individual species that are endangered in the wild.

As an AZA accredited zoo, our Zoo participates in very important programs of the AZA. The AZA’s Taxon Advisory Groups (TAG) work to examine the sustainability and conservation needs of entire species and to develop recommendations for population management and conservation based upon the needs of the species. While most of the animals at our Zoo fall under the AZA’s Species Survival Plan (SSP), our Zoo is charged with running “stud books” for at least four species under TAG. These programs support the



continued viability of many species through genetic diversity and managing the populations of animals throughout the country. This is why you read about animal movement between zoos and why the propagation of many species is controlled by the AZA through coordination of accredited zoos.

I. Richard G. Conway, a long-time member, officer, and director of the Wildlife Conservation Society and also the President of the AZA, who recently passed away, was quoted as saying, “The justification for removing an animal from the wild for exhibition must be judged by the value of that exhibition in terms of human education and appreciation, and the suitability and effectiveness of the exhibition in terms of each wild creature’s contentment and continued welfare.” Conway was also a strong supporter of animal conservation projects around the world. Locally the Friends and the local chapter of the American Association of Zookeepers also have provided support for conservation around the world.

While we had the great opportunity to view animals in their natural habitat in Africa, very few people get to do this. Because of our local zoo’s accreditation and its participation in the AZA TAG/SSP programs, we strongly support the local zoo. The AZA and the Rosamond Gifford Zoo work hand in hand and justify exhibiting animals from the wild as part of man’s “dominion” over wildlife.

I am proud of our community’s efforts to care for endangered animals and to teach respect and stewardship over animals of the earth.

Robert H. Linn is the retired managing partner of Ernst & Young, Syracuse and former Chairman of the Board of the Friends of the Rosamond Park Zoo at Burnet Park.



» Book Review

The New Climate War: The Fight to Take Back Our Planet by Michael Mann

Reviewed by Elliott Rabin

It is regrettably easy to feel despair and hopelessness when pondering the ecological state of our world. The impact of climate change is already disastrous; it's hard to envision how the inevitable increasing warming won't bring even greater damage, suffering and waves of extinction. For decades, political leaders have done nothing, pretending the problem doesn't exist. Oil and coal corporations have prioritized profits over the planet, wielding fleets of lobbyists and targeting campaign donations to secure politicians' votes against action. Most of what I read about the climate leaves me depressed at the rapidly diminishing prospects of humanity's ability and will to meet the challenges.

In this dismal moment, Michael



Mann's book *The New Climate War: The Fight to Take Back Our Planet* offers a bracing splash that concerned beings haven't felt in some time: hope. Mann is a highly respected scientist who has taken the thankless role of explaining climate science to the public. He regularly counters anti-science

propaganda regarding climate change and jousts with deluded crackpots on Twitter.

The message of *The New Climate War* is that a certain degree of hope is both warranted and necessary as we address climate change. It is warranted because, despite the evident and growing damage of climate change, humans do have the power to avert the worst by taking action. In Mann's expert view, we are already on the right path and just need to work together to accelerate the process. His optimism is sparked by the growing global youth movement that calls for governments to take responsibility and grant them a future. Optimism is necessary, because people are not inspired to take action if they believe there is no hope. And he believes strongly that hope is justified.

He describes two main fronts to the

climate war: denialism and doomism. Denialism is the pretense that climate change does not exist or the obfuscation that the science is inconclusive. This was the tack taken by the fossil fuel industry and its political allies for decades with bogus think tanks like the Heartland Institute giving it a veneer of scientific legitimacy. To their eternal shame, some prominent scientists willingly lent their reputation to this cause. Recent journalistic exposés have shown that scientists in the coal and oil industries have known about the impact of their products for more than half a century but chose to hide their findings from the public.

Fortunately, in Mann's observation, denialism is in serious decline, owing to the annual extreme weather patterns that can no longer be written off as aberrations. The greatest threat to climate action is what he terms "doomism," the belief that the end is nigh and there's nothing we can do to avert it. In just a few years, Mann found himself shifting from fighting people claiming "it's not real" to "we're a-goner." In Mann's view, doomism is a luxury we cannot afford. While things are certainly grim, we can and must do all in our power to make a difference. We cannot restore the natural world of 200 years ago, but we can put the brakes on climate change and work together to create a better, more livable planet.

The prophet Jonah was optimistic, in his bizarre way: if people receive the message that they need to change, they will actually change their ways. Mann embodies this message. Despite the entrenched interests of fossil fuel companies, oligarchs and the politicians on their payroll, the rest of us are capable of fighting back and winning the climate war. We all need his vision and hope and to heed his call to action.

Elliott Rabin is the Director of Thought Leadership at Prizmah, an annual guest speaker at Utica's Temple Beth El and an activist with the Jewish Earth Alliance.

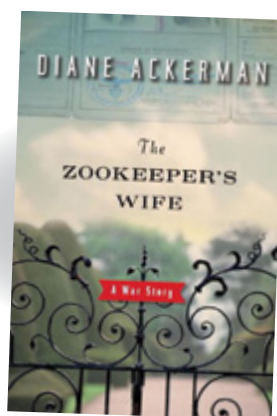
» Book Review

The Zookeeper's Wife by Diane Ackerman

Reviewed by Jackie Miron

The Zookeeper's Wife is a true story set in Warsaw, Poland during WWII. You may be familiar with the book or the movie of the same title, published and released in 2007 and 2017, respectively. The Warsaw Zoo was opened in 1928 but can be traced hundreds of years before to private animal sanctuaries. The zookeepers at the onset of the war were Jan and Antonina Zabinski who lived on the grounds of the zoo with their young son. They treat the animals like family and are incredibly knowledgeable and diligent managers of the animals, their habitat and their care.

When the Nazis descend on Poland, they disregard the animals as well as the people during their quest for dominance and murder. The vivid descriptions of what the people of the country and the city had to endure are as difficult as any war story of the times. The book is well-written, very detailed and incredibly sad and horrifying. The Zabinskis managed



to defy the odds by keeping their jobs. They also carried out an underground resistance, allowing Jews and others to escape by hiding them within the grounds of the zoo.

The couple is intelligent, careful and secretive, while caring for animals, people and themselves. It was a little-known story, and the book became a sensation to showcase yet another act of courage that came to light after the time.

The hardships endured by citizens during the time of war are not underscored for the sake of descriptions of the animals. Both are tragic, sad and difficult, and at times will bring to you to tears. What readers may find disappointing is an excessive level of description and detail unnecessary to the basic story. At times the book was slow and the pace bogged down by too many fillers that didn't add to the character development.

Those who want a thrilling page-turner, this is not the book for you. But if you are interested in Holocaust stories, detailed information, historical accounts and unusual and interesting ways people undermined the Nazis, you will be satisfied with *The Zookeeper's Wife*. Diane Ackerman is in her glory, having done the obvious research necessary to produce such a poetic description of the natural world. She does a fantastic job of seeing the couples' struggle as they internalize the war and outwardly stun us with their bravery and heroism.

Jewish News From Around The World



Israel Works to Save The Planet

“Our carbon footprint may be small, but our impact on climate change can be mighty,” said Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, as he called on Israeli entrepreneurs to “be the game-changers” and harness their creativity for climate solutions, calling the Jewish state the “climate innovation nation.” Bennett pledged this week that Israel will no longer burn coal for electricity by 2025 and committed Israel to be a net-zero carbon economy by 2050. He also announced the launch of an official task force called “The Green Sandbox” to provide funds to entrepreneurs and cut bureaucratic red tape.

Tuesdays for Trash. Nigerian-Israeli Sharona Shnayder is founder and CEO of Tuesdays for Trash, which encourages people to convene on a weekly basis to clean public spaces of discarded trash. It now operates in 23 countries. In 2020, Sharona interned at Israeli recycling company UBU during a Masa program. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/talking-trash-young-nigerian-israeli-activist-sparks-litter-picking-movement/>

Maize irrigation for Kenyan women farmers. Israel’s SupPlant is bringing its smart irrigation systems to the aid of 500,000 Kenyan smallholder maize farmers, mostly women in Bungoma and Busia. SupPlant aims to help 2 million+ smallholder farmers across Africa and India by 2022.

<https://www.jpost.com/international/supplant-to-help-500000-kenyan-maize-growers-avoid-crop-failure-681223>

Israel at COP26. At Glasgow’s UN climate conference Israel’s Prime Minister highlighted that Israel’s innovations can help solve the world’s environmental problems. Israel’s state comptroller led the meeting of his international counterparts who are tasked with monitoring the actions of their respective governments. <https://www.jpost.com/environment-and-climate-change/cop26-saving-the-planet-in-glasgow-from-climate-change-684069>

Tel Aviv is on the (electric) road to clean air. Israel’s ElectReon has struck a \$9.4 million deal to launch its wireless road-charging infrastructure for powering 200 Dan electric buses in Tel Aviv and in the south of Israel. ElectReon is already piloting its smart road tech in Germany, France and Belgium. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-smart-road-startup-to-deploy-charging-infrastructure-in-tel-aviv/>

Keeping a “beady” eye on the bees. Israel’s BeeHero has developed low-cost, Internet of Things (IoT) AI sensors and inserts

them into beehives to monitor in-hive changes. In the US, BeeHero implemented the world’s largest network of simultaneously monitored hives over tens of thousands of acres. <https://www.calcalistech.com/ctech/articles/0,7340,L-3919155,00.html>

Developing sustainable solutions. Israel’s NRS Agro Innovation is helping Israel’s Volcani Institute prevent the culling of male chicks. It is also working to eradicate salmonella in eggs. An NRS subsidiary, RumenEra, is working to reduce methane emissions from cows and improve land and water usage. <https://nocamels.com/2021/10/israel-venture-builder-nrs-agro/>

Timing traffic lights to save fuel. Several Israeli companies are developing smart traffic light systems. Early reports of Google Israel’s four pilots of its AI system in Haifa, Beersheba and the Israel National Roads Company show a 10-20% reduction in fuel use and delay time at intersections. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/google-tests-ai-tech-to-better-time-traffic-lights-in-israel/>

Climate tech startups. 1,200 Israeli companies are working in “PLANETech,” which covers ag-tech, food-tech, water-tech and clean-tech. Israeli focus is on clean energy, smart agriculture and sustainable mobility. The rapid growth areas are alternative proteins and green construction. <https://www.israel21c.org/israeli-innovators-working-on-solutions-to-climate-crisis/>



Jerusalem Park protects the climate. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature has selected Jerusalem’s Gazelle Valley Park in its top eight examples for climate protection. The criteria included social needs, biodiversity, adaptable and analytical management and long-term sustainability. <https://israelbetweenthelines.com/2021/10/07/jerusalem-park-named-top-8-for-climate-protection/>

More water to Jordan. Israel is to double, to 50 million cubic meters, the amount of freshwater it provides to neighboring Jordan, one of the world’s most water-deficient countries. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-signs-deal-doubling-water-supply-to-parched-jordan/>

The largest solar field in the US. Israel’s Doral Energy is building what will become the largest solar field in the United States. Indiana’s Mammoth Project will ultimately produce 1.3 gigawatts of electricity, sufficient to power over one hundred and seventy thousand households. <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/315100>

Israel’s largest floating PV field. Israel’s Shikun & Binui Energy and the Hof Har Carmel Water Association have inaugurated Israel’s largest floating photovoltaic (PV) solar energy field. The 51,500 panels cover 112+ acres of the Habonim reservoir and can produce 23 megawatts of electricity. <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-shikun-binui-inaugurates-israels-biggest-floating-pv-field-1001386475>

Cooling without electricity. Israel’s SolCold has developed paint that uses solar energy to trigger a cooling process without air-conditioners. Its eco-friendly double-layered coating absorbs the sun’s heat and re-emits it as cold. Each coat lasts up to 15 years and can be applied almost anywhere. <https://jewishbusinessnews.com/2021/10/18/israeli-startup-socold-turns-sun-rays-into-electricity-free-cool-air-conditioning/> <https://solcold.co/>

Recycling buildings. Israel’s female-led Criaterra creates sustainable building materials to build office and residential buildings that can be recycled and later even reused. Their production emits only 20% of CO2 and some 10% of energy, compared to standard products. Their thermal insulation is 600% better. <https://jewishbusinessnews.com/2021/10/17/criaterra-makes-construction-environmentally-friendly/>

A grateful Jerusalem garbage can. A garbage bin installed next to a bus stop in Jerusalem applauds those who use it. Drop a piece of trash in, and a recording of a child’s voice says, “Thank you very much!” It’s part of an initiative by local residents to clean up the streets in the Pat neighborhood of the city. It is silent on Shabbat. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jerusalem-garbage-can-thanks-you-for-not-littering/>

Moishe Pod Gets Off to a Great Start



After hosting 30 young adults in November, Moishe Pod raised the ante in December with a series of events at its Salina Street location. For Chanukah, the 8th Night Festival of Lights promo asked, “Are you a Chai Roller from the dreidel to the grave? Come get lit, put your mazal to the test and some gelt in the pot. Doughnuts, drinks and a

declaration of victory dictated by tradition!” The Kung Pao Shabbos on December 24 and 25 featured board games, stories, and Chinese chicken. (“Can you believe nearly everything in the US will be closing early on Friday afternoon and all of Saturday?! You’d think you’re in Israel! Come join our Friday night dinner and swing back for

brunch!” said the invitation.) And 2022 was run in with New Year’s New Shabbos which touted, “3 months into the Jewish New Year and you haven’t kept up with your goals? Start with a blank slate and toast to new beginnings with some close friends and Kosher Champagne!”

For more information about Moishe Pod and its activities or to get on their mailing list for invitations, you can follow them on Instagram (@MoishePodSyracuse) or email info@MoishePodSyracuse.com.



Menorah Park Awarded Grant to Protect Against Hate Crimes



Menorah Park of CNY was recently awarded a \$50,000 grant from New York State’s “Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes” program, a project of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services. The funds from the state will be used to protect the Menorah Park campus against hate crimes.

Protective measures include installing new safety windows on the Menorah Park’s main building and the Oaks independent living building, new security exterior and interior doors, additional video cameras and providing employee safety awareness. The enhancements will be made starting in 2022 and will continue through 2023.

“Our board members created a Security Task Force in 2019, and they drove this entire process,” said Mary Ellen Bloodgood, Menorah Park’s CEO. “While we installed a new security entrance to be staffed by trained personnel in 2019, there were many other areas where security issues, especially with the escalation in anti-Semitic crimes, could become an issue. We are also grateful to our local and regional law enforcement agencies and their support with our ongoing security initiatives.”

“Our Security Task Force was formed out of an abundance of concern by the Menorah Park board at the increasing number of violent antisemitic attacks faced by Jewish and Jewish-affiliated facilities across the country,” said Andy Fox, President/CEO of Natur-Tyme and Menorah Park Security Task Force chair. “We’re pleased that New York State and the Homeland Security and Emergency Services group saw fit to award Menorah Park this grant, as we’re eager to implement these very necessary safety features to protect our most vulnerable seniors, as well as our dedicated employees.”

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Early Registration for JCC's Early Childhood Program Starts February 1



From left, early childhood students Myles Gardner, Leela Dhir and Anna Intres are busy drawing.



JCC early childhood teacher Rebecca Wojtanowski (far right) works with pre-k students Elizabeth Sonneborn (left) and Cason Adcock.

The Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center's Jerome and Phyllis Charney Early Childhood Development Program will begin its early bird registration for the 2022-2023 school year on Tuesday, February 1. Early registration is open to current JCC members. Families looking to register early who are not currently members can join the JCC by February. Registration opens to the public on March 1. 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.



Olivia Scheer-Woulfe is happy to show off her masterpiece.

NCJW Pivots to Do Good

Due to the continued concerns of the pandemic, National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Syracuse Section, will not hold its annual Hannah G. Solomon Award luncheon again this year. The annual tradition of honoring Hannah G. Solomon, NCJW's founder, will continue with the mitzvah projects that have been closely associated with the luncheon each year since 2008. In that year, attendees were asked to bring suitcases for the Onondaga County Foster Care program and a tradition was started. Over a hundred suitcases were collected for children in the child protective system. Subsequently, Foster Care staff informed NCJW that there was a great need for children's clothing, from newborn to teenagers. Luncheon guests were asked to donate children's clothing and outerwear as well as baby items.

In 2012, the Hannah Solomon Committee voted to make Vera House's child victims of domestic violence the recipients of the Mitzvah Project by once



again asking attendees to bring children's items to the luncheon. Additionally, NCJW's Greater Syracuse Section was the recipient of two \$1000 grants from the Pomeranz Shankman Martin Charitable Trust. \$1000 was directed for the purchase of warm children's clothing for the County Foster Care program and \$1000 for similar items for children living at Vera House. The following year, the Trust increased the grant to \$2000 contingent upon NCJW raising \$1000 for the same purpose.

In 2016 the Trust granted Greater Syracuse Section an additional \$1000 to purchase diapers for the CNY Diaper Bank. NCJW is most appreciative of the funds provided by the Pomeranz Shankman Martin Charitable Trust to help the children in our community and is honored to raise matching funds for these worthy causes.

In subsequent years, the Hannah Solomon Committee voted to support Syracuse City school district's McCarthy School at Beard program which provides unique and specialized services for students with social/emotional, behavioral and academic concerns. To support that program, guests were asked to bring items that reward students for achieving specific programmatic goals.

To continue the tradition of a Mitzvah Project and in lieu of donations of tangible items, NCJW, with the help of the Hannah Solomon Committee, is holding a fundraiser requesting monetary donations for the purchase of children's items for the Onondaga County Foster Care Program and the Syracuse City District's McCarthy at Beard program. **Contributions may be by check, payable to NCJW, and sent to Marlene Holstein, 520 Hillsboro Pkwy, Syracuse, NY 13214.**

2022
HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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Tu B'shevat or the "New Year of the Tree," originated as an agricultural holiday and has become the most important ecological day of the Jewish calendar. In the current climate crisis, planting trees has become more important than ever before and Israel has been at the forefront of planting trees for a long time. We asked our community's school children, who will bear the brunt of climate change during their lives, to write short poems about trees and the environment.

Students from the Syracuse Hebrew Day School wrote their poems in Hebrew. The picture and poem are by Danya B. Clockwise, the other authors are Izzy R, Kita Bet, Kita Gimel/Dalet, Grace G and Nadiv Z.

"הפרח"
חיה ר
יום אחד הָיָה פֶּרֶחַ
אֲנֵחֵנוּ פְּרָחִים
אֲנֵחֵנוּ פְּרָחִים
נִלְחַם בַּמִּלְחָמָה נֶגַד הַפְּרוֹת
בַּמִּלְחָמָה!
בַּמִּלְחָמָה!
בַּמִּלְחָמָה!
בְּנֵי אָדָם אוֹהָבִים
אוֹתָנוּ יוֹתֵר מִהַפְּרוֹת
כִּי הֵם לוֹקִים יוֹתֵר
פְּרָחִים מִהַפְּרוֹת



"שיר"
חן ג
מִתְנוֹת וְתַאֲנָה
פְּרִי עֵלָה

נדיב זהבי-ט"ו בשבט
ט"ו בשבט, יום ההולדת של העצים,
בני האדם ובעלי החיים, כולם שמחים.
ט"ו בשבט הגיע, חג לאילנות,
לעצים ולפרחים אנחנו רוצים להודות.
לומר לכם יום הולדת שמח ומזל טוב,
את הפירות שלכם נאכל ונקטוף בקרוב.
ביום הזה נאמר לכם שוב תודה,
חג שמח ושנה טובה.

3 פר צפה בשמים מואים
זבלאים על האדמה יפים
הענפים אחדים וצרים
העלים רחבים וסובבים
כי טובה בא לעולם
חג שמח לכולם

פרחים, פרחים, פרחים
כיתה ב 5782
אני אוהבת את הפרחים
של טו בשבט
פרחים יפים
פרחים בכל מיני צבעים
פרחים של תפוחים
פרחים של דבדבנים
פרחים על עצים
הילדים מודים
הילדות מודות
על הפרחים
של האילנות

Szafrans Endow a Legacy at SHDS

Generations of children at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School got their foundational instruction from Simona Szafran. There was no teacher more dedicated, passionate or committed to her students than she. For more than a quarter of a century, she started hundreds of children off on the pathway to Jewish learning, teaching them Hebrew, prayer, Bible and ethics. Her classroom was always a delight to behold, and she put in thousands of hours each year to prepare new and individualized activities to help her students achieve. There was never a child who did not learn in Mrs. Szafran's class. Regardless of individual differences, all of her students learned to read, to pray and to sing with joy. Her well-disciplined classroom fostered academic accomplishment. She used puppets, songs, stories, games, mobiles, props and costumes to supplement her program, and she always went the "extra mile" for a student who needed special attention.

Simona Szafran died in 2016. Five years later, as he celebrated his 95th birthday, her devoted husband Daniel Szafran and their son, Dr. Zvi Szafran, established an endowment in her name and memory at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. SHDS Head of School Laura Lavine drove to Canton to meet with the Szafrans and to receive a check for \$50,000 which was given on the condition that the school match that amount. It was a memorable occasion for another reason. Dr. Szafran is the president of SUNY Canton and was a classmate of Ms. Lavine at H.W. Smith Junior High School more than fifty years ago. The two had not seen each other since ninth grade. Their reconnection made the event even more special.

Born in 1935 in Bucharest, Romania, Simona was an excellent student, but when the Holocaust began, the school she attended had to go underground. Many children wanted to quit their studies, but



Simona's mother Clara insisted that she continue. The children said, "We may die tomorrow," but Clara responded, "Then you'll die educated." Simona and her family survived the Shoah and emigrated to Israel in 1950. There she met Daniel Szafran, an Auschwitz survivor who had emigrated to Palestine, joined the underground army and fought in Israel's War of Independence. After a whirlwind three-month courtship, they were married and, in 1959, moved to Syracuse so Daniel could join his brother Nathan who had settled here earlier. As their children Zvi and Drorit grew up, Simona returned to school, earning an associate's degree from Onondaga Community College, then a B.A. in modern languages and M.Ed. in secondary education from SUNY Cortland. She taught French in the Syracuse public schools, then 1st and 2nd grades at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School from 1975 until her retirement in 2001.

In accepting the award from Simona's husband and son, Head of School Laura Lavine said, "Being remembered by the Szafran family is a high honor for the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. Their generous gift in memory of their beloved Simona will provide scholarships for students and professional development for faculty and will further underscore the legacy of learning that Simona and Daniel created in their years at our school. On a personal note, connecting with Zvi has been a delight. I enjoyed an impromptu lesson on quantum mechanics and string theory during a conversation about the role of Judaism in our lives. Leaving Canton, I couldn't help but ponder the benefit that scores of future SHDS students will derive from the Szafrans' largesse and their school connections that I hope will also last for a half century and beyond. We are thankful beyond measure."

Epstein and Syracuse Jewish Family Service Collaboration



Syracuse Jewish Family Service and the Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Studies are collaborating to offer a unique elective for Epstein students this winter. The "Arts for the Ages" elective will feature the Opening Minds through Art (OMA) program, an intergenerational art-making program for elders with dementia developed at the Scripps Institute at Miami University. Utilizing OMA's structured art-making processes, this program encourages elders to access their creativity, utilizing the skills they have instead of focusing on the skills that are impaired. The role of the Epstein students will be as partners for the elders, supporting their creative expression and establishing intergenerational relationships.

Throughout the winter term, students attend seven virtual class sessions where they will learn the "how" and "why" of OMA. These sessions include discussion of the art-making process, the tools needed to support elders with dementia and the traditional Jewish values

involved in this program. The student and elders will work together during three in-person practicum sessions to support the elders' creative expression. This partnership enables caregivers,



families and volunteers to expand their appreciation of the remaining capabilities of elders with dementia, thereby fulfilling OMA's mission of "using art to bridge age and cognitive barriers." Epstein students will also earn community service hours as part of this collaboration, which are helpful with National Honor Society and college applications.

With participation from local college interns, Syracuse Jewish Family Service has been offering OMA to the residents at Menorah Park Jewish Home since 2019. OMA consistently draws praise from elders and interns alike. Art created by elders with Epstein student assistance will be featured at a joint art exhibit in Spring 2022.



CBS-CS Sisterhood Sponsoring “Jukebox Bingo!”

by Joanne Villegas

What songs were you listening to or dancing to 60 years ago when Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas was founded?

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the synagogue, on Sunday, January 23 at 4 pm, the CBS-CS Sisterhood is sponsoring “Jukebox Bingo,” a lively game where participants try to match the song they just heard to a spot on one of their Bingo cards. The songs will be from many decades, so participants are likely to recognize many of their favorites, no matter their age. And there’s no need to drive in the snow. Just pour a favorite ‘60’s beverage and join the fun on Zoom. Anyone who gets “Bingo” wins a prize.

Each Bingo card is \$18 for two games. For hard-core Bingo players, two cards (four games) are a bargain at \$30. Registration is required to receive the cards and the Zoom link. **To register, email Marcia Cohen at ma1507@aol.com or call her at 315-251-1122 before Wednesday, January 19.**

Like the bowling nights CBS-CS Sisterhood sponsored in the past, this event is open to everyone. Save the date – Sunday, January 23 – and join other Bingo-enthusiasts for a lot of fun.



Former Terrorist Tracker to Speak at Temple Concord’s Goldenberg Series

by Chana Meir

On January 23rd at 3:30 pm, Tracy Walder will discuss her book *The Unexpected Spy: From the CIA to the FBI, My Secret Life Taking Down Some of the World’s Most Notorious Terrorists* as part of Temple Concord’s Regina F. Goldenberg Cultural Series.

While a student at the University of Southern California, Walder was surprised to be recruited by the CIA, but soon found herself flying to the Middle East under an alias identity. She worked tracking al-Qaeda members, chemical terrorists and weapons of mass destruction

while working with President George W. Bush and CIA Director George Tenet. She then moved to the FBI, where she helped take down one of the most notorious spies ever apprehended on American soil.

But another unexpected aspect of Walder’s career was the rampant sexism in the FBI. She now teaches young women and encourages them to pursue careers in the FBI, CIA, State Department, and Senate. Alison Stewart of WNCY said Walder’s book “reads like the show bible for *Homeland* – only her story is real.”

The event is virtual and free. To receive the Zoom link, register by clicking the link on the Events Calendar at templeconcord.org.



SCHEDULE

FEDERATION AND TEMPLE CONCORD PRESENT MOVIES THAT EXPLORE SOMETIMES CONTROVERSIAL ASPECTS OF JEWISH LIFE IN AMERICA AND ISRAEL.

JANUARY 30: **LITTLE WHITE LIE** approaches the intersection of Judaism and blackness. Filmmaker Lacey Schwartz, who thinks her dark skin and hair are from a Sicilian ancestor, said, “It never occurred to me that I was ‘passing.’ I grew up believing I was white.”

FEBRUARY 27: In **SAND STORM**, an Israeli teen’s forbidden love affair challenges the traditions of her Bedouin mother and father.

MARCH 27: **LEONA** is an intimate, insightful, and moving film that tells the story of a young Jewish woman from Mexico City who finds herself torn between her family and her forbidden love.

MAY 15: **INCITEMENT** is a 2019 Israeli thriller that profiles Yigal Amir in the year leading up to his assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

MAY 22: **THE INFIDEL** is a very Jewish, very British and very Islamic movie dealing with the issue of multiculturalism. Omid Djalili plays Mahmud, a Muslim who discovers not only that he’s been adopted but also that he’s Jewish.

JUNE 12: **FOOTNOTE** tells the story of Eliezer and his son Uriel, professors of Talmud at Hebrew University. When Uriel wins a prestigious scholarly prize instead of his father, wounded pride threatens to upend their familial bond.

To sign up, email diane@templeconcord.org and indicate which movie you would like to see. Attendance is limited to 18.

HOW KLEZMER CAME TO SYRACUSE:

An Interview with Sidney Lipton

by Cheryl Gordon Wolfe

For the second consecutive year, KlezFest Music Festival was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. While certainly no substitute for the festival itself, Sidney Lipton, founder of the Keyna Hora Klezmer Band and co-founder of KlezFest, agreed to be interviewed to share the history of his involvement in Jewish music and his incredible influence on Jewish cultural life in Central New York.

I did not really grow up in a home with music. I lived in a small town which couldn't afford bands, but they encouraged music by holding sing-alongs in the school auditorium. I have always liked music. I wanted to play the piano, but the opportunity wasn't there. I first heard klezmer in the early 50's, and I didn't even recognize it. I recall hearing Mickey Katz's orchestra play a concert in Dayton, Ohio. It was all Jewish music, and I liked what I heard, but I didn't know it was klezmer.

About that time, I became friendly with a cantor in Dayton. On Friday nights, there would be a concert, and I would hear his davening. It was all in the klezmer modes. When I heard these modes, it really connected me with my family, going back through all the generations. It's my heart and soul. It is so Jewish, and I love that. It just makes me feel Jewish. I love the Hassidic music, but it is not my favorite. I love most what I call basic, typical Jewish folk music: the bulgars, the chussidls, the Terkisher tunes. What I like most of all is that music which pulls from the heart, the folk music of our families, all of our families.

My wife Donna and I lived in Syracuse and I kept thinking, "There are all these ethnic festivals, but why aren't there any Jewish festivals?" It bothered me for years. I wanted to see what music we Jews have. I don't have a good background in music theory, so what I did was try to figure out what kind of music we could play that Jewish and non-Jewish people would like. It was a mystery I couldn't solve until I met a young woman who told me about KlezKamp. Held on an annual basis in the Catskills, the camp featured klezmer instructional classes and opportunities to play in small ensembles and large bands with klezmer musicians of all skill levels and backgrounds. It seemed to be exactly what I was looking for.

Donna and I headed to KlezKamp in the winter of 1995. It was where I played klezmer for the very first time. It was



also where I met remarkable klezmer musicians, first generation Americans, whose families had come over years ago as klezmer musicians trying to make a living in America. When they got up on stage and started to play those clarinets, I said to Donna, "Oh my God! That's it!" It was a eureka moment. I was crying when I heard those tunes. These guys were playing from the heart and, all of a sudden, I could really hear the music.

I said to myself, "I have to keep it

going." But it almost wasn't meant to be. The whole thing came so close to not happening at all - no Keyna Hora Klezmer Band, no KlezFest Music Festival, no klezmer music in Syracuse at all. Here's why:

I went to KlezKamp with my banjo. I went to my first class and the teacher said, "So, you want to play klezmer music? Klezmer music is all played by ear." And I thought to myself, 'By ear? I don't know anything about 'by ear.' The teacher would sing a song, and everyone in class would pick it out on their instruments, but not me. I didn't know what to do, and I was lost. I didn't do a thing in that class.

In my next class, taught by Pete Sokolow, I played the rhythm I had learned when playing in Eddie Fagan's old-time favorites band back home: 1-2-3-4. That's what I knew how to do, and Eddie would always just say to me: "Keep going! Just keep going!" 1-2-3-4. 1-2-3-4. We played for a couple of minutes, and then Pete yelled "Stop!" He looked at me and said, "I don't want you to do that. You should play off beat." And I thought, "What the hell is off beat?" Then he told me to play the second and fourth beats. I had never heard of that. I tried, but I didn't do it right. Then he said again, "Stop! You don't know how." I started to ask if he would teach me and he said, "No! That's up to you to learn, and if you don't play it right, you should just stop."

Then I went to Sy Kushner's class. There, I played the chords for him, and asked, "Am I playing these right?" And

he replied, "You know, you really should be playing those off beat." So, there it was again. I knew I was screwed. I said to Donna, "They don't want me here. We're going to pack up and leave tomorrow morning. I don't know what they want from me, and they're not going to teach me how to do it."

Instead, here is what happened: That afternoon there was a slow jam. That's an opportunity to play in a small ensemble, but playing slower than is usually done so newer players can get accustomed to the music. Sy Kushner showed up and mentioned that he was a retired music teacher. I told him my problem. "They keep saying I need to play off beat. Is it possible for you to give me a lesson?" And he said he would work with me. We only spent about 15 minutes together and, all of a sudden, I understood what we were doing and what it was for. Sy went and grabbed some music from the slow jam, and we worked with that. And I got it. And there was no charge for the lesson, either!

While I was playing, very slowly, the off beats, Pete Sokolow came by. He looked at me and said, "That's exactly what I want. You play like that, everything will be great. That's all I want." (This is why I love Sy Kushner to this very day.) I said to Donna, "Stop packing! We're staying!" That's how close we came to losing everything.

[This is part I of a two-part article. The inside history of the formation of the Keyna Hora Klezmer Band will appear in the the next issue of the JO.]

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EZKERA / REMEMBERING

BEVERLY E. BROUNSTEIN WARD
October 30, 2021



Beverly E. Brounstein Ward, 75, passed away on October 30. She was preceded in death by her husband Larry Ward and parents Frederick and Anne Brounstein. She is survived by her sons, Nathaniel (Lynne) Sherman, Matthew (Wendy) Sherman and Jeremy Sherman and daughters Alexandria Dutton, Samantha (Eric) Scott, sister, Hollis (Steven) Berney and grandchildren, Noah, Khrystal, Jacob, Zachary, Liam, Lucas, Bradley, Jayden, Eli, Jackson, Emma and Andrew. Contributions in Beverly's memory may be made to Columbus Torah Academy at www.torahacademy.org, Congregation Agudas Achim at www.agudasachim.org or Jewish Family Service, Ebner Building, 1070 College Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43209.

SHIRLEY JEAN KAITZ
November 15, 2021



Shirley Jean Kaitz, 90, died on November 15 in Boca Raton, FL. Shirley was born in Syracuse to Saul and Ruth Hodis. She was a graduate of the Syracuse University School of Social Work. Shirley was a member of Temple Adath Yeshurun, the sisterhood of the Temple and was a dedicated and caring part of her community. After moving to Florida, she enjoyed retirement at Boca West Country Club. Shirley was pre-deceased by her first husband Harris Sarkin, her second husband Abe Kaitz, her sons Stephen and Allan and her niece Debra Goldberg Davidson. Her family includes her sister Lois Goldberg, her brother Mel (Donna) Hodis, her son Mark Kaitz, nephews Michael (Jacki) Goldberg and Doug Hodis and nieces Susan (David) Rifkin, Beth (Steve) Pollack and Jill (Fred) Lewis. Contributions to perpetuate her memory may be made to Temple Adath Yeshurun or CNY Make-A-Wish. www.sisskindfuneralservice.com

ELEANOR FEITLER
December 6, 2021

Eleanor Feitler, 91, passed away on December 6. She resided in Manlius for the past 15 years and previously lived in Oak Park, IL, and Moorestown, NJ. Trained as a dietician, she worked in food product development for over 20 years and was renowned for her superb cooking and baking. She was an active member of Temple Concord and a 12+ year volunteer at the Temple's food pantry. Eleanor enjoyed the local embroidery guild, Questors, the Manlius Herb Society and genealogy. She was predeceased by her beloved husband Joe. Her family includes her daughters, Barbara Karchin, Jane Feitler and Carol (Rob) Silverman, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Contributions to perpetuate her memory may be made to Temple Concord, Israeli Red Cross, American Foundation for Yad Vashem, B'nai B'rith or any health organization such as Sloan Kettering. www.sisskindfuneralservice.com

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RICHARD COHEN December 4, 2021



Richard Cohen, 72, passed away at his home on December 4. Born on August 10, 1949 to Hillard and Jane Cohen, he had been a life resident of Syracuse. He was a graduate of Nottingham High School and Syracuse University with a degree in accounting. He was a former member of Temple Concord. Richard was a practicing accountant with his father in their firm for many years. He was a co-trustee of the Leonard and Irwin Kamp Foundation which supported many Jewish organizations in our community.

He was pre-deceased by his parents and his sister Lori.

His family includes his wife Nancy of 47 years, their children Mark (Christine), Eric (Vanita), Lyle (MaryKate) and Kristine, granddaughters Kaitlyn and Chloe and his brother Stephen (Shari).

Graveside services will be in the Temple Concord section 30 of Woodlawn Cemetery at 11 am on Tuesday, December 7.

Contributions to perpetuate his memory may be made to the Syracuse Hebrew Day School.

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ATTENTION SNOWBIRDS!

Due to postal regulations, the *Jewish Observer* will no longer be forwarded to temporary change addresses.

If you plan to be away from your permanent address and are having your first class mail forwarded to your temporary address and would like to continue to receive the *JO* while you are out of town, please call Amy Bates at 315-445-0161 to give us your temporary address. Thank you!

NORMAN COHEN December 11, 2021



Norman Cohen, 73, died at home on December 11 of Lewy Body Dementia. He was born in Louisville, KY to Shirley and Seymour Cohen.

He is survived by his wife, Jessica of Jamesville, son Geoffrey and grandchildren Sawyer and Iselle of Newton Highlands, MA, sisters Billie and Rose Cohen, brother Andrew Cohen, sisters-in law Debbie Field and Shelly Field, a niece and four nephews.

Norm grew up in Monticello, NY where he met Jessica, his wife of 53 years. He attended Cornell University, receiving a BA in cinematography and Virginia Tech, receiving a master's in computer science. He was a person of diverse interests, working during his life as a filmmaker at the Art Institute of Chicago, public information specialist at the Cayuga County Planning Board, software engineer at Genographics and the Foxboro Company and professor of computer science at SUNY Morrisville. He loved teaching and working with his students and received many awards for his teaching. At heart, he was a musician, playing at various times the bassoon, guitar and keyboard with a variety of formal and informal groups. After retirement, he began attending classes at the Downtown Writers Center and developed a love of writing poetry that was witty and insightful.

Most of all, Norm was known for his extremely dry sense of humor that lasted through his dementia. He used to say that his day was complete if he had made at least one person laugh.

Contributions to perpetuate his memory may be made in his name to the YMCA Downtown Writers Center, 340 Montgomery St, Syracuse, NY 13202.

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