

Happy February!

Jewish Observer

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

of Central New York

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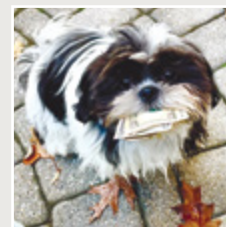
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DON'T MISS: THE POWER OF HELLO (3)



INSIDE: CAMPAIGN UPDATE (6)



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(10)**

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phone: 315-445-0270
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jewishfederationcny.org



President/CEO.....Michael Balanoff
Board Chair.....Neil Rosenbaum
Editor.....Barbara Davis



The Jewish Federation of Central New York is a proud member of the Jewish Federations of North America.



Creative Director.....Jean-Pierre Thimot
jpthimot@buffalospre.com
Lead Designer.....Kimberly Miers
kmiers@buffalospre.com
Senior Graphic Designers.....Josh Flanigan, Adam Van Schoonhoven,
Nicholas Vitello
Graphic Designer.....Taramarie Mitravich
Director of Advertising.....Barbara E. Macks
Sales Director.....Cynthia Oppenheimer
coppenheimer@buffalospre.com
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February 2022

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

So what can one do to alleviate February? Why, devote this issue of the *Jewish Observer* to one of everyone's favorite topics: Jews and Dogs. Why dogs? Because Jews and dogs have a long and complicated relationship, and untangling it is a fascinating way to pass a raw, cold evening in Syracuse with some entertaining articles and some interesting history. (We could have picked cats, of course, but to no-one's surprise, they were not as cooperative. Also, cats were worshiped as gods in ancient Egypt, so the Jewish connection is not as straightforward.)

The Hebrew word for dog is *kelev*. *Kelev* is a composite of two Hebrew words: *k'* meaning "like," and *lev* meaning "heart." So *kelev* means "like a heart." The Hebrew word for puppy, *k'lavlav*, underscores the special nature of the human-canine relationship. *Lavlav* is onomatopoeia, the sound of a heartbeat ("lub-dub" according to the American Medical Association.) So the Hebrew word for puppy means "like a heartbeat." And love is at the core of the relationship between Jewish humans and their dogs. Perhaps it is for that reason that the city of Tel Aviv has the largest number of dogs per capita in the entire world.

A sub-theme of this issue is welcome. We all know that dogs are always thrilled to see us when we come home. There have been many studies that not only verify this observation but analyze it. (According to almonature.com, "For a dog, its reunion with one or more members of the pack is a time of joy because, by its very nature, it likes to relate and share space.") Federation President/CEO Michael Balanoff examines the theme of welcome as it applies communally in his column on "The Power of Hello."

Yet the relationship between Jews and dogs has not always been amicable. There's a Yiddish proverb that says, "A Jew with a dog? It's either not a Jew or it's not a dog." In biblical times, dogs were considered unclean, because most were scavengers, living outside the walls of the cities and scavenging for refuse, which included ritually impure meat and the corpses of the poor, criminals and the unclaimed dead. The Talmud listed numerous restrictions on owning dogs, including "keeping them on a chain" (*Bava kama* 7:7) and not owning "angry dogs" (15:2). Fear of dogs was thus often seen as a Jewish characteristic. Shtetl memoirs note that Polish landowners used dogs to threaten Jews who visited them and the most profound Jewish dislike of dogs derives from the Holocaust, when dogs were used to track, find, intimidate and kill Jews in ghettos and death camps.

Dogs' reputation was rescued, however, by the Talmud which said that, despite their uncleanness, dogs should be tolerated and even fed and protected due to the arrangement that God made with the canine race during the Exodus from Egypt. Because it was important for the

T.S. Eliot wrote that "April is the cruellest month," but he didn't live in Central New York. To my way of thinking, February is the cruellest month, because there isn't a glimmer of hope yet that winter will be over. January is notable for a thaw and March offers the promise of a leonine entry and a lamblike departure, but February is just plain awful. It is the month with the least amount of sunshine, the most humidity and the most snowfall in Central New York. There aren't even any Jewish holidays to brighten the gloom.

Israelites to get a head start leaving before the Egyptian army could stop them, God arranged it that dogs would not sound the alarm when the Hebrews made their escape: "not a dog shall snarl at any of the Israelites, at man, or beast." In return for their silence, dogs were redeemed from their lowly status.

Fast forward to the 21st century. Dogs have made it big. In fact, the status of dogs among the Jewish people has risen so high that Tel Aviv was declared "The Most Dog-Friendly City in the World." Most restaurants and cafés in Tel Aviv are dog-friendly. There are specified dog beaches as well as parks where dogs can run freely off-leash. It is not uncommon to see dogs in offices and places of business, and the first television channel designed exclusively for dogs — DOGTV — originated in Tel Aviv and has since opened around the world.

There are many books about Jews and dogs: *The Jewish Dog*, by Asher Kravitz, *Yiddish for Dogs: Chutzpah, Feh!, Kibbitz, and More: Every Word Your Canine Needs to Know* by Janet Perr, *Is Your Dog Jewish?* by Leo Dworken. *How to Raise a Jewish Dog* by the Rabbis of the Boca Raton Theological Seminary is the subject of a review in this issue of the *JO*. There are articles like "How to Tell if Your Dog is Jewish" and "Are Jews a Dog People or a Cat People?" and scholarly works like *A Jew's Best Friend? The Image of the Dog Throughout Jewish History* by Rakefet J. Zalashik and Phillip Ackerman-Lieberman. And there are *tchotchkes* galore: Chanukah dog bow ties, "chewdaica" shaped like bagels, gefilte fish or even a *mohel's* scissors. (I am not making this up.) Then there is the *Bark Mitzvah*, complete with *tallit*, *kippah*, *bark mitzvah* chew pen and photo album, of which a short eponymous mockumentary has been made. You will find an article about that in this issue also.

So whether you're a dog person, a cat person or even someone who really doesn't like animals, we hope you will enjoy this issue of the *JO* and that it will take your mind off the wintery February weather.



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From the Federation President/CEO

Michael Balanoff

THE POWER OF “HELLO”



Albert Einstein is alleged to have remarked, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.” While not one to quibble with genius, I respectfully disagree with his statement. We might be short-sighted or unimaginative if we keep doing the same things over and over, but we are not insane. Instead, we need to carefully examine what changes may help us achieve our desired results and what it would be foolish not to change.

The 2013 Pew Report found that 94% of surveyed Jews are “proud to be Jewish.” But we know that nowhere near that number of our Jewish community is involved Jewishly. Where are they? Why aren’t they involved in something Jewish here? The 2020 Pew Report found that “about a quarter of U.S. Jewish adults (27%) do not identify with the Jewish religion. They consider themselves to be Jewish ethnically, culturally or by family background and have a Jewish parent or were raised Jewish, but they answer a question about their current religion by describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or ‘nothing in particular’ rather than as Jewish. Among Jewish adults under 30, four-in-ten describe themselves this way.”

What are we doing wrong, over and over again? We are not getting the results we want: engaging more people Jewishly, providing people with opportunities to express their Jewishness, attracting more people to our Jewish community. What can we do differently so that we get a different result, a better result, the result we are seeking? I have a suggestion.

A few weeks ago, I took my car to the dealership to have the tires checked. The attendant came over and very kindly greeted me, asking how he could help. When he had adjusted my tire pressures and started to walk away, I called him back. I told him that his friendly greeting had made me feel welcome and how much I appreciated his politeness and warmth. The smile on his face made my day.

The things we do to welcome people, and to make them feel welcome, go a long way toward engaging them. We need to look at the world through the eyes of the people we seek to attract, to understand what their perception is of what we are doing and to meet them where they are so that we can be sure we are fulfilling *their* needs and not just pursuing *our* interests.

When people enter a synagogue, the first thing they often encounter is a business office. What if the rabbi or cantor was the person greeting people as they entered? A warm and welcoming “shalom” would certainly make both parties happier and more engaged. The same could be said about

entering Menorah Park or the JCC. Greeting a visitor by name and a warm “Hello, how are you today” would make a very positive first impression. Even though we may be masked and sequestered behind shields, we can still greet people as if we are happy to see them.

Do you think you are warm and welcoming? I bet most people would say yes. But do the people who enter your space think you are warm and welcoming? Hmmmm.

Warm and Welcoming. How the Jewish Community Can Become Truly Diverse and Inclusive in the 21st Century, edited by Warren Hoffman and Miriam Steinberg-Egeth, is a

fascinating book. Some of its conclusions are controversial and some are common sense. One author makes the point that “Jews no longer need synagogues to acculturate into America” and the fact is that synagogues no longer meet the needs of the majority of the community, particularly for younger Jews. But synagogues can also be the model for new ways of engaging the community.

Warm and Welcoming provides some answers. It reports that synagogues which are growing did the following: “(1) they were mission driven; (2) they focused on ‘serious Judaism’ including Jewish learning, spirituality, social justice, and personal acts of hesed (lovingkindness); (3) they effectively empowered laypeople and encouraged their widespread, active participation in leadership; and (4) they presented Judaism as a toolkit to advance human flourishing.”

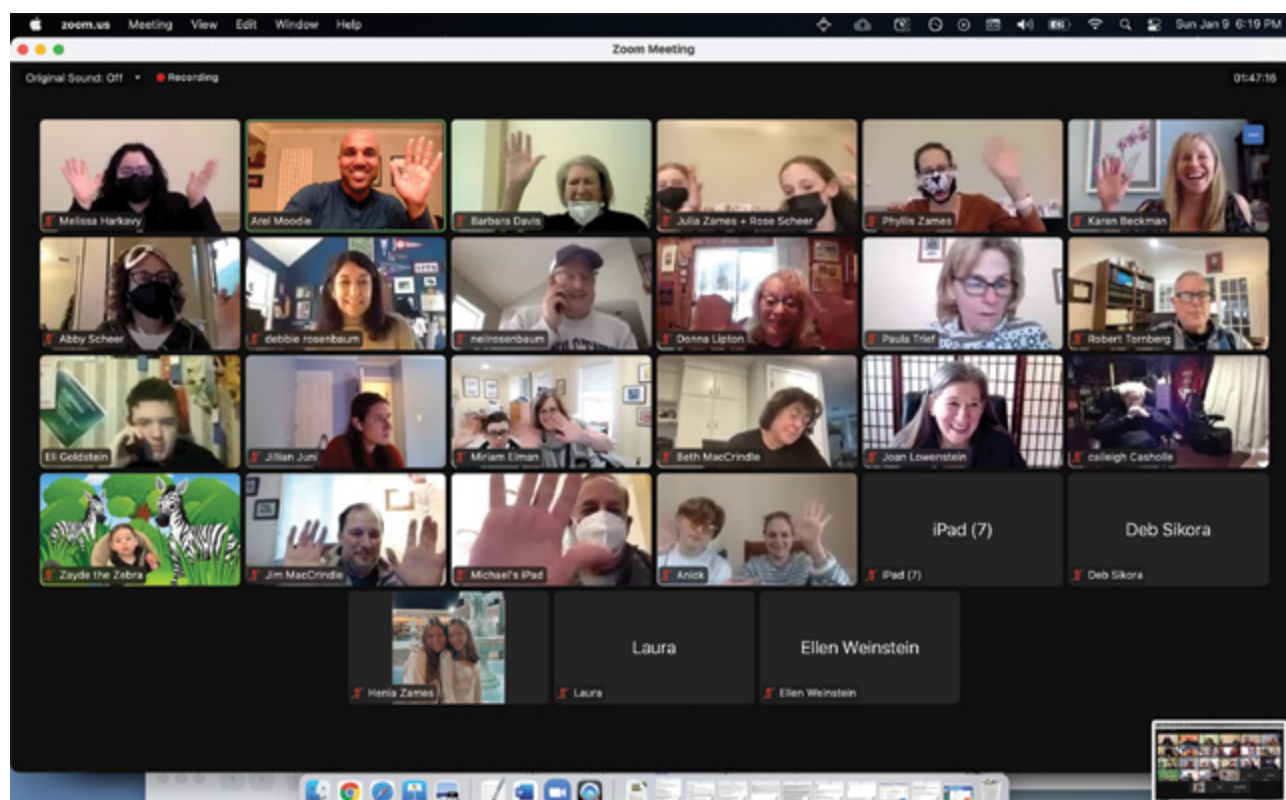
I believe that these principles could be applied to all our Jewish institutions. As Rabbi Sid Schwartz writes, “There is still tremendous energy among Next Gen Jews to reinvent Jewish life, even as they turned their backs on the Jewish institutions built by the previous generation.” Only a small percentage said they would respond well to appeals on their Jewish identity based on memories of the Holocaust or the existence of the State of Israel. But more than 90 percent of those surveyed said they felt an affinity to the ethics and values of Judaism. They want their Jewish

institutions to stand for something of value to the entire community.

We need to face the reality that our community is changing. Change is hard and often scary. It is uncomfortable to talk about and often provokes anger and dissent. I prefer to think of change as an opportunity to do better. To improve our community. To become more welcoming and more committed to making Jewish life more invigorating and satisfying.

Federation is eager to facilitate positive change in Jewish Central New York. Together, we can accomplish the goal of providing Jews with the opportunity to express their Jewishness in meaningful ways. And it starts with the way we greet people when they come to us. We cannot afford to be a community that is hidden behind security doors, that does not welcome visitors, that does not greet them with warmth and embrace them with enthusiasm. How many times have you entered a sanctuary or a Jewish organization and seen people standing nearby who give you the “once over” and then go back to their conversations? How often are visitors treated as unwelcome intrusions in a busy receptionist’s schedule?

The power of hello is the power of welcome, the power of inclusion, the power of warmth and connection. It is where we have to start. It is not an end point but the beginning of a trajectory of engagement that can make Jewish life more vibrant, relevant and significant for the 21st century.



SHDS Sixth Graders Sketch Their Dogs for Art Class



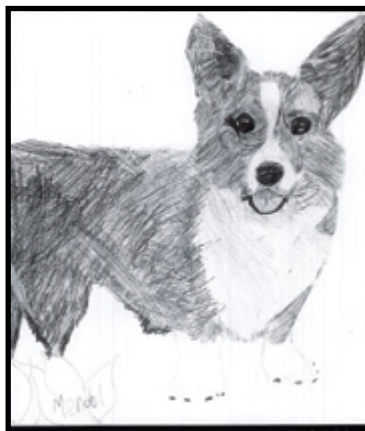
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Tammy G.

D'var Torah

Treasuring our Pets

by Rabbi David Kunin, Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas



I have always been disappointed that dogs and cats don't have a positive image in our traditional texts. I have found a few relatively modern examinations of pets and halakha, but largely our tradition is silent. Despite this absence, cats and dogs have played a significant role in Shelley and my lives, bringing unquestioning joy, comfort and companionship.

Pets are very much the thing in Japan. This may help to explain why there are more dogs and cats than children in Tokyo. During the summer the dogs were wisely undressed for the heat and humidity, but during the winter they were always dressed to the nines — sometimes even better than their very well-dressed humans. Often, it looked like the dogs were walking their humans. The dogs would sit regally in their carriages, pushed by their obedient human.

The Japanese appreciation of their pets should not, however, be much of a surprise, as animals form an important part of the iconography at both Shinto and Buddhist shrines. Dogs are common shrine guardians, while foxes guard Inari Shrines. Rabbits are common everywhere, and in Kyoto there is even a Buddha riding a pig. The animal iconography is very prevalent in the shrine town Nicco where you can find a wide assortment of fauna both real and imagined, most famously a beautiful white cat, and an image of the "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil monkeys."

The animal iconography, especially in the Shinto Temples, reflects a realization of the awe and wonder that we should feel towards the natural world. Just like us, it is a reflection of the divine image. We are part of a very diverse and evolving world that we did not create. Each animal that we see is part of an evolutionary ladder much

like our own. Each is also part of a chain of dependence that, if disrupted, has wide-reaching ramifications that even affect us. When an animal becomes extinct, they are gone for good, and all of us are impoverished by their loss.

For the Japanese and many other people, dogs are also associated with loyalty. This is especially true of Hachiko, who now is immortalized with a statue next to Shabuya Station. Each day, Hachiko accompanied his master to Shabuya station, but then in May 1925 his master did not come home to his waiting dog. Each day, however, for the next nine years, Hachiko came the station at the exact time it had been his master's custom to come home. Now in bronze, he remains there still.



Again and again, our Torah reminds us that we live in a world that we did not make, one that we truly do not own. Everything that we have is a gift replete with obligations. In one midrash, God warns Adam and Eve, "See my works, how fine and excellent they are! All that I created, I created for you. Reflect on this, and do not corrupt or desolate my world; for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you."

Mystically, we are also reminded that we meet the divine in the diversity of the natural world. Everything that exists is in some way in the image of the divine, and we can only begin to grasp that ultimate unity by looking with awe and wonder on everything and everyone that we see around us.

Our pets, in addition to the love and loyalty that bring us, can be a reminder of our connection to the world and the ultimate unity which lies behind all creation.

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» Book Review

How to Raise a Jewish Dog

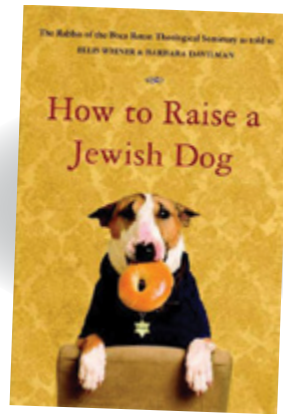
by The Rabbis of the Boca Raton Theological Seminary as told to Ellis Weiner and Barbara Davilman

Reviewed by Diane Sacks

Have you heard the funny jokes about the Jewish/Yiddisher Mama and how she so often guilts her children? A short version is the mom who buys her son two shirts. He visits her, proudly wearing one of them. When he arrives, he is greeted with, "What, you didn't like the other one?"

How to Raise a Jewish Dog takes us to another level of parenting as we are advised how to raise our "fur babies" using techniques similar to those that we, as Jewish parents (or non-Jewish parents), used when raising our human children.

The Boca Raton Theological Seminary was started in 1988 "as an institution for the training of rabbis to serve the Reform-Progressive Trans-Diasporatic Neo-Revisionist Jewish community" and discovered that it could successfully offer dog training classes to greater effect. *How to Raise a Jewish Dog* encapsulates much of the lessons of The Program. It includes such wonders as the Four



Questions of How To Raise A Jewish Dog: "1. Why is a Jewish dog different from all other dogs? 2. All other dogs are praised when they are good. Why does a Jewish dog possess an exaggerated sense of his own wonderfulness? 3. All other dogs are scolded when they are bad. Why is it Jewish dog guilty? 4. All other dogs have relationships with their masters. What is so different and special about the Jewish dog's relationship with his (or hers)?"

Dogs who attend the Seminary during the day are taught about obedience, socializing, diet and exercise, in conversation form as opposed to commands, which could possibly be seen as begging by parents. All, of course, with a humorous twist and more than a touch of Jewish Guilt.

While we get to have a good chuckle while reading, we also get the benefit of learning some actual fur-parenting techniques. The content is divided into easy-to-digest sections including training and obedience, socializing your dog (teaching them that you judge other people so that they will learn to be neurotic and presume they are constantly being judged), diet and exercise, traveling with (or without) your dog, what to do when your dog gets older and The Jewish Dog's Physical, Psychological, Mental and Emotional Health.

Here are examples of the sometimes tongue-in-cheek content:

"Questions to Ask a Breeder:
1. What kind of job is this, growing dogs?
2. Are these dogs nice? I mean of course they are. But if not, is this refundable?
3. Is this a stable business? Do you make a decent living?"

"Not eating occurs when the dog doesn't eat. This behavior can have several causes, one of which is that the dog is – supposedly not hungry. the owner is entitled to be skeptical when the dog professes that he is not hungry and to suspect that the dog is deliberately not eating for some other reason or purpose, including:

- *Wanting to torment the owner*
- *Wanting to "get back at" the owner for some previous wrong*
- *Being in one of his "Moods"*
- *Because nothing is ever good enough*
- *Because something is always the matter*
- *Because God forbid the owner's life should be easy*
- *Because the dog thinks he's fat, which is the owner's fault for giving him a poor self-image*
- *Because the owner stresses the dog out too much*
- *Or something*

If you are a person who can relate as well as enjoy the humor, then this book will be a great read for you.

» Book Review

Kelev's Journey: A Jewish Dog Wanders Home

by David Hammerstein

Reviewed by Marissa Spevak

Kelev's Journey: A Jewish Dog Wanders Home is about a Jewish dog who is learning about his Jewish heritage. There were many rules Kelev, a black Labrador retriever, had to follow as a Jew, and he felt spiritually empty.

One day, he went to his beagle friend Schmalzie, who lived next door to him. Kelev told Schmalzie he had no freedom and too many rules he had to follow. Schmalzie told Kelev he had a lot of rules to follow because he was Jewish. Kelev didn't



know what that meant, so Schmalzie explained it to him.

Overtime Kelev understands his responsibilities as a Jew ("Is that why I feel bad when my guardians tell me how tired they are when they take me out at night?") and also helps others learn about Judaism ("We'll show that phony Pharaoh a plague or two!"). Kelev has definitely become a better Jew!

I thought this book was funny, and it was cool to see Kelev become more Jewish over the course of the story.



I would highly recommend this book. This is my favorite quote: "Any dog that can relieve himself on a stranger's yard with such impunity must have acquired chutzpah from somewhere."

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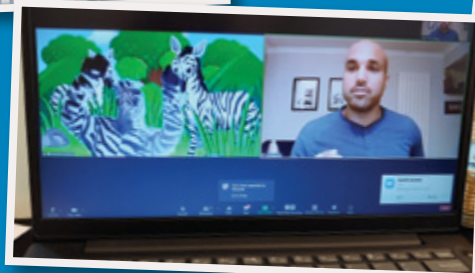
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Amy Bates

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2022 CAMPAIGN UPDATE!

2020 \$1,177,481

2021 \$1,258,500 **UP BY \$81,019**

OUR 2022 GOAL

\$1,350,000 **UP BY \$91,500**

LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN!!!

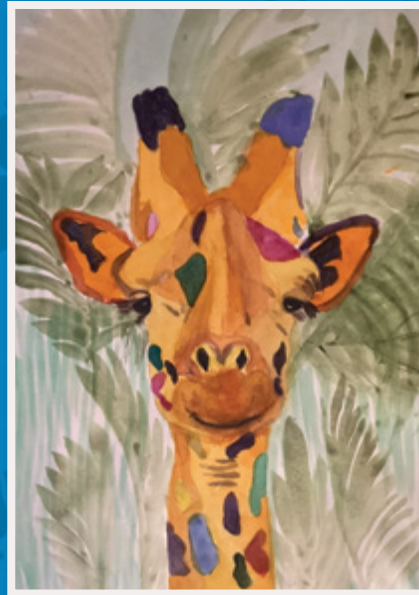
Achievement as of 1/1/2022: **\$222,154**

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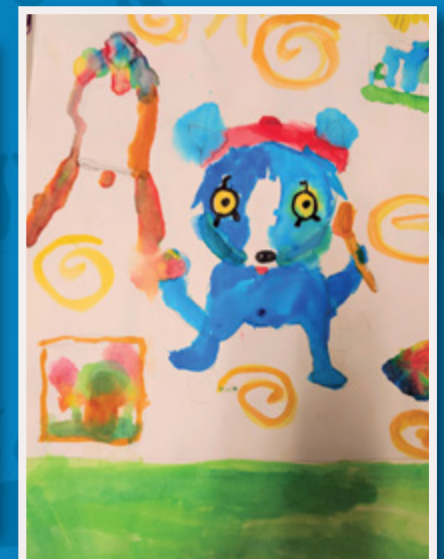
Shay



Abe



Laurie



Yetta

Jewish News From Israel and Around The World



Israelis and their dogs donate blood together. In the town of Kiryat Anavim, west of Jerusalem, a steady stream of dog owners rolled up their sleeves as their four-legged friends gave a donation too. “We need 1,000 human blood donations a day for Israel, and veterinary services need donations for dogs,” Nadav Metzner of Magen David Adom told *The Times of Israel*. “So putting the two together is a creative way to mobilize for both.” <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israelis-and-their-dogs-donate-blood-together-in-new-drive-to-bolster-supplies/>

All Israeli service dogs to be allowed in all public spaces. Israel will approve the entry of all service dogs, such as emotional support dogs, in public spaces starting November 2022. Until now, many service dogs, such as emotional support dogs who help those suffering from PTSD and other emotional traumas, have not been allowed in all public spaces, while guide dogs, who help those with physical disabilities such as blindness, were. This is especially important for many soldiers and victims of terrorist attacks who suffer from emotional traumas. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/all-service-dogs-to-be-allowed-in-all-public-spaces-by-november-2022-685602>

AshPoopie. Serial biotech inventor Professor Oded Shoseyov of the Hebrew University came up with a novel pooper-scooper that gathers dog droppings and turns them into odorless, sterile powder within seconds after the dog-walker releases an activation capsule from a cartridge inside the unit. Ramat Gan-based Paulee CleanTec, the company founded to develop this and related patented products for cats and even humans, is working with engineers to finalize the design ahead of a product launch in the United States. It will probably be marketed under a different name, but for now the working name remains AshPoopie.

Alzheimer’s guide dogs. Israel’s Service and Therapy Dog Center was the first in the world to train dogs as helpers for people suffering from mental and physical limitations, including Alzheimer’s, autism and brain or orthopedic injuries. The training protocol was developed over four years by geriatric social worker Daphna Golan-Shemesh and professional dog trainer Yariv Ben-Yosef, using calm, sociable and intelligent female collie shorthairs. Alzheimer’s patients frequently can’t leave home because they are easily disoriented, but they’re safe with a guide dog leading the way. As an extra precaution, a GPS navigation system is embedded in the dog’s collar. At home, the dog will press an alarm button if her owner falls and doesn’t get up quickly, or if she hears choking sounds from her master. <https://www.israel21c.org/the-top-10-unique-ways-israelis-love-their-dogs/>

Dog Bio-Security System. An Israeli biometric alert sensor transforms any dog into a sophisticated warning system that can detect an intruder and send out an alarm. Bio-Sense Technologies designed its sensor, DBS, to fit onto the dog’s collar and integrate with existing security systems. If the dog starts to bark or growl in an unusual way, the algorithm-based system goes into alert mode, sending out details of the security breach via SMS and triggering the burglar alarm. The product comes in two varieties, one for the security market, suitable for medium to large facilities protected by guard dogs. The consumer version, TeleDog, is mobile and personalized. The cellular-based sensor monitors not only the dog’s barking but also its movements via GPS. Both systems are manufactured and sold in Israel and shipped to customers internationally.

Israelis set up a US bank with a charitable ethos. Spiral is an Israel-founded socially-responsible “neobank” (on-line bank) for US customers. Up to \$250,000 of each customer’s savings are protected by FDIC Insurance. Its app facilitates easy donations to any charity with a 501(c)3 designation, which Spiral matches up to \$150. <https://www.israel21c.org/a-bank-with-a-charitable-ethos-and-no-building/>

Rare 18th-century Esther scroll penned by teenage Italian girl unveiled in Jerusalem. An auction house in Jerusalem has revealed a rare antique Jewish text that was written by teen-aged Luna Amron. There are few extant texts written by women,

and the Amron scroll illustrates the importance of religious women in Italian Jewish community life at the time. The colophon said the scroll was “All handwritten, with the hand of God who bestowed wisdom to a maiden who is humble and pleasant. Mistress Luna Tama daughter of the honored philanthropist, the honorable Yehudah Amron and she is in the fourteenth year of her life. Give her from the fruits of her hand and they shall praise her actions at the city gates.” <https://www.timesofisrael.com/rare-18th-century-esther-scroll-penned-by-teenage-italian-girl-unveiled-in-jerusalem/>

Prestigious Booker Prize goes to a South African novel about a Jewish woman’s dying wish. Damon Galgut London’s *The Promise* spans 40 years of recent South African history and begins when the mother of a white farm-owning clan insists that the family’s Black maid inherit the house she lives in, despite apartheid laws preventing Blacks from owning property. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/novel-about-south-african-jewish-mother-picks-up-prestigious-booker-prize/>



Meet Gary the robot. Gary is a robot that does household chores such as picking up toys, watering plants and stripping bedsheets. The height of a 10-year-old and a weight of about 88 pounds, Gary never balks at taking on a repetitive or boring task. He doesn’t mind cleaning toilets, picking up socks or moving packages in a warehouse. Gary is available for pre-order from the Petah Tikva-based startup Unlimited Robotics. He costs \$5,900 (there’s an installment plan of \$100 a month) and 80 people have already paid \$99 to reserve a spot on the waiting list. <https://www.israel21c.org/meet-gary-the-robot-who-can-tidy-your-house-and-do-the-laundry/>

Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind

The Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind was founded by Noach Braun, who had trained dogs in the IDF for military purposes. When he left the military, he wanted to continue to work with animals, but for a different purpose. When he found out that there was no guide dog school in Israel, he decided to establish one.

Before the Center was opened in 1991, visually impaired Israelis had to pass an English test. If they understood English well enough, they were sent to the USA or UK for a month of instruction with a guide dog. This posed multiple challenges: the dogs were trained in English, not Hebrew, and they were not trained to handle obstacles found only in Israel: cars parked on sidewalks, security barriers, aggressive drivers or warning sirens.

After a long and challenging series of events, Noach was helped by American philanthropist Norman Leventhal and British philanthropist Lady Elizabeth Kaye



to establish the Center, which has created partnerships between hundreds of blind and visually impaired Israelis and guide dogs. The Center also provides service companion dogs to autistic and blind children, IDF soldiers with PTSD and other Israelis with special needs. They use only positive reinforcement to train the dogs and work with an international network of staff, trainers, puppy raisers, volunteers and donors. It costs \$25,000 to train a dog and its partner, but clients pay nothing because of the generosity of people from all around the world who want to help.



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Five Lessons We Can Learn from Dogs

1. Live in the moment. Dogs don't brood about what happened in the past or stress about the future. They take life as it comes.

2. Be forgiving. Dogs don't hold grudges. They forgive you and expect to be forgiven as well.

3. Go all in, all the time. Dogs are enthusiastic, eager and energetic and they never get tired of their favorite things or their favorite people.

4. Be glad to see people. Dogs never question why you came to see them. They're just thrilled that you came.

5. Relax and get comfortable. Dogs know how to get comfortable. Anywhere. Anytime. The closer to you the better. Maybe even on top of you.

Is Your Dog Jewish?

Well, if he or she has one of the following names, it might be a clue: Kugel, Matzaball, Babka, Cholent, Latke, Sufganiya (Sufi for short), Vashti, Dreidel, Challah, Bagel, Blintz, Rugelach, Lokshen, Mazel or Groucho Barx.

There is also a website where you can find the 130 best Yiddish dog names (<https://petpress.net/yiddish-dog-names/>) and two that provide Hebrew dog names (<https://wagwalking.com/name/hebrew-dog-names> and <https://welovedoodles.com/hebrew-dog-names/>).

Jewish Dog Humor

A man walks into shul with a dog. The shammash comes up to him and says, "Pardon me sir, but this is a house of worship, you can't bring your dog in here!"

"What do you mean?" says the man. "This is a Jewish dog. Look."

The shammash looks carefully and sees that, in the same way a St. Bernard carries a brandy barrel around its neck, this dog has a tallis bag around its neck.

"Rover," says the man, "kipah!"

"Woof!" says the dog, stands on his hind legs, opens the tallis bag, takes out a kipah and puts it on his head.

"Rover," says the man, "tallis!"

"Woof!" says the dog, stands on his hind legs, opens the tallis bag, takes out a tallis and puts it around his neck.

"Rover," says the man, "daven!"

"Woof!" says the dog, stands on his hind legs, opens the tallis bag, takes out a prayer book and starts to pray.

"That's fantastic," says the shammash, "absolutely incredible! You should take him to Hollywood. Get him on television. Get him in the movies. He could make you millions!!"

"You talk to him," says the man, "he wants to be a doctor."

How to know if you're a dog parent:

1. Your parents talk about their granddogs.
2. You buy premium dog food and make your own dog treats.
3. You make play dates for your dog.
4. You show pictures of your dog on your FB page and on your phone to everyone you meet.
5. You give your dog presents and celebrate milestones like Bark Mitzvah.
6. You have conversations with your dog.
7. Your social life and vacations are planned around your dog.
8. You dress your dog up in costumes for holidays.
9. When you eat at a restaurant, you order food which your dog will enjoy as leftovers.
10. You facetime your dog when you're away.



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The Bark Mitzvah

The first recorded *Bark Mitzvah* took place in Beverly Hills California in 1958. According to the *Beverly Hills Courier*, Max and Janet Salter celebrated the coming of age of their black cocker spaniel, Duke of Windsor, by inviting guests to his “bark mitzvah.” In 1997, another widely publicized *bark mitzvah* was criticized by several rabbis. One wrote a letter to the editor of *The New York Times*, decrying the “desecration of a cherished Jewish tradition.” Despite criticism, *bark mitzvahs* continued to be popular, and pet stores and dog bakeries now offer special *bark mitzvah* party packages, complete with party favors, merch, treats and gifts.



In 2004, Admiral Rufus K. Boom Nadler, a Wheaten Terrier, turned thirteen and his owner, Mark Nadler, a New York cabaret singer, hired party planners and bartenders to ensure a special evening for Admiral Boom. A *bark mitzvah* cake displayed Boom’s photograph, and his name was iced in English and Hebrew. There were satin *yarmulkes* with Boom’s name and celebration date printed inside and a full buffet. Nadler requested that, as a *bark mitzvah* gift to Boom, guests make a donation to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Coverage of the celebration was featured in *The New York Times*.

A year later, Edie and Ed Rudy celebrated Columbo Rudy’s coming of age at a Florida café. Rabbi Rex Doberman signed a certificate from Congregation Beth Poodle congratulating the canine. Coverage of the event was featured on MSNBC. In 2005, a short mockumentary, entitled “*Bark Mitzvah*,” followed the drama as a Jewish family threw an extravagant coming-of-age celebration for their dog. This past September, a Jewish family threw their 13-year-old dog a “bark mitzvah” on the 39th anniversary of his dog dad’s ceremony. Rambo, a Havanese, enjoyed a two day celebration with challah, a peanut butter cake and a puppy-sized kipah and tallis.

It is hard for some to understand the motivation behind *bark mitzvah* events, although many are used as fundraisers for worthy causes, but they do not seem to be diminishing in popularity. And the word is that *meow mitzvahs* are coming next.

The National Dog of Israel



The Canaan dog is a breed of pariah or feral dog abundant in the Middle East. It is the national dog of Israel. Archeological evidence shows that the prick-eared, curled-tailed Canaans have existed in the Negev for millennia. They served as watchdogs and herders for the ancient Israelites and were used as herding dogs by the Bedouin and guard dogs by the Druze. An ancient dog cemetery in Ashkelon, Israel, dating from the fifth to third centuries BC, the largest known animal cemetery in the ancient world, contains the remains of more than 1,300 Canaan-like dogs, most of them puppies, positioned on their sides, with tails positioned between their legs. Jewish tradition holds that when the Israelites were forced to leave their ancient homeland during the Diaspora, the dogs they left behind in the desert became feral.

The Canaan dog is physically suited for survival in an arid environment, with

the ability to survive high temperatures with little water. It is a medium-sized square-built dog, with a wedge-shaped head, erect and low set ears with a broad base and rounded tips. Its outer coat is dense, harsh and straight of short to medium length. Its colors range from black to cream with all shades of brown and red in between, with white markings, color patches and white or black masks.

The Canaan dog became an Israeli national symbol in the 1940s, when Dr. Rudolphina Menzel, an Austrian animal trainer and Zionist, was asked by the Haganah to develop a dog that would

guard Israeli settlements and fight in wars. She lured adult dogs in the Negev with food and collected entire litters of puppies. She established an institute to study and train dogs for military and agricultural purposes. Dr. Menzel found the Canaans to be intelligent, independent and easily trainable. They are defensive but not aggressive. The dogs she trained searched for wounded soldiers, detected and transported ammunition, carried messages and located land mines.

Today the breed is recognized by kennel clubs internationally. Canaans make wonderful companions and protectors. Dogtime.com says of this uniquely Israeli canine, “If you understand and appreciate the unique qualities of this breed and are willing and able to live with a primitive breed who retains the instincts and behaviors that have kept him around for thousands of years, the Canaan Dog may be the ideal companion for you.”



Opening a New Door to Addiction Treatment

Addiction affects all, regardless of background, race, ethnicity, gender, religion or socio-economic status.

In recent years, communities across our nation — including Central New York — have experienced alarming increases in the number of people needing addiction treatment services.

As the longest running treatment program in the region, Crouse Health’s Addiction Treatment Services remains committed to our mission to expand access to care and ensure delivery of high-quality addiction and mental health treatment in our community.

We are proud of our new facility that matches the caliber of our staff and provides a nurturing, safe and uplifting environment that is already greatly enhancing our focus on holistic patient care: The Bill & Sandra Pomeroy Treatment Center at Crouse Health.

If you, a loved one, friend or colleague is in need of treatment for substance use disorder, please contact us at [315-470-8304](tel:315-470-8304) or visit crouse.org/addiction.

Bill & Sandra Pomeroy Treatment Center in Syracuse. The two-story, 42,000 square-foot facility at 2775 Erie Blvd, East, replaces the 100-year-old former location of Crouse’s outpatient treatment services at 410 South Crouse Avenue.




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

Veterinarians

The Jewish Virtual Library notes that “Judaism places great stress on proper treatment of animals. Unnecessary cruelty to animals is strictly forbidden, and in many cases, animals are accorded the same sensitivity as human beings.” The laws regarding treatment of animals are referred to as Tzar Baalei Chayim, prevention of cruelty to animals. These laws are unique to Judaism.

Judaism has always recognized the link between the way a person treats animals and the way a person treats human beings. Moses was specifically chosen to lead the Israelites out of Egypt because of his compassion in caring for animals. “The Holy One, Blessed Be He, said ‘Since you are merciful to the flock of a human being, you shall be the shepherd of My flock, Israel.’” Similarly, Rebekah was chosen as a wife for Isaac because of her kindness to animals. When Abraham’s servant asked for water for himself, she volunteered to water his camels as well.

In addition to the many members of our community who are animal lovers and who work on behalf of animal welfare, there are several who serve in a professional capacity as veterinarians. We profile two of them in this issue of the JO.



MARCIA ZIEGLER-ALEXANDER

Marcia Ziegler-Alexander is a Central New York native who attended Jamesville-Dewitt High School. While there, she worked at Stack Hospital for Pets as a kennel attendant. After she graduated from Cornell University, she went to Atlantic Veterinary College at Prince Edward Island, Canada where she graduated second in her class.

Dr. Ziegler-Alexander has co-owned Stack Hospital for Pets with her business partner, Dr. Patricia Lucia, since 1998. She lives in Pompey with her husband, one dog, two cats, four goats, 20 birds, fish and a turtle. Her passion for animals is not only professional but at the root of everything she does. “I have always wanted to be a veterinarian,” she notes. “I never swayed from that from the time I could talk to the time I became one.

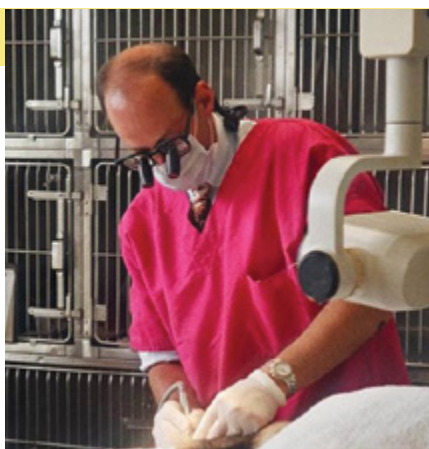
Being a veterinarian is truly a dream come true. I am blessed that every day I get to go to a job that I love and have the privilege of having my clients entrust me with the care of their beloved pets.”

Dr. Ziegler-Alexander was honored by Bankers Trust Health Care Group as CNY’s 2017 Veterinarian of the Year.

ERIC DAVIS

A Syracuse native and graduate of Nottingham High School, Eric Davis graduated with honors and distinction from Cornell University and received his DVM degree from the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1979. He then worked as an associate veterinarian at two local practices in the Syracuse area before starting Lyndon Veterinary Clinic in 1985. After nearly 20 years as a general practitioner, he became a resident in the American Veterinary Dental College and achieved Diplomate status in 2005. During his residency, he served as the veterinarian in charge of the Dental Referral Service at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals.

Davis then began Animal Dental Specialists of Upstate New York, a referral practice that serves patients requiring endodontic treatment for fractured teeth, advanced surgery for oral tumors, orthopedic surgery for maxillofacial fractures and orthodontic treatment for animals with traumatic



malocclusions. Davis is one of seven board-certified veterinary dental specialists in New York State and he receives referral patients from veterinarians throughout the area, from Rochester to Albany and from northern New York and Canada to Binghamton and northern Pennsylvania.

Dr. Davis and his wife Hannah have two daughters, Briana and Lauren, and five grandchildren. The family also includes three dogs, two cats, one horse, a pot-bellied pig, two goats and two aquaria. Dr. Davis used to be a long-distance bicyclist and brew his own beer. Now he drinks craft beer made by others and cycles between the easy chair and the sofa. New hobbies include making wooden toys and furniture for his grandchildren and writing scientific articles for peer-reviewed journals on a variety of oral health topics in animals and humans.



Some Interesting Side Notes:

The Torah contains many *mitzvot* designed for the protection of animals, including commandments to unload a donkey whose load is too heavy (Deuteronomy 22:4), to give an animal a day off from work on Shabbat (Exodus 20:9), not to muzzle an animal when working in the field (Deuteronomy 25:4) and many others.

The halakhic prohibition of sterilization derives from the verse in Leviticus (22:24) that prohibits the sacrificial offering of male animals with damaged or disfigured sexual organs: “You shall not offer these to God, and in your land you shall not do so.” The seemingly superfluous phrase, “You shall not do so” was interpreted as a prohibition of castration in general. The 13th century *Sefer Hachinuch* (The Book of Education) expressed the belief that neutering undermined the biological imperative of species to reproduce and the divine blessing “to be fruitful and multiply.” Immortality was conferred through one’s progeny, both for animals and humankind.

Thus, many Jewish veterinarians will not neuter pets, neither male nor female, and there is a significant body of rabbinical discussion about sterilization and when, if ever, and how it can be performed. The topic is also a hot button issue in Israel, where animal rights advocates cite *Tza’ar ba’alei chayim* (“suffering of living creatures”). This commandment bans causing animals unnecessary suffering and is linked to the biblical law requiring people to assist in unloading burdens from animals (Exodus 23:5). Israel has taken a lead in animal rights issues by banning dissection of animals in elementary and secondary schools, performances by trained animals in circuses, the dehorning of cattle and the production of foie gras. The latter is particularly significant because Israel was previously the world’s fourth biggest producer of foie gras but gave up this major source of income for ethical reasons.

All dogs in Israel must be licensed and microchipped. A new amendment to the Tel Aviv municipal bylaws requires dog owners to provide DNA samples for their dogs upon receiving or renewing their dog licenses. The resultant DNA database, part of an effort to fight against the issue of dog feces in the street not being picked up by owners, will allow municipal inspectors to collect samples from the streets, identify the dogs responsible and fine the owners who did not clean up.

Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas Celebrates Six Decades

by Joanne Villegas

Time flies when you're having fun. Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas is turning 60 in 2022, and we've got lots of activities to help celebrate. Our theme, much like our community, is "family." We're also mindful of, and motivated by, COVID and have made sure that every event is safe.

We started our festivities with Rabbi Kunin's installation, where the values of our founding members were highlighted. Each night during Hanukkah, longtime members helped us rededicate ourselves to those values, while lighting their *chanukiyas*.

It's a *bar mitzvah*. On Saturday, January 8, we will honor those families who joined in our first 13 years. On Saturday, April 2, we will honor our many intergenerational families, from those who grew up in the congregation and joined as adults, to those who joined as adults because their children are members.

Instead of singing in the shower, we invite everyone to join us on Saturday evening, March 12 and sing along to *Fiddler on the Roof* as it celebrates its 50th year.



How are we culminating our 60th year celebration? We're going retro, with dinner and a movie at a magical venue on Sunday June 12. Dinner will be served in a white rustic barn or in the safety of the family car, keeping things COVID-safe for all. Dinner will be followed by a drive-in movie experience.

Sisterhood is sponsoring a '60s-theme "Jukebox Bingo" on the afternoon of Sunday, January 23. Anyone with Zoom can join in. Men's Club is planning a 9-hole handicap golf tournament at Butternut Creek on a summer Sunday, also open to everyone.

Throughout our year of celebration, we look forward to seeing our many friends in the Syracuse community and beyond. For more information, please call CBS-CS at 315-446-9570.

"We Share the Same Sky" Podcaster at Temple Concord

by Chana Meir

On February 13th at 3:30 pm, Rachael Cerrotti will discuss her book "We Share the Same Sky" as part of Temple Concord's Regina F. Goldenberg Cultural Series. Based on her podcast of the same name, the book is described by Publisher's Weekly as "a gripping and deeply moving debut account of her late Jewish grandmother's experience growing up in Nazi-occupied territory during WWII."

Cerrotti's grandmother, Hana, was the only member of her family alive at the end of the war. Cerrotti, a photojournalist, documented Hana's story by transcribing numerous interviews with her grandmother. Upon Hana's passing in 2010, Cerrotti discovered an archive of photos, journals, diaries and deportation and immigration papers, as well as creative writings Hana had done throughout her life. After organizing these,



she retraced her grandmother's journey through Central Europe, Scandinavia and across the United States, tracking down the descendants of those whose kindness had helped save Hana's life.

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

TAY Zooms Around the World

by Sonali McIntyre

According to the World Tourism Organization, worldwide travel rose to a whopping 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals in 2020 a 6% increase from 2017. However, from January 2020 through September 2021, there has been an average 76% decrease in international tourist arrivals due to COVID-19. Temple Adath Yeshurun is bringing international travel to its members amidst the pandemic, with a virtual cultural series: *Jews Around the World*, taking Zoom trips to Morocco, India and Italy.

In early December, TAY Sisterhood presented Helene Herman on *The Ancient and Modern Kingdom of Morocco*. Herman's presentation taught about the diversity of the ancient and increasingly modern kingdom of Morocco. According to Herman, Morocco is distinguished by Berber, Jewish, Arabian and European cultural influences, and Jews have played an important role in Morocco from biblical times to present day. She presented a story beyond tolerance and focused on the celebration of the rich multicultural history of Morocco.

In mid-December, the TAY Programming Committee invited members to travel to India with Rahel Musleah for *Namaste and Shalom*. She is the seventh generation of a Calcutta family who can trace her roots to 17th-century Baghdad. Musleah guided participants from Mumbai to Cochin and onward to



Calcutta, sharing videos and photos of various synagogues, and providing an intimate and personal view of the rich Indian-Jewish culture.

In January, the TAY Programming Committee invited members to go to Italy with Micaela Pavoncello for *Journey to Jewish Rome*. Pavoncello was born in Rome to a Jewish-Roman father and a Libyan-Jewish Sephardic mother, and her Roman roots go back over 2000 years. She offered a fun, passionate and personal tour of Rome's Jewish history and culture, showing how miraculous it is that the Jewish community in Rome still exists.

For more about Temple Adath Yeshurun's programs, visit www.adath.org.

New Year, New Classes at the Epstein School

After returning to in-person learning in October, for the first time since March 2020, students at the Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Studies have resumed remote learning for January and February. "We are trying a new schedule this year: two longer in-person terms separated by a shorter remote winter session," Head of School Aaron Spitzer reports. "The goal was to give families a break from driving during the harshest months, as well as to limit families' exposures to the flu and COVID-19." The new classes for the seven-week winter term began on January 4.

During the first hour, Epstein students learn with their grade cohorts. Seventh and eighth grade students are continuing to tackle Moral & Ethical Dilemmas, while juniors and seniors are continuing their exploration of Jewish history and traditions with Rabbi Kunin. Ninth and tenth grade students are exploring a modified version of the Maimonides Moot Court *Beit Din* Competition with *morah* Ora Jezer. A *Beit Din* is a Jewish court of law that rules in accordance with *halakhah*. This program is an annual competition for high school and college students that presents students with a detailed legal/ethical case. Students use a curated sourcebook of traditional and modern Jewish texts to construct legal arguments to handle the ethical issues that emerge. The goal of the competition is to "inspire rigorous ethical debate rooted in Jewish legal wisdom." This year, students are tackling a case that deals with shaming on social media, a very timely topic. A recent Pew survey reported that 58% of American teens have personally experienced cyberbullying. One of the unique aspects of this year's case is that it also asks students to consider whether social media and the internet can be part of the solution as well a platform for harm.

The second hour of classes is choice-based and determined by student interest. Offerings for the winter term include Jewish Cooking, where students cook alongside *morah* Diana Koester from the comfort of their own kitchens; Modern Hebrew with *moreh* Moshe Alfasi and Jewish Trivia and Games with *morah* Ora Jezer. Art for the Ages is another elective, offered in partnership with Syracuse Jewish Family Service, which combines class sessions with in-person practicum sessions where students help older adults with dementia create artwork.

JCC Receives Three Security Grants

The Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center of Syracuse was recently awarded two grants from the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services “Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes Program” totaling \$100,000 and one grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency for \$150,000. The funds will be used to further enhance the JCC’s already exceptional campus security and surveillance technology.

Some of the upgrades that the JCC will be performing throughout this year and next will include additional security cameras, upgraded outdoor lighting and enhanced building access security. “These additional protective measures are all part of a planned upgrade program that we started several years ago after receiving several antisemitic threats,” said JCC of Syracuse Executive Director Marci Erlebacher. “While many of our already completed security upgrades such as beefed-up windows and doors have not been outwardly apparent to our members and visitors, they have been meaningful additions to our solid campus security. We are extremely grateful to have received these grants and for the additional safety and peace of mind that they’ll soon be providing.”

Save the date: JCC’s Annual Meeting and Gala returning this spring



SAM POMERANZ
JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER
OF SYRACUSE

After skipping its biggest and most important annual fundraiser for the past two years because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center of Syracuse is excited to bring it back this spring. The JCC of Syracuse’s 157th Annual Meeting and Gala, presented by naming sponsor the Wladis family, will be held on Sunday, May 22, 2022 from 11 am to 2 pm at Ower Vineyards in Cazenovia.

This year’s theme will be a “New York City-Style Brunch” and feature 2018’s and 2019’s gala caterer Yitzzy of Essen New York Deli of Brooklyn. A cocktail hour will kick off the event and segue to an authentic Jewish deli brunch. A brief business meeting will follow, which will then lead to the community service awards ceremony. As in past years, the gala’s proceeds will provide significant funding for scholarships to individuals in the JCC’s early childhood, after school, summer camp and senior programs.

The JCC’s gala is a unique and distinctive celebration which brings together many members of the Central New York Jewish community to benefit the JCC of Syracuse and to pay tribute to select individuals who have acted so selflessly. The five awards that were scheduled to be given in 2020 will finally be presented to the same previously 2020 announced distinguished honorees this year.

The 2022 JCC honorees represent a wide range of dedication and support. The Kovod Award, which signifies honor and importance, will be presented posthumously to Judith Stander who passed away in November 2020 after retiring from the Jewish Federation of Central New York earlier that year. Stander was a long-time volunteer in the community, a former JCC employee and committed volunteer at her synagogue, Temple Concord.

The JCC’s Kovod Gadol Award, which in Hebrew translates to great honor, will be presented to the husband-and-wife team of Jeffrey and Abby Scheer. Jeffrey is a partner at Bond, Schoeneck and King, board member of the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York and Menorah Park of Central New York, and former board member of the Jewish Federation of Central New York. Abby is a Syracuse University librarian, former JCC board member, past board president of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and current board member of the Epstein School of Jewish Studies.

Two Hall of Fame Awards will be presented this year to two couples who have given so much to the community. They are Steven and Sondra Goldberg and Barry and Debrah Shulman. The Goldbergs are longtime generous community supporters whose roots at

the JCC of Syracuse run deep. Both have served on the JCC board and Steven is a former treasurer and vice president of the board. Steven is currently executive vice president of the locally based company Raymour & Flanigan Furniture and Sondra has served in executive positions on multiple local and national philanthropic boards. The Shulmans also have been longtime generous supporters of the local community and of the JCC. Barry and Debrah co-chaired the JCC’s original \$2.8 million capital campaign. Barry has taught Tap Dance classes at the JCC of Syracuse for many years and donates all proceeds to the JCC. Debrah was instrumental in launching the Drug Store Quiz Show which ultimately impacted nearly half a million students in New York State.

This year’s Leslie Award, the fifth to be given since 2016, will be presented to JCC board member Davia Moss. She is a lifelong Syracuse-area resident who literally grew up at the JCC—she attended the Early Childhood Development Program. Moss serves on the JCC board’s gala committee and on the building committee, she co-chairs the Early Childhood Development Program committee and is an at-large member of the JCC board’s executive committee. “The Leslie” recognizes a younger up-and-coming professional within the local Jewish community for their outstanding commitment and service to the JCC and to the local community. These are the qualities which the award’s namesake, Leslie London Neulander, personified throughout her many selfless volunteer pursuits.

“I am thrilled that we’ll finally be able to come together in-person to recognize these terrific honorees after two years of COVID fatigue,” said Marci Erlebacher, JCC of Syracuse executive director. “All have displayed such dedicated service to the JCC and to the local Jewish community through their selfless acts and generosity. While this year’s gala will likely include COVID precautions that will be announced as we get closer to the event, I am beyond delighted to be bringing this event back bigger and better than ever.”

For more information about the JCC of Syracuse’s upcoming gala, including event tickets and sponsorship opportunities, call 315-445-2360 or visit www.jccsyr.org.

UPDATES

We have all grown used to delays due to COVID-19 and supply chain and political issues, but that doesn’t mean we like the waits. We wanted to update JO readers on some local projects that have been delayed but not cancelled and are well worth waiting for.



The east-facing wall of the Monroe Building at 333 East Onondaga Street has been primed in anticipation of the completion of the Syracuse Trailblazers mural as soon as weather and scheduling permit this spring.



Delayed by chip shortages, the Magen David Adom ambulance sponsored by our Jewish community is now scheduled for production in May and will be sent to Israel via Syracuse upon completion.



Klez Fest Story – Pt. II

by Sid Lipton as told to Cheryl Wolfe

[In Part I of this story, Sid described how he fell in love with klezmer music at KlezKamp in 1995. The story picks up from there.]



I knew I couldn't wait a whole year for another KlezKamp to hear this music again. I wanted to play it and needed to get a group together so we could have it year-round. As soon as I got home, I placed an ad in the *Jewish Observer*. It read: "I am looking for amateur musicians interested in forming an informal klezmer group to play Yiddish, Hassidic and Israeli music in the klezmer style. It is hoped that the group would meet weekly for the enjoyment of playing music and for good times." And that was the start of the Keyna Hora Klezmer Band.

Soon it began to grow. The first person who responded to the ad was Margie Schlisserman, a great pianist. She introduced me to the Kamen book, a compilation of Jewish music. It was exactly what we needed. And then Sam Katz, an accomplished violinist with the Onondaga Symphony Orchestra, joined. Somewhere along the line we figured out that we needed somebody to sing. I knew that Mimi Weiner was taking voice lessons, so I asked her if she would do some singing for the band. And she did, even bringing along her violin, which she hadn't played in years. When Sam Katz heard her play, he immediately told her to take the violin home and leave it there. So, Mimi continued to sing with the band and secretly took refresher violin lessons on the side. In time, she improved so much that she gave up the singing and brought her violin playing back to the band.

Mike Fixler joined the band. He played clarinet and saxophone. Mike Fixler suggested the name "Keyna Hora" for the band. The translation from Yiddish is "no evil eye." Alan Kosoff played drums and commented that it was the first time he

had ever taken them out of his basement. Harvey Pearl started playing on an old mandolin, but was so dissatisfied that he had a new one made. There were others, too. Megan Mawhinney on clarinet. Carl Borek on clarinet and saxophone. Neil Novelli on banjo. Sam Young played euphonium. Bill Sanderson played trumpet. Becky Kaplan joined as a vocalist. She had a tremendous voice, knew Yiddish and Hebrew and taught music in the Syracuse schools. She also played oboe. When she sang, people would comment that she sounded as though she had just come from the *shtetl*. Marty Miller also joined as a vocalist. He had a wonderful, throaty baritone voice.

Some musicians stayed with the group for a short while; others are still with us. That small klezmer band grew over the years into a 15-piece musical ensemble with motivational dancers. Today, the Keyna Hora Klezmer Band features: Marla Eglowstein, bass; Jan Gilkey, clarinet; Paul Goldsman, mandolin; Alan Kosoff, drums; Elaine Meltzer, violin; Harvey Pearl, mandolin; Britta Serog, cello; Harry Sommer, vocalist and motivational dancer; Ernie Wass, violin; Sue Wass, piano; Cheryl Wolfe, vocalist; Mark Wolfe, drums, percussion, accordion and vocalist; and Rosalie Young, poik. I strum along on the banjo, and Mimi Weiner plays violin and conducts the entire ensemble. Chongchun Chen is a vocalist and motivational dancer. Linda D'Imperio joins her in the dancing. I tell people all the time, as far as becoming a member of the band is concerned, the only requirement is that you are breathing!

We used the music I brought back from KlezKamp each year, and Mike Fixler was

also able to provide us with some music which originated in Yiddish theater. Mostly, we used the Kamen book. We even bought Kamen books for everybody in the band, because we didn't want to violate copyright law by making illegal copies. We rehearsed at Margie's house at first, and her piano accompaniment made us sound like we were the greatest band you had ever heard.

Let me tell you about Murray Shore, Rabbi Shore's father. That was a critical point for the band, too. Somehow, we were playing for the first time over at The Oaks, where Murray was living at the time. He knew all of the songs we were doing and enjoyed our performance so much that he convinced The Oaks to allow us to rehearse there every week. We treasured the Oaks folks, our test audience as we improved our musical skills and worked out our performance numbers.

Eventually, the Jewish community found out about us. Hadassah asked us to play sing-alongs for them as did the Beth El Sisterhood. Then, somebody hired us to play for a *bar mitzvah* party and then someone's 83rd birthday. And so it grew. We especially enjoyed playing for the folks in local nursing homes and senior residences. Over the years, we had many memorable performances. I recall the 60th anniversary celebration of Israel held in downtown Syracuse. You talk about crowd participation! We had flags flying - the middle flag was the U.S. flag and it was surrounded by flags of Israel. That was a prized, proud moment.

Of course, our favorite gig is KlezFest, now known as the Jewish Music and Cultural Festival. Mimi Weiner and I were instrumental in co-founding it. Our vision was to create an annual event, inviting local, national and even international musical performers to bring klezmer to Syracuse. Keyna Hora is the host band, and we perform every year. The festival is our crowning glory.

I hope that the band will continue, and I want the music to stay in the klezmer modes. I really feel that somehow it was meant to be. All I care about is that we stick with the klezmer modes - the Hassidic and the typical Jewish folk song modes. Just keep going. Bring music out to the people. I don't want it to die out again as it did in the last century. This is what I hope. Just keep going. The only place we can get klezmer music in Syracuse is from our own band and festival. It connects us. I just hope we keep going. We must continue to play Jewish music. We want the world to know that the Jewish people are alive and well. *Am Yisrael Chai.*

Celebrating a Quarter Century of Teaching Hebrew



Language is a fundamental aspect of identity. A shared language creates a connection not only among its speakers but to a broader community. Hebrew has served the global Jewish community in this way for centuries, reinforcing a shared history and heritage. Israel marks Hebrew Language Day on 21 Tevet, the birthday of Eliezer Ben Yehuda, the father of modern spoken Hebrew. This year, the date corresponded to December 25. Closer to home, Michal Downie celebrated her 25th year of teaching Hebrew in Syracuse. She has been on the faculties of Syracuse University, the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, the Epstein School and the religious schools of Temple Adath Yeshurun, Temple Concord and Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas. On the occasion of this "happy anniversary," she says she is "lucky to have had this close connection with many of the young children in this town and honored to be part of their Jewish journey."



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!

BARBARA (BUZZY) BIRON
December 13, 2021

Barbara (Buzzy) Biron, 95, a native of Syracuse, NY and a longtime resident of Longboat Key, FL, died on December 13, 2021. A cum laude graduate of Syracuse University, she was an avid golfer and tennis player and a longtime member of the Longboat Key Club, Temple Adath Yeshurun and Temple Beth Israel of Longboat Key.

She is survived by her husband, Edwin (Jim) Biron of 72 years, their daughter, Suzanne Biron Yellen (Murray Plotkin), their grandsons Benjamin (Jenny) Yellen and Jeremy (Sasha) Yellen and their great grandsons, Jacob Biron Yellen and Tsumugi Ariel Yellen.

Private graveside services for the immediate family are in Adath Yeshurun cemetery.

Contributions to perpetuate her memory may be made to a charity of one's choice.

www.sisskindfuneralservice.com.

DR. BRUCE M. MARMOR
December 26, 2021

Dr. Bruce M. Marmor, 82, formerly of Syracuse, passed away on December 26, surrounded by his loving family. He was a graduate of Nottingham High School and Syracuse University and earned his medical degree at Upstate Medical College. He trained in internal medicine and cardiology at Downstate and New York Hospital-Cornell, served as a physician in the United States Air Force, and practiced medicine in Syracuse. For many years, he was Chairman of the Department of Medicine and Chief of Critical Care at Community General Hospital. He was the physician for the City of Syracuse Police Department, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department and the City of Syracuse Fire Department for over 15 years.

Bruce was a leader in many professional and community organizations in Syracuse. As Chairman of the American Heart Association's Professional Education Committee, he instituted the annual Heart Teaching Day, which became one of the largest local cardiology education conferences in the country. He served as president of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, was a founder and past president of Shaarei Torah Orthodox Congregation and was actively involved in many other non-profit organizations.

He is survived by his wife Dr Beverly Spirt Marmor, four children, David (Debbie), Rafi (Jessica), Rachel and Sarah Marmor and four grandchildren. Funeral and shiva will take place in Los Angeles, CA. Contributions in Bruce's memory may be made to the Syracuse Hebrew Day School.

www.sisskindfuneralservice.com

STEVEN WECHSLER
January 1, 2022

Steven Wechsler, 76, died on January 1 in Miami. The son of Leonard and Annette Wechsler, Steve was born and raised in New York and graduated from Calhoun High School in Merrick, NY.

Steve earned his undergraduate degree from Cornell University (1967) and served as a Lieutenant JG in the US Navy during the Vietnam War (1969-1972). He was awarded an MBA (1973) and juris doctor (1975) from the University of Michigan.

Steve joined the faculty of Syracuse University College of Law in 1979 and retired as emeritus professor in 2014. He served as associate dean and was a nationally recognized scholar in professional responsibility and commercial law. He was a visiting professor at the University of Michigan (1988) and an adjunct professor at the University of Colorado (1975-79). Steve is remembered by his law students as "thorough, practical and challenging, and a professor who helped shape our futures." Prior to academia, Steve practiced law in Denver, CO (1975-1979).

For 39 years, until her death in 2019, Steve was married to Stacy Beth Veeder. A devoted couple, they enjoyed vacationing together in the Adirondacks and New York City and cherished their friends and their homes in Syracuse, New York and Key West, Florida.

Steve was a loving husband and superb cook who enjoyed warmth and good conversation with a loyal group of friends. As a widower, Steve was fortunate to find friendship with Kay Friedlander.

Steve is survived by his brother Wayne (Robin) Wechsler, sister-in-law Debbie (Robert) Clevens and nephews Matthew Wechsler, Ralph Dashow and Jonathan (Christina) Billker. A celebration of his life will take place in the spring.

In lieu of flowers, donations to perpetuate his memory may be made to Key West's Sister Season fund: <https://www.sisterseason.com/>

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HELEN RIBAK MARCUM**January 4, 2022**

Helen Ribak Marcum, 86, of Manlius died January 4 at home in her sleep. Born in Brooklyn, she started her career as a volunteer while attending high school by helping to serve dinner trays to patients at a local hospital. She moved to Syracuse in 1955.

Helen was a past president of the Syracuse Chapter of The National Council of Jewish Women, The NCJW Evening Branch and was a member of the National Board of NCJW. Helen also served as president of the Jewish Community Center of Syracuse, the Syracuse Jewish Federation and the Syracuse Federation of Women's Clubs (SFWC). In addition, she was on the Board of Directors of the GFWC-New York State Federation of Women's Clubs serving as treasurer, parliamentarian and finance chairman, a position she held since 2004. She was appointed chairman of the Syracuse Commission for Women by Mayor Thomas Young. She was treasurer of the Advocates for Girls, Inc., the Ida J. Butcher Scholarship Fund and the Syracuse Federation Formers.

In 1985, Helen received the NCJW Hannah G. Solomon award, presented to honor someone who has changed the lives of others through their leadership efforts and service, and was recognized by the Syracuse Post-Standard as a Woman of Achievement in Volunteerism in 1989. The Syracuse Jewish Federation presented her with the Esther and Joseph Roth award for outstanding leadership in the Jewish community in 1990, and she was named Club Woman of the Year by the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs in 1992. The senior adults of the Jewish Community Center honored her in 1996 for her dedication to senior adults. Advocates for Girls presented her with the Voice for Girls Award in 2005. In 2006, she received the Caring Friend to Others Award from the Salvation Army Auxiliary, and in 2016, she received the Jewish Community Center of Syracuse Hall of Fame Award.

In addition to serving others as a volunteer, Helen loved travel, the theater, her weekly mahjong game with good friends and going to the Senior Adult Dining Program at the Syracuse JCC. She was a remarkably gracious antique car wife, joining her late husband for many years at various car shows.

She was predeceased in 2014 by her husband Stanley of 60 years, in 2010 by their daughter Sue, and in 1998 by her

sister Nina Ribak Rosenthal. Surviving are her son Alan (Barbara), of Palo Alto, CA, two grandsons, Joshua of Las Vegas, NV, and Rayden of Waltham, MA and several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, contributions to perpetuate her memory may be made to the Senior Lunch Program at the Syracuse Jewish Community Center, The Sue Marcum Scholarship Fund, Kogod School of Business at American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20016

or The Marcum Family Endowment for the Arts at Manlius Pebble Hill School, 5300 Jamesville Road, DeWitt, New York 13214

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