

»» L'Chaim!

Jewish Observer

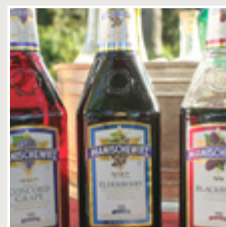
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of Central New York

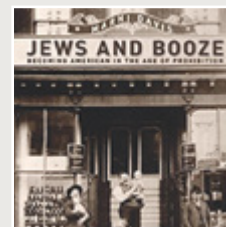
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AUGUST 2022 | AV-ELUL 5782



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MANISCHEWITZ
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IS BACK!
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August 2022

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

Jews have a complicated relationship with alcohol. Wine is used for the *kiddush* recited on Shabbat and holidays and four cups of wine are integral to the Passover seder. On Purim we are told, “It is one’s duty *levasumei*, to make oneself fragrant [with wine] on Purim until one cannot tell the difference between ‘*arur Haman*’ (cursed be Haman) and ‘*barukh Mordekhai*’ (blessed be Mordecai)” (Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 7b). Wine figures prominently in *havdalah*, *brit milah*, and the *sheva brachot* of the wedding ceremony.

And yet some of the most egregious sins in the Torah are directly related to alcohol consumption. After Noah survived the flood, he made grapes his first crop and the inebriation which followed resulted in a shameful incident of incest; Lot’s excessive drinking led him too to commit incest; the two sons of Aaron the High Priest, their judgment impaired by wine, entered the Holy of Holies without permission, lit strange fire and were punished by death.

Our sages had mixed feelings about wine. “Wine cheers the heart of a man,” we read in *Proverbs (Mishle)* 104:15 and “Wine adds to the appetite” in *Talmud, Pesachim*. But we are cautioned that “A lot of wine is harmful, but a little is good.” (*Derekh Eretz*) (*Talmud Bava Batra* proclaims “Wine tops the list of all medicines” and *Derekh Eretz* says, “Wine is as good to the old as milk is to babes.” But *Yalkut Shimoni* warns “Look not on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly! In the end, it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder” and *Ben Sira* 31:30 comments “How exceeding strong is wine! It makes all to err that drink it.”

Despite the warnings, Jews were heavily involved in the liquor business for centuries as distillers and tavern keepers, particularly in Poland. Glenn Dynner’s book, *Yankel’s Tavern: Jews, Liquor & Life in the Kingdom of Poland*,

explains that “The nobles who owned most of the region’s distilleries and taverns preferred to lease them to Jews, whom they believed to be more sober than the rest of the population. The Jewish-run tavern became the center of leisure, hospitality, business and even religious festivities, while Jewish tavernkeepers became integral to both local economies and local social life, presiding over Christian celebrations and dispensing advice, medical remedies and loans. Nevertheless, as peasant drunkenness reached epidemic proportions, reformers and government officials sought to drive Jews out of the liquor trade.”

Closer to home, we find that many local Jewish families were involved in the provision of spirits to the public. Our cover photo shows Ben Lavine at his bar, The Brown Derby, on the corner of Adams and Townsend Streets in the 15th Ward in 1941. Other local families were similarly employed. In 20th century America, Prohibition led to deep Jewish involvement in the distilling and selling of alcohol. The reason is that Jews were allowed to have wine for religious purposes, and they therefore became hubs for “sacramental wine procurement.” A review of the book *Jews and Booze* in this issue will go into the ramifications of this situation in greater detail. The myth that Jews themselves did not abuse alcohol is dispelled by another review in this issue of yet another book also entitled *Jews and Booze*, which demonstrates that the warnings of our ancestors about the dangers of the consumption of alcoholic need to be taken seriously.

Other articles in this issue detail what to many may be surprising – that Manischewitz, the quintessential Jewish wine, is manufactured next door in the Finger Lakes and that kosher wine is actually becoming something of a regional specialty. Which leads to the questions, also answered in this issue, of what makes a wine kosher anyway, and whether there is a gene that protects Jews from alcoholism. Finally, in the spirit of fun, we provide a list of Jewish holiday-themed cocktails in our *B’tay Avon* section, while urging moderation in their consumption.

We are also delighted that this issue of the *JO* has so many reports and photos of community activities. The Central New York Jewish community has clearly been taking full advantage of respite that our lovely weather summer brings to us as well as of the relief we are experiencing as COVID becomes less of a threat to our health and our survival. *L’chaim!!*

Cover photo courtesy of Gary Lavine

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



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Federation and Community Dedicate Ambulance for Israel

The sun shone brilliantly and the temperature was in the 90s at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo on June 26 as members of the Syracuse Jewish community came to celebrate the dedication of “our” ambulance before it made its long journey to Israel. Laurie Bandremer of Magen David Adom (MDA) told the admiring crowd that the ambulance was soon to head to Baltimore to be put on a boat for Israel. It was not yet determined which city would receive the gift from the Jewish community of Central New York, but inasmuch as MDA had not been able to supply ambulances for two years due to COVID, it was sure to be very welcome wherever it was delivered. Bandremer said that the ambulance would be fully outfitted with equipment upon arrival and that it would be used for all those in need of medical care, regardless of nationality or religion. Israel does not manufacture any ambulances. Magen David Adom supplies about 100 ambulances each year from the United States, with Australia, Great Britain and France sending others. The lifespan of an ambulance is about a decade, so there is always a need for more. Should a baby be born in “our” ambulance, the Central New York community would be notified of the joyous event, and if anyone from Central New York was touring Israel, MDA would locate the ambulance to arrange for a visit. David Hootnick, whose idea sparked the successful \$100,000+ fundraising effort, cut the ribbon to great applause.



Thank you to all the donors: Our First Responders, first: Anonymous, Anonymous, Anonymous, Michael and Euni Balanoff, Karen and Marc Beckman, Shira and Jared Boschan, Bill and Sylvia Cohen, Barbara Davis, Melissa and Rabbi Daniel Fellman, Jewish Federation of Central New York, Mark and Sue Field, Jacki and Michael Goldberg, Robin and Neil Goldberg, Steven and Sondra Goldberg, Lisa and Seth Greenky, The Children of Jacob and Anna Hootnick, Jack Lyon, Sidney Manes, Debbie and Neil Rosenbaum, Rose and Carl Rosenzweig,

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PLEASE HELP US GET AN INCUBATOR FOR MAGEN DAVID ADOM'S HUMAN MILK BANK!



AUGUST IS NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING MONTH.

The Federation's **Women's Philanthropy Initiative** wants to raise \$10,000 to allow the **Magen David Adom Milk Bank** to purchase a **WARMING INCUBATOR**, essential for pasteurization of donor milk while preserving milk composition.

There are 500 milk banks around the world, but there is **only one** in Israel. **Magen David Adom's Human Milk Bank** allows nursing mothers to donate surplus milk for babies who need it. Breast milk provides antibodies that protect babies from disease, especially preemies who cannot tolerate formula.

Our goal is to raise \$10,000 by the end of the month. If we can get 100 donations of \$100, we will make it.

You can donate online at <https://jewishfederationcny.org/donate/> (click MILK BANK) or send a check to Federation at 5655 Thompson Rd, DeWitt 13214.

To kick off the campaign, you are invited to an ICE CREAM SOCIAL in the middle parking lot of Congregation Beth Sholom Chevra Shas (18 Patsy Lane above the New School) **on Monday, August 1st from 3:30 to 4:30 pm. It's free and will be held rain or shine. Nothing's going to stop us!**

Nan, Robin, Debbie, Ellen, Lisa, Shira, Amira, Leah, Miriam, Elyssa and Barbara

D'var Torah



by Rabbi Daniel Jezer, Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas

I recall very distinctly in elementary school singing the short ditty: "In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue." In those days, before his cruelty to the indigenous population became known, Columbus was considered to be an unblemished hero. We were incorrectly taught that he was the first to recognize that the world was spherical, not flat. (In reality, even the Greeks knew that and had calculated the circumference of the world.) As Jewish kids, we were proud of what we now know is misinformation that Columbus was a secret Jew, a marrano. We do know that one of the most important crew members on his first voyage was Luis de Torres, who was born a Jew and had converted to Catholicism (a converso). He was important because he spoke Hebrew, considered to be the original human language, and thus would be able to converse with foreign people.

Much remains mysterious about the man Columbus. One of the many questions remains as to the reason for the date of his first sailing. He was scheduled to sail on August 2 but did not sail until the next day. Speculation remains, most particularly among those who claim the "Jewishness" of Columbus, that the sailing was delayed one day because in 1492 August 2 was the Hebrew date of *Tisha b'Av* 5252.

Tisha b'Av is a bleak, black fast day in our tradition. It is the only day, other than Yom Kippur, which is a 24-hour fast. *Tisha b'Av* (the ninth day of the month of *Av*) commemorates the destruction of both the first and second Temples, the ending of Jewish national independence until the birth of the State of Israel in 1948.

There are those who, assuming Columbus was Jewish, speculate that he waited an extra day to sail, as *Tisha b'Av* was not an auspicious day with which to begin his trip. More likely is that August 2 that year was the date by which all Jews had to leave Spain under threat of being killed. 100,000 Jews left Spain, and the harbor was filled that day with many, many ships carrying Jewish passengers fleeing from Spain. (Perhaps as we today face airline delays, he faced a sailing delay.)

That day, *Tisha b'Av* 5252/August 2, 1492, marks a great tragedy in Jewish life. On that day, 700 years of creative Jewish life in Spain ceased. Spain had been the home of a large Jewish community, well integrated into the country. Some of the greatest names of our culture, Maimonides, Judah Halevi, Ibn Gabirol wrote their great works there. Many of the poems in our *siddur* and *mahzor* emanate from that period.

We had poets, politicians, scholars, businessmen, traders, generals etc., and all of it came to an end on that date.

Our Jewish community today, in this country, is more accepted and integrated than it has ever been in any country, even during the Golden Age of Spain. We are blessed living in this country. And yet we must not forget the lesson of 1492. We need be vigilant and pro-active as winds of change are always possible. Let us hope and work for many years of continued freedom and prosperity in these United States.



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What Makes **Wine** Kosher?

Some people think that a rabbi must bless wine to make it kosher. That's just wrong. For wine to be certified kosher, the entire winemaking process from crushing the grapes to bottling the final product must be handled by Sabbath-observant Jews, and no non-kosher finings (substances added to remove unwanted ingredients) or additives may be used. That's it. No blessing.

Wine is produced in all 50 of the United States, with at least one winery in every state, but the states of California, Washington and Oregon account for over 90% of total American wine production. New York is the nation's third leading wine-producing state. New York's principal winemaking regions are the Finger Lakes and Long Island. The Finger Lakes wine region was developed in the 19th century. Three factors – the soil, the drainage and the moderating influence of deep lakes – make the Finger Lakes a prime location for growing some of the more delicate European vinifera grapes and French-American hybrids. The growing of grapes, and the manufacturing and selling of wine is a \$6 billion business in New York. Most New York wine is sold directly by the wineries in their tasting rooms or is distributed by the wineries to local stores or restaurants.

Kosher wines are sacramental wines made following guidelines found in the Torah. For centuries, each Jewish community made its own wines as a part of family life. According to the New York Wine & Grape Foundation, kosher winemaking as an industry was born in New York which remains one of the nation's largest producers of these "special" wines.



Every step in the kosher winemaking process from the picking of the grapes to the bottling of the wine is done under strict, rabbinic supervision. At one time, kosher wineries did as much as 80 percent of their business during the Passover holiday. Today, however, non-Jewish consumers have been discovering the diversity and quality of these wines.

New York State's makers of kosher wines are Manischewitz, Royal Kedem and Crown Regal wineries. Manischewitz is the oldest, tracing its beginning to 1933 when Leo Star began making Passover wine at his Monarch Winery in New York City. In the 1940s, he contracted with the Manischewitz kosher food firm to use its name on his wine. In 1986, Canandaigua Wine Co. bought the line from Monarch and moved it to Widmer's Wine Cellars in Naples. Royal Kedem was founded in 1946 on Manhattan's lower

west side. In 1948, Royal moved to Milton on the Hudson River. The firm makes some sweet kosher wine, but it also produces a line of drier wines. The tiny Crown Regal Wine Cellars in Brooklyn was started in 1981. It averages about 3,000 cases a year and sells it under the Kesser and Joseph Zakon Winery labels.

A unique feature of kosher wine is the classification of wines as *mevushal* or non-*mevushal*. *Mevushal* means "cooked." This means the wine undergoes flash-pasteurization or flash détente, in which the grape "must" (the destemmed and crushed product) is heated for a short period of time to a high temperature. The process is used in the non-kosher world to remove the flaws of under-ripe grapes. The *mevushal* process allows the wine to be handled by anyone. Non-*mevushal* wine, on the contrary, may only be touched by Sabbath-observant Jews from when the grapes are first crushed until when the wine is bottled and sealed to be considered kosher. Because the *mevushal* process allows the wine to be handled freely by anyone, it greatly simplifies wine usage in restaurants or at events such as bar mitzvahs and weddings. Still, most premium kosher wines are made non-*mevushal*, as winemakers do not want their products boiled.

The other requirements for wine to be considered kosher are the intrinsic kosher ingredients, including the yeasts and fining agents, as well as cleaning products used in the process of winemaking. Fining agents are used by some winemakers to remove "colloids," or unwanted aspects of a wine, including clarification for color, aroma or bitterness as well as to stabilize the product. These agents bind to the unwanted component and can then be filtered out. Traditionally these agents have included dried blood powder, but today, more typically include two categories of agents: organic compounds from animals and solid or mineral materials. Organic compounds include egg whites, isinglass (from fish bladders), gelatin (from animal collagen) and casein (derived from milk). Solid/mineral materials include pulverized bentonite clay, activated charcoal carbon and potassium ferrocyanide. Many winemakers prefer not to fine their wines, worried about losing important compounds for aroma and flavor. The rising demand for vegan and kosher products decreased the use of fining agents.

In Israel, Kosher wine producers must observe agricultural laws in the vineyard which date back to Biblical times. For the first three years, fruit from the vine may not be used for winemaking. In the fourth year, the grapes may be made into wine. Growing other fruits between the vines is prohibited. Every seventh year, the fields are left fallow and allowed to rest. Over one percent of the production is poured away in remembrance of the "ten percent tithe" once paid to the Temple in Jerusalem.

People sometimes ask if kosher wine is halal. The answer is that while there are many similarities between Jewish and Islamic dietary restrictions, and while much of what is kosher would also be considered halal, this is not true of wine. Because consumption of any alcoholic beverage in any form is prohibited in Islam, it is not that kosher wine is not halal, but that no alcohol is halal.





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Funny Jewish Drinks

The Shmaltz Brewing Company (no joke) was an American craft brewing company headquartered in Troy, New York. Calling itself “The Chosen Beer,” it was originally best known for its flagship He’Brew brand. The company produced a large line of kosher Shmaltz Brewing beers with amusing Jew-ish names such as Chanuka Beer, David’s Slingshot Hoppy American Lager, Funky Jewbelation, Manna IPA, Messiah Nut Brown Ale and Rejewvenator. In 2020, the company released several She’Brews beers, including RBG IPA, described as a milkshake India pale ale brewed with raspberry, blueberry and grapefruit in honor of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The company thrived for a quarter century, but then in 2021 announced that it was releasing Exodus 2021 Barleywine Ale, brewed with dates, figs, pomegranates and grapes, and going out of business.

Lest readers be disappointed to hear this news, the *JO* collected an assortment of ten Jewish-themed cocktails with similarly amusing names, and is pleased to share them (and links to their recipes), coordinated with major Jewish holidays.



For Rosh HaShanah:

Apples and Honey Cocktail

<https://whatjewwannaeat.com/apples-honey-cocktail/>

For Sukkot:

Sukkot Spritz

<https://sukkahhill.com/artisanal-cocktails/>

For Chanukah:

Chocolate Gelt Cocktail

<https://spoonuniversity.com/lifestyle/8-cocktails-to-drink-for-every-night-of-hanukkah>

For Tu b’shevat:

Fruity Sangria

<https://jamiegeller.com/recipes/kosher-sangria-for-tu-bishvat/>

For Purim:

Long Island Iced Vash-tea

<https://jamiegeller.com/holidays/18-fun-purim-cocktails-to-complete-your-meal/>

For Passover:

Red Nile

<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/food/articles/passover-cocktails-for-each-of-the-ten-plagues>

Yom haAtzmaut:

Kachol v’lavan

<https://tipsybartender.com/recipe/blue-russian/>

For Lag b’omer:

Smoeres Cocktail

<https://tasty.co/recipe/smoeres-cocktail>

For Shavuot:

Tropical Clarified Milk Punch

<https://www.atlantajewishtimes.com/beer-milk-berries-perfect-for-shavuot-drinks/>

For any occasion:

Manischevetini (2 oz vodka; 1/2 oz orange juice; 1/2 oz Manischewitz. Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker, shake well; serve. Garnish with an orange twist if desired.)

Last, but not least: The Kiddush Club -

1 part whiskey, 1 part *lashon hara*.

Man-O-Manischewitz

Manischewitz is the #1 kosher wine brand in America, with a product line of nine wines including Concord Grape, Elijah by Manischewitz Moscato, Blackberry, Elijah by Manischewitz Cabernet Sauvignon, Cream White Concord, Cream Red Concord, Cream Peach and Elderberry. Manischewitz wines are produced in Canandaigua under the supervision of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.



The Manischewitz Company once had the market on kosher food cornered. Rabbi Dov Behr Manischewitz and his son Jacob Uriah made their name and their fortune building a mechanized gas oven that allowed for large-scale production of matza. They even changed the shape to square, to make it better for packaging and shipping.

The Manischewitz company got into the wine business in 1947 after the repeal of Prohibition. The secular Monarch Wine Company struck a deal with Manischewitz to license its name for a brand of wine. The agreement also stipulated that the Monarch Wine Company would get to borrow the Manischewitz rabbis for kosher certification. The wines were sweet because the only locally available grape at the time was the hearty Concord, grown in upstate New York. Since the grape was characterized by sour juice, the vintners added sugar, and sweet kosher wine was born.

In the 1940s, the branding emphasized the wine's religious origins: The label featured a rabbi with a long beard holding a glass of wine in one hand

and a sacred text in the other. The word "Sacramental" was splashed in all caps across the label, which was also adorned with Hebrew lettering. Manischewitz wasn't the only wine company to use religious iconography; there were kosher wine brands. The difference, historian Roger Horowitz has said, is that most of the wines were "made by Jews, for Jews." Manischewitz, however, "mobilized the kosher characteristics, Hebrew lettering, and imagery as a way to sell to non-Jews, too." They reached out to gentile consumers, specifically targeting African Americans in northern cities. Black musicians were featured in the brand's print advertising campaigns. The Ink Spots appeared in a 1950s ad in the *Pittsburgh-Courier* declaring, "Manischewitz kosher wine harmonizes with us — sweetly!" In the 1950s, the doo wop group The Crows released a single called the "Mambo Shevitz." Sammy Davis, Jr., doing double duty as a Black Jew, was a pitchman for years on radio and television with the slogan, "Man O Manischewitz, what a wine!" By the mid-1950s, some 80 percent of Manischewitz wine consumers weren't Jewish.

Today, Manischewitz produces some two million gallons or 900,000 cases of wine annually, exporting 200,000 cases to Latin America, the Caribbean and South Korea. A commentator described the taste of Manischewitz as "Welch's Grape Juice meets Port meets the blood of our forefathers," adding, "there's definitely something 'afflicted' in the flavor." It's a Passover staple, made with sugar for the holiday instead of the corn syrup that is used year-round.

Roger Horowitz, a food historian and author of *Kosher USA: How Coke Became Kosher and Other Tales of Modern Food*, explained the continuing appeal of this libation nobody really likes. "The Jews' focus is on tradition. So that's what they sell, that's what it's about," he said. "And I don't think the appeal for Jews has changed that much. This is the taste that we associate with the Passover seder."

An advertisement for Weight Loss Surgery at Crouse Health. The background is a photograph of a smiling couple, a man and a woman, with the woman holding a potted plant. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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CROUSE HEALTH

» Book Review

Jews and Booze, Becoming American in the Age of Prohibition by Marni Davis

Reviewed by Jeffrey Lee Drimer, Esq.

In the last two decades of the 19th century and the first 25 years of the 20th century there was a mass exodus of Jews from Europe. More than 2.8 million emigrated to the United States, 94% of them coming from Eastern Europe.

On January 16, 1919, the 18th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which banned the manufacture, transportation or sale of intoxicating liquors, was ratified. Prohibition went into effect on January 19, 1920 with the passage of the Volstead Act.

The historic overlap of Jewish immigration and Prohibition is the subject of *Jews and Booze* by Marni Davis (published in 2012), which seeks to explain the history of the American Jewish experience as it was impacted



by Jewish participation in the alcohol industry, its position regarding Prohibition and its reaction and resistance to the Volstead Act.

Jews and Booze is a beautifully written, meticulously researched history book

that touches on a period of the Jewish experience in the United States of which we are (mostly) uninformed. Usually, when I read a book, it is to be amused or excited. On occasion, I read a book to learn things of which I'm unaware. *Jews and Booze* is not a feel-good reading experience, but when you finish it, you will say, "I'm glad I know that" or "That's something I should think about." That's how I felt when I finished *Jews and Booze*.

Davis' premise is quite simple. Her extensive research shows that Jews in America were disproportionately involved in the manufacture, distribution and sale of alcohol throughout the country. In some cities, Jews were saloon keepers. Davis propounds the theory that Jewish involvement in the alcohol business made them an increasingly despised section of the economy in a nation with a troubled and ambivalent relation to alcohol. As antisemitic sentiment intensified at the turn of the century, Jewish involvement in the alcohol trade mirrored broader concerns about their place in American society. Simply put, Jews did not favor Prohibition, so they didn't belong here.

Once Prohibitionists reached that conclusion, they had to make that case to the American people. How they did that was frightening. Davis recounts a *Colliers* magazine story about an incident in Shreveport, Louisiana in which a young white girl was allegedly murdered by a black man. Reporters, however, placed the blame for the murder on one "Lee Levy," a Jew, for selling liquor to the alleged perpetrator. The writer of the article asked his readers "would you grease a rope for him?"

Prohibition sold its position by use of racism and antisemitism. But, according to Davis, Irish and Italian immigrants were not exempt because their culture included alcohol. Germans, as manufacturers and distributors of beer and enemies of the U.S. in WWI, were also not welcome in an America that was about to outlaw alcohol. Prohibition became the law of the land.

Davis' book makes you realize why it was done, but even more importantly how it was done. It reveals how a part of America said that if you didn't accept their moral code of behavior, you were

not 100% American.

Did you ever think you would read a book that had a chapter titled "Rabbis and Other Bootleggers?" Social economist Mark Heller said that of the 73 most significant bootleggers in the United States, half were Jewish. Meyer Lansky, a Jewish bootlegger, was in at the start of organized crime with Lucky Luciano. Bootlegging was a business opportunity for Jews who were filling the void and satisfying the demand for alcohol. The Jewish relationship to alcohol consumption is most clearly represented by the Bronfman family. Among the many anecdotes and stories that Davis tells is her recounting of how this Canadian family bought American alcohol at the beginning of Prohibition and then smuggled it back into the United States so often that Lake Erie became known among bootleggers as "Jew Lake."

There were rabbis and Jews who claimed the religious exemptions to the Volstead Act and entered the bootlegging business. Jewish resistance to Prohibition was according to Davis not only economic but tied to a demand for individual liberty.

Davis' book seeks to shed light on what was, to most Americans, a long-forgotten past. Prohibition is the subject of old movies and TV shows (e.g., *Untouchables* and *Boardwalk Empire*). It is the theme of a romanticized genre of entertainment. Davis' book reveals an ugly and dangerous truth, namely, that Prohibition was the result of one part of the American persona making a moral determination that the lifestyle and activities of another group of Americans was wrong and therefore anti-American. They then claimed that people who didn't agree with them didn't belong in America. Davis shows us the role that anti-immigration sentiment, racism and antisemitism had in the implementation and enforcement of Prohibition. It is not so far removed from political discourse today. *Jews and Booze* is not just history. It is a warning, as all history should be.

Jeffrey Drimer is a practicing local attorney and frustrated English teacher who loves to share his enthusiasm for books with his family and friends.

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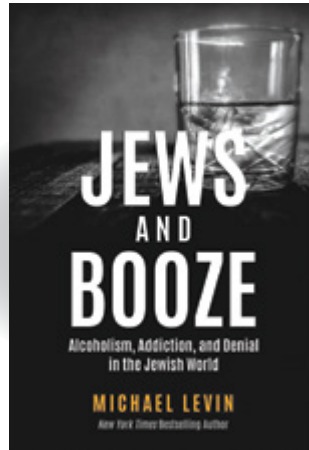
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» Book Preview

Jews and Booze by Michael Levin

One doesn't have to read too many pages of Michael Levin's soon-to-be-published book *Jews and Booze* to feel the passion behind his words. Levin gave the *Jewish Observer* permission to review his book prior to its November publication date. In fact, he wrote, we are the first to read it. It is hard-hitting and direct. Levin is a *New York Times* best-selling author of over twenty books, a ghostwriter "for the world's most successful, innovative, and fascinating people" and a Jew. But at the end of his very lengthy biography, one finds the reason for the fervency of his writing and his bona fides. He has been, he says, "staying sober, a day at a time, for the past 29 years."

The full title of Levin's book is *Jews and Booze - Removing the Stigma Surrounding Alcoholism, Addiction, and Recovery in the Jewish Community*. The chapter titles themselves tell a story: So How Did We Get So Into Booze?, Addiction and Orthodoxy, Is AA Kosher for Jews? He pulls no punches and starts right off by challenging the myth that Jews can't be drunks: "The belief that Jews are safe from addiction has pervaded our communities for longer than you can imagine. Even where the addiction might be staring you in the face, we have our ways of brushing it under the rug. We could call the phenomenon of Jewish denial about addiction the 'Star of David' syndrome, because we somehow believe that being Jewish is a guard against drinking too much, eating too much, gambling too much, or indulging in inappropriate sexual



relationships. Wherever we are on the religious spectrum, we don't believe Jews are capable of such things because of our superior culture or because of our religious observance." He goes further, linking alcoholism and drug addiction, which currently is killing some of the best and brightest young people in our Jewish community.

Levin punctures that myth of Jewish immunity from addiction right from the start: "The truth comes out in the end. Our denial does not suppress reality; it only pressurizes it so that when it is eventually released, it hits our community with the force of dynamite. Every funeral of a teen, every funeral of a parent, every DUI that risks the lives of not only the driver but others on the road, every incarceration, every family whose father fails to be present because he is passed out drunk on the couch—will testify against us eventually."

For Levin, the solution is first and foremost telling the truth: "On Yom

Kippur, we sing the *Ashamnu*, as a community, and often quite loudly. We are rejoicing in our humanity, in our imperfections, and in our certainty that despite whatever bad things we might have done, a loving God will forgive us, will embrace us, and will help us to do better. It's time to apply that same *Ashamnu* mentality to addiction. It's time for us to admit, out loud and as a community, that alcoholism and addiction are within our gates, within our yeshivas, within our synagogues, at our Shabbat tables, at our simchas, and behind closed doors. It's time to sing out, not mumble with excuses, that addiction exists in our community and actually thrives on the vow of silence we've taken to keep ourselves from telling the truth." He wants us to recognize addiction of any kind for what it is: "a disease, not a disgrace." Only when we do so, he asserts, "can we begin to save the lives of the addicts in our communities—and the lives of their spouses, children, parents, and families."

Levin uses the terms "alcoholism" and "addiction" interchangeably in the book but stresses that "given the high price of addiction, you would think most addicts would want to stop. And a lot of the time, they do. But how are they supposed to stop if telling the truth about themselves to a spouse, a loved one, a rabbi, or a *rosh yeshiva* can so often lead to blame, hostility, ostracism, or even exile? In some Jewish communities, families with an addicted or alcoholic child ship him off to rehab—usually in another part of the country—and pretend he doesn't exist. It's like a

Soviet-style 'disappearance.' That's what you can get for putting your hand up and saying, 'I have a problem.'"

Fortunately, Levin does offer solutions. Several chapters of the book are devoted to the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step program as applied in a Jewish context. He also offers practical suggestions for the whole Jewish community for combating the scourge of addiction in the Jewish communal space:

- 1) Treat addiction as a disease
- 2) Increase addiction awareness
- 3) Invite experts on addiction and recovery as guest speakers in our religious institutions
- 4) Inaugurate an annual "Recovery Shabbat"
- 5) Help rabbis and Jewish community leaders understand the recovery process
- 6) Host meetings in more Jewish spaces
- 7) Cut down on the booze
- 8) Remove the shame from recovery

Jews and Booze is not an easy read, but it is a vitally important one for the Jewish community. The problem of addiction is not going to go away, and it needs to be confronted. As Levin writes, "How much longer will individuals and communities suffer in silence? How many more young people must we bury due to opioid abuse, and how many homes must be destroyed because we were too timid to understand and destigmatize alcoholism and addiction? If not us, then who? And if not now, when?"



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The American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame Honors Neil Goldberg

Local business and community leader Neil Goldberg will be inducted into the American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame in October. “This year’s inductees represent a broad spectrum of enduring excellence and superior accomplishments from across the industry, including design, global sourcing, manufacturing, retail and communications,” said Caroline Hipple, president of the American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame Foundation’s board of directors. “Their impact is significant and



far-reaching. Each epitomizes the innovation and creativity worthy of our industry’s highest honor.”

A seven-member selection committee chooses inductees based on their contributions to the growth and development of the home furnishings industry in America, based on four

criteria: enduring excellence, superior accomplishments, innovation and creativity and philanthropic generosity.

Neil Goldberg is Chairman of Raymour & Flannigan the largest furniture and mattress retailer in the Northeast and seventh largest nationwide. Under his leadership, the company has grown through organic expansion and acquisitions, from three stores to 145 locations in seven states. It includes a real estate portfolio of stores, shopping centers, warehouses and office buildings. Goldberg is known for creating a strong, loyal team culture with a relentless focus on operational excellence to enhance the customer shopping experience. A Great Place to Work® company, the retailer maintains a 98 percent in-stock inventory for fast delivery, seven days a week. Social responsibility is expressed through extensive community involvement and sustainability practices, including recycling 99 percent of packaging materials.

In what is certainly a unique twist, Sophia, the world’s first humanoid celebrity, will deliver an inspiring keynote address, as well as engage in an on-stage conversation and answer questions from the audience, during the 2022 Induction Celebration. The American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc., is an industry-wide organization founded in 1988 to preserve the history of the home furnishings industry, to celebrate exceptional individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the U.S. home furnishings industry, and to inspire the next generation of innovative leaders.

Local Distillery Goes Kosher

Black Button Distilling is the first grain-to-glass farm distillery in Rochester since prohibition. It specializes in farm to still products, using all-natural ingredients from local farms. The first distillery in New York to obtain New York State Grown and Certified status, Black Button has a long-standing commitment to locally sourced ingredients and high-quality standards. To these distinctions, Black Button is adding yet another: their spirits are under the supervision of the Kashruth Division of the Orthodox Union and are now certified kosher.

Black Button Distilling, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year, has an interesting history. Owner Jason Barrett’s grandfather owned a button factory in Rochester, and as a kid, Jason imagined himself running the factory one day. But he is colorblind and making only black buttons wasn’t an option. So he employed the values of hard work, entrepreneurship and community that his grandfather taught him by crafting handmade spirits.

Over 90% of Black Button’s ingredients are grown or produced in New York State, as the company is dedicated to supporting New York State agriculture and the responsible stewardship of the natural environment. In 2018, Black Button proudly opened their own farm and forestry, where they grow juniper for gin, white oak to make their own bourbon barrels and fresh herbs and spices as well as organic honey for their cocktails. Their corn, wheat, rye, and barley are grown in the Finger Lakes just a short drive from the distillery. Even their water is sourced from Hemlock Lake in the Finger Lakes, gaining its purity by being filtered through the limestone and shale formations of western New York. The result is a unique taste. In addition, they source the highest quality American Oak barrels from their partners at Adirondack Barrel Cooperage.

Black Button Distilling has garnered dozens of medals from spirit competitions across the globe, including Best in NY State from the 2021 Heartland Whiskey Competition and tying for best bourbon in the same competition



with a Kentucky-made bourbon. Larry Olmsted of *Forbes* magazine wrote, “The Four Grain Straight Bourbon from Black Button Distilling is one of the best whiskies I have recently tasted.”

The following Black Button Distilling grain to glass spirits are now certified kosher: All American Corn Vodka, American Dry Gin, American Whiskey, Bespoke Blend Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Bespoke Bourbon Cream, Bespoke Coffee Liqueur, Cask Strength Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Citrus Forward Gin, Four Grain Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Lilac Gin, Loganberry Gin, Single Barrel Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Small-Batch Straight Empire Rye Whiskey and Pre-Prohibition Style Straight Bourbon Whiskey.

Making bourbon kosher is relatively easy if certain care is taken. Bourbon is highly regulated. It can, by law, only contain water and “a fermented mash of not less than 51 percent corn, rye, wheat, malted barley, or malted rye grain” (all kosher) and must be “stored at not more than 125 proof in charred new oak containers.” (The fact that they are new is important.) However, in many facilities, bourbon runs through the same processing system as other alcohol products which could contain non-kosher ingredients, such as glycerin (often obtained from animal fat) or red dye made from crushed bugs.

Their website, www.blackbuttondistilling.com, offers cocktail recipes, tasting schedules and more.



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Jews and Alcohol: An Invisible Issue

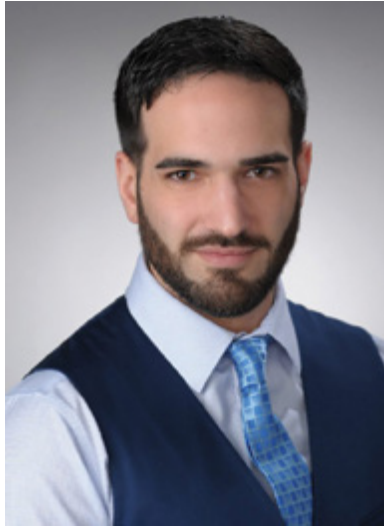
by Aaron M. Klein

There is a maxim within Jewish communities which basically amounts to “alcoholics aren’t Jews.” In contrast with this myth, more than 14% of respondents in a recent Israeli survey reported having a substance use problem and alcohol problems are rising. These statistics are similar to lifetime prevalence rates of addiction in the United States and Canada. Another parallel to general trends disclosed in the survey is that a very low percentage of those struggling with addiction sought help.

Denial of addiction or mental health problems is not unique to Jewish communities. Many communities with some degree of insularity hold similar beliefs about the capacity of members to struggle, because facing this reality entails grappling with uncomfortable feelings of fear, guilt and shame. However, the fact is that alcohol, substance use, and mental health problems can be found in all communities.

Community denial perpetuates stigmas that can make seeking help prohibitive and further alienate those in our midst who are suffering. It then falls on those who are suffering to participate in the denial at their own expense, or to be the ones to grapple with these uncomfortable feelings on our behalf. Yet despite this challenge, many find the courage to recover and are resourceful or blessed enough to find critical support.

As a substance use counselor, I have worked with people from many different walks of life. I have found that addiction doesn’t care whether you went to Yale or jail. Why people struggle with addiction runs the gamut from concrete and specific to capricious and unpredictable. It is tempting to ask why some Jews do, but this may not be the essential question for our community. In my experience in recovery circles these last ten years, I have found these questions to be vital: why and how do we live today?



Many who are recovering in body, mind and spirit develop the capacity for mending relationships, rebuilding community and giving back to us all the wonderful gifts that they hold within. What if today our community could break through the denial and grandiosity to act in kind? Instead of turning away and conflating the challenges of those struggling with outsider status, what could result from embracing them with our whole heart as *b’nai Israel*?

There are many ways to include and consider recovering Jews. Some take care not to shame others in religious or community gatherings, by doing things like normalizing and making available drinks other than alcohol. Some hold in their hearts those still suffering during *Mi Shebeirach*. Some familiarize themselves with critical resources like detoxification, rehabilitation, counseling and mutual aid. Organizations like Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons and Significant Others (JACS) have been created to increase community support. To those who practice any means of including, considering and responding to the needs of those among us who are struggling, in recovery or recovered, we need to say *today rabah*.

Aaron Klein is a licensed mental health counselor and credentialed alcohol and substance abuse counselor. He works at the Barnes Center at the Arch at Syracuse University.



What You Can Do To Save The Planet: BOTTLES

PROBLEM: Only 1 in 5 plastic water bottles ends up in a recycling bin. The other 80% end up in landfills where they can sit for up to 1,000 years before being fully degraded. Moreover, in addition to creating immense waste, the manufacturing process for disposable water bottles uses 17 million barrels of oil annually, which is more than enough oil to power one million cars for a year. Finally, bottled water contained about 50% more microplastics than tap water.

SOLUTION: Just buy a reusable water bottle. A reusable water bottle takes less oil to produce, replaces all the plastics that you



would have used and thereby reduces both your carbon footprint and helps reduce the plastic burden on landfills, oceans, streams and other places where plastic waste ends up.

Bootlegging



The term “bootlegging” seems to have originated in the Midwest in the 1880s to denote the practice of concealing flasks of illicit liquor in boot tops when going to trade with Native Americans. The term entered into the wider American vocabulary during Prohibition (1920-1933) to denote the illegal manufacture, transport, distribution or sale of alcoholic beverages.

When Prohibition ended the legal sale of liquor, it immediately created a demand for an illegal supply. Bootleggers smuggled foreign-made liquor into the United States across the Canadian and Mexican borders and along the seacoasts from ships under foreign registry. Sources of supply were the Bahamas, Cuba and the islands of Sainte-Pierre and Miquelon. Bootleggers anchored in an area opposite Atlantic City just outside the 3 mile limit beyond which the U.S. government lacked legal jurisdiction and discharged their loads into high-powered craft built to outrace U.S. Coast Guard cutters.

Bootlegging helped lead to the establishment of American organized crime, which persisted long after the repeal of Prohibition. The distribution of liquor was necessarily more complex than other types of criminal activity, and organized gangs eventually arose that could control an entire local chain of bootlegging operations—from concealed distilleries and breweries through storage and transport channels to speakeasies, restaurants, nightclubs and other retail outlets.

Prohibition was closely linked to antisemitism as evidenced by a particularly vile 1922 publication entitled *Aspects of Jewish Power in the United States*, volume IV of *The International Jew – the World's Foremost Problem*, which contains articles from the *Dearborn Independent*, including the following statement in a chapter titled “The Jewish Element in Bootlegging Evil”: “It is not surprising, therefore, that violation and evasion of the Prohibition law has had a deep Jewish complexion from the very beginning.”

Climate Digital Art Contest Winner

Broden Eisenbies, a 7th grader at J-D Middle School and the Syracuse Community Hebrew School, was the winner in the student digital art contest to design a logo for the Federation’s ad hoc Climate Crisis committee. His logo will illustrate the committee’s monthly column in the *JO*.



CBS-CS Torah Begins Long Journey to the Spice Islands

by Joanne Villegas

On June 26, Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas said good-bye to one of its Torahs which began a journey to Indonesia with the congregation's spiritual leader, Rabbi David Kunin and his wife, Shelley. Leaders of the congregation removed the Torah from the ark in the sanctuary and passed it along to others present until it reached Rabbi Kunin, while Lisa Levens provided musical accompaniment.

After its long journey, the scroll will live in Ambon in the Spice Islands. This community has waited nearly 500 years for a Torah as they remembered their Jewish heritage in secret. Their ancestors came to Ambon as Portuguese *anusim* (hidden Jews). The Ambon Jewish community is one of seven Jewish communities of the United Indonesian Jewish Communities. The seven communities are stretched out throughout the islands of Indonesia and have only three Torah scrolls. This will be their fourth.

These Jewish communities are small and isolated from the world Jewish community. Even so, they have an exuberance and excitement as they express their Jewish identity. While their local leadership is growing in knowledge and experience, they need visits and support from world Jewry to grow and flourish. Rabbi Kunin and his wife have worked with these communities for nearly ten years. Prior to coming to Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas



two years ago, Rabbi Kunin was the rabbi of the Jewish community of Japan and a past chair of the Assembly of Rabbis and Cantors, Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

Hillel Staffer Graduates from Prestigious Spertus Institute Master's Program

Ian Solow-Niederman, assistant director of Syracuse Hillel, received his Master of Arts in Jewish Professional Studies from the Spertus Institute in June, after completing a creative leadership-building program designed to elevate graduates' careers and strengthen the organizations they serve. The graduation ceremony was held at Spertus Institute in downtown Chicago. "It is wonderful to gather together for this special occasion, with guests joining us in person and tuning in from around the world," Spertus President and CEO Dr. Dean P. Bell said as he opened the ceremony. "The courses built on each other, providing important perspective. I was able to immediately



apply what I learned professionally—and also personally," Ian said about his experience in the program. "Spertus invested in me and my future."

Keyna Hora Klezmer Band Seeks New Members

by Mimi Weiner

The Keyna Hora Klezmer Band is looking for some new members. You do not have to be Jewish to join. There are several people of differing religions. Almost any instrument players would be welcome. Some of our members have had to drop out after many years of playing, due to illness or personal reasons. Most of the people in the band have played together 10 years and more. The band, itself, is 26 years old.

Members of the band do not participate to make money. What they earn is more important than cash. They earn life-long friends and the joy of playing Jewish music. The music is secular, the kind one hears at weddings and other happy events. Recent gigs include a trip to a Poconos Mountain synagogue, an event at Moses Dewitt School to celebrate diversity and a dinnertime program at the Jewish Community Center. The Jewish Music Festival, again called



KlezFest, will occur in September.

The band rehearses every Tuesday night at 7 pm at The Oaks, 18 Arbor Lane in Dewitt. Members bring their own stands and instruments, and the music is provided. Some sight reading is valuable, and at-home practice is never discouraged.

For anyone interested, please call Mimi Weiner at 315-446-7810, cell 315-558-0557 or Sidney Lipton at 315-682-8489. Or just come to a rehearsal and see if it is something you might enjoy. The band encourages any enthusiastic new member.

Day School Teacher Recognized by NYS Education Department



Four general education teachers from the Syracuse Hebrew Day School engaged in professional development from several sources during the 2021-22 academic year. One was through the New York State Education Department's State Office of Religious and Independent School's (SORIS) Upstate Professional Development Resource Center in partnership with the company Measurement, Inc. The Day School teachers were led through carefully constructed strategies for analyzing students' work. The conversations among all four were focused, in-depth and analytical. The State consultant praised the quality of their work and offered to continue working with SHDS even though she

was promoted to the level of director. SHDS's Pam Sequin, who teaches sixth grade math and kindergarten, made such an impression on the consultant that she was invited by another consultant to be a guest presenter at a session for teachers from around the state entitled "Looking Collaboratively at Student Work." Sequin shared her own experience analyzing student work samples with her colleagues and shared a student work sample so that others in the session might experience a mock collaborative review conference. Sequin was selected

because of her ability to reflect deeply on the connection between her own teaching and her students' performance, her enthusiasm for discussion and dialogue about the process and her willingness to be vulnerable in sharing her own questions and uncertainties for the good of her own professional growth. The teachers who participated in the session reported that hearing from a teacher who had used the process and the opportunity to be part of a mock conference were the most valuable parts of the session.

Moodie Stars as Guide in Disney+ *Family Reboot* Series

"I am in awe of the incredibly talented hardworking people that I've met on this journey and am grateful to help do what I



truly believe is important work on this powerful platform," said Arel Moodie of his work on the Disney+ *Family Reboot* series. Moodie, a local author and motivational speaker, is the guide on three of the six episodes of the series. *Family Reboot* follows families that have become so busy with their individual lives, whether from a job, going back to school, after-school activities, keeping up with social media, sports or running a business, that they have lost touch with one another. In each episode, a family takes a full week away from their busy schedules to go on a journey to reconnect and rebuild their family bonds. Leaving their phones, laptops and all other devices behind, they must find their way to their week-long accommodations the old-fashioned way, with just a paper map in hand. On arrival, they're greeted by their *Family Reboot* guide, who welcomes them and talks to the parents about how the week ahead can benefit them the most, whether it's finding ways to connect with their children, with each other or both. All organized by the guide, the week's journey focuses on working together, communicating and, most of all, having fun. The families leave the journey completely "rebooted" — more connected, happier and ready to take on their busy lives at home again, but with an entirely new outlook.

Sports Mural Celebrates Moral Courage

It was not just about basketball. A six-story mural of four of Syracuse's most famous basketball players painted by muralist Jonas Never is a tribute to "moral courage," according to Frank Malfitano, who led the effort to put Dolph Schayes, Earl Lloyd, Manny Breland and Breanna Stewart on the side of the Monroe Building in downtown Syracuse. At a reception celebrating the completion of the work, Malfitano spoke about what the four sports stars did off the court to fight against antisemitism, racism, homophobia and other forms of hate, noting that "Tonight, we humbly pay tribute to four giants of the game who have distinguished themselves on and off the court for being champions, pioneers, trailblazers and barrier breakers. Tonight, we celebrate the moral courage, and the timeless class, grace and excellence of four premier athlete-activists who changed the game and changed the world."



The project was funded by members of the Syracuse community, including the Jewish community. The Federation, the Jewish Community Center and the Syracuse Hebrew Day School were all sponsors of the project, as were individual community members. NBA player Dan Schayes came to honor his father, Dolph, one of the greatest players in NBA history, who won an NBA title with the Syracuse Nats. It took Never a month to complete the work, which can be seen at 333 East Onondaga Street.

It Takes a Village

The Women's Philanthropy Initiative, an ad hoc, grass roots project begun by four women, sent out the following notice: "Jews know what it means to be refugees. We know what it means when a community welcomes refugees, as happened for the Jews at Safe Haven in Oswego. Our community has been generous in support of the Jewish Ukrainians who are refugees. There are 100,000 Ukrainian refugees who will eventually be allowed into the United States. Some will be Jewish; some will not. But we need to help them all."

They requested sheets, blankets, towels, toilet paper, shower curtains and waste baskets to be packed in 36 25-gallon storage tubs for InterFaith Works' refugee center to be given to the refugees from Ukraine who will be coming to Central New York. The community responded quickly and generously, just as it did for



Federation's campaign to get medications and other supplies for Cantor Robert Lieberman to take for the refugees on the Poland/Ukraine border.

In short order, the Federation conference room was filled with bedroom and bathroom supplies. Enter NexGen to pack the bins. Working efficiently and effectively, they sorted and packed everything in labeled tubs with a welcome message inside from the Jewish community. InterFaith Works picked up the bins to store in their warehouse awaiting the new arrivals. Mission accomplished. Many thanks to all who donated.

Epstein Students Explore Safe Haven and Fort Ontario

More than 20 students and chaperones from The Rabbi Jacob Epstein School of Jewish Studies traveled to Oswego on June 12 on a field trip to the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum and Fort Ontario Historic Site. The trip, sponsored by the Holstein Program Fund of the Jewish Federation of Central New York and the Pomeranz Shankman & Martin Charitable Foundation, was the culmination of spring semester coursework at the Epstein School. Tenth-grade students spent the Spring semester answering the question, "What was America's response to the Shoah?"

The whole school participated in two learning sessions prior to *Yom HaShoah*. Dave Reckess, Executive Director of 3GNY, which teaches grandchildren of survivors how to tell their grandparents' stories, shared his family's experiences. Students also watched the movie "Island on Bird Street," based on the semi-autobiographical novel about a young boy who must survive alone in the Warsaw Ghetto after its liquidation. More than a dozen Epstein students took an active role in the community *Yom HaShoah* commemoration in May.



Safe Haven shares the stories of the 982 mostly Jewish refugees who lived at the only World War II refugee center in the United States in Oswego, NY from August 1944 until February 1946. Epstein students found personal connections to the refugees, searching the list of refugees for those who shared their birthdays and for refugees with their last names. Some students were surprised by the small size of the barracks rooms that families shared, while others remarked on how difficult it must have been for refugees, all of whom were concentration camp survivors, to enter another camp surrounded by high fences and barbed wire. Nearly all of the students drew connections to today's refugee crisis.

At Fort Ontario Historic Site, students and chaperones enjoyed a guided tour focused on the refugees' experiences as well. They learned where refugees ate, slept, worked and worshiped. They also learned about the earlier history of the Fort, including experiencing the loading and firing of a civil war era musket. "The field trip was the perfect way to mark the end of the 5782 academic year," remarked Head of School Aaron Spitzer. "It combined learning and bonding time. The museums were both very compelling. The adults learned as much as the teens, and everyone seemed to have a great time."

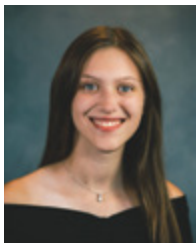
CBS-CS Member Milestones and Pearlman Award

by Karen Morton

Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas' June 18 Shabbat services included their annual Moving Up ceremony, in which they celebrated both school-aged and adult members who have reached academic and other significant secular or Judaic milestones.

Shaynah Sikora was the recipient of this year's special honor, the Dr. Gustave and Alice Pearlman Award. This annual award recognizes a graduating senior who maintains active involvement in Jewish community life, reads Torah and exemplifies the values of commitment, character and love of Torah that guided the Pearlmans' lives.

Shaynah, daughter of Deb and Tom Sikora, graduated from the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and J-D High School and plans to attend RIT this fall. She has read Torah at CBS-CS, volunteered at four local non-profit organizations and continued her Jewish education at The Epstein School. She was a *madricha* at CBS-CS' school and an afterschool



counselor at the Jewish Community Center. To have participated actively in Jewish and broader community life during COVID years reflects not only Shaynah's commitment and character, but also her creativity: When the "Shul School" closed to in-person learning, Shaynah readily shifted with the program to teach Hebrew online. A long-time camper at Ramah, Shaynah has also travelled to Israel with The Epstein School.

The Dr. Gustave and Alice Pearlman Award is sponsored by a CBS-CS Fund in their name. Alice initiated the fund to honor Dr. Pearlman's memory as the congregation's *ba'al koreh* for 25 years. He taught Torah to generations of CBS-CS students and their family members. He and Alice were a team in that mentoring process. When Alice passed away, the congregation decided to broaden the name of the award to recognize Alice's role in their partnership.

New Leadership at Temple Adath Yeshurun

by Sonali McIntyre

Saying goodbye is never an easy thing to do, so instead we say *l'hitraot* – until we meet again. Temple Adath Yeshurun recently said *l'hitraot* to its Executive Director Barbara S. Simon as she retired on June 30, 2022. Stepping into the role of Executive Director is Alicia Gross, formerly the director of the Rothschild Early Childhood Center at Temple Adath Yeshurun.

Barbara began working as the executive director at Temple Adath Yeshurun in 2008. Always available when families needed her, Barbara was instrumental in orchestrating all the special events and *simachot* for the congregants. Barbara took a special interest in screening the latest Jewish films and finding fascinating guest speakers for the community. During the pandemic, Barbara's diligence and efforts kept staff and congregants safe, allowing TAY to remain vibrant and to continue offering a place to worship. Barbara and



her husband, Dr. David Simon, are looking forward to spending more time together and with their children and grandchildren.

Barbara said, "It is important that the person taking over has a love of

the institution, and Alicia certainly does. Over the years, she has demonstrated her excellent leadership abilities and maturity as director of the RECC. I am comfortable leaving knowing the organization is in good hands with Alicia."

Alicia began working at RECC in 2010, moving up the ranks from education coordinator, to assistant director, and finally to director of RECC. She has also led young children and family programming at TAY for several years. In recognition of her leadership and administrative skills that have been so instrumental to the success of the RECC, the TAY Board of Directors unanimously and enthusiastically voted for Alicia to assume the position of executive director at Temple Adath Yeshurun.

KlezFest Is Back

by Paul Michie-Derrick

KlezFest had become a much-anticipated celebration of Jewish culture in Central New York. Once a year, the front yard of the JCC would become the stomping grounds for festive music, delicious food and Jewish spirit. Klezfest, once known as the Syracuse Jewish Music and Cultural Festival (JMAC) had been the largest Jewish festival in New York State outside of New York City. It had evolved into a festival not only for the Jewish community, but for all of Central New York. Once the pandemic began, however, the beloved festival was canceled once and postponed another time. Though the world is still getting acquainted with the "new normal," we cannot allow it to go without KlezFest any longer. After a two-year hiatus, KlezFest is finally making its return on September 18, 2022.

The Jewish Federation of Central New York sponsors KlezFest as a family-friendly program that is perfect for kids.



Free activities include arts and crafts in the kids' tent, games, the Robert Rogers Puppet Theater and face painting. The COVID-friendly outdoor space leaves plenty of room for everyone to walk (or run) around, play and enjoy the live music.

Local synagogues and Jewish organizations will have booths for all to visit. And there will be plenty of delicious food for sale, including corned beef sandwiches, hot dogs, knishes, Israeli salad and more. Local vendors will offer jewelry, handmade crafts and Carvel ice cream.

A variety of amazing artists will perform. The featured musician will be Latin Grammy winner and PJ Library artist, Mr. G. Hailed as "a bilingual rock star" by the *Washington Post*, Mr. G. (Ben Gundersheimer) tours internationally playing everywhere from Lollapalooza and Lincoln Center to climate change rallies on Capitol Hill. His spirited bilingual performances aim to help children see each other across borders and foster cross-cultural connections. Also making music with be Yale Strom, renowned violinist, composer, filmmaker, writer, photographer and playwright, and the Keyna Hora Klezmer Band. The lively music will set the mood for the festivities.

Most importantly, KlezFest offers a place for the Jewish community of Central New York to reconnect. COVID made it hard to gather together. As organizations that put community first, the Federation and the JCC have made it a top priority to regain as much community spirit as possible. We look forward to KlezFest and the celebration of each other.

JIM BIRON
June 28, 2022

Jim Biron, 98, a native of Philadelphia, and a longtime resident of Syracuse, NY and Longboat Key, FL, died peacefully Tuesday evening in the comfort of his home. Jim was a graduate of Penn State. He was the former vice president of Roy's Furniture of Syracuse.

A WWII veteran, he was awarded the bronze star for his service in Tunisia and Italy. Jim was a long-time member of The Longboat Key Club, Temple Adath Yeshurun of Syracuse and Temple Beth Israel of Longboat Key.

His beloved wife Barbara passed away in December of 2021. They had been married for 72 wonderful years. He is survived by their daughter Suzanne (Murray Plotkin) Biron Yellen; their grandsons Benjamin (Jenny) Yellen, and Jeremy (Sasha) Yellen; and their great grandsons Jacob Yellen, and Tsumugi Yellen.

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

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RITA SHAPIRO
June 29, 2022



Rita Shapiro, 90, born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, passed away on June 29 at Loretto. Rita was a medical transcriptionist for 28 years at PHP in Syracuse, NY. She also worked at the Royal Globe Insurance Co. and Travelers Insurance Co. While living in Montreal, she worked for the Department of Defense production. Rita earned her associates degree from Sir George Williams College and also was a graduate of Alexander Business College. Rita was a member of Temple Adath Yeshurun and HAZAK, a senior group and social group at Temple Adath, which Rita proudly served as recording secretary.

She was pre-deceased by her husband Irving. Her family includes her children Marla of Dewitt and Jeffrey of Chicago; her sister Blossom Wiltzer of Montreal, nieces Allie Mayers, Gwen Wiltzer and Lois Mayers, nephews Sam, Jamie and Lorne Mayers.

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MIRIAM STERN KAVANAGH
July 3, 2022

Miriam Stern Kavanagh, 97, died on July 3 at the Daughters of Sarah in Albany due to pancreatitis. Miriam was born in Manhattan on May 25, 1925 to Annette (Chelnick) and Harry Stern. The family also included her brother Robert.

She was a graduate of Central High School, Syracuse. Miriam worked for General Electric during World War II at the Electronics Inspection Section for the Army Air Forces, then Syracuse University prior to motherhood. As a housewife, she worked part time with the E.C. Hooper telephone surveys, and then worked for 20 years for JC Penney in the catalog department at the Shoppingtown, DeWitt location.

Always an active volunteer, Miriam was a longstanding member of the PTA, a Girl Scout cookie chairperson and a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Jewish Home. She was awarded Temple Beth El's prestigious Woman of Valor award by the sisterhood of the Temple.

One of the last of her generation, Miriam was an unsung hero, a self-taught scholar who believed in lifelong learning via reading, listening, traveling, talking and laughter. Her legacy is the love and pride she took in others' accomplishments.

Devoted to friends and family, Mimi was predeceased by her husband of then 51 years Arthur Leonard Kavanagh. Her family includes her children Paula (John) Neubauer of Clifton Park, NY, Renée (Harvey) Susman of Wantagh, NY, Ronald (Shira) Kavanagh of Silver Spring, MD and Cheryl (James) Farewell of West Bend, WI; 9 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren along with numerous pseudo grands who adopted her over the years.

Contributions to perpetuate her memory may be made to The Daughters of Sarah, <https://www.daughtersofSarah.org/massry-residence-assisted-living/> where Miriam spent the last five years in the care of the incredibly supportive staff who enabled her to live life to the fullest of which she was capable, or to support education through The Book Fairies <https://thebookfairies.org/>.

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GWEN KAY AND JEF SNEIDER
RECENTLY ESTABLISHED A PACE FUND WITH
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF CENTRAL NEW YORK.



They explained the reason they did so:

"We have both been long term supporters of the Jewish Federation of Central New York but we could see that our contributions would start to wane as retirement cut into our income. Having been founding members of the Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Chas Fund for the Future, we saw how the money from the endowment was able to contribute every year to the congregation budget. We used the first RMD from Jef's IRA to start our PACE fund so that Federation can continue to benefit from our contribution in perpetuity. Gwen has continued to add to the fund from money she gets annually from her family."

**TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER
IS WHAT COMMUNITY IS ALL ABOUT.**

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