

# Jewish Observer

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

## of Central New York

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DECEMBER 2023 | KISLEV-TEVET 5784

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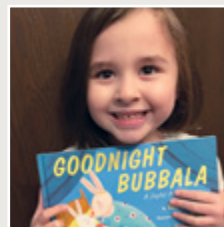
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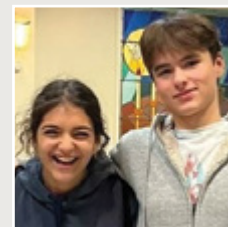
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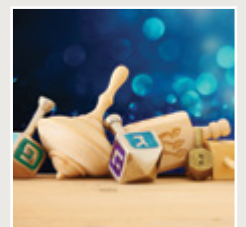
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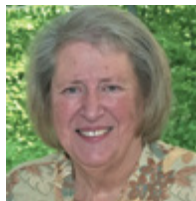
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# December 2023

## From the Editor



Barbara Davis

***"A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle."***

James Keller

The theme of this month's *Jewish Observer* was going to be Chanukah and Community. Then Hamas attacked Israel, resulting in the greatest loss of Jewish lives since the Holocaust. The resulting war was devastating.

We learned many things during this tragedy. One was that Israel was not a divided country. Whether conservative or progressive, Orthodox or secular, Israel's leaders put their political and personal differences aside to form an emergency unity government.

We also learned that the Jewish community has many allies. The CNY Community Foundation reached out to Federation with generous concern for our wellbeing and gave us a grant of \$5000 for security. Our friends in the Catholic Church added a prayer for Israel to their daily service. The County Executive came to our rally. We heard from Christians and Muslims, Democrats and Republicans, people of all ages and races and creeds, who expressed their concern and support.

We learned that people can be very generous. In less than two weeks, we sent OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS in aid to Israel, for humanitarian needs, medical needs and support for the IDF.

We also learned that antisemitism did not diminish during this period. Our middle and high school students in particular experienced incidents that were unpleasant, if not actually threatening. But they were our heroes. Students at Fayetteville-Manlius High School created a Jewish Culture Club and fought for the right to display the Israeli flag and to include Israel as part of "Jewish Culture." Inspired by their example, students at Jamesville-DeWitt High School also created a Jewish club.

Another thing that we learned – and what I am about to write now will undoubtedly cause distress, but I am going to say it anyway – was that support of Israel is not universal in our community. I was deafened by the silence of many, too many, in our Jewish community who said nothing and did nothing. Whether they were afraid, whether they do not support Israel, whether they just don't care – their refusal to speak up for and stand by Israel at this time was, in my opinion, reprehensible and tragic. Perhaps I have no right to judge them, but I do. Some of them are in communal leadership positions, which makes their silence even more shameful. Turning away from Israel at a time like this is, to me, inexplicable and inexcusable. For the first time in my life, I understand what happened (or did not happen) during the Holocaust, when so few cried out against the destruction of six million Jews. I am sorry that I had to experience the same kind of indifference to Jewish suffering today. The pain of this rejection by our fellow Jews is embittering, exceeded only by the tremendous sorrow that accompanies the deaths of innocent civilians on all sides and the deaths of brave young Israeli soldiers.

This masthead article was written at the beginning of November. By the time the December issue of the *JO* reaches readers, the situation may be very different from what it is today. I can only hope that peace will have been restored and that Hamas will have been permanently defeated. It is difficult to turn away from the war and deal with mundane issues, but Judaism emphasizes life over death. So I will turn to the upcoming celebration of Chanukah, the original theme of this issue.

In 5784, our Jewish community is trying a bold new experiment. The members of the Rabbinical Council agreed to forego individual synagogue Chanukah dinners in favor of a gigantic Community Chanukah Dinner at which all the shuls will join together with those in our community who are not shul members to celebrate the holiday which means "dedication." Partnering with Federation, which has *Engage!* as its theme for the year, and with the support of very generous benefactors, this first-ever community celebration is another step in the revitalization of Jewish Central New York.

It is said that Jewish life revolves around two institutions: the home and the community. To be in a community, you need to be doing something together that is worth doing and makes belonging to that community matter. The community needs to have a purpose, and its members need to be passionate about that purpose and to share the community's core values. This year, our religious leadership and our professional leadership have taken a big step up the ladder of Jewish purposefulness by observing three C's: consultation, communication and collaboration. Their goal is to have everyone in our Jewish community care about what we have in common, care about and respect one another, be loyal to one another and build meaningful relationships.

This is a big deal, and of course, there is some risk. But we know that the most effective communities support members who take risks, try new things and go out on limbs to create and innovate. Effective communities work through differences of opinion and make space for civil discourse and for the learning that occurs from appreciating multiple points of view. It is our hope that members of the community who come to the dinner will not sit with people they already know but will find space at a table with people they don't know, or don't know well. Let's widen our Jewish friendship circles. Let's make new friends. Let's build a greater community.

The goal of our Community Chanukah Dinner is to engender in participants a sense of dedication and purpose. Every Jew matters in the big picture of community. Each member of the community adds value to the whole. As we share a meal together, as we light the *chanukiyah*, as we enjoy the music of Six13 in the company of hundreds of other members of our community, let the words of the Chanukah blessing acquire greater resonance and meaning: *Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.* To which, this year, we add **AM ISRAEL CHAI!**

# Jewish Observer

of Central New York

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# From the Jewish Federation of CNY President/CEO



Michael Balanoff

## EVERYBODY COUNTS.

When Israel was attacked on October 7<sup>th</sup>, our horror, sorrow, shock and grief were immeasurable. But as Rabbi Deborah Waxman has said, “a capacity for resilience has been woven into the fabric of Judaism over thousands of years. Judaism’s focus, both spiritual and practical, on helping people get on with living in the face of challenges, pain and tragedy has helped the Jewish people to survive.” Within days, we had organized a rally to show our support for Israel. We wrote letters to the newspapers, appeared on television, told Israel’s story. We worked to control the narrative

and to keep the community aware and informed about how to provide meaningful assistance. We put out Israeli flags; the students in our schools made banners and posters; they wrote letters to Israeli soldiers. And we set up a fundraising campaign to provide for the immediate needs of the survivors of the massacre, to provide medical and blood supplies for Magen David Adom to treat the wounded and the troops and to provide support for the members of the Israel Defense Forces. Donations large and small poured in. Within two weeks, we had achieved something of a miracle for a small upstate New York Jewish community: we had raised over **one million dollars** for Israel. And we know that many people made other donations to other organizations and sent support in other ways.

**What mattered was that people stood up to be counted.** And that’s what I would like to talk about in this column.

**Everybody counts.** Your contribution matters. You’re a parent, aunt, uncle, grandparent, friend or teacher and you’re having a meaningful impact on children’s learning. You’re participating in a project which will affect the user experience for a company or a not-for-profit. You are working to improve the environment or to resettle refugees or you’re in the medical profession or the legal profession. You’re a first responder,

you’re tech support, you’re a bus driver or an Uber driver or you’re just the first person to greet people when they come to the office in the morning with a cheery hello that starts their day off right. **Everything you do makes a difference.** Everything you do affects the quality of life of other people.

As the president/CEO of Federation, when I say the word “contribution,” everybody thinks I mean money. And, of course, there are times when I do mean money, but what I’d rather have is your contribution to the wholeness of the community. (Oddly enough, since I am



dictating my words into my document, the computer just typed “holiness” instead of “wholeness,” but I think it has a point there also.) A community is not just our campaign achievement. It’s not just the number of donors. **It’s about people coming together because they want to, because they support the values of our community and want to make them a reality.** When 400 people come to celebrate Israel’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, that’s community. When 500 people attend a performance of a rock musical about the Holocaust, that’s community. When people who may never give us money come to KlezFest or plant saplings for Reverse *Tashlich* or put food in the food pantry or sign up for the Sunday Cinema Series or stand up for Israel or accept an invitation to our Chanukah Dinner, that’s community. **It’s not just about money.**

**Engage!** is Federation’s theme this year. What does that mean? Hillel said, “Do not separate yourself from the community.” Yet we know that in 5784 more Jews than ever have done just that. The Pew Research Center created a name for these unengaged Jews: “Jews of no religion,” but that implies that the only way to be Jewish is to be religious. To me, being Jewish is more about peoplehood

than about religious observance. And Pew’s research indicates that one-third of Jewish adults say that being part of a Jewish community is essential to what being Jewish means to them, and an additional 39% say it is important, though not essential. The vast majority of U.S. Jews say they feel either “a great deal” (48%) or “some” (37%) sense of belonging to the Jewish people. And most Jewish Americans feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish people and responsibility for fellow Jews in need. We saw that this fall.

That is why Federation is working to increase engagement. Pew reports that “older Jews report having more robust Jewish friendship networks than younger Jews, as do married Jews compared with unmarried Jews. Jews living in the Northeast – where Jews are disproportionately concentrated – tend to have more Jewish friends than Jews living in the Midwest, South or West.”

So we are trying to reverse this trend, to increase Jewish friendship networks among younger Jews, unmarried Jews, alienated Jews, Jews of no religion, interfaith families, those who are Jewishly adjacent or Jew-curious. **We want to engage all the Jewish members of our community, so that they know that they are part of our people, that they are valued and needed and have roles to play.** We want everyone in our community to feel a sense of engagement, connection and belonging to an extraordinary people with a tradition that has sustained us for thousands of years and has always had treating others well and making the world a better place at the core of its ethical system.

As we celebrate the holiday of Chanukah, I invite you all to **Engage!** Happy Festival of Lights!

**Happy Hanukkah**

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# Unity and Community

by Rabbi Evan Shore, Shaarei Torah Orthodox Congregation of Syracuse

The joyous holiday of Chanukah is more than just lighting candles. Though we thank God for the miracle of the olive oil, there is another crucial part: the miraculous military victory over the Greeks.

Rabbi Chananya writes: "Every war that breaks out in the world stems from a conflict of ideas. In other words, ideological conflicts lead to an actual war." The Greeks tried to darken the eyes and lives of the Jewish people with their decrees. (*Midrash Rabbah*) The war the Jews fought was in response to the spiritual threat posed by the Greeks' pagan worship. Jews could still call themselves Jews as long as they would believe and behave based upon the mandates of Hellenism.

Though outnumbered, weaker and less trained in the art of war, the Jewish people, under the leadership of the Maccabees, were victorious over the Greeks. The Greeks, having failed to convert the Jews peacefully, resorted to warfare to achieve their nefarious goals. How did a smaller-sized army beat a larger one? When the Jews mobilized against their enemy by placing their faith in Almighty God, it served as a source of strength and continuity. The new bond enabled the Jews to face the challenges posed by the Greeks.

However, at the same time, a second conflict was raging. A civil war existed between the Hasidim and the Jewish Hellenists. This conflict was for control of the Jewish soul and future. Would Jewry remain loyal to Hashem or embrace the idolatrous and licentious



Greek way of life.

It is fascinating to note that the warring Jewish factions did come together and become united to defeat the evil Greek

Empire. The last law in the Rambam's listing of Chanukah *halakhot* says: If a person has the opportunity to fulfill only one of two *mitzvot*, lighting candles for one's home i.e., Sabbath candles, or lighting a *Chanukiah*, the lights for Shabbas receive priority, since they generate peace within the home.

Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik points out this is a very strange place to discuss the difference between Shabbat and Chanukah candles. In this case, when both Shabbas and Chanukah coincide, and a person lacks the resources to light many candles, then only the Shabbat candles are lit. This is due to the fact that Shabbat candles symbolize and project a message of peace. The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom* from the root form of *shalem* meaning whole or complete. United we stand, divided we fall.

There is a great deal to learn from this Rambam. Hamas is at war against Jewry. In Israel, the horrific attack of October 7 brought the entire country together. As the Prime Minister of Israel said, "this is our second independence war." The world must realize that Hamas broke a truce with Israel on October 7. As King David writes in the *Book of Psalms*: "I am all peace; but when I speak, they are for war." Just as the cohesion of the Jews in the Chanukah story led to victory, let the unity today amongst Jews in Syracuse and the rest of the world result also in victory for the Land of Israel.

HaShem will give might to his people; Hashem will bless his people with peace.

# Souper Sunday Scheduled for January 7

by Anick Sinclair

*"Only the pure in heart can make a good soup." - Beethoven*

**Soup is a timeless tradition, recipes passed down through generations. So is Super Sunday. If we marry these two customs, we are left with a fabulous SOUPER SUNDAY!**

Historically, Souper Sunday was an all-day telethon. This year, being held at Shaarei Torah, and in person for the first time in three years, organizers are hoping to turn this into a young-family-friendly event.

"Come to Souper Sunday and have a bowl of hot soup and a grilled cheese sandwich to warm up. This is an opportunity to turn an old tradition into something more relatable and fun," says Amira Goldberg, Souper Sunday co-chair with her husband Adam. "We are excited to present something new under the flag of the Jewish Federation of Central New York."

Along with soup bowl painting, arts and crafts tables, a trivia quiz and a PJ Library® corner, families are being asked to bring soup cans with them to the event. Not only will these cans be donated to the Food Pantry at Menorah Park but the family with the longest line of cans will win a prize. And there are plenty of other prizes to be won.


Participants are also asked to bring in their favorite soup recipes, with a family photo. Federation will create an online cookbook for our community, something to pass on and to remind our children of the beauty of our heritage.

"Of course, we cannot lose sight of



our main goal which is to reach out to our Jewish community and raise much-needed funds for the Federation annual campaign," reminds Adam. "Our incredible volunteers will be calling you and asking for your pledges and donations."

"Please give generously," encourages Nan Fechtner, 2024 Campaign Cabinet Chair. "This year has seen deepest hardship in Israel and abroad and you have the power to transform the Jewish dream of a better world into reality. The power to create a world where we freely and joyously celebrate our Judaism. Where Jews and our neighbors live in safety and peace. Answer the call! Don't avoid it. We need you more than ever."



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## Wishing you a Happy Chanukah!

"Humanity needs our joint witness in favor of respect for the dignity of man and woman created in the image and likeness of God, and in favor of peace which is above all God's gift." Pope Francis

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## » Book Review

# The Cook and The Rabbi, recipes and stories to celebrate the Jewish Holidays

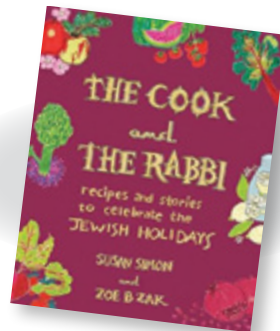
Reviewed by Joan and Lon Lowenstein



If you are looking for Bubbe's noodle kugel recipe, this is not the book for you. However, if you need a refresher course to fill in gaps from your Hebrew school days, or if you have lived as a secular Jew for most of your life and would like to learn more about the major holidays, then this is a perfect place to start.

*The Cook and The Rabbi*, by Susan Simon and Rabbi Zoe B. Zak, takes the reader on a journey through the Jewish lunar year beginning with *Selichot* in the Hebrew month of *Elul* until we end at *Tu B'Shvat* in, well, *Av*. Along the way, each chapter contains a thorough yet concise explanation of each of the major holidays along with very interesting and sometimes humorous anecdotes. If you are anything like us, a few decades removed from religious school, you will find this to be an excellent review.

Following each chapter are several interesting and somewhat complex recipes from James Beard award-winning Chef, Susan Simon. The majority of these recipes are not typical Jewish holiday foods like brisket, tzimmes and matzo ball soup. They originate from Susan Simon's wealth of experience and her travels and are influenced by her research in places such as Italy, Morocco, The Seychelles Islands, ethnic restaurants in New York City, or local farms near Hudson, New York where she resides. The Chef half of this book review team stated that most of the recipes are "restaurant level and involve more technique and more exotic ingredients than average recipes," but sprinkled throughout are a few easier recipes.



As Hanukkah is approaching, we thought we would try the Mixed Vegetable Latkes, and they were delicious! Like all latkes, they were a patchke, but like all latkes, well worth it. The Chef describes them as "more herbaceous and seasoned than plain latkes" and he found that "the dill comes through and provides a lot of flavor." While vegetable latkes have been around for a long time, this "is a good version with sweetness added from the parsnip and carrot."

Now, for an anecdote. Were you aware that Elvis Presley served a family as a *Shabbos goy*? Not only that, but after his famous peanut butter and banana sandwich, his next favorite food was gribenes! For those of you too young to remember, gribenes is the crispy fried chicken skin "cracklings" or remnants, left in the pan after making schmaltz, often served with fried onions. Not surprisingly, the peanut butter and banana sandwich is likely the easiest recipe in the book. Sadly, the recipe for gribenes is not included.

This review might have concluded differently had it been written before October 7, 2023. But it wasn't, so as with anything in life these days, our reading and writing is slanted toward Israel. In her teachings about Chanukah, Rabbi Zak references the *Mishna* and teaches how "Aaron, believed that every person, within their heart, longs to make reconciliation and peace." She continues "Chanukah is a time for peace making. In Israel, there is even a tradition of feuding families to join together for meals... and for anyone needing to heal a relationship, to come together for this purpose. Hanukkah is an auspicious time to come closer to one another and for reconciliation. It is the great holiday of peace."

May it be so, Rabbi Zak, may it be so.

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# New Twists on Old Customs

For those who like a new twists on an old customs, here are some recipes that are breaking the mold for Chanukah. B'tay avon!

## GENIUS LATKE TARTS

Kosher.com promises that “you can make amazing latkes with delicious toppings for a crowd, without standing over the stove frying.” In this recipe, the latke mixture is pressed into tart pans just like a crust and baked. Fill the crust with your choice of toppings, cut into pieces and serve.

*Yield: 2 tarts*

### Ingredients:

7 medium potatoes (about 2.5 lbs)  
1 large onion, peeled and quartered  
2 eggs  
4 tablespoons matzo meal  
2 teaspoons kosher salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
Cooking spray

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Peel and grate the potatoes and onion in a food processor fitted with the shredding blade. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl. Drain excess water. Add eggs, matzo meal, salt and pepper. Mix well and work as quickly as possible so that the potatoes don't brown.

Spray the tart pans well with cooking spray and place them side-by-side on a baking sheet. Divide the latke mixture between the two pans and press it down evenly all over the pan to create a crust. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes until the tarts are browned all around the edges.

Cool for 10 minutes in the pan before removing and topping with desired toppings.



## STRING BEANS AND ASPARAGUS WITH PASTRAMI CRUMBLE

Chef Sima Kazarnovsky, who believes the string bean is the cook's best friend in the side dish category, created this recipe topping the vegetables with a maple-flavored crumble so it is “disguised into a majestic side that begs to be served with a proper utensil at its proper course.”

### Ingredients

1 (12-oz./340-g.) bag frozen string beans  
1 bunch white asparagus  
1 and 1/2 tablespoons Gefen Olive Oil  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
1/2 teaspoon Montreal steak spice



### For the crumble:

1/3 cup maple syrup  
3 tablespoons soy sauce  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
1 teaspoon yellow mustard  
1–2 teaspoons hot sauce  
1 cube frozen garlic salt, to taste  
pepper, to taste  
1 (8-to-9-oz./225-to-250-g.) package shoulder pastrami, diced  
1/4 cup chopped pecans

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit (or 250 degrees Celsius).

Place string beans and asparagus on a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and spices. Toss to coat evenly.

Place in the oven for 35–40 minutes or until slightly charred, mixing them halfway through to get an even char.

Whisk the maple syrup, soy sauce, vinegar, mustard, hot sauce and garlic together in a bowl.

Place a frying pan over high heat and spray with cooking spray. Add the pastrami and sauté for five minutes, or until it darkens. Add the pecans and sauté for two more minutes, allowing them to toast on the bottom of the pan. Add the sauce mixture. Once it's simmering, turn the heat to medium-low and allow to cook for another five minutes, or until the pastrami is coated and sauce is thick and reduced. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, to taste.

Arrange vegetables on a platter. Top with the pastrami crumble and any extra sauce.

## TRIPLE CHOCOLATE TARTE

Chaya Ruchie Schwartz, proprietor of CookIt, a home-cook business, recommends this recipe which features a chocolate crust, truffle-like mousse and a rich glaze. “This dessert is a winner,” she says, “Perfect for that something special on Shabbos Chanukah.” Yield: 1 9-inch tart or 6 mini tarts.

### Ingredients:

15 chocolate sandwich cookies  
4 tablespoons margarine, at room temperature  
1 and 1/4 cups Kineret Whipped Topping  
7 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped  
2 large eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
4 tablespoons Kineret Whipped Topping  
4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped  
2 teaspoons light corn syrup  
2 tablespoons water



### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Finely crush cookies. Add margarine and mix until incorporated. Press into the bottom and up the sides of a nine-inch tart pan or mini pans. Bake for 10 minutes or until firm. Cool.

In a small pot, bring whip to a low boil. Shut the flame and add chopped chocolate. Let sit for one to two minutes, then mix until smooth. Quickly add eggs, vanilla extract and salt.

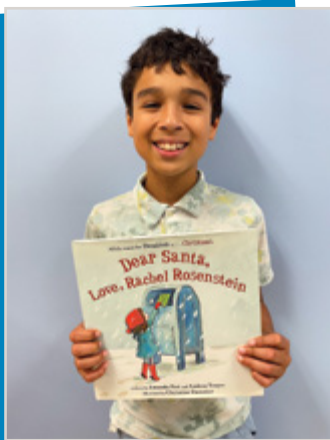
Pour filling into crust and bake for 25 minutes for a nine-inch tart or 20 minutes for mini tarts, until the outer part is set but the middle is still a bit wobbly. Cool completely.

Glaze: In a small pot, bring whip to a low boil. Add chocolate and let sit for a minute before mixing. Add corn syrup and water and mix until smooth.

Pour over cooled tart. Tilt the tart so that the glaze covers the whole top. Cool completely. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

## » Book Reviews

# New Chanukah Books for Kids



## *Dear Santa, Love, Rachel Rosenstein*

**Reviewed by Asher Moodie**

Rachel Rosenstein wants a very unusual gift for Hanukkah: Christmas! Rachel's house is the only one without any lights for Christmas because they're Jewish. Rachel feels left out and wants to celebrate Christmas, so she decides to write a secret card to Santa. Then she sets up her living room to be more festive for Christmas. On the day of Christmas, she is very disappointed. But then she learns valuable lessons about being Jewish and not celebrating Christmas, such as being happy with what she has and how beautiful the Hanukkah traditions can be. This book is written by Amanda Peet and Andrea Troyer and Illustrated by Christine Davenier. I would recommend this book for 3- to 6-year-olds because it is a fun story for the holiday season.



## *Bubbie and Zadie Come To My House: A Story For Hanukkah*

**Reviewed by Phoebe Cronlund**

I read *Bubbie and Zadie Come To My House: A Story For Hanukkah*, by Daniel Halevi Bloom, with illustrations by Claudia Julian. It is a book about Bubbie and Zadie going around to Jewish kids' houses on the first night of Hanukkah. Bubbie and Zadie use their magical powers to travel around by flying. This book tells you what to do if Bubbie and Zadie visit your house and what Bubbie and Zadie's address is. Bubbie and Zadie live in Alaska. I think this is a very good book. I suggest it for all ages. It is a bit long so I don't suggest beginner readers try reading it on their own, but someone could read it to them. It's a fun story for the Hanukkah season!



## *The Golem's Latkes*

**Reviewed by  
Soren Gaskin Bennett**

*The Golem's Latkes* is a Hanukkah story about a rabbi who made a Golem that does any work well, but cannot stop until you say, "Golem, enough." One of the characters is Rabbi Judah Loew who goes to see the emperor, and while he's out, the housemaid Basha uses Golem to do work. Then the city overflows with latkes! It is based on a Jewish legend in which the rabbi makes a golem to protect the Jewish people from the Holy Roman Empire. This was a good book; it had a good balance of funny events and serious lessons, such as the importance of paying attention and doing your own work. I think it is a book anyone can read and should read.



## *Shmelf the Hanukkah Elf*

**Reviewed by Yetta Waks**

I read *Shmelf the Hanukkah Elf*. The story starts where Santa Claus lives. He has a lot of worker Elves to help him. There is one new Elf. His name was Shmelf whose job is to see which kids deserve presents. He saw so many kids on his list that should have gotten presents, but it said they shouldn't. The head Elf said they were Jewish and did not celebrate Christmas. Shmelf the Elf thought it was crazy that some people didn't celebrate Christmas. Shmelf snuck out and saw people celebrating Hanukkah. Shmelf thought it was amazing. He went to Santa, and Santa said he could be the new Hanukkah Elf. He flew on a sled with a moose. They went to all the Jewish houses to make Hanukkah more amazing! I would recommend this book to everyone, because it is a cute and festive story, and it can be for everyone whether they celebrate Hanukkah or Christmas.



## *Goodnight Bubbala*

**by Sheryl Haft,  
illustrated by Jill Weber**

**Reviewed by Diana and Sophie Koester**

*Goodnight Bubbala* is, as its subtitle declares, "a joyful parody" of the classic children's book, *Goodnight Moon*. With a definitively Jewish spin on the tale, this story will delight Jewish readers of every age with the turn of every page. It begins with a little bunny in a little bedroom, about to go to sleep, when suddenly the whole *mishpacha* arrives and festive Hanukkah fun ensues! Sophie reports that she particularly liked the part when the family noshed on latkes. She also shared her delight in discovering that this story includes a tzedakah box ("Hey, I have one of those!"), a cute mouse wearing a kippah ("Hey, Daddy wears a kippah when we go to temple!"), and bubblies ("Hey, I have a Bubbe too!").

This story is adorable, and the Yiddish words and phrases sprinkled like gelt throughout the book really enrich the experience for readers. I give bonus points for managing to make rhymes with Yiddish words, no easy feat. There is a glossary at the back of the book for readers to learn the meanings of the Yiddish, and it also includes a latke recipe from Ina Garten. For all that, I have to say, my favorite part of *Goodnight Bubbala* is the fact that Sophie identifies with it. The importance of genuine and positive representation, especially in children's literature, cannot be overstated. In a time when being Jewish feels so very complicated, reading *Goodnight Bubbala* with Sophie is just as rejuvenating a Jewish experience as digging into a bowl of matzo ball soup (of which Sophie's Bubbe makes the best!).



A close-up photograph of a man's hands adjusting his cufflinks. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a purple patterned tie. The background is a solid purple color.

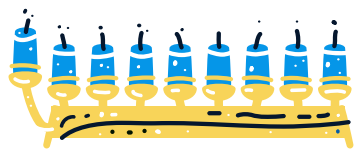
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# Celebrating Chanukah with Chanukiyot

Once upon a time, we lit something we called a menorah and we ate potato pancakes, and we thought we were doing Chanukah right. We weren't wrong; we just weren't exactly right. It turns out that a menorah is generic for "candleholder," so we were really lighting a very specific kind of menorah called a *chanukiya*, which has room for eight candles and a shamash.

The next thing we found out is that latkes, which we thought were the quintessential Hannukah food, are not what they eat in Israel for Chanukah. There, they eat donuts – just as cooked in oil and just as bad for you and just

as delicious. So we added another high cholesterol treat to our Hannukah menu (Luckily, they just announced that eating cholesterol isn't bad for most folks.)

The Hebrew neologism for doughnut, *sufganiya*, is derived from the word for

sponge, *sfog*, because the doughy treats absorb oil, making them perfect for Chanukah. A fanciful Israeli tale says that after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, God Himself tried to cheer them up by feeding them *sufganiyot*. The justification for the story is that *sufganiya* can be read as sof-gan-yud-hey, meaning "end of the Garden of the Lord."

Lastly, of course, we found out that we were not spelling the holiday right.

But nobody could really tell how to spell it: Hanukkah, Chanukah, Hannuka, Chanukkah, Hanuka or Chanuka. The conclusion, of course, is that the only thing that really matters is to celebrate eight nights of light triumphing over darkness and rededicate ourselves to those things that really matter. Below are some *chanukiyot* which illustrate the many varied ways you can accomplish just that.

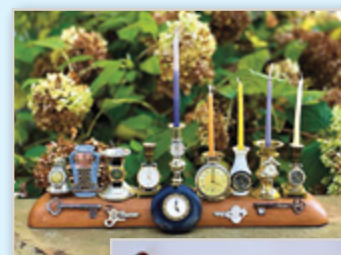
This one is the most expensive, for sale for \$55,000.



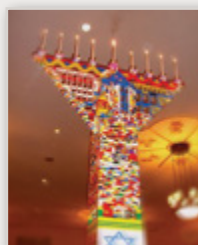
This one is the largest, located in Manado, Indonesia, a country with 238 million people and only 25 Jews.



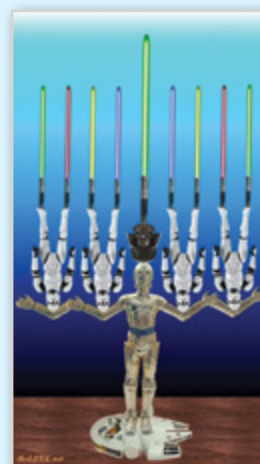
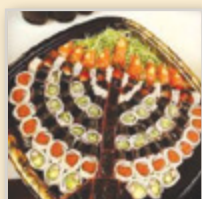
And the rest will suit a variety of tastes.



The next two are made of Lego and rocket parts.



These three are the most edible, for those who like challah, sushi and veggies.



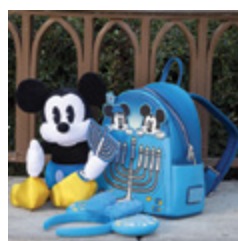


# Chanukah 5784 Merch



The *Times of Israel* reports that “Unlike years past, retail giants are now dedicating entire aisles to dreidel-shaped pet toys and latke onesies – but critics note that it’s a business strategy, not inclusiveness.” It adds, “For many American Jews, the result is a sense of inclusion at a time of unease – although some are wrestling with what it means to have access to a fast-fashion form of Judaica.” Okay, *Times of Israel*. Be a grinch. The *Jewish Observer* is still going to let readers know about some of the latest cool products that enhance the Festival of Lights.

## Disney Hanukkah Light Up Backpack



In addition to Hanukkah Ears and a plush Mickey holding a menorah, Disney has introduced a new Loungefly mini backpack

featuring Mickey and Minnie which now lights up with one light on the menorah each night.

## The Chosen One: A Game Of Fun And Laughter



This Is A Jewish Mom Approved, C h u t z p a h - Filled Party Game! Match Jewish Themed Questions With Answer Cards To

Make The Most Hilarious Matches. The Laughs Are Endless With The Meshugah Answers Available. This Main Game Includes 418 Cards. Expansion Games Are Also Available To Add On To This Main Game. What Are You Waiting For? Call Your Mom, Call Your Bubbie, And Call Your Favorite Gentile - This Game Is For Everyone!

## Hanukkah Gnome Dog Toy



The perfect way to keep your furry friend entertained for all eight nights is made from recycled water bottles and has

a squeaker and crinkles to keep your pup engaged. This 8” tall adorable gnome is dressed in its Hanukkah best and ready for an endless game of tug-o-war!

## Outdoor Hanukkah Polar Bear Decoration Display



Perfect for adding a festive touch to your home or yard during hanukkah. Made in the usa, these premium

decorations are professionally printed with vivid colors on waterproof, weather-resistant corrugated plastic. They include 2 stakes per shape, so you can easily display them in your yard. The 10 piece set includes: 3 Menorah Shapes (8” X 10”), 2 “Happy Hanukkah” Shapes (12.5” X 7”), 3 Polar Bear Shapes (9.25” X 13.75”), And 2 Dreidel Shapes (7” X 11”).

## DIY Solar System Menorah Craft Kit



The ultimate DIY menorah kit for kids that is just out of this world. Your kids will love soaring the galaxy with all the supplies

needed to create their very own one-of-a-kind solar system menorah. The kit comes with detailed instructions and allows the creator to use their imagination to create the menorah of their dreams.

## American Girl Doll Chanukah Sweater



A blue knit sweater with a “Happy L l a m a k k a h ” message, a llama face with a glitter yarmulke, and an all over snowflake print for American

Jewish girls who have lots of money to spend on dolls and their attire.

## Baby Loves Angular Momentum on Hanukkah! Board Book



Baby discovers the science behind spinning a dreidel on Hanukkah. Accurate enough to satisfy an expert, yet simple enough for a baby, this clever board book explores angular momentum, torque, friction and gravity. Beautiful, visually stimulating illustrations complement age-appropriate language to encourage the baby’s sense of wonder. Parents and caregivers may learn a thing or two as well.

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# Programs at Epstein School Tackle Israel-Hamas Conflict

On October 10th, three days after Hamas terrorists massacred 1,400 Israeli civilians and took over 200 Israelis hostage, students at the Epstein School participated in a dialogue with social media influencers and activists Hughie and Avery Stone Fish. The Stone Fish brothers are Epstein school and SHDS alumni, and they examined ways to combat antisemitism through Jewish pride and positivity with the current student body.

Hughie Stone Fish is a composer, performer and activist who won an Emmy in 2021 for his work with Jason Alexander on the examination of the history of antisemitic tropes in cartoons. Avery Stone Fish, a director and co-founder with Hughie of The Arts Project Syracuse, opened the evening with the question: "What does Jewish pride mean to you?"

The answers from five dozen students in grades eight through twelve varied widely. Students talked about connecting to their past, to Israel, to their families and to their own innate sense of Judaism. "I know," remarked one 10th grade student, "that no matter where I go or what I do, that I am Jewish, that deep inside, I am Jewish."

Over the next hour, students and the Stone Fish brothers shared stories of facing antisemitism at school and in the workplace. The conversation ranged from how to correct misinformation about Israel on social media to how to handle overt and subtle antisemitic incidents at school. Students talked about the challenges they faced recently in starting Jewish Culture clubs in high school. Hughie and Avery advised students on how to deal with antisemitic acts. "Safety first!" Hughie noted in response to a student's question of how to deal with an antisemitic remark from a peer at school. Avery concurred, noting that if the peer was a friend, and if the interaction lent itself to education, this might be an opportunity to educate the friend as to how what they said was antisemitic. "Sometimes," Hughie continued, "the most powerful thing you can do is walk away."

This program was generously sponsored by a Philip L. Holstein Community Program Fund grant from the Jewish Federation of Central New York.



The following week, on October 17th, Michal Downie arranged for students in grades nine to twelve to hear from Ron Wasserman from Fuel for Truth. Fuel for Truth is an Israeli education and advocacy organization that seeks to educate young people to advocate for

Israel in an articulate and non-combative manner. Ron specializes in breaking down the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The goal was to give teens the tools to feel confident discussing it in the real world. It was particularly interesting to the students who went on the "Teen Taste of

Israel Trip" last February. They had many questions to ask Ron about the truth rather than the media reportage. Ron kindly donated his time.

On the same evening, therapy dogs were brought in by Pet Partners of CNY to help with any emotional challenges the students might be dealing with. On the evening of October 22, CBS-CS sponsored a "Teen Coffee Talk," a community circle and a safe space for teenagers to discuss current events.

Epstein School director Aaron Spitzer noted, "We must not forget that every age group is being affected by the war in Israel, and the community must support each other at this time of crisis in Israel and in the face of rising antisemitism."

We break down the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so you can feel confident discussing it in the real world.

## Nostalgia Night at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School

A graduate of the Class of 1969 and a soon-to-be-kindergartener, who would be in the Class of 2030, were among those in attendance at Nostalgia Night, a joint program of the Day School and the JCC, with funding from a grant from the Federation's Philip L. Holstein Community Program Fund. Other alumni represented the Classes of 1986, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2006 and 2015, with some current students in the mix.

Hughie Stone Fish, a Day School and Epstein School graduate, his wife Jessica and his younger brother Avery were the featured speakers of the evening. Hughie has made a name for himself as an Emmy award winning songwriter and touring musician. Through his comedy group, Lewberger, Hughie was a finalist on NBC's "Bring the Funny," received a standing ovation on "America's Got Talent," and wrote, starred in and music



directed the sold out Off-Broadway run of the show "Wizard of Friendship." Hughie is proud to have co-founded The Arts Project Syracuse, a 501(c)3 nonprofit bringing arts education to under-resourced youth in his hometown. In the fall of 2023, Hughie and his brother Avery, both Federation Pierson 6 Under 36 Award winners, co-produced the song "Down Down Down" with students from

the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and the Boys and Girls Club. The song is part of his upcoming solo album, which has received radio play in Syracuse and across the country. "Down Down Down" received its first public showing that evening. Afterwards, guests went to the Day School for a tour and the opportunity to look through old yearbooks.





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## A New Chapter for PJ Library® in CNY

After nine years as the program coordinator for PJ Library, Carolyn Weinberg is handing off her PJ hat to Miriam Klaben. PJ Library is a literacy program that sends free Jewish books to Jewish families with children from birth to age eight. PJ Our Way is a continuation of PJ Library offering eight and a half to twelve-year-olds the option to choose the book they would like to receive each month.

PJ provides a wide range of books about holidays and values. There is a PJ book for just about any lesson a parent wants to teach their children. Currently PJ Library is offering \$100 Get Together Grants for PJ families to get together with other Jewish families to celebrate Shabbat or a holiday together.

Weinberg has helped to make Syracuse a pilot community for PJ Our way and has brought many families together over the years through PJ programming in CNY. She has developed many partnerships with local libraries, public schools and community organizations over the years. The program has continued to grow in Syracuse.

PJ Library in Syracuse will continue to thrive with Miriam Klaben as the new program professional. Like Carolyn, Miriam grew up in the community and recently returned to the area with her family from Chicago. In Chicago, Miriam was actively involved in PJ Library and is excited to step into the role. Miriam has a background in education and has lots of exciting new ideas to bring to PJ Library in Syracuse.

PJ Library in CNY is a program of the JCC of Syracuse, supported



by the Pomeranz, Shankman and Martin Charitable Foundation, Jewish Federation of Central New York, Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas, Shaarei Torah Orthodox Congregation of Syracuse, Syracuse Hebrew Day School, Temple Adath Yeshurun and Temple Concord. PJ Library in CNY serves children from birth to 8 years old in Cortland, Madison, Onondaga and Oswego Counties. **For more information and to sign up, visit [www.pjlibrary.org](http://www.pjlibrary.org) or email [pjcnyc@jccsy.org](mailto:pjcnyc@jccsy.org).**

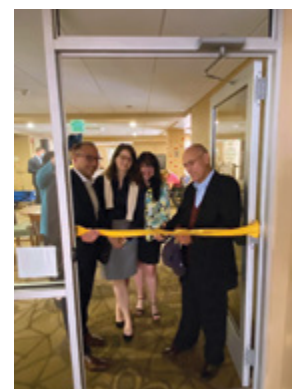


## Menorah Park Cuts Ribbon on Sephardic Foundation on Aging Arts & Minds Community Room

Menorah Park of CNY reopened a recently constructed room on October 2 to be used for social events for its residents, their families and for community events. The Sephardic Home for the Aged Foundation Arts & Minds Community Room was largely funded by the Sephardic Foundation on Aging, a charitable organization which was founded in 1939 as the Sephardic Home in Brooklyn. The foundation now extends its charity beyond the Sephardic community for which it was founded.



The Community Room, which was constructed and put into use just prior to the COVID pandemic, hosts parties, cooking demonstrations, meetings, movies and more, and has proven itself quite popular with residents.



According to Mary Ellen Bloodgood, chief development officer of Menorah Park, "the Sephardic Home for the Aged Foundation has been a consistent supporter of Menorah Park. Since their initial contribution to the Arts and Minds Community Room, they've helped support the Elder Center, the Magen Center for Elder Justice, dementia care training and case management services provided by Syracuse Jewish Family Service, as well as their BeWell and M-Power U initiatives. They know we work to maintain the highest level of care, while recognizing the ever-changing needs and desires of the senior community."

## CNY Community Foundation Gives Crisis Response Grant to Jewish Community

**"By supporting organizations that are living by our belief in the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals as well as our equity values, we can provide immediate support to those being unfairly persecuted for their religion, race or nationality."** With these words, the Central New York Community Foundation announced the distribution of \$8,000 in crisis response grants the Jewish Federation of Central New York and InterFaith Works to address local safety and security concerns within the community amid the Israel-Hamas war in the Middle East.

The Jewish Federation of Central New York will receive \$5,000 to enhance security measures at Jewish organizations due to a predicted increase in antisemitic sentiment and violence both locally and nationally. According to the Anti-Defamation League, the number of



CENTRAL NEW YORK  
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antisemitic incidents in the United States increased by more than 36% from 2021 to 2022, and officials are expecting this trend to continue amid increasing tensions. Interfaith Works will receive \$3,000 to support interreligious community dialogue.

"The deadly attacks and kidnappings that took place in Israel last week have profoundly shocked and saddened our Jewish community, already trying to come to grips with rising incidents of antisemitism locally and nationally," said Michael Balanoff, president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Central New York.

"The Community Foundation's concern for the well-being of our community, and this wonderful gesture of outreach, allyship and support is deeply meaningful and even more deeply appreciated."

"When terrorism and war erupt in the Middle East, Jewish and Muslim communities find themselves having to grapple with increased hatred and intolerance, including here in Central New York," said Thomas Griffith, interim president and CEO and vice president of development at the Community Foundation. "The Community Foundation's role during times of crisis is to urgently respond to the needs of the local community. By supporting these organizations that are living by our belief in the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals as well as our equity values, we can provide immediate support to those being unfairly persecuted for their religion, race or nationality."



# SHDS Students Complete First Phase of Butterfly Garden Project



Phase 1 of the Butterfly Garden Project at Menorah Park has been successfully completed. Dr. Joby Swerdlow was asked to help with this project and, to everyone's surprise and delight, she provided exactly the sort of informed and knowledgeable guidance and enthusiastic leadership that was needed. Here is what she wrote about the project: "Native insect populations are crashing in large parts of North America and Europe. Insects are not only an integral part of complex food webs, but humankind utterly depends on insect pollinators for many of our foods. Causes of the population drops include development, with replacement of native plant food sources by built environments and ecologically badly deficient lawns, flowers, shrubs, and trees; pesticides; introduced diseases and pests, and much more. Creating a "butterfly garden" can provide a degree of true natural *tikun olam* - repair of the world, while teaching children that they have both responsibility AND agency to share in the process. The availability of nectar and pollen is necessary but not sufficient to help butterflies, moths, and other life-sustaining and enriching arthropods. Proper plants to lay their eggs on and feed caterpillars, and safe places for pupae to transform into adults, are all important. The new garden at Menorah Park will be filled with its own babies: tiny rooted cuttings of regionally adapted native species, whose roots can grow down many feet over the next few years, and whose leaves and flowers will eventually feed butterflies and more."

The pictures accompanying this article show the joy and energy that the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School experienced as they planted the milkweed cuttings and other plants that will bloom in the spring.



# Baking Challot for Shabbat and Israel



On Thursday, October 19, several dozen people gathered at Temple Adath Yeshurun for a challah bake in preparation for Shabbat and in support of Israel.

Organized by Miriam Klaben and Amira Kipnis Goldberg, funds were collected to be sent to Israel's One Family Fund, an organization that



supports victims of terror and their families. Challah bakes have become popular in recent years as a way to cope with stress and to be more mindful. Beth Ricanati, a physician and author of *Braided: A Journey of a Thousand Challah,s* explains that the first step of the recipe is to stop and think. When baking challah, it's important to have an intention, to consider "why am I here and in whose merit am I making this bread?" She adds, "Challah is not necessarily about the end product, about making a perfect challah. It is about the process. Challah is special because it is intended to nourish us both physically and spiritually."

# CNY's First High School Jewish Club

It is hard to believe that there has never been a high school Jewish Club in Syracuse. In fact, there is only one other such a club in New York State (in Manhattan). Dory Sinclair, a junior at Fayetteville-Manlius High School, took it upon himself to start such a group and, after convening a committee, the Jewish Culture Club was born.



Dory, one of the club's co-presidents, explains, "We're aiming to foster awareness of antisemitism and to learn how to combat it using guest speakers in the wider community. Our plan is to make learning about Judaism an exciting experience and to celebrate our identity proudly."

To ensure that the club was a vehicle to celebrate Jewish culture without getting involved in contentious politics, the word "culture" was intentionally inserted in the name. There was an initial reluctance by the school to allow the club to use the flag of Israel on its literature. "This led to a healthy debate about whether the State of Israel is a part of our Jewish identity. We, as a group, decided that it is," comments Dory.

"The Jewish Culture Club will be a fun and interactive club that will explore Jewish history, holidays and customs through various activities," explains Meytal Downie, the group's co-president. "We will learn how to cook traditional foods, play exciting games and hear about Judaism's ancient and rich history. We'll meet once a month after school, and we will also create out-of-school fundraising and learning opportunities."

The club has joined the Jewish Student Council (JSU), a national organization which empowers school students to discover their unique and personal connection to Judaism. With 320 clubs across North America, JSU creates a space to build friendship and connect with others. "We hope to not only build a robust club that will last for generations in the F-M community, but also to participate in programs with high school peers across the country and discover opportunities for deeper engagement," says Dory. He is excited for other schools in Central New York to follow suit.



# Generations

by Barbara Davis

We moved to Syracuse in 1969. I was working at OCC and my husband was a graduate student at SU. I was pregnant with our first child and was worried about childcare. “You have to go to the JCC,” insisted my colleague, Professor Nancy McCarty. “It’s the best.” One did not argue with Nancy McCarty, and she was correct. It was the best, and my daughter thrived in an excellent program that seemed to do everything right. Naturally, my second child went to the JCC (on Genesee Street then) as did my third. They learned to swim in the indoor pool and went to Camp Friendly in the summer, as did most of their friends.

When, a generation later, my daughters established their own families in Central New York, there was no doubt where they would send their children for preschool. By then, the JCC had moved to DeWitt. By the time my youngest grandchild was born, the JCC even had an infant care program. So six more young members of my family enjoyed the benefits of the JCC’s outstanding preschool.

Mine is not an exceptional story. There are many families who have enrolled several generations of children in the JCC, drawn by a program that for decades has been at the forefront of quality, child-focused, reliable and accessible care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. The indoor pool is a memory, but now there are playgrounds and a gym and gymnastics, sports, music, dance and karate.

The JCC’s executive director, Marci Erlebacher, recently held a meeting of the Center’s board of directors and, looking around the room, realized that three of her board members had attended the Center’s Early Childhood Development Program when they were small. Now they were serving in a leadership capacity for the organization and enrolling their own children in ECDP.

Federation board chair Neil Rosenbaum’s daughter recently had a baby. Returning to work when her daughter was three months old was made much easier by the fact that quality care was available for her at the JCC on a schedule that accommodated her workday. Selecting the JCC’s Early Childhood Development Program was a no-brainer. Not only was it the best program, but it was the same one she and her three siblings had attended when they were little. It was like coming home.

These are just a few of the examples of the generational impact of Syracuse’s Jewish Community Center. In addition to providing quality childcare, the Center is home to three of the community’s most important Jewish institutions: the Jewish Federation, the Jewish Community



Foundation and the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. It also offers the only kosher senior lunch program in upstate New York and administers the PJ Library Program. At various times in the past, the J has also housed the Jewish War Veterans, the Epstein School, the Syracuse Community Hebrew School, a Sephardic high holiday congregation and the nascent Shaarei Torah congregation.

The Center also hosts many communal Jewish celebrations, including KlezFest, a community *sukkah*, a Chanukah party, a decades-old Purim carnival, the Matzo Bakery and the Israeli Scouts. Each week at ECDP, children celebrate Shabbat and learn to recite the appropriate blessings for *kiddush* and *hamotzi*. They enjoy apples and honey for Rosh HaShanah, latkes and *sufganiyot* for Chanukah and hold model seders in their classrooms for Passover. Even though a significant percentage of the children enrolled in the program are not Jewish, they all learn about Jewish celebrations. This has led to some interesting results. A friend of mine named Jim Doherty told me that while he had been very happy with the ECDP program, he was somewhat relieved that his daughter was going to public school kindergarten “because she wants to light *Shabbas* candles every Friday.” Another cute story involves a little boy whose family held weekly Sunday dinners. At one, the parents asked, “Who wants to say grace?” The 4-year-old ECDP child raised his hand eagerly. His parents were a bit skeptical. “Do you really know how to say grace?” they asked. “Yes,” he said and began “*Baruch atah Adonai...*”

## Belgium Chanukah Celebration at Syracuse Community Hebrew School

The Syracuse Community Hebrew School has worked hard to stay unified and to support one another during this difficult time. They look to the story of Chanukah to give them insight into their community’s tenacity, and to discover ways of finding hope when times are dark. Parents, friends and family are invited to join the Chanukah celebration on December 20 from 4-6 pm at Congregation Beth Sholom - Chevra Shas as they celebrate their students’ growth this year and students help lead *t’filah* and sing *zemirot*.

Part of the focus at SCHS this year is an expansion from an Ashkenormative perspective to one that includes Jewish communities from all over the world. At their Thanksgiving program in November, students met virtually with their “sister community” in Nigeria, the Igbo Jewish community, learned about their traditions and made *kippot* from Nigerian fabric. At the Chanukah celebration, Rabbi Steinitz will provide a synopsis of how Jews, following their expulsion from Spain in 1492 and dispersal to all parts of the globe, persevered. He will specifically highlight the Jews of Belgium and their traditions.

Students will make waffle latkes in place of traditional latkes, as this is the custom adopted by the Jewish community in Belgium. Students and seniors will try pumpkin- and chocolate-waffle latkes, along with other flavored waffle latkes. Students have been working hard learning Hebrew and will have some of their work on display. Their second annual huge dreidel contest with more than 80 participants is sure to be great fun. Students will also write cards to their sister community in Nigeria. Following their program, students will be decorating residents’ doors at Menorah Park. “The cheer the children bring to the seniors creates a true light,” said Russ D’Amico, CEO of Menorah Park.

## CBS-CS School Bake Sale to Support Magen David Adom

by Joanne Villegas

**Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas Sunday Shul School’s purpose is to help connect students to their Jewish heritage, culture and community. This year, one focus for the students is doing *tzedakah*. CBS-CS’ fourth and fifth grade students were tasked to research good works. The class decided to support Magen David Adom, Israel’s official representative to the International Red Cross. For their goal, Shul School students are looking to raise \$1,800, which would provide funds to purchase five First-Responder Red Bags for Israel’s volunteer EMTs.**

As part of their research, the students decided to offer a plethora of Jewish favorites including challah, latkes, bourekas, parfaits made with berries and granola, knishes and babka. As for why they decided to make these specific items, one student said, “Challah is a delicious Jewish food that people eat every Friday night.” “Latkes, because I love the fried potatoes, and it’s a Jewish



food that people love,” said a fourth grader. Some fifth graders commented, “Bourekas, because it is a Jewish delicacy and it’s good.” One student said, “Knishes, because I have never tried it, but I think I should try it, and you should too.” Another student added, “I’m the most excited to make potato filling.” And the last student said, “Babka, because it reminds people of their grandmothers.”

**The CBS-CS Fourth and Fifth Grade Shul School Bake Sale will be held at CBS-CS on Sunday, December 10 from 10 am to noon. Preorders, as well as day-of purchasing, will be available. For questions or additional information, contact Kelly Bernhardt Klapper, Director of Youth and Education at [kelly.klapper@cbscs.org](mailto:kelly.klapper@cbscs.org).**



# From Y to J: A Brief History of Jewish Community Centers



An article from the *Jewish Telegraphic Service* defines JCCs as “general community centers with a Jewish flavor” which have “catered to both Jewish immigrants and non-Jews as their function has shifted over time.” It notes that the typical JCC “acts as a kind of Jewish YMCA, providing anything from preschools to summer camps to day programming for senior citizens regardless of religion. Many also have fitness facilities and swimming pools and offer gym memberships to Jews and non-Jews. Many of these programs will include culturally Jewish content.”

So, really, how Jewish are Jewish community centers? Are they supposed to be Jewish? Are they supposed to be *more* Jewish? The JCCA, the umbrella organizations for the 350 JCCs in North America, says that “The JCC Movement comprises many communities of Jews (and non-Jews) spread across North America, with very different approaches to Jewish living and learning.” It includes JCCs

among all Jewish institutions (schools, synagogues, museums, libraries, camps), as both destinations for Jewish engagement and portals to Jewish communal life. It firmly states, however, that “No institution is THE destination, since it is the individual who determines the journey’s path.” Going further, the JCCA states that “synagogues look at Jewish life mostly through the lens of Judaism, the religion of the Jewish people. JCCs look at Jewish life mostly through the lens of Jewishness, or the more general culture of the Jewish people.” And reiterates that “it is up to the individual to choose which approach to Jewish life is meaningful to them” because the JCC Movement “doesn’t presume to define what being Jewish should mean to its members.”

*Tablet* magazine examined the unique position of JCCs, noting that “Jewish community centers had been around since the interwar years, a cross between a settlement house, an urban institution that had once attended to the varied needs

of the community’s immigrant population, and a Y.... The Jewish community center served as a cultural clearinghouse where the Jews of the neighborhood could go for a swim, play basketball, attend a lecture, take a drawing class.... It deliberately maintained an open-door policy, a nondenominational perspective, or what one of its supporters called a ‘non-doctrinaire commitment to the universals in the Jewish heritage.’”

A Brandeis University study reported that “The mid-20th century Jewish community center was built on the model of a brick-and-mortar, full-service, membership-based community center,” but noted that “this model is increasingly out of step with today’s reality.” As society in general became more inclusive in allowing Jews into formerly exclusive entities and as racial and gender barriers to membership were being challenged and dropped everywhere, JCCs also changed, as did their financial model. Whereas, once they were membership organizations reliant upon dues, they instead developed fee-for-service programs, which today account for 80 percent of their funding.

Today, outside of large metropolitan areas, non-Jews account for the majority of JCC membership. In cities with relatively small Jewish populations, “in order to ensure that the Jewish community has the best possible facility, or even any facility at all, the JCC must open its doors to all comers,” said Randy Freedman, executive director of the York, PA JCC. “If we want the privilege of a JCC, it has to be this

way,” he added. “There aren’t enough Jews in the community to support these kinds of services.” John Sandager, an evangelical Christian who is the treasurer of the Albuquerque JCC, presented the situation from a different angle. He appreciates the way his JCC brings together different faiths. “When you work out at the JCC, one of the wonderful values of the JCC is it’s not Christians on these machines and Jews on those machines — it’s a community,” he said.

Still, majority non-Jewish membership has created a balancing act for many JCCs as they work to try to accommodate the needs of both non-Jewish members and less or more observant Jewish members. Jim Grumbacher, a York area businessman, was one of the primary movers behind the JCC’s decision in the 1980s to build a larger facility and actively welcome non-Jews as members. As a result, membership has expanded, the facility is first class, the center has a steady stream of Jewish programming and, in Grumbacher’s view, relations between Jews and non-Jews in York have improved. But Grumbacher confesses that he sometimes wonders whether the JCC has lost a certain sense of Jewishness that permeated the kibitzing and give-and-take in the old, smaller and mostly Jewish facility. “I’m somewhat conflicted over the results,” he says, “but I think it reflects what’s happening in the larger American society. I don’t know that there was another solution.”

## Become a JCC Fitness Member this Month for \$1

by Carlett Spike

No one needs to wait for the new year to start working toward their fitness goals because they can sign up for the JCC’s Dollar & a Dream promotion to kickstart the journey. Beginning December 15 through January 31, first-time members can sign up for only \$1. Those who register before the new year will get the \$1 membership for both December and January. Once the Dollar & a Dream special concludes at the end of January, those signed up through the promotion will receive an exclusive offer for a discounted one-year membership. The offer is only available for first-time participants. **Those who are interested may contact Nick Finlayson at [nfinlayson@jccsy.org](mailto:nfinlayson@jccsy.org) to sign up or for more information.**



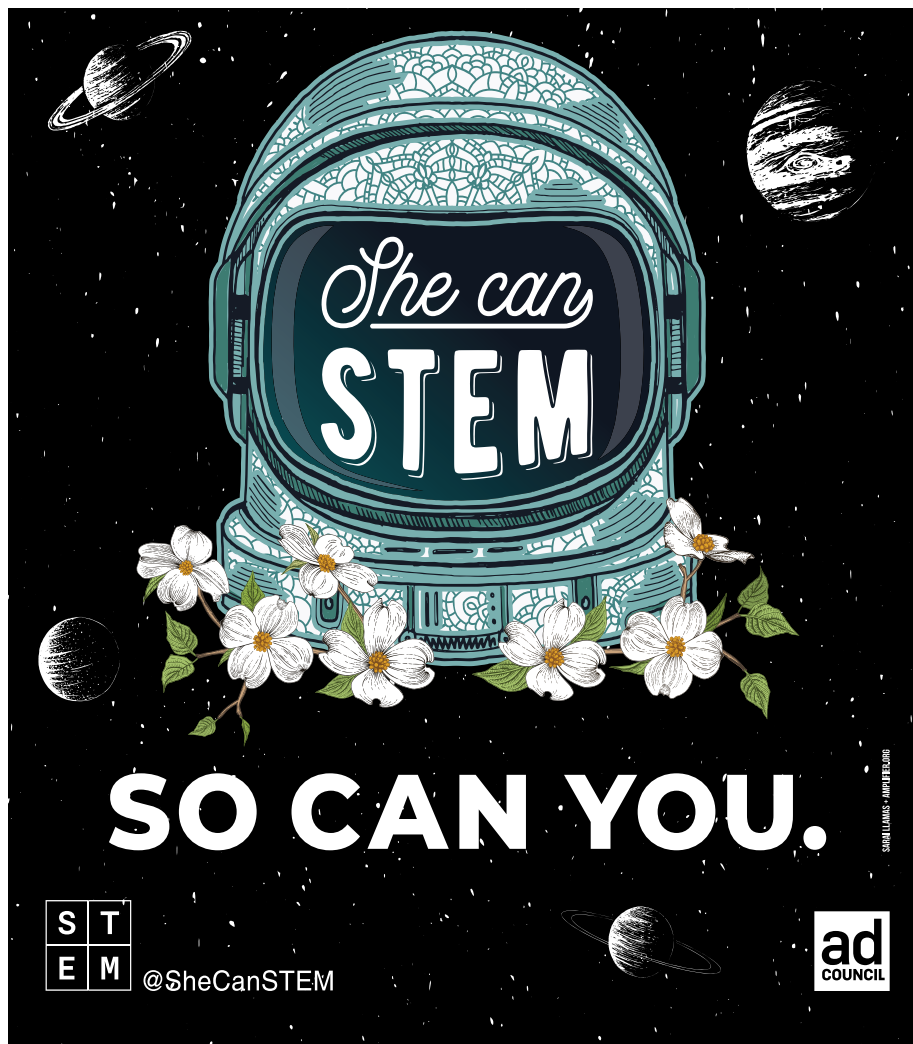
## Matthews Foundation Continues Support of JCC

by Erin Hart

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’s programming has received continued support for a number of years from the Matthews Children’s Foundation. Pictured are the JCC’s Executive Director, Marci Erlebacher and Immediate Past President, Steven Sisskind.







# “Children Of Eden” to be Performed at TAY

by Mookey Van Orden

BraVa is the creative brainchild of two theatre kids who refuse to grow up. Black- and women- owned, this company was formed out of a love for theatre compounded by a need in the community. Our mission statement: to prove safe, equitable and free programming to all youth of CNY.



Why does Syracuse need another theatre company, you may ask? The answer is simple: there is a lack of equitable theatre in Syracuse, especially in children’s programming and training. Our goal is to be able to offer equitable theatre programming for the children in the city of Syracuse. We want to create an environment for children to sing, dance and act at no cost to them. Families will not be expected to pay for participation, costumes or anything of that nature. We plan to keep ticket prices low so that the community can enjoy the product of our programming.

BraVa, was graciously given a grant from the Federation’s Philip L. Holstein Community Program Fund which has made possible our debut production of “The Children of Eden.” From musical theatre greats, Stephen Schwartz and John Caird, comes a joyous and inspirational musical about parents, children and faith... not to mention centuries of unresolved family business.

For our current production, all rehearsals and performances take place at Temple Adath Yeshurun. We are so grateful for the use of their space, including the kitchen, as we also provide dinners at our Sunday rehearsals, which helps create a community in our cast.

With BraVa being a teaching company, we strive to provide the children working with us a safe and fun environment to

learn. We are so excited for the youth interns who signed up and will be doing backstage work as well.

Our cast is made up predominately of children of color, which we believe will help build diversity in the theatre community in Central New York. We believe that every child should have access to the arts and every child watching should be able to see a representation of themselves on stage.

We want to make sure each child is always part of a safe space, and that starts with our staff, all of whom have extensive child care experience. We are so grateful to our youth actor supervisors as they are integral to helping us protect youth who wish to be involved in the arts. Our ultimate goal is to empower our children to know their rights and to ultimately carry our messages with them in the future as they navigate the theatre industry.

*We are thankful to the Jewish community and Federation for their trust and support. Please join us and come see “Children of Eden” on November 30th and December 2nd at 7:00 pm and December 3rd at 2:00 or 6:30 pm at Temple Adath Yeshurun. Tickets are available now. The link is on our social media pages: Instagram: brava\_theatre and Facebook: BraVa Children’s Theatre.*

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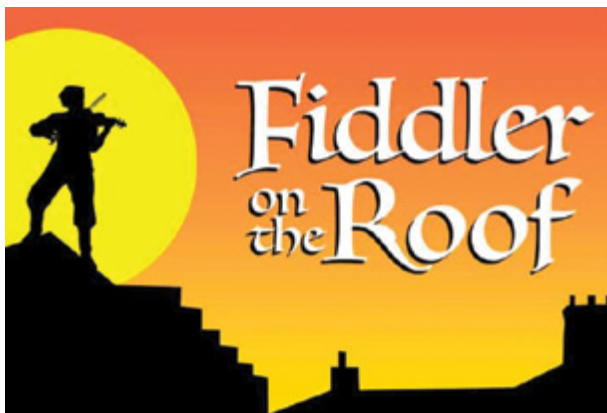
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# “Fiddler on the Roof” to Benefit JCC

“Fiddler on the Roof” is iconic. From the image to the music to the lyrics, everything about “Fiddler on the Roof” speaks to the Jewish soul. Ruth W. Wisse has written: “No creative work by or about Jews has ever won the hearts and imaginations of Americans so thoroughly as the musical Fiddler on the Roof.” Everyone enjoys this show, whose musical numbers — “Tradition,” “Sunrise, Sunset,” “If I Were a Rich Man,” “To Life,” “Matchmaker,” and others — not only enliven Jewish weddings but are commonly understood to represent something essential about Jews and Jewishness.”

But “Fiddler” is bigger than its Jewish origins. With music by Jerry Bock, lyrics by Sheldon Harnick and book by Joseph



Stein, “Fiddler” is set in 1905 in the Pale of Settlement of Tsarist Russia. Based on Sholem Aleichem’s stories about Tevye the milkman and his daughters, the play centers the protagonist’s attempts to maintain his Jewish religious and cultural traditions, which outside forces encroach upon the family’s lives. Tevye must cope both with the strong-willed actions of his three older daughters, who wish to marry for love — with each one’s choice moving

her further from the customs of his faith — and with the edict of the Tsar that evicts the Jews from their village.

The original Broadway production of “Fiddler” was the first musical in history to surpass 3,000 performances, and it remains one of Broadway’s longest-running productions. It won nine Tony Awards, including best musical, score, book, direction and choreography and was turned into a highly successful 1971 film. “Fiddler” is the fifth most popular play performed by high school and community groups — by actors and for audiences which are not Jewish.

“In much the same way that ‘The Diary of Anne Frank’ is not just a Jewish story, neither is ‘Fiddler on the Roof,’” wrote *LA Times* theater critic Barbara Isenberg, author of *Tradition!: The Highly Improbable, Ultimately Triumphant Broadway-to-Hollywood Story of Fiddler on the Roof, The World’s Most Beloved Musical*. “Fiddler’s” strong themes of tradition, repression, prejudice and diaspora continue to evoke

common ground for audiences — wherever they are. The well-crafted book and memorable songs don’t hurt, of course, but they are augmented by a plot that has something for everyone, whether it’s the importance of family, friction between generations or the difficult choices that accompany emigration and assimilation.”

“Fiddler on the Roof” is a gift from the shtetl to the whole world. Its universality and its humanity transcend the boundaries of time and place. The Central New York Playhouse will be presenting five performances of “Fiddler” at Atonement Lutheran Church at 116 W Glen Avenue, in early December. CNY Playhouse is partnering with the Jewish Community Center of Syracuse with this production of “Fiddler On The Roof.” A percentage of every ticket sold will be donated to the JCC. Playing the lead role of Tevye is Adam Fumarola. Other community members in the cast are Issy Weinberg, Rachel Pettiford and Evangeline Fumarola.

**For information about tickets, go to <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/cnyplayhouse/885164>.**

## Holocaust Information Resource Center Library Opens to the Public

by Erin Hart



The public is invited to peruse the extensive collection of Holocaust literature donated by Dr. Alan Goldberg to the Jewish Community Center. His collection has been catalogued and is on display in the Jerome and Phyllis Charney Holocaust Information Resource Center. “We are beyond thrilled and honored that Alan has chosen the JCC to house this incredible library of books. We hope that this can be a resource to many across the Central New York community,” said JCC Executive Director Marci Erlebacher. “Those interested in viewing the collection can visit the JCC of Syracuse in person or online at [www.jccsyr.org](http://www.jccsyr.org).”

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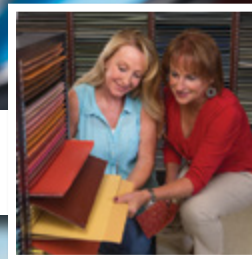
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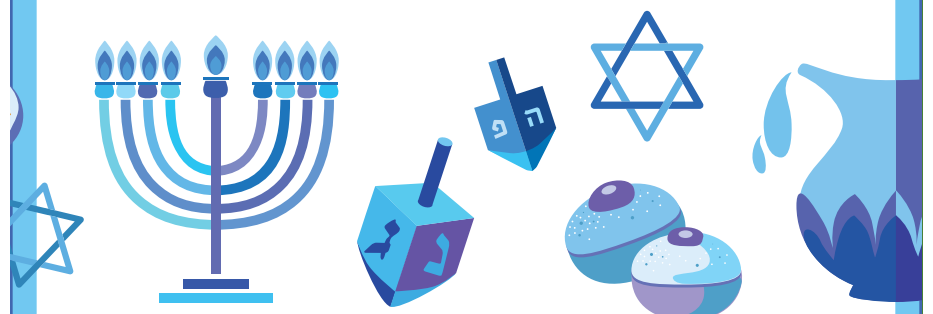
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Making the world a better place by helping those in need is among Judaism's highest values. *Tzedakah* does not mean charity. It means justice. We do not give because it makes us feel good about ourselves but because we have an obligation as Jews to do so. We believe in justice, social justice, and by giving to our "community chest," we help those in need, families, children, seniors, the hungry.

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December is a wonderful month in which to bring more light into a dark world through *tzedakah*. So please go to [www.jewishfederationcny.org/donate](http://www.jewishfederationcny.org/donate) and gift some gelt to the 2023 campaign.

Thank you and Happy Chanukah!





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# Remembering Yuval Halivni

Yuval came to Central New York in 2010 as a member of the Tzofim Caravan that summer. Melinda Greenman, organizer of the Caravans' visits, recalls that "Yuval was always smiling. He was interested in interacting with our host parents and their children and everyone loved talking to him."

Yuval met the love of his life in the Caravan that summer. His friend Jamie Deline recalls that "he told us that he and Amit had only been friends during their journey but realized they missed each other when they got home. They went on to marry in 2020 and their son Jonathan was born the following year. He also told us during our visit how he aspired to be a pilot. He became a paratrooper in the 7008th battalion of the Arrows of Fire unit and rose to the rank of colonel."

Yuval was called for reserve duty after last week's terrorist attack occurred. He was serving near the Gaza border when he was killed.

Tzipi Livni, the former foreign minister of Israel, went to his funeral. This is what she wrote: "I just came back from the funeral of Major Yuval Halivni. As if to remind others who need it, even though it's been almost a week that we don't need to be reminded of anything, an alarm sounded and those at the funeral were required to lie around the open grave and lower their heads, as if we had no reasons to bow our heads. I learned to recognize Yuval, an IDF officer who was killed while protecting the civilians of Israel in Sderot. I should have met him first. We are family. My grandfather and his great grandfather were brothers and came to Israel many years before the establishment of the country and before the Holocaust. I remember the visits I made as a child in the moshav. Over the years I couldn't make it to the large family gatherings. I went to this terrible gathering. How could I not?"

"Yuval was a special person, a sensitive guy with a clean and luminous heart, and a loving family member. Yoni Richter sang the song 'As long as Yuval loves.' I saw his fellow warriors hugging and everyone saying goodbye and crying, as is being done all over the country in recent days — families and friends of warriors and citizens who paid with their lives for the existence of the country. This country has raised inspiring people and what I write here is not just a private story of one family but the story of a country, a family story called Israel. This week has provided us many reasons to bow down this nation's head, but it also gives us many reasons to lift our heads proudly."

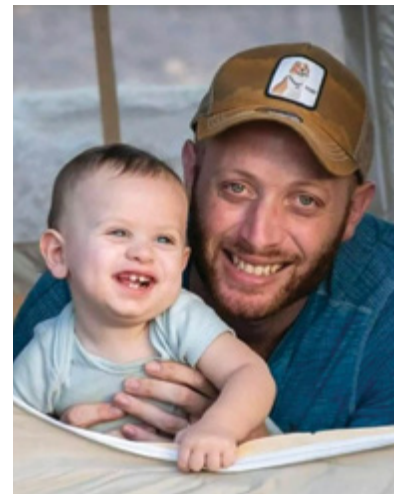
When she posted the news of Yuval's death, his friend Jamie wrote, "Grief ultimately belongs most to his family and close friends and I debated posting at all because he was so much more than a name and a face in an ever-growing list of pain and sorrow. It speaks to his character that literally thousands of people have expressed their shock and heartache over his death, but please understand that as this long and brutal war drags on, every Jew on earth will likely suffer the loss of someone like Yuval. Every single one of us."



*"Yuval was a special person, a sensitive guy with a clean and luminous heart, and a loving family member...."*

## This was Yuval

"This was our friend Yuval. He was one of many Israeli Scouts who came to stay with my family via the Tzofim Friendship Caravan each summer. He was outgoing and gregarious, funny and kind. I can still see the smile on his face as he high fived my brother after convincing him to create a Facebook account so they could stay in touch. Yuval was one of two sets of twins, with a brother a few minutes older and a younger brother and sister.



My mother and I visited him and his parents the following spring

at their temporary lodging and they showed us where their dream home was being built. He was so proud that he had successfully shlepped the lion you see pictured here back to Israel with him after he won it at Six Flags, despite the caravan's annoyance at how much space it took up in their van." From Jamie Deline



"Yuval was one of my closest friends, a role model to all of us, a man with the biggest heart I know, a one-of-a-kind person, a true friend to all, the best husband to Amit and the best father to little Jon Jon. Since

Yuval and I participated together in the programs with people abroad, I'm certain that if you read this here you probably also know Yuval. Yuval's smile, gold heart and optimism are something I'll not only remember for the rest of my life but will do everything I can to share it with every person I meet." From Yaniv Wisney

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**CHARLES  
"CHIPPER"  
EDWARD JOFFE-  
HALPERN  
August 16, 2023**



Charles "Chipper" Edward Joffe-Halpern of Williamstown, MA passed away on August 16 after a long illness. He was born in 1949 in Syracuse. He is survived by his wife Ellen Joffe-Halpern, his daughter Rebecca (Brent) Filson, his son Noah (Hillary) Halpern, his brothers Stephen and Andrew Halpern and his five (soon to be six) grandchildren Maya, Judah, Marlowe, Evan and Jake. He was predeceased by his mother Sylvia, father Harold and sister Barbara.

Chipper grew up in a Jewish community in Syracuse, the third of four children, where he cultivated his love of Syracuse basketball, photography and golf. In 1977, he earned a master's degree in social work from the University of Albany. That same year, he found his lifelong partner while working as a clinician at a residential youth treatment school. There he fell in love with his co-therapist, an artist named Ellen Joffe. They were married two years later at Tanglewood in Lenox, MA.

Chipper served the people of Northern Berkshire County as a clinical social worker, during which time he received several awards including the NASW award for "Outstanding contributions to the Social Work profession." He later served as executive director of the non-profit Ecu-Healthcare in North Adams. It was at Ecu-Healthcare where he found his ultimate professional success and fulfillment helping area residents obtain affordable health coverage.

Recognizable in his signature bowtie, Chipper excelled at finding creative ways to build relationships and connect with

his peers and his community. In one notable outreach campaign to improve local dental care access, he rallied the city of North Adams to attempt to break the Guinness World Record for most people consecutively brushing their teeth.

Chipper would go on to establish himself as a go-to expert in the health policy field, bringing him opportunities to impact policy at the state level. He served as president of the board of directors at Healthcare For All in Boston and served on the inaugural Health Connector board during the implementation of universal healthcare in Massachusetts under Governor Mitt Romney.

Outside of his professional life, Chipper was a devoted husband, father and grandfather. He intentionally structured his life around being present and available to his children, spending many hours playing catch and running batting practice with his son and daughter, attending their recitals, games and performances. Later in life, his greatest joy was his five grandchildren whom he loved beyond compare.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations to Ecu-Health Care Health For All in North Adams, MA, or a charity of one's choice.

**DAVID MARK  
ELIAS  
October 1, 2023**



David Mark Elias, 71, died on October 1 at his home in Menorah Park. He was formerly employed by Chappell's and Wegman's in Dewitt as a baker's helper and a front end helping hand. He graduated from Nottingham High School and OCC. He was also a Shining Star Volunteer at Menorah Park.

He was pre-deceased by his beloved parents Allen and Sarah Elias and loving brother-in-law Jonathan Dinkin, a composer of Jewish music that David supported and enjoyed.

He is survived by Aveeya Dinkin, who was a fierce advocate and loving sister, and Deborah Ellis, a close, compassionate and dedicated friend.

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**MARVIN A.  
GOLDENBERG  
October 1, 2023**



It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Marvin A. Goldenberg. Marvin was a devoted son, brother, husband, father and grandfather who embraced each moment of his life with a sense of grace, sophistication and dignity. He was a true gentleman, widely regarded for his wisdom, sense of humor, kindness and charm. An avid golfer, martini connoisseur and Frank Sinatra disciple through his final days, his resilience and positive outlook on life were a source of inspiration to all who knew him.

Marvin was born in New York City on May 9, 1927 to Birdie and Jack Goldenberg. Birdie introduced him to the game of golf when he was a young boy and it became a focal point for him throughout his life. He won the Queens Championship Tournament when he was 17 and went on to play Division 1 golf for Penn State University, where he graduated with a degree in electrical engineering. His college attendance was interrupted by war, and he served in both the Merchant Marines and the US Army. He went on to earn his Juris Doctor degree at George Washington University Law School while also working in the US Patent office in Washington, DC. In 1960, Marvin and his young family moved to Syracuse and he began a 30-year career as a patent attorney with General Electric.

Marvin embodied a lifelong enthusiasm for and commitment to physical fitness, truly ahead of his time. He was active in

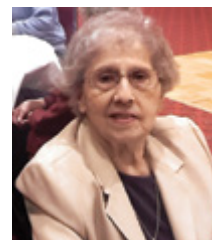
handball, tennis, jogging and, in his later years, racewalking. At age 80, he set two American indoor records in the 3k and 5k racewalks. He walked his last race at age 90 and placed first in his age group. Remarkably, he performed a daily push-up routine into his 96th year.

Marvin is predeceased by his first wife, Regina F. Goldenberg, with whom he shared 45 years of marriage, and his second wife of 10 years, Doris Pearlman Goldenberg as well as his sister, Sonia Bushman. He is survived by his loving partner of 10 years Marilyn Pinsky of Sarasota, FL, her children and grandchildren, his daughter Elizabeth Goldenberg (Douglas Van Delia) of Tully, NY, his son James Goldenberg (Gay Shanahan) of Duxbury, MA, and his son William Goldenberg (Amy Henderson) of Boothbay, ME. He will be greatly missed by his six grandchildren, Marlee Delia (Tommy Honton), Quin Delia, Phoebe Goldenberg (David Randolph), Miles Goldenberg, Regina Goldenberg and Samuel Gray Goldenberg. He is also survived by his two loving nephews, Steven Bushman and Michael Bushman. In addition, he is mourned by stepdaughter Jill Pearlman (Vladimir Goldstein) and her children Rachel Pearl O'Shea and Eve O'Shea; and stepdaughter Heidi Pearlman Swartz (Craig Swartz) and their children Lisa Swartz and Jason Swartz.

Contributions in Marvin's memory may be made to Smokey Hollow Community, Inc, whose mission is to provide safe, appropriate and affordable housing for adults with 24/7 support needs (<https://smokeyhollowville.networkforgood.com/projects/195024-support-smokey-hollow>).

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**MARILYN  
STEINBERG  
October 25, 2023**



Marilyn Steinberg, 92, of Jamesville, died on October 25 at the Jewish Home of Rochester. She was the daughter of the late George and Ane Karch.

Marilyn was a Nottingham High School graduate and earned her bachelor's degree from Syracuse University. For several years she worked as a social worker for Onondaga County before joining the family business, GEM Sport Supply, associated with Ra-Lins, as the secretary/treasurer for many years.

She was a lifelong member of Temple

Adath Yeshurun and past president of their sisterhood. Marilyn helped coordinate many of the Temple's events including the antique shows, Citizen of the Year dinners and bingo. Her true love was spending time with her family, especially when she wasn't taking care of the kitchen at the Interment Ski Area in the 60s and 70s.

Marilyn is survived by her sons, Gary (Tammi) and David Steinberg; grandchildren, Traci (Justin) Fine, Seth Steinberg, Elyssa Steinberg, great-grandchildren Yigal Fine and Ya'ara Fine and sister Eileen Froehlich.

Contributions may be made to the Steinberg Family Fund at Temple Adath Yeshurun, 450 Kimber Road, Syracuse, NY 13224.

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# JAMES J. LUKE

October 27, 2023



James Joseph Luke, 82, lifelong resident of Syracuse, died on October 27 after a brief illness with his wife of 61 years, Mary Jane Luke (nee Evans) who was the love of his life, at his side.

Jim was born in Syracuse on March 15, 1941, the first son of and predeceased by Mr. and Mrs. B.C. Luke. After graduating from Nottingham High School, Jim attended Le Moyne College and worked for decades in the insurance and credit industries, serving as vice president of a hardware company before retiring. Like his paternal grandmother, Jim developed a passion for antiquing, and he spent the remainder of his life buying, selling and collecting antiques with his family. Like many locals, Jim "bled Orange" and was an avid fan of Syracuse University sports, enjoying both in-person and televised games.

In addition to his wife Mary Jane, Jim is survived by his two beloved daughters, Melissa (Joseph Tomassone) Luke and Kristen (Phillip) Richardson, his three cherished grandchildren, Brynn, Ella and James and a brother and sister. Throughout his life, Jim was a devoted husband, father and grandfather, taking active interest in the activities and achievements of his children and grandchildren and proudly singing their praises. Jim will be remembered as a loving and generous family man, so often putting others before himself.

As Jim was a three-decade survivor of cancer, the family respectfully requests that donations be made to the American Cancer Society in his memory.

# SHELDON HERSHMAN

October 23, 2023

Sheldon Hershman, 95, passed away on October 23 in Boca Raton, FL. Born on December 18, 1927 to Harold and Rachel Hershman in Brooklyn, he had been a resident of the New York area until retiring to Florida about 25 years ago.

He was predeceased by his first wife Arlene 30 years ago. He then met his wife Carol and shared 25 years of wonderful marriage. He is survived by his children Liz, Donald (Jorge), Kenny (Maria), Jay and Jill. He was predeceased by a son Lloyd. He is also survived by Carol's children I. Stephen (Kathleen) Davis, Susan (Russel) Rothstein, and Marion (Philip) Cantor) and grandchildren Kelly (Sam), Katie, Meghan, Noah, Michelle (Scott), Jack, Melody, Louis D., Louis R., Richard, Jacob and Ross. He was also predeceased by a grandson, Joshua Ian Davis, and a granddaughter, Dani Hershman.

During his professional career, he was in the automobile business. He will be remembered for his wit and funny personality. He was a warm and loving man who will be missed dearly. He had a life well lived.

Funeral services and burial are in Florida. Contributions may be made to the Joshua Ian Davis Memorial Fund, c/o the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York, 5655 Thompson Road, DeWitt, NY 13214

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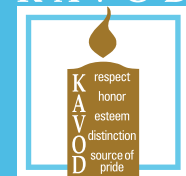
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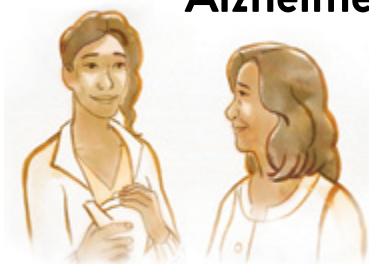
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