

Jewish Observer

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

of Central New York

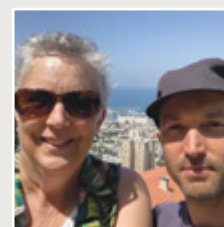
PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID, SYRACUSE, NY & ADDITIONAL OFFICES

SYRACUSE, ISRAEL & THE JEWISH WORLD | WWW.JEWISHFEDERATIONCNY.ORG

JULY 2023 | TAMMUZ- AV 5783



INSIDE:
WHAT OUR
RABBIS SAY
(4-5)



LOOK:
INTERFAITH
STORIES
(6-8)



DON'T MISS:
THE TZOFIM
ARE COMING
(15)

July 2023

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

“You shall not marry them, you shall not give your daughter to their son and you shall not take his daughter for your son.” Deuteronomy 7.3

This is the basis for the Jewish rejection of intermarriage. Which is not to say that the prohibition was universally observed, even in biblical times. Moses married a Cushite, Judah married a Canaanite and Joseph married the daughter of an Egyptian priest. Yet historically, for centuries, interfaith marriage was condemned by Jewish leaders, prohibited and considered invalid. Jews were not alone in their condemnation of “mixed marriages.” Christian rulers prohibited marriages of Jews and Christians under penalty of death, and Islamic law banned marriage of a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man and a Muslim man to a polytheist woman.

The definition of an interfaith marriage is one in which each partner adheres to their own religion. On the whole, religiously mixed marriages are the exception in the United States. Eight in ten American adults say they were raised within a single religion, including two-thirds who say they were raised by two people who shared the same religion (or lack thereof) and another 14% who say they were raised by a single parent. Yet according to a Pew Research Center Religious Landscape study, interfaith marriage is increasingly common in the United States, accounting for 39% of marriages since 2010. One quarter of Millennials grew up in a religiously mixed family as did 20% of Gen Xers.

In the Jewish community, the rates of intermarriage are more dramatic. Up until the middle of the 20th century, the intermarriage rate among Jews was 13%. Today, in the first quarter of the 21st century, fully 42% of all married Jewish respondents to a Pew survey indicated that they had a non-Jewish spouse. Among those who have married since 2010, 61% are intermarried. Because intermarriage is rare among Orthodox Jews (98% of married Orthodox Jews say their spouse is Jewish), if one looks only at non-Orthodox Jews who have gotten married since 2010, the rate of intermarriage is 72%.

Reaction to the significant increase in Jewish interfaith marriage runs the gamut from total dismay and dire predictions of the end of the Jewish people to optimistic predictions about population growth and a new Jewish flourishing. “It is the bane of much of world Jewry, a phenomenon growing worse with each passing year, one that poses a grave threat to the future of the entire Jewish people,” wrote Michael Freund in *The Jerusalem Post*. “We are probably witnessing the last generation of Jewish life in America as we now know it,” a leading rabbi wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Yet the Pew Foundation posited another scenario. According to Pew, about two-thirds of intermarried couples raise their children as Jews. In a typical intermarried family (one Jewish parent and two kids), “this means the Jewish population doubles in a generation.” Len Saxe, Klutznick Professor of Contemporary Jewish Studies at Brandeis University, also sees a rosier picture. “Judaism and Jewish culture are flourishing. American Jews express their Jewishness in diverse ways. But for most, it is a valued part of their identity,” he says.

An interesting phenomenon is that women are the

determinant of whether children in an interfaith marriage are raised Jewish. Keren McGinity, of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, has studied what motivates Jews who intermarry to raise their children Jewish. In her 2009 book, *Still Jewish: A History of Women and Intermarriage in America*, McGinity wrote that “feminism empowered women to remain Jewish and bring their kids up as Jews.” The 2020 Pew Report found that children of intermarried parents whose mothers are Jewish were 1.86 times more likely to be raised exclusively Jewish than those whose fathers are Jewish.

Naturally, as with almost all things Jewish, interfaith marriage has given rise to a Jewish joke. There once was a young Jewish man who fell in love with a non-Jewish girl. His parents were upset but decided to make the best of it. They asked only that the girl learn about Judaism. The young woman, eager to please her future in-laws, began to read as much as she could about her fiancé’s faith. The more she learned, the more she was attracted to Judaism. After several months, her fiancé called her to discuss their wedding plans. “Are you kidding?” she responded. “Do you think I would marry a boy who would marry a non-Jewish girl?”

This issue of the *Jewish Observer* looks at interfaith marriage and interfaith families from a variety of perspectives. The stories that four interfaith couples are willing to share with our readers are intriguing and poignant. The views of our local rabbis are sagacious and empathic. We also share information about the issues involving intermarriage both within the Jewish movements in the United States and in Israel.

Interfaith marriage is not going to go away. In addressing this topic, we knew that we were going to ruffle some feathers. But learning matters. Sticking one’s head in the sand does not solve problems. When my daughter’s college roommate “married out,” her mother sat shiva for her. There are still those who would do likewise. And there are others who embrace interfaith relationships, pointing with pride, for example, to America’s vice-president. We hope our readers will learn much about this topic from this issue and that this will help them formulate meaningful positions with regard to this important contemporary issue.

Jewish Observer

of Central New York

Published by

Jewish Federation of Central New York
5655 Thompson Road
DeWitt, NY 13214

phone: 315-445-0161
fax: 315-445-1599

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.

PRODUCED BY



BUFFALO SPREE PUBLISHING, INC.

President.....**Sharon C. Levite**
Vice President/Chief Revenue Officer.....**Barbara E. Macks**
Vice President/Administrative & Finance.....**Michele Ferguson**

Publisher.....**Barbara E. Macks**

ART, EDITORIAL & PRODUCTION

Executive Editor.....**Sabrina Kahwaty**
Creative Director.....**Jean-Pierre Thimot**
Lead Designer.....**Kimberly Miers**
Senior Graphic Designers.....**Josh Flanigan, Nicholas Vitello**
Graphic Designers.....**Rachel Kaznica, Taramarie Mittravich**

ADVERTISING & SALES

Director of Advertising.....**Barbara E. Macks**
Sales Director.....**Cynthia Oppenheimer**
coppenheimer@buffalospreepublishing.com
National Ad Director.....**Terri Downey**
Senior Account Executives.....**Mary Beth Holly, Caroline Kunze, Robin Lenhard**
Account Executives.....**Keren Green, Rachel Wasserman**
Sales Coordinator.....**Robin Lenhard**

ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCE

Administrative & Finance Director.....**Michele Ferguson**

Submissions:

Submit stories and photos no later than the 1st of the preceding month prior to publication to jo@jewishfederationcny.org.

To Advertise:

To advertise, call Cynthia Oppenheimer at 716-308-4843.

Ad space & materials are due by the 16th of each month prior to publication. For a rate card and any additional information, please email Cynthia Oppenheimer coppenheimer@buffalospreepublishing.com or Barbara Macks bmacks@buffalospreepublishing.com.

To Subscribe:

To subscribe, email bdavis@jewishfederationcny.org. Free for Central New York area residents and donors to the Federation's annual campaign. Non-resident subscription is \$36 for 12 issues, payable to the *Jewish Observer*.

THE JEWISH OBSERVER OF CENTRAL NEW YORK (USPS 000939) (ISSN 1079-9842) Publications Periodical postage paid at Syracuse, NY and other offices. Published 12 times per year by the Jewish Federation of Central New York Inc., a non-profit corporation, 5655 Thompson Road, DeWitt, NY 13214. Subscriptions \$36/year; student \$10/year. POSTMASTER: Send address change to JEWISH OBSERVER OF CENTRAL NEW YORK, 5655 Thompson Road, DeWitt, NY 13214.

The *Jewish Observer of Central New York* reserves the right to cancel any advertisement at any time. The Jewish Federation of Central New York and Buffalo Spree Publishing, Inc. are not liable for the content or errors appearing in the advertisements beyond the cost of the space occupied. The *Jewish Observer* does not assume responsibility for the kashrut of any product or service advertised in this paper. Editorials, columns, advertisements, agency reports and other outside articles do not necessarily represent the views of the newspaper or the Jewish Federation of Central New York, but rather express the view of the writer.

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise “based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.” This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis.

From the Jewish Federation of CNY President/CEO



Michael Balanoff

FOLLOWING IS THE ANNUAL REPORT GIVEN BY MICHAEL BALANOFF, FEDERATION PRESIDENT/CEO AT THE FEDERATION'S ANNUAL MEETING ON JUNE 8TH.

"I don't know what Federation does." I hear this over and over again and, to be honest with you, it makes me mad. I hear it from people who are not engaged with Federation and, sometimes, I even hear it from people who are.

So I am going to tell you what Federation does. Besides raise money. Because that is what we do every minute, of six out of every seven days, of every week, of every month, of every year. We are always raising money. More money. For more things. All the time.

Here is how we spend that money:

We allocate funds for our community's major agencies: the JCC, the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, the Epstein High School of Jewish Studies and the Syracuse Community Hebrew School. Education is the biggest expense in the Federation's allocations but it is the key to our community's future. We also fund Hillel at Syracuse University, Jewish Family Service, the Judaic Heritage Center, PJ Library, Kosher Meals on Wheels, the Beit Tikvah group home, the Va'ad Ha'ir, the cemetery association and the mikvah. We provide funding for security at the high holidays for all of our community's synagogues. We have a security program that is a model for the nation. We run a food pantry at Menorah Park.

We give money away. When COVID hit, we gave \$50,000 to Menorah Park. When PPP money was distributed, we gave \$100,000 to our community's synagogues. We raised \$100,000 for Magen David Adom for an ambulance, \$60,000 to meet some of the needs in Ukraine and \$10,000 for a Milk Bank in Israel. Our Lions of Judah raised funds for and distributed bags of supplies to the residents of subsidized housing in Syracuse, Mother's Day gifts for the adult students at the West Side Learning Center and kitchen appliances and supplies for the refugees and immigrants of the community organization RISE.

When the Jewish holidays come, Federation offers unique programming. We held Reverse *Tashlich* last year and will hold it again this year. We hold an annual community Chanukah

program and this year will hold a very special one to bring us all together for dinner for the very first time. We sponsor and organize programming for *Yom haShoah* and *Yom haAtzmaut*, this year an amazing program that brought over 400 people to celebrate Israel's 75th birthday. Our NexGen group held a *Lag b'Omer* bonfire and regularly hosts Shabbat dinners.

Federation is the community convenor. I made it my mission, when I took this position, to work to break down the silos which were keeping us apart. We have made tremendous progress in this area. No longer are we in competition with one another, no longer do we vie to outdo one another. We work together, and we enjoy the experience. Our regular bi-monthly meetings with the presidents, executive directors and rabbis allow us to share ideas and experiences and to plan and accomplish things cooperatively, especially things that are "outside the box." We prize innovation and we prize collegiality. Our Philip L. Holstein Community Program Fund is another example of how we value collaborative and innovative projects. Over the past two years, we have invested over \$65,000 in programs as diverse as Hillel's Greek Unity Shabbat, Temple Adath Yeshurun's community Nefesh Mountain concert and Temple Concord's community "Synagogue of the Future" symposium.

Federation partners with others in our community. I serve on the Round Table of Faith Leaders at InterFaith

Works. I meet regularly with the Dean of Hendricks Chapel of Syracuse University. I serve on the Central New York Hate and Bias Prevention Regional Council and the Heritage Park Advisory Commission. We convened the leaders of all the upstate Federations to share best practices last summer and will do so again this summer. We are becoming part of a regional consortium on security, organized by JFNA, which will not only strengthen our own community's security but extend protection to neighboring, smaller communities like Cortland, Binghamton, Utica and Elmira.

What else does Federation do that people don't know about? We provide camperships for local kids who go to Jewish overnight summer camps. We provide financial assistance to young adults who want to study in Israel. This year, for the very first time, we offered a Jewish Family Camping experience for 15 young families in our community. We provide tuition assistance for the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. We offer interest-free loans through the Hebrew Interest-Free Loan program. And we also send \$200,000 in aid to Israel and other Jewish communities throughout the world through the Jewish Federations of North America.

We communicate with our Jewish community on a daily basis through social media. We communicate on a weekly basis through Community Happenings. We communicate on a monthly basis through the *Jewish Observer*.

We provide programming of all sorts and on all topics throughout the year. Each month, our Sunday Cinema Series offers free Jewish and Israeli movies with wonderful, moderated discussions. Federation funds online Hebrew classes at no charge to our community. Federation has sponsored programming

on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, on how to deal with antisemitism and on Jews of Color. We worked together with a local theater group that brought a play about antisemitism to our community. It is Federation that is the funder of KlezFest, and we recently held a wonderful intergenerational program at Menorah Park for *Cinco de Mayo*.

Federation does all of this, and there is not a full-time person on the Federation staff of four. Don Cronin, Amy Bates and I also work for the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York. Barbara Davis works on an hourly basis. Somehow, we raise over a million dollars each year for the campaign and an awful lot more for all of these special projects.

So the next time you hear someone say "I don't know what Federation does," please tell them that you listened to me for a very long time and that the list of what Federation does is exhaustive. Listing all of these things is exhausting. But I am happy to do it because I am so proud of what we do at Federation. I hope that, after hearing about it, you are proud, too. Thank you.



Beth MacCrindle
Licensed Assoc RE Broker

Stage ♦ Photograph ♦ List ♦ Sell

Personal Experienced Service

Thinking about Buying or Selling
Now or in the Future?



Real Estate Services

6866 E Genesee St
Fayetteville NY 13066
"It's Good to be Back Home"
beth.maccrindle@gmail.com
Cell: 315-299-7794

To advertise in the

Jewish Observer
of Central New York

Call Cynthia at
716-308-4843
coppenheimer@buffalospree.com

The Book of Ruth Models Personal and Communal Character and Integrity

by Rabbi Ethan Bair

On Shavuot, *chag matan Torateinu*, the holiday of the giving of our Torah, we read the *eser dibra'ot*, “Ten Utterances” or “10 Commandments” in shul and we hear *Megillat Rut*, the Scroll of Ruth. As the Book of Ruth recounts the cherished story of Ruth the Moabite’s conversion to Judaism and full acceptance – first by Naomi, then by her redeemer Boaz, and then by the entire Jewish community to which she returns with her mother-in-law-- we are reminded that the Torah is equally for Jews who are born into the covenant and those who choose Judaism through conversion.

By pairing the reading of Ruth with the 10 Commandments, Ruth’s story actually becomes the paragon by which we come to understand what living a full life according to these commandments looks like. Our ten commandments are a list of what to do (5) and not to do (5). The Book of Ruth, on the other hand, gives us role models in Ruth, Naomi and Boaz that fill out this list of righteous action with embodied integrity of character. Ruth demonstrates loyalty, spiritually and physically to her mother-in-law when she says to her, “Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.” (Ruth 1:16-17) Ruth also demonstrates commitment to God (1st and 2nd commandment) and respect for (in this case, adopted) parents (5th commandment). We have Boaz demonstrating integrity and honesty in swearing truthfully

to become the designated redeemer (according to the custom of biblical levirate marriage) and marry Ruth only after making sure the one relative who is even closer of kin than he does not want to marry her first (Ruth 3:11-13 and 9th and 10th commandments). The commandments against murder, theft, coveting one’s neighbor’s property, these are all demonstrated by Ruth and Boaz in various ways as they redeem Naomi’s legacy through levirate marriage and through Naomi and Boaz’s encouragement that Ruth glean in Boaz’s fields. Allowing the poor to glean prevents theft, sustains life and provides honor to farmer and gleaners alike. Boaz proves extra generous in this regard.

While famously, God does not appear as a character in the scroll, the story is about righteous people who build up and redeem each other for the preservation of a community that works for everyone. Treating the ger (“proselyte” or “stranger”) equally is expressly written into the Torah’s articulation of the 10 Commandments themselves (4th commandment about



Shabbat). In our day, there are many additional obligations on the convert as well: such as life-long cultural learning in addition to limud Torah lishma (the study of Torah for its own sake). The extent of one’s continued cultural learning (cookbooks, newspapers, book clubs, social immersion in the Jewish community, etc.) and the depth of relationships one forms makes a big difference as to how much “a part of” the community one feels and therefore the extent to which one is likely to feel sustained by the community spiritually and physically. But the onus of becoming fully part of the community truly goes in both directions – on the ger and on the community, to embrace and support the lifelong choice and journey of Jews by Choice.

Toward the end of Megillat Ruth, Boaz proclaims his commitment to Ruth as redeemer and “the people at the gate and the town elders” respond: “We are [your witnesses]. May Adonai make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the House of Israel! Prosper in Ephrathah and perpetuate your name in Bethlehem! (Ruth 4:11) And after Boaz and Ruth’s child, Oved, whose name

comes from the root “to serve or praise” is conceived, the women of the town say to Naomi, “Blessed be Adonai, who has not withheld a redeemer from you today! May his name be perpetuated in Israel! He will renew your life and sustain your old age; for he is born of your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons.” (Ruth 4:14-15) This is what true acceptance by the community looks like. King David, whose line will lead, according to tradition, to the messianic age, is himself great-grandson of Ruth, a righteous, loyal, humble, compassionate, kind and devoted Jew by Choice.

This month’s issue of the *Jewish Observer* is about centering the lived experience of interfaith families in our community, as well as exploring boundaries and how we negotiate them as a welcoming Jewish community of integrity. To live up to the ideals modeled by the characters of the Book of Ruth, I believe that we, as a Jewish community, ought to extend this kind of passionate embrace, acceptance and blessing to non-Jewish partners and parents raising Jewish children as well. In doing so, we also become the kind of community non-Jewish spouses may one day aspire to join in the fullest sense, as Jews.



LAURIE KUSHNER
LICENSED REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON

(315) 420-2668

realestatebylauriekushner.com

HUNT
Since 1911

ERA
REAL ESTATE

7650 Highbridge Rd. Manlius, NY 13104



**A TRADITION OF
BEAUTIFUL SMILES**

315-446-3360 | BracesandMore.com
7000 E. Genesee St., Fayetteville



Child and Adult Treatment
Teen and Adult Invisalign®
Teeth Whitening
Certified Orthodontic Assistants
Reduced-Radiation X-Rays
Reduced Treatment Times
Early Morning Appointments
Major Credit Cards Accepted
Payment Plans Available

invisalign
PROVIDER



Going to a wedding?

CUSTOM SUITS FROM **\$895**

mrshopsyracuse.com



What Our Rabbis Say

The *Jewish Observer* asked our community's rabbis three questions:

1. Would you officiate at an interfaith marriage?
2. Why or why not?
3. What is your personal approach to an interfaith family?

Here are their thoughtful responses:

Rabbi Ethan Bair Hillel

"In my experience, the vast majority of 'interfaith couples,' that is, couples with one Jewish and one non-Jewish partner, who seek me out as a rabbi to officiate at the sacred ceremony of their marriage, are interested in creating a Jewish home together. What matters most to me when deciding whether officiating at the wedding of a couple of mixed faith background will have integrity to me Jewishly and rabbinically, is commitment to Judaism as the sole religion of the home and the religion of any and all future children, as well as a demonstrated openness and interest in Jewish learning and discovery.

Sometimes, my measuring this commitment with a couple I have only just met can be very hard. Therefore, I deeply respect rabbis who will only officiate marriages between two Jews. Yet there are interfaith couples I have married that have demonstrated an even greater commitment to observance of Judaism than two highly assimilated Jews. So I get to know the couple and use my intuition to determine the sincerity and Jewish commitment of the couple, regardless of upbringing. As a Reform-ordained, pluralistic, halachah-respecting rabbi, I have the freedom to do this. Conservative and Orthodox rabbis simply do not, because of the parameters of halachah, or Jewish law. So with respect for the boundaries of Jewish tradition, let us explore in the pages of this issue both a variety of rabbinic approaches to interfaith couples and learn from the lived experiences of interfaith couples themselves. Even as rabbis uphold and negotiate important boundaries, I believe that we all also seek to ensure that our communities will be welcoming places for people and couples who seek Jewish community, no matter the trajectory and status of all family members. I have met so



many non-Jewish spouses (mothers in particular by the way) who have borne the brunt of ensuring their children are raised Jewish. And that should be lauded and uplifted, privately and publicly in community.

I have also seen many non-Jewish spouses who, after a child's B. Mitzvah, are so inspired that they become B. Mitzvah themselves and if they never converted previously, do so. I would prefer this path, in fact, to forcing a non-Jewish partner to convert to Judaism before the wedding as a prerequisite for marriage. On a pre-wedding timeline which is often when, let's face it, many interfaith couples first come to a rabbi, adding conversion to their pre-wedding checklist plate can feel stressful. There are many non-Jewish partners who have contributed to raising the next generation of Jewish young people. And to all of you, I especially say thank you. And to some of you I might also say, nu? (When you're ready to follow in Ruth's footsteps, contact your rabbi!)"

Rabbi Irwin Beigel

"Although these questions are important, they are difficult to discuss. Compassion may be mistaken for approval, and refusal to officiate at interfaith weddings may be mistaken for a lack of compassion and an inability to accept the realities of contemporary society. I will respond as clearly as possible. My purpose is not to pass judgment on others, but to present the Jewish view as I understand it.

I do not and would not officiate at interfaith weddings. To do otherwise

would be to sanction a departure from Jewish law, longstanding norms and tradition. A basic disagreement between Judaism and American society today is that society (or, at least, a large segment of it) places the desires and perceived needs of an individual above the needs of the whole community and certainly above the teachings of the Torah. Judaism teaches that the needs and behavioral norms of the Jewish people as a whole take precedence over needs and feelings of each person. For example, the 7 days of mourning after a burial (shiva) begin the very personal and intimate process of healing from loss. When a biblical holiday falls during shiva, shiva comes to an end in deference to the celebration of the totality of the Jewish people.

In an egalitarian society, Judaism stands out by recognizing that all people are not the same and all belief and value systems are not the same. The distinctiveness of Jewish values and beliefs is seen as worth preserving. Tradition has seen a marriage between 2 Jews as the most likely way to create a Jewish home and to teach Jewish values and observances to the next generation.

Interfaith families are not all the same. There are families in which the non-Jewish partner is deeply committed to raising Jewish children. There are other families in which spouses share a commitment to secular values. Although I am no longer the rabbi of a congregation, I believe that every Jew should be warmly welcomed into the synagogue. Interfaith families should be encouraged to participate in synagogue activities. It is futile to answer questions

that are not being asked, but I want to be available when questions are being asked."

Rabbi Ilan Emanuel Temple Concord

"Like many Reform rabbis in America today, I am happy to perform interfaith marriages as long as the ceremony is a solely Jewish ceremony, and the couple commits to creating a Jewish home and, if so blessed, raising Jewish children. In a world in which intermarriage is becoming more the norm than the exception, I believe performing interfaith weddings and being inclusive of non-Jewish partners is an important part of being welcoming to the increasing segment of the Jewish community who are in interfaith relationships and their families. When I was first ordained as a rabbi in 2005, I did not perform intermarriages but my mind was changed over time by seeing how engaged so many non-Jewish partners were in the life of the congregation. On so many occasions I saw non-Jewish partners be essential as volunteers in temple activities and enthusiastic supporters of their Jewish family in their Jewish activities. In seeing this, I also realized that I would have a much greater and more positive influence on the Jewish life of the many intermarried families in the community if I was welcoming and engaged with them Jewishly, starting with their wedding and continuing through all the subsequent stages of their life in the community."

Rabbi Daniel Jezer Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas

"When asked to officiate at a wedding I am delighted and feel honored, as this is a great responsibility. At the same time, I realize that I am being asked because I am a rabbi, a transmitter of Jewish tradition and values. A wedding is an event that brings a unity to two different people. My officiating as a rabbi, transmitter of Jewish tradition and values, certainly speaks to the Jewish partner. However it does not speak to the non-Jewish partner as that person is not part of the Jewish people. There are many values that unify the couple, but one that does not is religion. A wedding needs to emphasize the unity, not the disparity. My officiating emphasizes the difference not the unity.

I will happily work with such a couple to help them design a secular service. However, a service with both a rabbi and

a clergy member of a different faith is even more problematic than one with a rabbi alone officiating. I will wish them well, will welcome them to my Shabbat table, in the synagogue and any other time. But I am not the one to officiate at the marriage. The holiness of the marriage is created by the bond between the two, not by the words conveyed by an officiant."

Rabbi Moshe Saks
Temple Adath Yeshurun

"The rules of the Rabbinical Assembly (organization of Conservative rabbis) prohibit its members from performing interfaith marriages. Outreach is the key, both before and after the marriage ceremony. We are an inclusive congregation at Temple Adath Yeshurun."

Rabbi Evan Shore
Shaarei Torah Orthodox
Congregation of Syracuse

"I would not officiate at an interfaith marriage based upon the opinion of the Talmud, Maimonides and the *Shulchan Arukh* based upon a sentence in *Devarim* Chapter 7, sentence 3. It is clear that the Torah is against the practice.

In every interfaith marriage, I am always concerned about the spiritual welfare and the continued Judaic growth of the Jewish spouse. Additionally, if Jewish children are involved, we also have to ensure that they grow in a productive, meaningful environment that is absent of any type of confusion as to the ideals and principles of Judaism. For these reasons I have no problem whatsoever with an intermarried family being members of my synagogue."

Rabbi Oren Steinitz
Congregation Beth Sholom-
Chevra Shas

"First, I would like to thank the *Observer* for not shying away from difficult, important questions.

Second, this is a very timely topic for me, as I am in the process of transitioning from an unaffiliated congregation that required me to be able to officiate at interfaith marriages, to CBS-CS, a Conservative congregation that does not allow me to do so.

Personally, I believe that the question of officiating a wedding has less to do with whether both partners are halakhically Jewish, but with whether the household they intend to establish is indeed a *bayit ne'eman b'yisrael* - a home loyal to the traditions of Israel. We have all met families in which both partners were halakhically Jewish and yet Judaism was all but absent from their home lives, and so-called "interfaith" families which were highly committed to living a life informed by Jewish values and the Jewish yearly cycle. We have all met non-Jewish partners who are the ones who insist on the children receiving a Jewish education and encourage synagogue attendance and religious school enrollment. Many times this attitude is directly influenced by the way the community welcomed the couple into their midst. We simply cannot keep pushing interfaith families away and then be surprised when they do not want anything to do with us. In a reality where over 70% of non-Orthodox Jews find their partners outside the Jewish community, it is our challenge, and duty, to not only 'accept' these families but also to warmly welcome and engage them. The alternative would be a very, very small Jewish community."

WEISS,
SAVEDOFF
& CICCONE

Doctors of Optometry, PC

Does your child have
delayed vision skills?

Offering vision therapy to help to correct your child's visual deficits that may be contributing to reading or other academic disorders.



Dr. Laura A. Davis

Nationally certified in the treatment and management of ocular disease

www.SavedoffandCiccone.com

Downtown Office

60 Presidential Plaza,
Madison Tower, Syracuse

(315) 472-4594

Manlius Office

8116 Cazenovia Road.
Seven Pines, Bldg #7, Manlius

(315) 682-2835

Summer Consignment Opportunities

Long Lake Art & Antiques

Value Your Vintage

*Join us for an educational presentation
and bring one item for evaluation.*

Skaneateles Library,
49 E Genesee St.,
July 13th, 6:30 PM

Skaneateles Curbstone Festival,
Downtown Skaneateles,
July 21st – 23rd, 9 AM to 5 PM



For more information or to set up a private appointment contact:

Philippe Roth Schwimmer
pippa@longlake.art



315-382-3072 | www.longlake.art

Your Home Happens with Youchi Holstein



Happy 4th of July!

Youchi Levi Holstein

Licensed RE Salesperson

c. 315.254.8700

o. 315.682.9500

YouchiHolstein@HowardHanna.com

YouchiHolstein.HowardHanna.com



Making buying and selling homes an easy process.

Real Estate Services



Interfaith Stories

Judaism Has Come To Me

by Angela Locke

My Jewish boyfriend and I, on one of our first dates, went shopping on Alvarado Street in Los Angeles, around the corner from his law office. As there is nothing Christmas-y in the mild December weather of Los Angeles, and since every December I missed my upstate New York family, to cheer me up, we went shopping for Christmas tree ornaments for a tree we'd pick out later. If you've ever been shopping on Alvarado Street, you know what an understatement it is to say it's not high-end. We stuffed a bag full of cheap metal ornaments and headed to my place. My Jewish boyfriend, who became my husband, nearly killed himself climbing on a ladder and stringing Christmas lights around my very modest Echo Park rental.

Let's be clear: I was a secular Christmas celebrant. I did buy (and still have) a sad little angel with blue eyes and a halo. And I did put a creche under my tree, more to remember my beloved grandma and grandpa than to gush over the birth of baby Jesus. But though many in my extended family did, I did not pray to Jesus, nor did I think he particularly loved me, nor did I buy any literal stories, not of the virgin birth nor the star over the stable lighting the way for the wise men. But I liked the carols. I went to church to sing them and light candles and think about the divine light that penetrates the darkness all over the world. I didn't even know the Hanukkah story yet.

My first foray into *his* Jewishness was funnier. I won't call it Judaism because he was to the left of secular. On Fairfax Avenue, in the heart of the Jewish district, we went to world-famous Canter's Deli. "Now watch," he said, "the waitress will look at me when she asks what I want, but she'll expect you to answer." Indeed, watching the seasoned couples scattered around the room, it did seem that way. And then at the next table, I heard—and saw—the waitress, speaking directly to the elderly man, "What'll you have, dear?" And the woman, who I assumed was his wife, answered, "He'll have the roast beef dinner no gravy you put too much salt in the gravy he shouldn't be eating salt and don't overcook the green beans he'll have yes green beans and a baked potato with no butter either no butter and no salt he has high blood pressure and he can't eat salt."



Angela Locke and her son Josh Hershfield

We married under a *chuppah*; we smashed the glass and said Hebrew prayers. My six-year-old daughter from my first marriage read the famous First Corinthians entry on love. We were secular, and we'd been hippies. *Shomer negiah* meant nothing to us. We'd lived together for nearly a year before we got married. But in the *yichud* room, we intertwined our arms, shared a glass of wine and a piece of challah before joining our wedding guests.

Then began our life together. Neither my husband nor his parents nor his brother's family were religious at all, so there were no trips to the synagogue. My approach to Judaism was through the typical domestic role: cooking and talking to children. I started reading all the Jewish cookbooks I could get my hands on, and I was the one who insisted we begin celebrating Friday night Shabbat. Jewish cookbooks present a plethora of traditions, philosophies and teachings. But still, I didn't have a concept of Shabbat as a time to unplug. I didn't have a concept of Shabbat as a time to go deeper spiritually or study Torah or let it last into Saturday. I struggled mightily, yearning for God, but there were no answers. Though my husband had been raised in a practicing family, they weren't any longer. Yes, we celebrated Passover and Hanukkah as a family, but we never went to synagogue and there was never any discussion of the Torah. When there was a death, his family's prior practices, of which I had heard nothing, ruled: suddenly, you couldn't do this, you couldn't do that, you had to do this, you had to do that. No one ever explained anything to me, and once it was over, it was over, and everyone reverted into a sort of "vanilla" Jewish identity.

It was in my son's preschool at JCC Los Angeles that I learned about *Purim* and *hamantaschen*; about the *shofar* and the *sukkah*, about Jewish history. Both of our children went to JCC after-school programs. It was there that my daughter made a Star of David for us to put on top of our December evergreen. We gave our son the choice at age thirteen about becoming *bar mitzvah*. Why would he have chosen yes? He'd never gone to Hebrew school; he'd never gone to synagogue. But, as an adult, he became *bar mitzvah* and made *aliyah*. And, *Baruch HaShem*, though I am now in my seventies, I am studying and moving toward conversion.

Without Compromise

by Anonymous



When we met and fell in love and made the decision to get married, we were sure about two things: #1 our relationship was strong enough to overcome any challenges created by the fact that one of us was Jewish and the other was Catholic and #2 that we were going to raise our children in the Jewish faith. All the rest, as they say, is commentary, but it is an interesting story.

We were married by a justice of the peace because there was simply no compromise for the religious part of the ceremony. This satisfied both sets of our parents and allowed us to set the tone for having mutual respect for each family's beliefs without compromise, attending family holiday traditions regardless of religion. Looking at the positive, besides teaching our children to respect their (Catholic) grandparents' faith which differed from theirs, was not having to compromise when the holiest days for each were celebrated throughout the year. Santa never came down our chimney, we never put out cookies and milk. It was always clear to the children, not in conversation, but in how we lived our life Jewishly, that they were born and being raised Jewish. We did not eat *chametz* during *Pesach* which, except for maybe one year, always fell during the Easter holiday. We compromised on Christmas as the kids got older by going to a movie (skipping the Chinese food) on Christmas Day. We allowed both sets of grandparents to embrace the children's accomplishments when they became *b'nai mitzvah*, as equally as synagogue rules would allow.

For us, even though we started with religions that were different, raising the children Jewish was easy because we were both committed to having them attend the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. It was this education that helped solidify their Jewish upbringing, serving them well as adults, not only in their professions but in how they live their lives.

While it's hard to pinpoint when this happened, it became clear to all of us that we truly only practiced one religion within the four walls of our household, while maintaining respect for our extended family and their traditions. Ultimately, soon we will all be Jewish, even if one of us is by choice, and we have no regrets about how we handled the challenges of starting out interfaith, without compromising our beliefs.

I Never Dated a Jewish Woman

by Marc Beckman

I never dated a Jewish woman, but I am married to one. I used to joke that I was able to create four new members of our Jewish community without removing one from circulation.

At the time that Karen and I were set up for the annual “screw your roommate” dance for first-year students at the University of Rochester, I had never dated a Jewish girl. I grew up in a small, predominantly Italian/Catholic village just outside the Bronx. Karen, my wife of going on 29 years, grew up in Cortland, NY. Her Methodist family could trace its roots to the Mayflower on one side and Quakers from Pennsylvania for 300+ years on the other. Karen’s family had books tracing their family tree back generation by generation for hundreds of years. My family was run out of Russia/Ukraine during the pre-WWI pogroms when many thousands of Jews were murdered or fled. No one cared to remember from where exactly anymore.

In many ways, we couldn’t have been more different. I also knew from our first meeting that Karen was uniquely special. Ultimately, after college, I decided that I wanted to ask Karen to marry me. However, despite my relatively limited Jewish education and observance, my Jewish identity was strong. I knew that my Jewish family’s lineage was not going to end with me.

I planned an elaborate engagement date that involved flying around Manhattan in a helicopter and a horse-drawn carriage ride through Central Park. Early on at dinner during that evening, ring hidden in my pocket, we had a serious conversation. If we were to marry, was Karen willing to raise our children in the Jewish faith? I knew that for me this was a threshold question, and I was terrified asking it so earnestly, since it would dictate all that followed.

Karen’s answer was brilliant of course. She completely turned the table on me. Yes, she was willing to raise our kids in my faith, but that meant I had to actually “go be Jewish.” I do not think she actually meant that I wasn’t before, but that she recognized that of the two of us, she didn’t have the background to be the one leading the effort of inculcating Jewish practice and Jewish values to our children.

This, of course, was not true. Karen is steeped with Jewish values; they were just branded differently to her as a child. Maybe it is for this reason that she agreed to bind her children’s future to the Jewish people, certainly not the safest of choices. It also meant that we could not take our new family’s Jewish identity for granted. Holidays and traditions were researched and honored with greater intentionality. This



The Beckman Family

brought great meaning to us, and hopefully our children’s positive Jewish experiences were that much more impactful.

With the meaningful support of our synagogue rabbi and Hebrew Day School communities, twelve years into our marriage, and following three prior trips to the *mikvah* to convert each of our children, Karen took the *mikvah* plunge herself. I never asked whether she would convert because that was always a completely separate and highly personal decision for her. Throughout our marriage, my in-laws were always highly respectful of our decisions, and we were always respectful of how they continued to celebrate their own faith. In many ways, we grew closer through our mutual education and dialogue. Years later, Karen used her experience as a physician to become religiously certified to serve as our Syracuse Jewish community’s first *mohelet*.

We just celebrated *Shavuot*, through which I noted parallels to my experience. In addition to the dazzling narrative of the revelation of the Torah, there is the wonderful story of Ruth which is coordinate with the holiday. Ruth, the widowed Moabite daughter-in-law of Israelite Naomi, instead of going to find a new husband, pledges herself to Naomi with these words: “wherever you go I will go, wherever you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God shall be my God” (Ruth 1:16). Ultimately, Ruth marries Israelite Boaz and is regarded as the progenitor of the lineage that eventually produces King David. The story of Ruth, suggesting that renowned King David descended from someone who chose to join the Jewish people, and the rabbinic understanding that Ruth is the paradigm of the righteous convert, suggest that efforts to welcome those who seek affiliation with the Jewish people may be among the most meaningful work we as a community can do.



Allison was bawling, she turned to me and said, ‘Mom, I got a D.’ It was the first time she called me ‘Mom.’

Lisa, adopted 16-year-old Allison



LEARN ABOUT ADOPTING A TEEN
YOU CAN'T IMAGINE THE REWARD

ADOPTUSKIDS.ORG



Interfaith Stories (cont'd)

“This isn’t ‘Fiddler on the Roof’”

by Laura Lavine

When asked for an article about interreligious marriage, thoughts turned to love. My husband’s and my union fit the bill, but the love at the center of this essay is for a special rabbi. In 1981, I was urged to accept a dinner invitation from a Jewish dentist who had recently moved to Syracuse. All other attempts to get me to sever ties with the not Jewish man I was dating had failed. Disagreements among family members and efforts to get me to see the error of my ways had been the prevailing theme so, under pressure to go out with the Jewish oral surgeon, I considered it. The man I was seeing encouraged me. “Go out with him. You need to be sure that I’m right for you. I don’t want you to have any regrets.”

My mother was hopeful when I told her the date was “okay,” but hope quickly



Laura Lavine and Don Fitzgerald

turned to dismay when I explained that I felt “no connection” and declined a second invitation. She implored, “You could learn to love him!” I replied, “This isn’t ‘Fiddler on the Roof.’ It’s not happening.”

She finally acquiesced and invited my

future husband over for dinner. Within minutes it was apparent that she liked him. By evening’s end, she had steered the topic of conversation to planning a wedding to be held three months later.

Although not a traditionally observant Jew, I was firm in my resolve to be married by a rabbi and to have a Jewish home. A practicing Catholic at the time, my fiancé, which I think is the word we started using that night, got the seal of approval from his priest who said, “As long as you have clergy there, I can live without a priest presiding.”

The search began. There were hints that at least one area rabbi quietly officiated for friends whose children married non-Jews, but I decided not to try my luck. I can’t remember whom to thank for suggesting that we contact Rabbi Alvin Roth from Albany, but we will forever be grateful because Rabbi Roth had decided to publicly officiate at interreligious weddings at a time when few rabbis did. To me, it made sense—why turn away a Jew who wants a Jewish life in marriage?

We met Rabbi Roth in Albany. We had told him about the difference in religions, age gap, previous divorce and the incredulity of family members on both sides—all of the factors going against us. Nevertheless, after welcoming and talking with us, he expressed confidence in our decision and agreed to preside over our wedding.

My husband and I fondly recall Rabbi Roth arriving at the Grand Ballroom at Hotel Syracuse needing to borrow a tie because he had forgotten one, but more important, we always remember and appreciate his faith in our judgment and decision-making.

Each year, we sent him an anniversary card with updates on our lives and inquiring about him. Each year, for fourteen years, we received a reply in the form of a short story replete with love for his family and that

illustrated his gift for creative writing. The first year of no reply, we tried not to worry, but after the second year without a short story, we surmised the worst. Then came a letter from Rabbi Roth’s wife Nancy saying that he had died the year before and that she couldn’t bring herself to tell us at that time. She also shared that our anniversary cards brought great joy to her beloved husband.

Not many people initially supported what seemed a major lapse in judgment—embarking on this marital path. But Rabbi Roth, unlike one relative who bet that the marriage wouldn’t last six months, saw that it was a union to which he could give his blessings, and ultimately things worked out with our loved ones.

My mother spoiled my husband and admonished me when she thought I wasn’t doting enough on him. On her death bed, she told him he was one of the best things to happen to our family. Most important was her declaration that my beloved late father would have liked him. My siblings loved/love my husband as a brother—a sentiment that is reciprocated many times over—and my other relatives grew equally fond of him, including a special aunt who not only ended up accepting him but requested that he be a pallbearer at her funeral.

Interreligious marriage poses challenges that I wouldn’t recommend anyone seek, but love doesn’t always work that way. The happy outcome is that the bonds that have strengthened within both sides of our families over four decades far outweigh the stress from before Rabbi Roth made us husband and wife. For presiding over our wedding and his continuing support of our interreligious marriage with his letters and stories, we will always remember and love him. In his memory, it is an honor to publicly express our affection and gratitude to him with this tribute.

**EARN A
GREAT RATE**

*and have easy
access to your
money!*

*“Geddes Federal.
How can I help
you today?”*

*Invest your savings in a
MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT*

GET IT AT GEDDES!



**GEDDES
FEDERAL
SAVINGS**
and Loan Association



2208 W. Genesee St., Syracuse • 240 W. Seneca St., Manlius
315-468-6281 • www.geddesfederal.com

**Disaster
could show up at
YOUR doorstep.**

**Make a
plan today.**

[Ready.gov/plan](https://www.ready.gov/plan)





How the Major American Jewish Movements View Interfaith Marriage

The Reform movement's position appears to be quite clear: "If you identify as interfaith, multi-faith, Jewish-adjacent or Jew-ish, you belong in our Movement. If your Jewish kids enjoy celebrating with their extended family on Diwali, Easter or Ramadan, you belong."

But a closer look reveals that this acceptance has some conditions. A 2001 Central Conference of American Rabbis' *teshuvah* says that "we do not condone mixed marriage," that the ideal "is that Jews should marry Jews" and that interfaith marriage "tends to frustrate the achievement of build[ing] Jewish homes and ensur[ing] the transmission of Jewish life and identity to our children."

A 2003 survey by the Rabbinic Center for Research and Counseling indicated that at least half of Reform rabbis were willing to officiate at interfaith weddings. However, interfaith marriage, as mainstream Judaism understands it, usually means a Jew — religious or not — marrying someone of no strong, well-defined faith. As many understand the term, "interfaith marriage" doesn't really mean the coming together of two people of different faiths, but rather that the non-Jewish spouse will go along with Judaism as a religious and cultural framework for the couple and their family.

In 1995, a survey of Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis found that a combined 47 percent would officiate at intermarriages. Two decades later,



another survey found that 84 percent of Reform rabbis and 88 percent of Reconstructionist rabbis perform intermarriages. Most Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis require couples they marry to commit to keeping a Jewish home and/or raising Jewish children. Forty-three percent of rabbis from the two denominations require that the children not be "promised" to another faith, and 22 percent require that the non-Jewish partner not be committed to another religion. Most Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis will not co-officiate a wedding with clergy of another religion, and only 20 percent would conduct a ceremony with theological references to another religion.

Reform rabbis who were ordained in recent years are more willing to officiate at intermarriages than rabbis ordained in previous decades, but less willing to co-officiate with non-Jewish clergy.

Approximately 90 percent of Reform rabbis ordained after 2000 said they perform intermarriages, as compared to 80 percent of those ordained before 2000. But 27 percent of rabbis ordained before 2000 said they would co-officiate, compared to 23 percent of those ordained after 2000.

In 2015, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College voted to accept rabbinical students in interfaith relationships, making Reconstructionist Judaism the first type of Judaism to officially allow rabbis in relationships with non-Jewish partners.

All branches of Orthodox Judaism follow the historic Jewish attitudes to intermarriage and refuse to accept that intermarriages are valid or legitimate. They strictly forbid sexual intercourse with a member of a different faith. Orthodox rabbis will not officiate at interfaith weddings and try to avoid assisting them in other ways. Secular intermarriage is seen as a deliberate rejection of Judaism although some Chabad-Lubavitch and Modern Orthodox Jews reach out to intermarried Jews, particularly Jewish women as Jewish law considers the children of Jewish women to be Jews regardless of the father's status.

The Conservative Movement does not sanction or recognize the Jewish legal validity of intermarriage but encourages acceptance of the non-Jewish spouse, hoping that such acceptance will lead

to the spouse's conversion to Judaism. In 1995 the Leadership Council of Conservative Judaism published the following statement on intermarriage: "In the past, intermarriage... was viewed as an act of rebellion, a rejection of Judaism. Jews who intermarried were essentially excommunicated. But now, intermarriage is often the result of living in an open society... If our children end up marrying non-Jews, we should not reject them. We should continue to give our love and by that retain a measure of influence in their lives, Jewishly and otherwise. Life consists of constant growth and our adult children may yet reach a stage when Judaism has new meaning for them. However, the marriage between a Jew and non-Jew is not a celebration for the Jewish community."

The Rabbinical Assembly Standards of Rabbinic Practice prohibits Conservative rabbis from officiating at intermarriages or even attending an interfaith wedding. In 2017, the USCJ General Assembly voted to allow people of other faith backgrounds to become members of synagogues, enabling all members of interfaith couples and families to belong. In 2018, the USCJ published *A Synagogue for All Families: Interfaith Inclusion in Conservative Synagogues*, a co-branded resource (with InterFaith Family) sharing stories about Conservative synagogues that model what it means for a 21st Century synagogue to engage 21st century Jewish families.

Please Patronize Our Advertisers

Say "I Saw It in the JO!"

We urge our readers to support the companies and individuals who support us. Every advertiser is important. Please patronize those who partner with us, through the JO, to make our Jewish community ever better.



**KREHER
FAMILY FARMS**
Founded 1924

*...the closer the hen house
...the fresher the egg®*

Proud Producer of **FARM FRESH
EGG-LAND'S BEST**



Make sure the eggs on your table are Kosher - certified Eggland's Best®. The freshest, best tasting and most nutritious egg available.

Use our farm fresh, locally produced Eggland's Best® eggs for all of your family meals.



Interfaith Marriage In Israel

Marriages in Israel can be performed only under the auspices of the religious community to which couples belong, i.e. the Jewish, Muslim and Druze communities and ten specified denominations of Christianity. Interfaith marriages performed within Israel are not given legal recognition.

The religious authorities for Jewish marriages in Israel are the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the rabbinical courts. Israel's religious authorities are not permitted to marry couples where both partners do not have the same religion. It is a criminal offense for Jews in Israel to marry in weddings performed outside the state's religious authority, and doing so can result in a jail sentence of up to two years. Islamic tradition considers interfaith marriage for Muslim men lawful (halal) but prohibits Muslim women from interfaith marriage. Under Sharia law, a Muslim man may marry a Christian or Jewish woman but not a woman who belongs to another



non-Muslim religion) but group. A Muslim woman is not allowed to marry a non-Muslim man of any non-Muslim religious group. The Druze community, recognized as separate from the Muslim community in 1957, does not allow its members to marry outside of their own faith.

According to a 2016 Pew Research Center survey, more than 98% of Israelis are married to a partner of the same religion. 97% of Israeli Jews would be uncomfortable if their child married a Muslim and 89% would be uncomfortable if their child married a Christian.

The vast majority of secular Israeli Jews oppose interfaith marriage.

Yet interfaith marriage is on the increase in Israel. Between 2011 and 2018, the intermarriage rate grew by 38%, from 1,527 to 2,460 cases per year. The Jerusalem Post reported that "the vast majority of intermarried couples in Israel, some 90%, involve a Jew and a citizen defined as 'without religious classification,' the large majority of whom are Israeli citizens born in the former Soviet Union or their descendants." Of great concern, in a country where only the children of a Jewish woman are considered Jewish, is that nearly 60 percent of interfaith marriages (52,000 out of 87,000) involve a Jewish man wedding a woman who is not Jewish. Should they have children, their offspring would not be considered Jewish according to Israeli law.

Israel has no provision for civil

marriage, but since 1963, the Interior Ministry has been required to register the marriages of couples who wed in civil services performed abroad. As a result, overseas marriages are increasingly popular. Nearby Cyprus is the most popular destination because it is nearby and Paraguay, which allows marriage without the presence of the couple to be arranged by the Paraguayan consulate in Tel Aviv, is another jurisdiction used.

A July 2022 ruling by the Lod District Court opened the door to interfaith marriage still further. Judge Efrat Fink ruled that the Population and Immigration Authority of the Interior Ministry is obligated to register the marriages of couples who wed through an online civil marriage service carried out under the auspices of the American state of Utah. The decision meant that Israeli couples can now get married in civil ceremonies without leaving the country, granting another victory to advocates of civil marriage in Israel.

There is considerable consternation about interfaith marriage in Israel. David Shipler, author of *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*, writes, "Recipe for an interfaith marriage in Israel: imagine every problem that an interfaith couple or an adult child of an intermarriage can experience in the Diaspora. Multiply the problems by a factor of one hundred, occurring on a daily basis. Stir in an ongoing civil war, bring to an emotional boil." The *Jerusalem Post* described the problems that the increase in interfaith marriage poses for Israel: "a sizeable percentage of those who make aliyah each year under the Law of Return are non-Jews. According to the Interior Ministry, between 2012 and 2019, 37% of all immigrants to Israel were not Jewish according to Halacha. And there are anywhere from 400,000 to 500,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union who are not classified as Jews. And since every single one of them lives and works here and is part and parcel of Israeli society, it is inevitable that many will end up marrying Jews." A commentator noted, "Nothing less than the Jewish character of Israel is at stake."

While it is clear that the number of interfaith families in Israel is nowhere near that of the United States, the issues raised by interfaith marriage are increasingly fraught in the Jewish state.

We Help You Help.

When you help care for a loved one, you take care of everything. But are you taking care of yourself?

AARP can help with information and useful tips on how you can maintain a healthy life balance, care for your own physical and mental well-being, and manage the challenges of caring for a loved one. Because the better care you take of yourself, the better care you can provide for your loved one.

**You're there for them.
We're here for you.**

Find free Care Guides to support you and your loved one at
[AARP.org/caregiving](https://www.aarp.org/caregiving)



Seven Graduate from the Epstein School

At the May 23rd *Siyum* (completion) for the Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Studies, the Class of 5783/2023 shared advice for younger students that showcased their experiences at the school. The 2023 Teen Taste of Israel Trip was chief among the highlights that speakers Nathan Warren-Faricy, Stephanie Lynne, Sasha Dailey, Joanna Cooper and Mae Cohen included in their speeches. All seven graduates traveled to Israel in February, and their advice to younger students about the trip was unequivocal: "Go to Israel! It is so worth it: It is a great way to make new friends and get closer to the ones you already have. It will create a deeper connection to your culture and religion." Their remarks reflected the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that the Israel trip was postponed multiple times, but stressed the positive culture of the Epstein School: "Here at Epstein, as well as in Israel, you will learn that it is so special to be Jewish. The leaders at Epstein have created a safe and joyful space to be your authentic Jewish selves, in any way that that may be."



Incoming students, graduates of the Syracuse Community Hebrew School, were also honored at the Siyyum, as were the 29 Epstein students who participate in *Shalsholet*. *Shalsholet* (chain) connects Epstein students with the Syracuse Community Hebrew School and the community's three Sunday schools. Epstein students who serve as *madrachim* (teacher's aides) in one of these schools and who attend more than 60% of Epstein classes earn a stipend for their work with the community's youngest members.

The Class of 5783/2023 includes seven students: Samuel Allen, Mae Cohen, Joanna Cooper, Sasha Dailey, Eliazar Goldstein, Stephanie Lynne, and Nathan Warren-Faricy. "All classes are unique and special, of course," remarked head of school, Aaron Spitzer, "but this class has always been especially close knit, even more so since the Teen Taste of Israel trip. They are a group of exceptional young individuals, as well. Students of the class of 5783/2023 will take the Jewish values and learning they've accumulated and absorbed over their years — in CNY religious schools, at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, as *madrachim*, in youth groups, at the Epstein School, and, most importantly, at home — where it will inform all of their choices moving forward. Mazal tov to the Epstein School class of 5783/2023!"

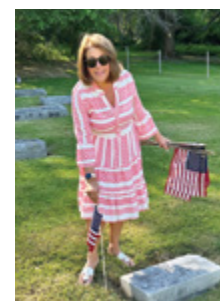
Memorial Day Mitzvah



Judaism teaches that honor, respect and caring for a person who has died is one of the greatest mitzvot. Students from the 4-5 class at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School are shown with Head of School Michael Ferman and Steven Sisskind before they planted flags on the graves of Jewish war veterans in honor of Memorial Day.

For the past 18 years, Sisskind has generously donated more than 750 flags to be placed on the graves in all of the local Jewish cemeteries under the guidance of Rabbi Evan Shore. Steve Nathan, a Jewish war veteran himself, has not only participated in the cost of the flags, but has taken the responsibility to place flags at the graves of Jewish war veterans in Temple Concord's sections 30 and 63 at Woodlawn Cemetery. SHDS students took on the solemn responsibility of placing the flags to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country once the local Jewish War Veterans post members were no longer able to do so. It is a very powerful and meaningful experience for the students.

For many years, Robin and Steve Sisskind have also fulfilled the mitzvah by planting flags on the graves of Jewish war veterans at the Norwich cemetery.



WILLIAM TUCKER, MD



DRY EYE SPECIALIST

NEW PATIENTS WELCOME • FREE PARKING

NORTHEAST MEDICAL CENTER
SUITE 207
4000 MEDICAL CENTER DRIVE
FAYETTEVILLE, NY 13066

315.637.1010

SCHS Seventh Graders Move Up to Epstein

by Ora Jezer

The Syracuse Community Hebrew School is designed as an inclusive setting for students in grades 3-7. Students acquire a quality t'filah-based Hebrew education and are challenged to explore a deeper and more personal understanding of prayer. The school fosters a sense of Jewish community and graduates are prepared to lead and participate in services in synagogue and at home and to continue their learning at the Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Studies. The SCHS curriculum includes both Hebrew and prayer. The development of the curriculum was a collaborative effort between Temple Adath Yeshurun, Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas and Temple Concord.

This year, 16 seventh graders are graduating from SCHS and moving up to the Epstein School. They are Caitlyn Casshole, Broden Eisenbies, Cara Engel, Kayla Graber, Mia Grabowsky, Sydney Graham, Sabina Hart, Sarah Kuss, Jacob Lacrignola, Lilah Levy, Gemma Mone, Rachel Pettiford, Olivia Pierce, Ben Smolen, Olivia Sykes and Charlotte Waldman.



“Sharing is Caring” Lending Program

by Ora Jezer



When the heat of the COVID-19 pandemic began dissipating in 2021, many students were eager to return to physical classes. Some, however, were unable to return in person. The Syracuse Community Hebrew School saw the opportunity to pilot interactive hybrid classes so that all students could feel connected to their peers, regardless of where they were physically.

With generous sponsorship from both the Slutzger Foundation and the Federation, SCHS secured funding for the needed technology. SCHS purchased high-quality equipment to hold hybrid classes including OWLs (an immersive 360-degree video conferencing technology)

along with HP computers and projectors for each classroom.

Since our school is now all in-person, SCHS has taken the lead in lending out the OWLs, computers and projectors. Several synagogues and the Epstein School are currently borrowing the OWLs and computers. This year, using Better Together grant money, we were able to purchase many large games that appeal to people of all ages. Following an Art Show and *siyum* at the Oaks, a new opportunity arose for yet another partnership for materials. The Oaks borrowed many of the games for their outside summer programs as well as borrowing a projector to watch movies all summer long. Residents of the Oaks can enjoy many movie nights with family and lots of popcorn.

We have been honored to have the opportunity to share our riches and continue our mission of *L'dor v'dor*. Through the “Sharing is Caring” lending program, SCHS demonstrates to its students the importance of valuing traditions from generation to generation. SCHS has been enriched by this partnership and looks forward to continuing and growing our collaborations for many years to come. We are grateful to be able to lend support to the community that has given us so much these past years.

A Mezuzot Mitzvah

Long ago, Jews wrote or etched prayers onto the doorposts of their houses. The practice then changed to carving a notch out of the doorframe into which a scroll could be inserted. Later, the custom evolved to placing a scroll inside a case attached to the doorpost. Last month, the JCC continued this tradition by affixing *mezuzot* to the entryways of the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center, the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and the Jewish Federation and Foundation of Central New York. The *mezuzah* (which means “doorpost”) contains a scroll on which two passages from *Devarim* are inscribed. The *mezuzah* distinguishes a Jewish space and is a visible sign to all that a sense of Jewish identity and commitment to God’s commandments exists therein.



I’m From *Shalom*

A collaborative poem created by the Jewish Creative Writing class at The Epstein School of Jewish Studies: Judah Eglash, Sydney Kanter, August Mueller, Talia Salomon, Joseph Seidman, Marissa Spevak, Emma Waldman, Issy Weinberg. [Morah Sarah Reckess]

I’m from *Shalom*: hello, goodbye, and peace.

I’m from a kitchen where we eat delicious chicken on Shabbat evenings, along with onions and chicken skin and zesty herbs.

I’m from a bubbly, drunk Manischewitz wine for toasting after services. I’m from a Fanta soda with tingly carbonation.

I’m from bowls of my Bubbe’s matzoh balls, delicious and warm, that make me full after the Seder.

I’m from *sopapillas* on Hanukkah and Grandpa talking loud enough to burst your eardrums.

I’m from latkes year-round, occasionally setting off the fire alarm. I’m from clothes smelling like potatoes and oil. With sour cream or applesauce.

I’m from a place where “*Shalom*” means “how weird” in their minds.

I’m from realizing only Jews say “oy vey.”

I’m from the story of Moses, an old guy who split the Red Sea. I’m from the Megillah with Esther, Haman and Mordechai, and lots of noise from groggers.

I’m from holidays. “Which one?” we wonder. I’m not sure... there seem to be a lot of them. So many that we can’t keep track!

That’s Judaism, creating memories.

I’m from *Chai*, 18. I’m from “*l’chaim*” before we drink, and “*mazel tov*” when we celebrate.

I’m from a strong prayer, a gift of peace.

I’m from a Bubbe who says, “Put on a sweater! I’m cold!” I’m from a Zeidi who says “Move your *tuches*.” I’m from a Grandma who says, “*Mi’jito*, come here.”

I’m from what makes a house a home. We look different, but we all have something in common.

There are many types of Jews.

I’m from a community, a strong suit of armor knocked down a hundred times – but we keep rising, strong as ever.

Rothschild Adult Day Center Has Winning Formula

by Judy Schmid

Ask any of the participants at Menorah Park's Rothschild Adult Day Center what their favorite part of being a member of the group might be and most will say "friendships." Sure, a few will say "games" or "the food," but the friendships built here help strengthen the health and well-being of everyone in the room.

The Rothschild Adult Day Center is a medical-model daycare program serving adults of all ages who require support with healthcare and activities of daily living. It includes medical management, education, nutrition, therapies, recreation, social work and more, all set in a welcoming and supportive atmosphere.

Liz, a resident of Menorah Park's Beit Tikvah Group Residence, has been a participant in the Adult Day program since 2008. She prizes her independence and the program at Rothschild allows her to exercise daily to keep up her body strength. She is fiercely direct and honest in her communication and is always willing to help the team with her ideas. Liz is especially welcoming to new participants, and the staff considers her inspiring.

Liz's longtime friend, Alberta, has also



been a participant since 2008 and Liz and Alberta have a special bond. Alberta's arrival routine has her greeting everyone and then going directly to the exercise equipment. She is sweet-natured and loves her family. She recently lost a family member and felt comfortable enough to talk one-on-one about her grief with the staff at Adult Day, who provided the support she needed. Alberta considers herself part of the "senior team," just as Liz does.

The Rothschild Adult Day Program at Menorah Park is staffed by skilled nurses, occupational and physical therapists and case workers. All food provided is kosher. They accept Medicaid and private pay. If you believe your family member could benefit from joining the Adult Day Program, call Casie Bowles at 315-446-9111, ext. 137 or Jacki O'Brien-Gerace, ext. 145.

CBS-CS Adult Learning Focuses on Antisemitism

by Ruth Stein

Under the auspices of Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas' Adult Learning committee, congregant, Lois Weiner, led a four-part series on the status of antisemitism in the United States and in the world today. The first session summarized the root causes of antisemitism. The next involved the antisemitic forces that many college campuses and students face. The third session focused on the major groups that harass, bully, incite and sometimes commit violence and the final session covered antisemitism in various areas of society such as media, big tech companies, social media, government and academics.

After the series, attendees formed a group to consider what might be done to deal more effectively with antisemitism in Central New York. One of the action plans suggested was developing ways for students to get training on how to respond to antisemitic behavior that may occur from elementary school to high school and college and ways for adults to learn how to handle antisemitism in the workplace. **Anyone who is interested in getting involved in ways to educate against antisemitism is asked to contact Lois Wiener at lweinerorioles@aol.com or the CBS-CS offices at admin@cbscs.org.**

CBS-CS Got Talent Show

by Joanne Villegas

Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas showcased the diverse talents of its members at the "CBS-CS Got Talent Show" on May 21. The show featured 16 performers and included an art exhibit which displayed pieces from 17 artists, all CBS-CS members. The exhibit included photography, quilting, painting, knitting, sewing, and t-shirt design. The audience was wowed by the diversity of the acts including singers, pianists, guitarists, a children's book author, a martial artist, a standup comedian, and a Syracuse-themed rap video. The Moodie family showed off their t-shirt designs and Hanita Blair sang. Cantor Robert Lieberman and Rhea Jezer lead a sing-along with over 115 eager participants. "CBS-CS Got Talent" culminated with Israeli dancing, led by Michal Downie.



Rabbi Ilan Emanuel Arrives at Temple Concord

by Sally Cutler

On July 1, Rabbi Ilan Emanuel joined Temple Concord as its rabbi. Ordained by the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Rabbi Emanuel previously served as associate rabbi in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and as rabbi in Lincoln, Nebraska and, most recently, in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Jeff Lefkowitz, Temple Concord president, noted that "Rabbi Emanuel brings the experience and passion to lead Temple Concord at an extraordinary time in its history. He has the knowledge, insight, and vision to guide our Reform synagogue into the future, and we are delighted that he is joining us."

Rabbi Emanuel said that "Becoming the rabbi of Temple Concord is a great honor. I am humbled that I will be only the seventh Rabbi in just over 180 years and am excited to have the chance to help guide the congregation at such a time of great opportunity."

Rabbi's family includes his wife, Randi, and their daughter, a University of Texas student. Rounding out the household is their dog, Indiana Jones.

Temple Concord, which began its existence in 1839, is the ninth-oldest Reform synagogue in the country, serving a wide geographic area of Central New York.



This column featuring businesses owned by members of our community is generously sponsored by RAV Properties.

Young Entrepreneurs

"Are you a person who likes to brighten other people's day? Are you someone who's really nice but you don't like talking to people? Wouldn't it be great to have a shirt that says it all? That's why I created the U Rock shirt. Now you can go into public and put smiles on people's faces without even saying anything. The shirt does all the talking."

Asher Moodie is a natural-born salesman. Who would not buy a U Rock shirt after hearing this pitch?

Asher and Davin Moodie are brothers. They are in the 4th and 2nd grades respectively at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. Both have designed t-shirts under their brand name Pandito Art Work. Asher designed his Chip the Cookie shirt because Davin really likes cookies. He wanted to cheer him up, so he came up with a cookie character, Chip, who is positive and tells people to not feel crummy. The Pandito name comes from a nickname Asher's parents came up with when he was a baby.

Davin created his Rainbow Koala shirt because he thinks koalas are cute, and he loves all colors (he doesn't have a favorite color) so he enclosed the koala in a rainbow square.

The shirts are available on Amazon and a personal website www.toyskidslove.org. The responses from purchasers are very positive. "People were smiling at me, and I wasn't sure why, but then I remembered I was wearing this shirt," wrote one reviewer on Amazon. "Every time I wear this shirt, someone stops me and says how much they like it. Def a cool design," wrote another. Another family posted a photo and this review: "Our family LOVES these shirts! They fit perfectly, we ordered all different sizes and colors and everything is good quality. We loved that they had woman's cut shirts that fit really great. More than anything, we love the cute design, and they are

great conversation starters!"

The shirts come in standard and premium quality in black, navy blue, pink, red and purple, priced at \$14.99 and \$19.99. They are also available in both men's and women's sizes and also as hoodies in heather grey and dark heather, priced at \$31.99.



Crouse Health Ranked as a 'Most Trusted' Healthcare Brand

"Trust is such a key foundational element in healthcare and it is gratifying to be recognized and listed among industry leaders," said Crouse President and Chief Executive Officer Seth Kronenberg, MD. He made the statement in response to the news that Crouse Health was ranked as one of the 30 most-trusted healthcare brands in the United States in a research report published by Monigle, an independent healthcare consulting company. "This is validation that our dedicated focus on 'every moment matters' is making a difference for our patients, their family members and our community," added Dr. Kronenberg.

The Monigle report drew on research from more than 25,000 healthcare consumers who evaluated 207 brands across 64 markets to identify the strongest healthcare experiences in the nation. All health systems in the report were evaluated using Monigle's *Humanizing Brand Experience* framework, which asked consumers to share their perceptions across a range of emotional, intellectual and behavioral drivers. Using their feedback as a guide, brand scores were then calculated as a composite based entirely on consumer perceptions, adjusted by market. The research looked at what consumers see and hear from a brand, including its 'buzz', aesthetics and environmental spaces; what consumers associate about a brand, including its employees, outcomes and transparency; the emotional connection a brand builds with consumers, including a sense of security and confidence; how a brand builds engagement with consumers.

Crouse Health is a not-for-profit organization serving Central New York. In operation since 1887, Crouse is licensed for 506 acute-care adult beds and 57 bassinets, and serves more than 23,000 inpatients, 56,000 emergency services visits and more than 600,000 outpatients a year from a 16-county



area in Central and Northern New York. It is a top 10 area employer, with 3,200 employees and a medical staff of more than 900 physicians. Crouse is Central New York's largest provider of maternity care services, delivering 3,800 babies annually, and is the designated regional referral center for high-risk neonatal intensive care (NICU) services. Other areas of specialty include comprehensive adult and pediatric diagnostic and interventional cardiac care (Crouse is home to CNY's only pediatric cardiac catheterization program); internal medicine; surgical services (including the latest advancements in bariatric, GYN oncology and robotic surgery); stroke care/neurosciences (Crouse is a NYS-designated Comprehensive Stroke Center); orthopedics and the region's longest-running addiction treatment services provider. Crouse also operates the Pomeroy College of Nursing, providing critical nursing education to more than 250 students annually.

Advertise in the

Jewish Observer

of Central New York

Call Cynthia Oppenheimer
at 716-308-4843

coppenheimer@buffalospre.com



Tzofim Friendship Caravan Returns to the JCC This Summer

by Sara Collins

After a few years of hiatus due to COVID, the *Tzofim Friendship Caravan* will be returning to Syracuse. They will be performing this summer with two performances. The Caravan will be performing at the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center of Syracuse on July 17 for JCC campers in the morning and again at 7 pm for the community.

The *Tzofim Friendship Caravan* is a group of ten teens from Israel who are a part of the Israeli Scout movement. They travel across the US to showcase their lives and culture through musical performances. Featuring songs in Hebrew, English and Yiddish, the Caravan puts together an engaging show that also includes dances, stories and images.

On July 17th the teens will spend the day on the JCC campus. After their morning performance, the Scouts will be engaging campers in Israeli fun and games. Once the camp day is over, the Caravan teens will have dinner with seniors at the JCC Bobbi Epstein Lewis Senior Adult Dining Program. Their visit will culminate with their evening community performance at 7 pm that is free to the community in the JCC gymnasium.

"We are excited to once again be able to bring the Friendship Caravan back to the Syracuse community. We look forward to the excitement the Scouts bring to our campers and to the community. The Caravan is a great way to kick off our Israeli culture week," said Amy Bisnett, associate director of children's programming. **For more information about the Tzofim Israeli Friendship Caravan's visit to the JCC, please go to www.jccsy.org or call 315-445-2360.**



Matthews Children's Foundation Supports JCC



The JCC of Syracuse received \$1,000 from the Matthews Children's Foundation. The Foundation awards grants to nonprofit organizations whose purpose is to support children. The JCC's children programming has received continued support for more than a decade from the Matthews Children's Foundation. Pictured is the JCC's Executive Director Marci Erlebacher and Board president Steven Siskind.

A Central New York Teen in Israel

By Ari Eglash

For the past three months, I have been attending high school, living, visiting and experiencing Israel as a 16-year-old sophomore on the Heller High school program at Kibbutz Tzuba near Jerusalem. Going on this four-month-long trip has been the best thing that I have ever done in my life, and it was by far the best decision I have ever made. Learning about my heritage, in our homeland, has been life-changing for me and has allowed me to connect much more deeply to my Judaism.

Every week, we go on one or two *tiyulim* (field trips), usually with our Jewish history teachers, to a place that connects to the unit we are learning about. This way, we can learn about an event while actually seeing where it happened. There are also big trips that last for about ten days like journeys south to the desert and to Poland. We went to the desert and Eilat three weeks into the program, and I am really glad we did because it was a great opportunity to get much closer to my classmates and to warm us up to the program.

Going to Poland was an extremely meaningful experience, and I am so happy that I did it, even though I was hesitant to go at first. My group walked through the Warsaw Ghetto, Ticochine, Lubline, Krakow, Mydonik and Auschwitz. These six places were all extremely important for me to see, but what made the biggest impact was Auschwitz. There was a huge book which included the 4,000,000 Jews that were murdered during the Holocaust and of whom we still know the names. I was able to find the name of one of my great uncles in the book, and my family then told me what had happened to him, making this experience very emotional. Another reason why this experience was extremely personal to me was because I grew up learning about my own family's Holocaust story; my Grandma Helen is a survivor. Being able to spend this time in Poland with my friends and people that I am comfortable with made it even more special for me and made it so my connections and relationships with these people got stronger and deeper.

Our school week lasts from Sunday to Thursday and we do volunteer work on Friday mornings. Normal school days start out with two hours of Hebrew class and two and a half more of Jewish history, with a few breaks throughout. In the afternoon everyone takes all the classes that they would normally take back home like math, science, English, history and foreign language. The days sound very long, but when you are living them, they are fun and don't feel like eleven-hour school days.

At the beginning of the semester, everyone was interviewed by the Hebrew teachers so that they would be placed in the best Hebrew level for them. There are four levels, the fourth being nearly fluent Hebrew speakers and the first being people who knew almost no Hebrew. I'm in the third level. In class we work on reading, writing and speaking, with the goal being to return home nearly fluent. In Jewish history, we started out the semester learning about Biblical history while using the Tanach and other sources as we worked our way up to modern Jewish and Israeli history.

Most of the weekends are free weekends where we can either stay with the group on the kibbutz or leave to visit someone. I usually leave so that I can go see my aunt and many cousins that live around the country. It has been amazing to be able to see the family that I otherwise don't get to see often enough.

Just three months ago, I was walking through an airport with a group of teenagers that I had met ten minutes prior, and I could already tell that I was going to love it here. Now that it is almost time to come home, I know that I was absolutely correct. I cannot express enough gratitude to the Syracuse Jewish community, Temple Concord and the CNY Jewish Federation helping to make it possible for me to have this incredible life-changing experience. Coming back to Syracuse and leaving my family, friends and life in Israel is going to be a really hard adjustment for me, but I am glad that I could use these four months in the best way possible.



DR. SUSAN SALKOW ROSENTHAL
 May 15, 2023

Dr. Susan Salkow Rosenthal, age 78, died peacefully in Syracuse, NY on May 15.

She was a graduate of Nottingham High School and went on to earn her B.A. and Ph.D. from Syracuse University. Her groundbreaking research on overtrust of computers was decades ahead of its time and still has widespread implications today.

After completing her doctorate, she settled in Ithaca and became a tenured professor in the Ithaca College School of Business for more than 30 years, with a focus on organizational behavior, before retiring in 2018.

Dr. Rosenthal is survived by her son Rick (Lailee) Rosenthal, her daughter Jill (Brian) Kaufman and three grandchildren, Abby Kaufman and Elias and Nina. She was predeceased by her brother Hugh Salkow and her parents Jessie and Irving Salkow.

Those wishing to honor her life may make a donation in her name to ORT America which provides educational programs to students in under-resourced Jewish communities worldwide.

www.sisskindfuneralservice.com

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!

RUTH SMULYAN
 May 17, 2023


Ruth Smulyan, born on January 23, 1931 in Wilkes Barre, PA, died at home at the age of 92 on May 17. Ruth graduated from Grand Army of the Republic High School in Wilkes Barre and was one of two graduating seniors in her class to attend college. She received her B.A. in journalism from Penn State University in 1950. Ruth worked in the Lifestyle department (formerly the Women's Desk) of the Syracuse Herald Journal from 1963-1974 and was active in and president of the local chapter of the Association for Women in Communications. She served as Director of Public Relations for the Syracuse Symphony from 1976 to 1978 and then public relations specialist for Youth Community Services. She subsequently coordinated the Consortium for Culture and Medicine, a collaboration between SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse University and Lemoyne College, for over 15 years. She was married for 68 years to Harold Smulyan, professor of cardiology at Upstate Medical University, who died in 2020. Together they lived in Oxford, England in 1974-1975 and Paris, France in 1996.

Ruth was an avid reader, and she regularly attended the Friends of Central Library Author Series. She also loved theater and dance and in addition to her lifetime Syracuse Stage subscription, she often traveled to the Stratford Festival at Niagara on the Lake, New York City ballet performances in Saratoga Springs and performances whenever possible in New York City and London. She served as her own travel agent and arranged trips around the world for herself and Harold, covering Europe, South America and central, southern and eastern Asia.

Ruth is survived by three daughters, Susan Smulyan, Lisa Smulyan and Betsy Smulyan, son in-law Michael Markowicz, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She welcomed their families and friends into her house for decades, beginning with the crew from Nottingham High School, provided food and conversation for several generations of friends and neighbors and offered sage advice, pretzels, cookies and a smile for all. We will miss her fiction recommendations, her chocolate stashes and her magic suitcase full of children's books.

Donations in Ruth's memory can be made to Syracuse Stage at SyracuseStage.org/support or by mail to Syracuse Stage, 820 E Genesee St. Syracuse, NY, 13210.

Birnbaum Funeral Service

DR. ROGER GREENBERG
 May 17, 2023


Dr. Roger Greenberg, born in 1941, died May 17 at SUNY Upstate. He held the rank of Distinguished Professor at the State University of New York Upstate Medical University, where until his retirement several years ago, he headed the Division of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry. Roger served as a psychologist on the faculty at Upstate for more than 50 years.

As the son of Depression-era parents, he learned early the importance of working hard, studying to get ahead and saving. Despite coming from a working-class background, Roger was drawn to music and art from an early age, and he was gifted at both. Roger also sharpened his sense of humor from an early age, and this eventually became one of his lifelong interests, and something which generations of his Upstate colleagues, interns and patients would later remember him for.

After graduating with a degree in psychology from Brooklyn College, he relocated upstate from New York City, completing his Ph.D. at Syracuse University, and not long thereafter joining the faculty at Upstate.

Roger will be remembered as a positive, supportive influence in many other people's lives. He touched others through kindness and humor. And fundamentally, he cared.

He is survived by Vicki, his wife of 58 years; by Michael and Lisa, his son and daughter-in-law; and by Hunter and Spencer, his granddaughter and grandson.

www.sisskindfuneralservice.com

RONALD NAISTADT
 May 20, 2023


Ronald Naistadt, 76, passed away May 20 with his wife, daughter and sister by his side. A lifelong resident of Syracuse, he was born on May 1, 1947 to Gerald and Betty Naistadt.

During his professional career, he was a well-respected sales representative, admired by customers and colleagues alike for his professionalism and success. He was always dapper, many times with his trademark bow tie whenever he went on a sales call. He had a gift of being able to relate to people and engage in conversations on any subject.

He was passionate about cars and had a lifelong love affair with Corvettes, his 2002 black coupe being his current ride. He was a past officer of the Syracuse Corvette Club and thoroughly enjoyed many rallies and events.

He was a life-time member of Temple Adath Yeshurun and part of young leadership of Syracuse Jewish Federation. If something peaked his attention, he pursued his research and interest until he was satisfied that he had attained a thorough knowledge on the subject.

Ronnie's family includes his devoted, loving wife Marlene, his daughter Kari (Alan) Fineman, Marlene's children Jonathan and Bryan, grandchildren Ben and Rachel; his sister Sherry Rappaport and a loving extended family.

Contributions in lieu of flowers may be made to Temple Adath Yeshurun or Make-A-Wish of CNY.

Marlene and family gratefully acknowledge and thank the loving care given to Ronnie by the staff at both Upstate campuses.

www.sisskindfuneralservice.com

BETTE LEVINE
 May 19, 2023


Bette Levine, 87, died May 19 at Menorah Park. Bette was a life resident of Syracuse. She married her late husband Ralph in June 1956, and they settled in Syracuse where they raised their two sons and had a good life. Bette worked with Ralph over the years in their clothing store, and later they worked together for CPT Systems.

She was a long-time member of Temple Adath Yeshurun. She was especially proud to have been the author of "The Talking Baseball," a children's book, and "The Hurricane Within Me," a book detailing her life with dystonia.

Bette's devotion to her family was most important to her. She is survived by her sons Shel (Julie) and Phil (Heidi), grandchildren Jake, Noah and David and her sisters Trudy Spector and Jeanne Glick.

Donations in Bette's memory may be made to the National Fragile X Foundation.

www.sisskindfuneralservice.com

JOAN BLUM RUBENSTEIN
May 24, 2023

Joan Blum Rubenstein, age 97, died peacefully on May 24, surrounded by her family. She was born on August 23, 1925 in Wheeling, WV and spent her childhood in NYC. Joan spent her adult life in Syracuse where she raised her three children with her husband, Emanuel Rubenstein, to whom she was married for 49 years.

Joan, the matriarch of her family, is survived by her children, Susan Rubenstein Reed of Rochester, NY, Robert (Helen) Rubenstein of Fairlawn, NJ, and Patti (Jonathan) Becker of Stamford, CT, 8 eight grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. She was predeceased in 1993 by her husband and in 2012 by her granddaughter, Stephanie Rachel Becker, as well as her Mom (Marjorie Livingston Blum) and Dad (Melville Blum).

Joan was devoted to her family, adored her three kids and called them her greatest accomplishment. Described by many as an optimist, she was known for her broad smile, bright red lipstick and matching red nail polish. Joan loved life and the stock market. She was proud of her intellect and financial acumen. Joan graduated from NYU at 19, with a major in retailing, where she was president of her sorority, Alpha Epsilon Phi. She was an avid reader, always with multiple 500+ page books by her bedside. She loved playing cards and was a bridge regional master. She enjoyed entertaining her many friends, which she did easily and often. She went on exotic annual trips but was equally happy at home with a casual dinner cooked in 15 minutes and served at 6 pm promptly. She spent many of her happiest days with her family at her cottage on Lake Ontario.

Joan was a true supporter of the Syracuse community. She was the longest-serving volunteer at Crouse Hospital, where she worked for 40 years. She was the treasurer of NCJW for decades, and she was the treasurer of Temple Society of Concord and president of Sisterhood.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Stephanie Becker Fund at StephanieBeckerFund.com or Make-A-Wish.

www.sisskindfuneralservice.com

MARK GELDER
DRUCKER
May 29, 2023


Mark Gelder Drucker, 84, of Richmond, VA, formerly of Syracuse, died on May 29. Mark was born in Chicago, IL to Abraham and Vera Drucker. He was a graduate of Michigan State University. Mark leaves behind his wife, Marlene Rubenstein Drucker and two daughters, Cantor Michelle (Elias Friedman) Drucker Friedman and Lizzie (Russell Basch) Drucker-Basch who, he had on good authority, hung the moon. The joys of his life were his five grandchildren, Annika (Sid) Siddarth, Sophia Basch, Emma Friedman, Noah Basch and Julia Friedman.

His grandchildren share special memories of Zayde's boating trips. These outings included tubing, feeding snacks and ice cream outside of mealtimes and invariably running aground. With Mark, life was an adventure. Illegal firecrackers and jokes were shot off at the slightest provocation. His laugh was glorious and infectious. He loved deeply and shared opinions freely, "naturally, as one would." He can rest easy knowing that he transmitted his special brand of wisdom to his children and grandchildren who know that if you "waste not" you will "want not," and they will never take any wooden nickels.

Mark earned his living as a manufacturer's representative, but he made his life being a kind, caring, funny man who loved people. For those who loved him, his memory will bless them as they continue his legacy. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Emanuel Congregation, www.emmanuelcong.org.

*Arrangements by Chicago Jewish Funerals
- Skokie Chapel*



"Zachor - Remember"

Our family continues to provide outstanding service in the most trying times.
PRE-PLANNING AND MONUMENT CONSULTATIONS

birnbaum

funeral service, inc.

Martin J. Birnbaum, Elaine R. Birnbaum (Ret.) & Joel M. Friedman
 1909 East Fayette Street | Syracuse, New York 13210 | birnbaumfs@cnymail.com

birnbaumfuneralserviceinc.com | 315-472-5291



Steven L. Sisskind

Sisskind

Funeral Service LLC

*Entrusting a most sensitive time
into compassionate hands*

- Monument Consultation
- Pre-arrangements

3175 E. Genesee Street
 Syracuse, NY 13224
 315-663-4200
sisskindfs@aol.com
www.sisskindfuneralservice.com



KAVOD



INDEPENDENT JEWISH FUNERAL CHAPELS
 MEMBERSHIP BY INVITATION

To advertise in the

Jewish Observer

of Central New York

Call Cynthia at
 716-308-4843

coppenheimer@buffalospre.com

“All good men and women must take responsibility to create legacies that will take the next generation to a level we could only imagine.”

— Jim Rohn



Leave your legacy for the Jewish Community of Central New York, for the people, causes and organizations that have given meaning to your life.

Use the power of your life for the lasting good of all those you touch, from your own family to our community and into the future.

Have a conversation with Michael Balanoff, executive director of the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York about how you can leave a legacy that can make a difference.
Call 315-445-0270 or email mbalanoff@jewishfoundationcny.org

