

» AM ISRAEL CHAI!

Jewish Observer

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

of Central New York

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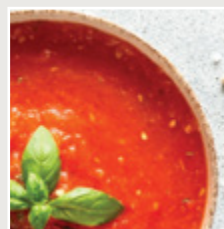
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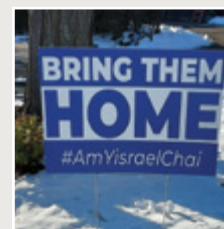
On Tu b'Shevat



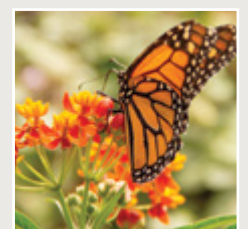
We Stand with Israel



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January 2024

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

Loud voices of Jew-hatred have been heard both locally and globally since Hamas' horrific October 7th attack on Israel. But those voices were drowned on November 14th as almost 300,000 people – mostly but not entirely Jewish – came to the National Mall to stand up and speak up for

Israel, to demand that the hostages from 30 nations being held by Hamas be freed and to condemn antisemitism in the strongest possible terms. We are so proud of the dozens of members of the Central New York community who went to the March. A report of their experiences appears in this issue, as does a recounting of the many events that took place locally in support of Israel and the hostages.

On another front, there have been multiple efforts to combat antisemitism in our community. Tackling this issue is very challenging, as feelings run high, rumors run amok and even well-intentioned people can be derailed by emotion. Federation has been actively working with local school officials to address the issue in various settings, both publicly and behind the scenes, and a group of educators and rabbis is working to develop some useful information for the community to use, should they face incidents of antisemitism. We are also working with WCNY and InterFaith Works on longer-term projects to address all forms of hate. We know we are not alone in these efforts and are ever mindful of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks' observation that the hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews.

As has been true for the past three months, the best-laid plans of the *Jewish Observer* to select a theme in consonance with the Jewish calendar have been disrupted. While the environment and climate are still top priorities for all of us, bringing to the community's attention all that has been going on with regard to Israel and antisemitism was seen as a more immediate concern. Nonetheless, this issue of the *Jewish Observer* also contains several articles about serious environmental issues, important environmental activism by community members and reviews of books about *Tu b'Shevat* for kids.

Also worthy of note last month was our first-ever communal celebration of Chanukah. Over 600 community members came together to light the last candle of the Chanukah menorah and enjoy a festive meal together, capped off with a wonderful concert by Six13. We are very grateful for the tremendous generosity of the dinner sponsors and the synagogues for coming together at a time when a little unity went a long way.



The hundreds of thousands of Jews who marched for Israel in Washington may not have accomplished anything specific in terms of getting the hostages released or combatting antisemitism, but they all had one extremely positive experience: the sheer magnificence of being together with thousands of other Jews from all across the religious and political spectra, united in purpose and committed to the same cause. The lesson of that experience, expressed very well by Rabbi Moshe Rabbi Hauer, is one we all need to take to heart: "This was a week of true unity of purpose. We should savor that and build upon it. We have each other and we must treasure each other.... Let us build together on what matters." To which, I say "Amen."

Am Israel Chai, the People of Israel Live, has been our watchword and Jewish solidarity anthem during recent months, used as an expression of Jewish peoplehood and an affirmation of the unity and continuity of the Jewish people. When the Jews of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp were liberated on April 20, 1945, they sang *Hatikvah*. At the end of the anthem, British Army Chaplain Rabbi Leslie Hardman, cried out, "*Am Yisrael Chai* – the People of Israel live!" It is our fervent hope and prayer that when we and Israel emerge from the dark and horrendous nightmare of the invasion and slaughter of innocents, the hostage-taking and the terrible war than ensued, costing thousands of innocent lives, that we too will be able to sing *Hatikvah* and proclaim *Am Israel Chai* in peace and unity as we continue the vital work of helping our planet live also.

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of Central New York

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From the Jewish Federation of CNY President/CEO



Michael Balanoff

There are those who do not see why Federation exists, who do not support it, who do not value it. They don't subscribe to *Community Happenings*; they don't open our emails; they probably don't even look through the *JO*.

But when disaster strikes, the first place they turn to is the Federation. That is fine. We're here for our community, even if our community chooses to ignore us most of the time. I recently heard a speaker say, "Some people love you, and some people love you and show up." Well, Federation does both. We love our community AND we show up for you.

And, many from the non-Jewish community have reached out to us to show support and to seek advice as to how their organizations can help combat antisemitism. Federation is most certainly the central address of the Jewish community.

When Hamas brutally attacked Israel on October 7th, Federation responded quickly and forcefully, not only in support of Israel but in reaction to the increase in antisemitism that we saw, regrettably, in our own community. I thought it might be useful to recap exactly what Federation has been doing over the past three months.

RAISING FUNDS TO SUPPORT ISRAEL

- Within two days of the horrendous invasion of Israel, Federation had established fundraising mechanisms that allowed community members to donate to organizations that we trusted to meet real needs on the ground in Israel.
- Within two weeks, **ONE AND A HALF MILLION DOLLARS** was provided to Israel, through local donations and carefully-managed matches.
- \$500,000 purchase of Israeli Bonds by the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York.
- Funds were donated to Jewish Federations of North America for use by the Jewish Agency for Israel and other organizations for humanitarian relief.
- We sent money to Magen David Adom for medical supplies, money which was matched leading to a doubling of our donations.
- Friends of the Israel Defense Forces also had a matching fund drive to meet equipment and medical supply needs.

RALLIES/PROGRAMS/MEETINGS IN SUPPORT OF ISRAEL

October 9 – Community Unity Rally at the JCC

October 10 – Zoom with Ron Wasserman of Fuel for Truth and program with Stone-Fishes at Epstein School

October 17 – Teen Coffee Talk

October 20 – Community Program with Ron Wasserman at JCC

October 20 – Shabbat of Solidarity for Families with Young Children

November 14 – March for Israel in Washington, DC

DAILY COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING

via social media and Constant Contact

Week 1: We Stand With Israel

Week 2: We are Not Alone

Week 3: Am Israel Chai – Federation Board

Week 4: Am Israel Chai – Federation Board

Week 5: Am Israel Chai – Federation Board

INTERVIEWS, MEETINGS AND LETTERS

We had interviews with local television stations; interviews with local print media; meetings with InterFaith Round Table of Faith Leaders, superintendents of F-M and J-D school districts; letters to the editor of the *Post Standard* and *Syracuse.com*; Congressman Williams re Upstate Medical School.

PARTNERING WITH OTHERS

Antisemitism is not just a threat to the Jewish community. Accepted hate, in any form, is a threat to our whole society. When the Jewish community partners with the non-Jewish community, it sends positive messages about Jewish values and actions, motivating and equipping our partners to be defenders of and upstanders for Jews.

Many in the non-Jewish community are willing to stand with us. Last year, a local theater group invited Federation to participate in a production of "Aktion," a play about the Holocaust, and asked audience members to make donations to Federation after each performance. \$1800 was contributed after the show's run. This year, CNY Playhouse asked to partner with the Jewish Community Center for its production of "Fiddler on the Roof." In addition to casting both Jewish and non-Jewish actors in the production, the producers plan to donate a portion of the proceeds to support JCC programs. Another theatrical production, "Children of Eden, Jr." features predominantly children of color and is supported by a grant from the Federation's Philip L. Holstein Community Program Fund.,

Federation is also partnering with Le Moyne College and the JCC to present a reading and discussion group about "Righteous Gentiles" in the spring. The program will be held both at the JCC and at Le Moyne and will be open to the entire community. Le Moyne and the Federation jointly applied to bring the U.S. Holocaust Museum's exhibit "America and the Holocaust" to town.

The Butterfly Project, a collaboration between the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and Menorah Park, will extend its reach beyond the Jewish community and will involve local schools in the creation of the butterfly sculpture that will memorialize the 1.5 million Jewish children killed in the Shoah. The residents of The Oaks and The Inn at Menorah Park and their families will be involved in creating the butterflies.

The Federation and the Day School were jointly engaged with the Everson Museum to present two programs for Chanukah, one for making dreidels and another for making *chanukiyot*. The Federation, the NexGen group, the JCC and the Syracuse Hebrew Day School were invited to contribute menorahs to the Everson's Festival of Lights.

The Federation is also partnering with Symphoria to present a second *Cinco de mayo* concert for the residents of

Menorah Park and their families. This is particularly meaningful in a year when the leading candidate for the presidency of Mexico is a Jewish woman.

Federation is also sponsoring the provision, at no charge, of scooters at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo for people with mobility issues who need assistance.

COMBATING ANTISEMITISM

Our Yom HaShoah Committee has incorporated a very meaningful community essay/art program into our annual Holocaust commemoration which reaches out to local school districts to help them understand the terrible consequences of antisemitism.

A special program is being considered for next year as the result of a collaboration between the Federation and InterFaith Works. Called "Breaking Bread," it will allow twenty teens from all across our community to learn about one another's faiths and cultures as they "break bread" together.

Federation is working with WCNY and InterFaith Works to create programs of information about combatting antisemitism that will be provided to local school districts.

Efforts to engage with the larger community, musical programs, theater, provision of assistive devices for the elderly and differently abled, lectures and other programs, serve to remind people that we are not separate, different, "the other." We are Americans just like them, and when we stand with and for others, they will stand with us.

All of these things have been going on while Federation continues to do its normal work: producing the *Jewish Observer*, running an annual campaign, providing grants for innovative programs and much more. In addition, our security program has been greatly expanded to assure as much as possible, the safety of our institutions and people, so that no one should be afraid to come out and speak out. So even if you don't see what we do, even if you are not aware of what we do, even if you don't think we do things exactly the way you want us to do them – please know that we are constantly working on your behalf. We are open to your suggestions, your volunteerism, your moral and financial support, your good ideas and your commitment. And most of all, as we have been saying these past three months – ***Am Israel Chai!!***

Fruit, Commitment and Hope

by Rabbi Irvin Beigel

I am writing this *d'var Torah* a month before you read it. We are still absorbing the shock of October 7. We are still anxious about the fate of hostages, and we pray for Israel's victory over Hamas terrorists. While Israel's soldiers risk their lives to fight for Israel's survival, we are working every day to support Israel by writing to elected officials and the media, as well as by donating to organizations that provide support to Israel and to Israelis in this difficult time. This is a year in which every one of us is called upon to make extraordinary efforts to support Israel and to combat antisemitism in this country and around the world.

Every Jewish holiday this year will have an added dimension of significance, reminding us of how much we share with Jews everywhere and reminding us of our connection to Israel and of our responsibility



for Israel's wellbeing. The Mishna says that there are four new years. There is, of course, *Rosh Hashana*, the day of judgment on which we blow the shofar. Another of the four is the 15th day of the month of *Shevat* which in 2024 will fall on January 25. On this New Year, there is no shofar. In fact, there are no special prayers required and no restrictions on activity as there are on biblical holidays. *Tu b'Shevat* was the beginning of the new year for calculating the tithes due on fruit. It became a day to praise the Land of Israel for its fruits. The Torah in *D'varim* (Deuteronomy 8:8) describes "a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees

and honey" (date honey). *Tu b'Shevat* became a day to eat fruits, particularly fruit of a kind that grows in Israel.

This year, when you eat these fruits, think of the many blessings that Israel brings us. It has been said that Israel is the place where no Jew need explain himself. Israel maintains a high ethical standard in peace time and in time of war. It is a society that is compassionate to those in need within her borders and beyond. Israel is a place where Jewish learning and culture flourish. As you eat figs and dates this *Tu Bishvat*, think of those who have built and defended the State of Israel from its inception until today. They are religious and secular, rich and poor, men and women, young and old. All are united by a resolve to build and safeguard the only Jewish state in the world.

In times of crisis, we Jews recite psalms. The psalmist knew pain and suffering, but he also knew hope, faith and joy. We gain strength from prayer, but the rabbis

tell us not to depend on miracles alone. We need to act. *Tu b'Shevat* is a time for us to renew our commitment to Israel. As a child, I remember at this time of year asking family and local merchants for contributions to the Jewish National Fund. They could give either 10 cents or a quarter. At this critical time in Israel's history, we need to be strong partners with her. Whether we write letters, attend demonstrations, or give money, we will make a difference. Israel faces unprecedented challenges. With the strength and courage of Israelis and with our unwavering support, Israel will emerge victorious.

May God remove evil from the world. May God spread His canopy of peace over us, over all Israel, over Jerusalem, and over all His creation.

Rabbi Irvin S. Beigel is retired as chaplain at Crouse Hospital, Upstate University Hospital and Hutchings Psychiatric Center. He is currently the Jewish chaplain at Loretto.



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March for Israel

Leaving in the predawn hours on the morning of November 14th, 43 members of the Jewish community of Central New York (and one non-Jewish ally) embarked on a long journey to the National Mall in Washington, DC to attend the largest pro-Israel gathering in U.S. history. Their bus took on six additional passengers from the Binghamton Jewish community to join with some 290,000 people convened for a rally to support Israel, demand the release of the hostages and speak out against antisemitism.

Those on the bus ranged in age from 8 to 80. Why did they go? The *JO* asked about their motivation. This is what they told us:

"I am called to stand in solidarity and support for Israel and the American Jewish community in DC out of my unabashed pride in my Jewish identity. The time since 10/07 has made it clear that the Jewish community must be united and unafraid to stand up for ourselves and for Israel. As Jews across the world prepare to gather for the largest pro-Israel event in U.S. history, I am hopeful for the future and inspired by the courage of our people. *Am Yisrael Chai!*"

Forrest Gatrell

"The recent slaughter of Jews awoke me from a decades-long complacency (much like the cocoon of Berlin in the 1920s). The resulting rise in antisemitism shocks me. I march because I want the nation to remember history and to not forget the victims and the hostages."

Mary Jumbelic

"With world sympathetic response to 10/7 Hamas mega atrocities rapidly waning, and pro-Hamas marches surging worldwide, the Jewish community needs very visibly to support Israel and combat accelerating antisemitism. An overwhelmingly impressive DC rally should be but an important first step."

Richard Wilkins

"I'm going to Washington to 'walk the walk' - to stand up, be counted, be heard. It's the best way I know how to include my voice in demanding the release of the hostages and thanking Congress and President Biden for their continued support of Israel."

Deb Sikora

"My messiah is Jewish. I believe what the Bible says: "Whoever blesses Israel will be blessed, and whoever curses Israel will be cursed."

Rafael Rivera

"I was a college student at the University of Albany. It was 1972, and the Israeli athletes had just been taken hostage. We marched to the capital, and as we got there it was announced that they had been murdered. This chilling experience has been with me ever since. Now, once again, I feel compelled to march for Israel. I can't explain the need I feel to be among my people to march for the hostages' release, to march against antisemitism, to march for my people. JCC Executives have been called upon to bring their communities to Washington DC to be heard. I am fulfilling this mission."

Marci Erlebacher

"I feel in every fiber of my being that we must stand up and march on Washington. I will not stay silent as Jews across the world are victimized by antisemitic rhetoric and violence. We must ensure that our government remains focused on supporting Israel and her needs. What happened on October 7th is horrifying and must never be forgotten. Israel must be given aid and support to protect herself from future horrific recurrences of the October Massacre. We must make our voices heard and demand the return of the 240-plus hostages held in Gaza. I implore our government to continue funding Israel's effort to eliminate Hamas. Israel's existence is dependent upon its ability to defend itself. We will stand united as one - *Am Yisrael Chai.*"

Ora Jezer



"It takes courage to stand up for what you believe. I want to stand up for Israel, even though many enemies have suddenly appeared. The most important thing is not to forget the hostages. We need to stand up until we can bring them home. If I were to hold up a sign, it would say, 'FREE GAZA — FROM HAMAS!' or 'BRING HOME ALL OF THE HOSTAGES - NOW!'"

Jef Sneider

"All my grandparents emigrated from czarist Russia to Boston in the early 1900s. Their remaining families were largely murdered by the German National Socialists. The miraculous reestablishment of the state of Israel as the third Jewish commonwealth, akin to the miracle of the Maccabees, occurred in my lifetime. It is both a great honor and privilege for me in this place and time to travel to Washington with you all to stand with her."

David Hootnick

"When asked why I am joining the rally the true answer is "If not me, then who?"

Donna B.



The rally was notable not just for its size but for the diversity of its roster of speakers, who came from many different political, religious and ideological backgrounds. Speakers included CNN analyst Van Jones, actress Debra Messing, college students from The George Washington University and Columbia University, families of hostages and Christian and Muslim leaders. A bipartisan group of congressional leaders, led by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), also addressed the crowd. The State Department's antisemitism envoy, Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, told the crowd that the Biden administration "stands shoulder to shoulder against Jew-hatred," saying that "today in America we give antisemitism no sanction, no foothold, no tolerance, not on campus, not in our schools, not in our neighborhoods, not in our streets or the streets of our cities. Not in our government. Nowhere. Not now, not ever."

The JO surveyed participants after the rally as they made their way back to Syracuse after a very long 22-hour day. Here is what they told us:

“It was an amazing event! I’ve never seen so many Jews from every background imaginable in one place at one time. All levels of observance from secular to orthodox were represented. We all came together standing proud and united in our Judaism.”

Jenna Grossman

“I was SO glad to attend the March for Israel. The speakers were wonderful, speaking the support for Israel and AGAINST antisemitism, which we all needed to hear. The family members of hostages shared their heartbreak, and it was everyone’s heartbreak. The most powerful for me were the songs! When the Maccabeats were joined by surprise guest Matisyahu, the roar was palpable. When 200,000+ people sang his hit, “One Day,” the song became a prayer. He ended the song with a Shema, like I have never heard before. We all prayed for Peace and for the return of the hostages.”

Bonnie Leff

“The 11/14 ingathering of America’s Jewry on the Mall in DC shouted to the world a united, ‘Never Again.’ In this time of fear and anger, we could feel our unity and its power in our demand, ‘Bring them home.’ What struck me most, however, was the palpable joy of our assembled Jewish family, from Alaska to Puerto Rico (by way of Brooklyn), being together in America’s front yard singing the national anthem and Hatikvah—public Jews, there, together.”

Dennis Lerner

“I signed up to go to Washington feeling that I wanted to do something other than sit and read the news. It can be so overwhelming sometimes to feel that I, as an individual, can make a difference, but I needed to stand up and be a part of something larger than myself. Going to the rally was way outside of my comfort zone, but I knew if I didn’t go, I would regret it. As I reflect on my day yesterday one word keeps coming to mind - awesome. To be surrounded by so many like-minded people, so many Jewish people, all united to show our unwavering support for Israel, peace and dignity was incredibly inspiring. I am struck by the positive messages of all the speakers, the attentiveness of the crowd and the support that our leaders spoke of yesterday for Israel, for Jews in the US and for an end to antisemitism. I am so proud of all of us who were able to be there to witness this rally for Israel.”

Nan Fechtner

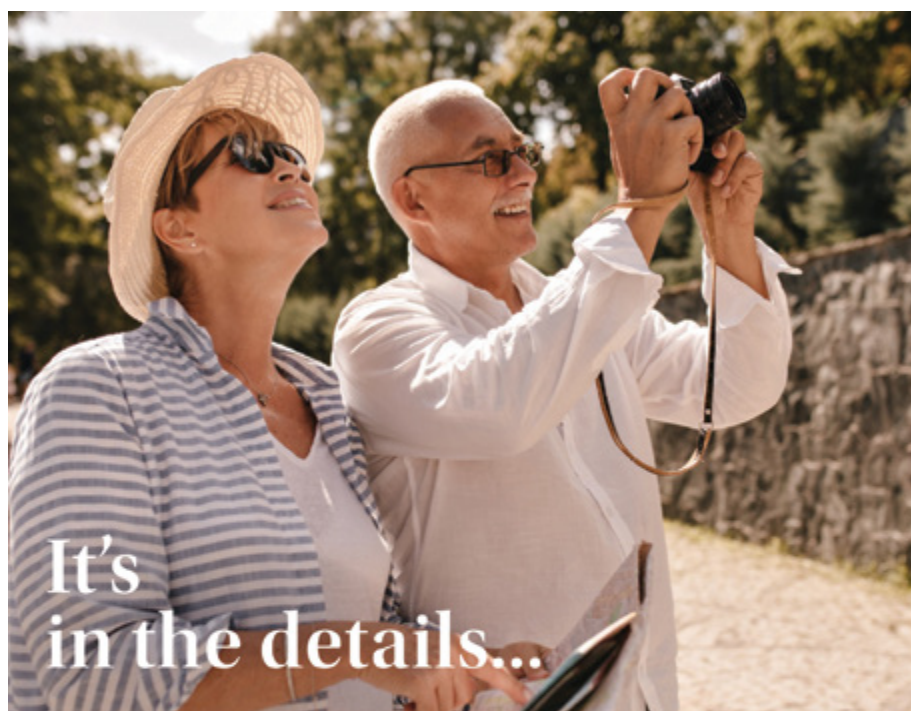


“The number of people there was overwhelming - the show of support for Israel, the call to return the kidnapped hostages and the fight against antisemitism were proclaimed loudly and often. The crowd was amazingly diverse, from black hats to children in school uniforms. The signs were evocative, angry and funny. The one I most wanted to express myself was “Free Gaza - From Hamas.” Recognition of the suffering of the Palestinians was almost universal, but that didn’t change the call for “No cease fire!” Kudos to the JCC and Federation, including the National Federation leadership for pulling this off. Marci Erlebacher did an amazing job getting us there and back. They fed us, gathered us together, got us to the rally and brought us home safely!”

Jeffrey Sneider

“It was a moment in history we were part of with our 300,000 *mishpacha* demonstrating our unequivocal support for Israel. We stand strong against antisemitism ravaging our communities and college campuses. We stand strong that all hostages be reunited with their families. They are not forgotten. For the first time since October 7th, I felt that we were finally able to make our voices be heard - *Am Yisrael Chai*. As we sang Hatikvah, tears rolled down my face, realizing that we are truly one - *b’nai Yisrael*. Antisemitism has hit many of us hard. This day of solidarity created a tangible awareness that we are not alone. My friends across the world felt supported as they saw the 300,000 march in Washington.”

Ora Jezer



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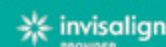


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CNY Stands With Israel



Information sessions, a teen coffee hour, a Shabbat of Solidarity program for families with young children and readings of *Tehillim* were among the many activities held by the Jewish community in support of Israel.

Rallies in support of Israel were held. Highway billboards were posted. T-shirts were sold calling to “Bring Them Home.” Lawn signs were distributed and hostages’ pictures were posted in synagogues.



Maura Koenig, assistant director of recruitment and partnerships for the Union of Reform Judaism Teen Immersive Israel Programs and a teacher at The Rabbi Jacob Epstein School of Jewish Studies, knew she had to do something for her loved ones and friends in Israel after the October terrorist attack. So she re-opened the doors of her COVID Bakery, Challah at Me 315 and asked Syracuse friends to help her raise funds for Israel. Challah prices were adjusted with donations in-kind and after a week of orders, twelve volunteers (Jews and non-Jews alike), fourteen hours of baking and a day of distribution, \$3,000 was raised. The funds were given to Kibbutz Sufa, one of the *kibbutzim* that were attacked and home to a long-time friend of Maura's. Another donation was made to the Federation for victims of terror. “Thanks to the local Jewish community and allies, along with the team at Temple Adath Yeshurun who opened their kitchen to me and my helpers,” Maura said.



The Shabbat Table installation at Hendricks Chapel at Syracuse University was created by Chabad House Jewish Student Center as a way of paying tribute to the hundreds of hostages kidnapped into Gaza following the October 7th invasion. The “Bring them Home: Empty Shabbat Table” was intended as a symbol of hope for the hostages’ safe return to their families, homes and Shabbat tables.



Engage! in Action

Federation's theme for 5784 is **Engage!** So when an email arrived from the Community Engagement Coordinator at the Ronald McDonald House of Central New York, a temporary home for families of critically ill children, where they can stay while their child receives medical treatment at one of the local hospitals, the response was immediate. Many of the families at the RMH come from very different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, so they wanted to serve them in a way that was best for them and their needs. Every day, a warm meal is provided by either a local restaurant or volunteers who come to the Ronald McDonald House and cook dinner for the families. One of the goals of the organization was to increase the diversity in meals that they provide, and with the holidays coming up, they were hoping that the Jewish community would be able to help them by making a Jewish meal for their families. Of course, we said yes.

Within minutes, a group of eight wonderful volunteers with culinary expertise and tremendous generosity of spirit, agreed to prepare a meal of matzo ball soup, apricot chicken, roasted vegetables, latkes and apple sauce, *sufganiyot* and chocolate gelt. On the afternoon of December 5, in their Federation **Engage!** t-shirts, chefs and sous chefs Michael and Wendy Gordon, Lon and Joan Lowenstein, Jay and Remy Sinclair and Phyllis Zames gathered in the Ronald McDonald House kitchens to prepare a pre-Chanukah feast, complete with dreidels and instructions for how to play the traditional game.



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Sierra Club Honors Rhea Jezer



Rhea Jezer was recently honored by the Sierra Club as the recipient of its 2023 Environmental Alliance Award, which recognized those who have helped further environmental goals through collaboration with other, non-Sierra Club constituencies. This is most recent but by far not the only award Jezer has received for her environmental leadership. She has been given a *Post Standard* Achievement Award, a “Greening our Community Advocacy Award,” a National Organization of Women “Woman of Power” Award, a Congressional Fellowship for Women & Public Policy, and an InterFaith Works Leadership Award “for her work bringing environmental education to Central New York.”

“These five fingers, individually they are nothing, but when I curl them together into a fist, they form a weapon that is terrible to behold.” Rhea uses this quote by Lucy of the “Peanuts” cartoons in her speeches, stressing the need for coalitions. She has based her career on the premise that the only way to

accomplish goals is through alliances, forging partnerships by encouraging collaboration between diverse groups: environmental, business, academic, labor, farmers and government. She took on the challenge of opposing NAFTA, started a coalition of environmental groups and reached out to labor who joined in the coalition, the first-time labor and environmentalists shared a podium.

In 1996 Rhea spearheaded and chaired the Central New York coalition supporting the 1996 NYS Clean Air/Clean Water Act, bringing together a rare coalition of business, labor and environmental groups and both Democrats and Republicans. Governor Pataki invited her to work on legislation for Superfund sites and brownfield remediation. Locally, she drew together a coalition to work on a pilot wind project, the first of its kind, in Madison County and was able to get funding and state and local support for an Environmental Center.

Cazenovia College, looking to boost its environmental sciences program, recruited Rhea to academia. She taught a course on “Policy and Politics of Environment,” and was asked by the college to run a symposium. Because of the threat of climate change, Rhea chose the topic of clean renewable energy. The symposium grew beyond the college, attracting attendees from the entire state, region, country and even abroad. The annual Symposium on Energy in the 21st Century is now in its twenty-third year and is held annually at SUNY-ESF both in person and livestreamed. The Symposium is a rare venue where many different constituencies come together and have real discussions, resulting in renewable energy initiatives.



RAV Properties Honored with RACER's Edge Award

RACER Trust presented Syracuse's RAV Properties with a 2023 RACER's Edge Award in recognition of its support in the environmental management of the Salina Industrial PowerPark. Elliott P. Laws, administrative trustee of RACER Trust, presented the award in Detroit to Robert Lieberman, the managing partner of RAV Properties.



RAV Properties purchased the Salina Industrial PowerPark — a multi-tenant, indoor industrial park — from RACER Trust in 2020. Since then, it has made improvements to the property and increased occupancy, creating new jobs and opportunities in the community. In addition, RAV Properties has facilitated access for RACER Trust to carry out its ongoing environmental obligations at the property, activities that are protective of the building's occupants and the environment.

“RACER Trust's environmental obligations often continue after a property has changed hands. We rely on cooperative owners to help us carry out this mission, which we understand can be an inconvenience to operations, and we deeply appreciate the efforts of Robert and RAV Properties to facilitate the access we need to do our jobs,” Laws said. “RAV Properties is an exemplary owner in every way, from its investments in improving the property to increasing occupancy and opportunities for the people of Central New York. Their commitment to quality is evident. We are delighted to offer Robert and his

team this well-deserved recognition.”

The Revitalizing Auto Communities Environmental Response (RACER) Trust was created in March 2011 by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court to clean up and position for redevelopment the properties abandoned by General Motors Corp. in its 2009 bankruptcy. RACER Trust's real property portfolio consists of 336 tax parcels; 34 million square feet in 167 buildings and 6,776 acres of land at 83 locations in 14 states. When it was formed, RACER was one of the largest holders of industrial properties in the United States and the largest environmental response trust in U.S. history. Since then, RACER has completed more than 90 property sales and achieved a no further action status or similar regulatory closure for more than 50 components of cleanups. Investments by RACER Trust's buyers and end users have generated annual, recurring impacts of more than 59,600 permanent FTEs, \$4.5 billion in labor income and \$16.4 billion in regional economic output, creating new opportunities and revenue for RACER's communities.

» Book Reviews

Tu b'Shevat Books Reviewed by CBS-CS Shul School

Teachers at the CBS-CS Sunday School read Tu b'Shevat-themed books to their classes and recorded their reviews. We hope JO readers will enjoy their comments and perhaps read some of these books with/to their young children.

Happy Birthday, Trees!

This is a short board book with colorful, appealing pictures of children planting a tree, as well as a catchy rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. One student said It was my favorite because it made me want to go outside and plant a tree. This is definitely great for our youngest readers.

Tu B'Shvat Trees

The main character of this book is Morah Rachel, so this would be a fantastic book for a Shul School class. It's a slightly longer book, so it would be better enjoyed by older elementary students as the little ones tend to have shorter attention spans. According to one student, "It was my favorite 'cause the pictures were weird!"

The Abba Tree

This is a lovely story about a father and a daughter's love for each other and care for the world that we have and the world that we will leave to our descendants. This was a favorite with our first and second graders. One said, "I liked all of the animals in the forest!" Another said, "My favorite was when the daddy was the tree!" (The little girl turns her Abba into a tree by decorating him with branches so that she can climb him.)

Shira and the Trees

This is a good lesson about a little girl who does a wonderful mitzvah of donating money to plant trees in Israel. One student said, "This was my favorite



because it had Hebrew in it that I could read myself!" Another student said, "I liked it because Shir was our teacher last year and it was like a story about her!" It's a great text for students who are comfortable decoding Hebrew because the Hebrew has clear vowel markings and context clues to help beginning readers.

Sadie's Snowy Tu B'Shevat

This story is absolutely perfect for our snowy Syracuse area students!. It tells the story of how Sadie finds a way to celebrate even in winter. This story inspired our third graders to ask if they could plant parsley in the classroom window this year for Tu B'Shevat, and then take it home for Pesach. It's a wonderful book with beautiful illustrations, and it's not overly wordy, so it would appeal to a wide age group.

» Movie Review

You Are So Not Invited to My Bat Mitzvah

Movie Review by Sam Young

Let me start out by acknowledging that I am not exactly the target audience for this movie. As you might have deduced from the title of this 2023 film, the movie is all about Bat Mitzvah parties and teen drama, and the intersection of the two in hyper-affluent Metropolitan New York City. But the film addresses important aspects of the American Jewish experience: coming of age, friendship, fitting in, and exactly how far a person should go to get what they want.

This film features Jewish mega-star and comedian-turned-Hollywood-staple Adam Sandler. Sandler's previous contribution to American Jewish pop culture was the Chanukah Song, which was first aired on SNL in 1994, and featured in at least four subsequent comedy recordings. In this film, Adam Sandler stars alongside his real-life daughters Sunny Sandler and Sadie Sandler (who play his on-screen daughters Stacy and Ronnie) and wife



Jackie Sandler, who plays the mother of Stacy's best friend Lydia.

The film begins with Stacy, a very privileged/spoiled thirteen-year-old making plans for her Bat Mitzvah. "My Bat Mitzvah will determine the rest of my life," she whines to her parents. "If I have a kick-ass party, doors would open." Throughout the film, she is depicted arguing with her parents about whether she should be allowed to have celebrity performers like Dua Lipa or a mojito bar (presumably a virgin one, but who knows?).

Stacy and her best friend Lydia are each planning their Bat Mitzvahs, while simultaneously navigating the vagaries of teen life,

cliques, middle school and synagogue Hebrew school. The two seem inseparable, planning outfits and sporting matching shoes, while helping one another plan introductory video montages and party menus. Along the way, Stacy goes to great lengths to impress her crush Andy Goldfarb and break into the popular set, but fails disastrously at both, propelling her crush into the arms of her best friend. Predictably, Stacy is devastated by the perceived betrayal, and plots her revenge on her best friend. While Lydia tries to apologize and make amends, Stacy takes things too far, and in doing so jeopardizes both her friendship and her values.

Her synagogue Rabbi, played by current SNL cast-member Sarah Sherman, is the super-cool, real-talk adult-in-the-room, who counsels Stacy to worry less about her Bat Mitzvah party and romantic crushes, and more about her mitzvah project, and what it means to become a Jewish adult. The combined wisdom of Stacy's Rabbi, her neurotic parents (played by Sandler and Idina Menzel) and her much cooler older sister eventually prevail on Stacy to re-examine what is important in becoming a Bat Mitzvah. Stacy starts to realize that a Bat Mitzvah

is more than an over-the-top budget-busting party. The film's conclusion is as heart-warming as it is predictable.

The world of super-sized, spare-no-expense Bat Mitzvah extravaganzas may only resonate with the narrow population of American Jews residing in New York City, Long Island and New Jersey. However, the process of planning for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and simultaneously coming of age as a Jewish young adult should strike a chord with most Jewish teens and their families. In the end, representation in popular culture is important, and this star-studded Netflix production serves to give Jewish teens a sense of recognition and belonging. At the same time, non-Jewish audiences may gain a better understanding of the meaning and importance of becoming a Bat or Bar-Mitzvah, a central feature of Jewish adolescence.

Sam Young is a lawyer and member of Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas. A movie buff, he moderates Federation's Sunday Cinema Series.

Gardening with Intention

by Joby Swerdlow

My parents loved getting their hands in the dirt, and on hot summer days shortly after we moved to Syracuse from Rangoon in 1957, my father would trade in his suit and tie for a cool Burmese *longyi* to garden in. My early gardening memories include cars screeching to a halt at the sight of a short, fat bald guy with glasses and a long skirt, contentedly working in the front lilac hedge.

Harry's and my first little house had readymade beautiful gardens, but the subsequent Manlius home building site in 1988 had had its topsoil scraped and sold off. There was barely a foot of clay subsoil over a shale bed. The first years required adding soil just to plant a sapling tree, and the strange looking soil bumps incited enlargement and turning into garden islands. It was five years before I could force a shovel into the ground. Garden designs came and went: white gardens, bright gardens, night gardens, food gardens. I had no idea of the difference between native and naturalized and agreed with garden writers who noted that no insect damage was a positive attribute.

In the meantime, plant roots and their mycorrhizal symbionts improved our still thin soil, invasive species threatened to take over, and my knowledge base increased. I gradually moved towards a more ecologically sensible garden, with more emphasis on regional native and good pollinator plants. It has been a fascinating journey, and has introduced me to some terrific people, organizations, and source material. I'll make a few, idiosyncratic comments, plus note basic reference material.

First of all, I suggest people become intimately familiar with their property-soil character, light availability, deer browse, wind exposure, and so

on. Although a 100% regional native garden is laudable, it is not aesthetically optimal for many people, who like other plants and want some lawn. I strongly recommend: reduce lawn to the minimum acceptable, seed in at least 25% white clover, enjoy the green mosaic of weeds, and stop all lawn pesticides.

Trees and shrubs that attract native arthropods are critical. No caterpillars = little food for ravenous baby birds. For instance, native maple species support hundreds of Lepidopterans (moths and butterflies), while Norway maples support only a few. My beloved ginkgo has no insect damage, to the detriment of local birds. I love my lilacs, but the gray catbirds love my gray dogwoods (*Cornus racemosa*).

Milkweeds for monarchs is a mantra to take to heart. Plant whatever regional milkweed species are suitable, and then plant more. Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) flowers are highly fragrant. There is evidence (reference below) that modern numbers of east coast fall nectar plants have been insufficient for the southerly monarch butterfly migration. A garden can not have too many fall blooming goldenrods and asters. Canada goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) is a garden bully, but there are less aggressive goldenrod and aster species. As a general rule, named plant cultivars and double flowers have



reduced or no nectar.

One garden aesthetic issue I am still working on is the tall abruptness of many regional native perennials, against the lawn, even with a hard June trimming. Edging with sedum Autumn Joy, purple lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*), prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*), zinnias, and golden alexanders (*Zizia aurea*) helps a lot. *Verbena bonariensis* gracefully grows through other plants and attracts insects.

Perhaps my single most attractive plant to migrating monarchs is tall varieties of Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia rotundifolia*), easily started from seed indoors a few weeks before the last frost. Rich soil encourages leaves at the expense of flowers, so do not fertilize.

A serious gardener, like a serious farmer, nurtures the soil. Organic material and complex life webs develop when not blasted with poisons or quick acting chemical fertilizers. I also recommend avoiding commercial mulch. Instead, rake in shed leaves (not black walnut). The juncos and house wrens will avidly seek out insects in the leaves, and the garden benefits from the nutrients brought up by deep tree roots.

There are a number of excellent native and pollinator plant resources for CNY. I recommend that all gardeners join the Wild Ones organization. Janet and John Allen have turned the local

Habitat Gardening of CNY chapter into a national role model. Their monthly online mailing is full of useful information, and they have a biannual preorder nursery grown native plant sale at their home.

Some other excellent information sources are first and foremost, ANY books and pieces written by Douglas Tallamy. Also highly recommended are "Native Plants of the Northeast" by Donald Leopold, "Native Plants for Native Birds" by Joel Baines, "Garden Revolution" by Larry Weaner and Thomas Christopher, "The American Woodland Garden" by Rick Darke, "Monarchs and Milkweed" by Anurag Agrawal, "The Northeast Native Plant Primer" by Uli Lorimer and published by the Native Plant Trust, and "Pollinator Conservation Handbook" published by The Xerces Society. Online resources include the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and Missouri Botanical Garden.

I have found most regional garden centers disappointing for native gardening, with a narrow selection and often ignorant staff. Two places worth the trip with an empty car going out are The Plantsman Nursery in Groton and Amanda's Garden in Dansville. There are plenty of excellent online sources for appropriate seeds and plants, which, however, may not be entirely regional or have genetic variability. However, I still way prefer them to typical garden center flowers.

An informative article on soil carbon movement is "Soil Carbon Storage" by Todd Ontl and Lisa Schulte, and an important book on climate change is "The Uninhabitable Earth" by David Wallace-Wells. The concept of soil carbon capture becomes immediately relevant to the serious gardener.

There are native plant and pollinator gardens at Baltimore Woods Nature Center and at the Three Falls Woods and Woodchuck Hill preserves. The natural world of course provides the best garden design inspirations. CNYLT staff and volunteers also have great native plant expertise and are a pleasure to talk with.

I am not being naïve. In my neighborhood, it is hard to successfully nurture native animal life surrounded by homes with extensive, treated lawns, nonnative plantings and plenty of free-roaming cats. The aesthetics of less tightly-groomed landscaping are not for everyone, and accepting change takes time. But native plant and pollinator gardens, however small, nourish the earth and nourish the soul.

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The Silent Culprit in Restaurants: A Glimpse into the Alarming World of Food Waste

by Samuel Wells

In the bustling world of restaurants, where gastronomy and culinary innovation reign supreme, there exists a hidden and concerning issue that often goes unnoticed by the average diner: food waste. Having witnessed firsthand the inner workings of a variety of dining establishments in Cazenovia, New York, I've been privy to a shocking truth about the exorbitant amount of food wasted daily. Behind closed kitchen doors, food waste is an epidemic that demands immediate attention. Every year, Americans waste an estimated \$408 billion worth of food, which equates to around 119 billion pounds, according to the non-profit Feeding America. This is almost 40% of the entire food supply in the United States. As a young American looking to enter the food industry one day, I worry about the discrepancies of such an issue from both an economic and a moral standpoint. I've spent the past summers working at different restaurants and hotels, and will share my experiences with food waste, as well as offer solutions to businesses and individuals hoping to eliminate costs and utilize produce more effectively.

What I've found to be the biggest cause of waste in my experience happens before the preparation of the food has even begun. Expiration dates. These labels cause restaurants to throw food away that is unopened, untouched and perfectly good to eat. And every evening, as diners indulge in exquisite dishes and marvel at the creativity of skilled chefs, an underbelly of waste is generated at an alarming rate. From meticulously trimmed vegetable scraps to unfinished plates, the magnitude of the problem is staggering. It's a paradoxical situation. While restaurants strive for perfection in presentation and quality, they're often forced to discard a significant portion of their carefully-prepared offerings. One of the most disheartening sights I've encountered is the aftermath of a busy night's service. Mountains of uneaten food, much of which is perfectly edible, pile up in the trash bins. It's a heartbreaking scene, especially when considering the sheer number of people



around the world who go hungry every day.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, approximately one-third of all food produced globally is lost or wasted each year. This is no knock on restaurants; no one wants to eat the waste of others. But that doesn't mean that there are no solutions to the problem. Restaurants often over-prepare food in fear of running out of popular dishes. This

tendency to err on the side of caution results in excess food that often ends up as waste. Additionally, the emphasis on aesthetic presentation can lead to portions that are larger than a diner can consume. It's a delicate balance between satisfying customers and avoiding waste, and usually the former takes precedence.

It's important to acknowledge, however, that many restaurants are becoming increasingly conscious of their environmental footprint. Efforts to minimize food waste are gaining traction, with chefs and managers implementing strategies to repurpose leftovers, compost organic waste and donate excess food to charitable organizations. Some establishments have even adopted smaller, more manageable menus to ensure they can maintain the highest standards without generating excessive waste. Customers too have a role to play

in curbing food waste. By being mindful of portion sizes, ordering conservatively and taking leftovers home, diners can contribute to a more sustainable dining experience.

Fostering a culture of appreciation for food and its origins can go a long way in reducing the casual attitude towards waste. The issue of food waste in restaurants is multifaceted, requiring collaboration between chefs, management, staff and patrons. The time has come for the culinary industry to address this challenge head-on and find creative solutions that balance culinary creativity with responsible consumption. From farm to plate, a greater awareness of the journey our food takes can reshape the dining landscape into a more sustainable and equitable one. As I reflect on my experiences within the restaurant world, the urgency of this issue becomes all the more evident. It's not just about preserving the artistry of food - it's about respecting the resources, effort and dedication that go into every dish.

Sam Wells is a senior at the Hill School.

The Eggplant

It's been fifty years since the All Night Eggplant opened in a strip mall on East Genesee Street in DeWitt. It really was open all night, and the menu was pretty much what it is today. The pictures on the walls are the same today as they were then, although the restaurant is now located in the Chimney's Plaza (5781 Bridge Street) in East Syracuse and is no longer open all night. But you can still get "Anything. Any time. Any way." It's that kind of an accommodating place.

Which explains its longevity and its popularity. It's usually full and packed on the weekends. Most customers come for breakfast, and the Eggplant (which doesn't serve eggplant) goes through 300 dozen eggs each week. The restaurant, started by Steve Coelho, and now managed by his son Rick, offers ten different flavors of pancakes (including apple, date nut, oreo, chunky monkey and banana walnut) and 40 different items to fold into omelets: 8 cheeses from cheddar to provolone; 6 meats from corned beef to turkey; 8 veggies from broccoli to spinach and an eclectic array of other fillings including salsa, peanut butter, dates, walnuts, hot fudge and bananas. Home fries and corned beef hash are listed among the many side items, and the bread list is extensive, with bagels, garlic rolls, French toast and toasted honey buns.

The lunchtime crowd is offered a menu with dozens of "Sammiches,"



including the usuals Mom used to make (chicken salad, tuna salad, PBJ, egg salad, grilled cheese, cream cheese and jelly) and the unusual (the bo-burger and the doozie; brutus subs and garden burgers.) There's a special item called the Vhopper, which has an interesting backstory. A two-patty burger called a Whopper was served by Coelho at a restaurant he owned on Marshall Street, but when Burger King learned of it, they filed suit, claiming "exclusive and incontestable" rights to the Whopper name. Coelho considered some alternative nomenclature and settled on the "Vhopper." "Considering my ethnic background," he said, "it was a natural

choice." You can try the Vhopper along with hamburgers, hot dogs and corned beef sandwiches not to mention steaks and salads at the Eggplant.

The dessert list, called *Après La Fête*, tempts diners with cheesecake, hot fudge sundaes, honey bun splits, Belgian waffles, ice cream and rice pudding. Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, sodas and a New York egg cream are listed as Legal Liquors. One does not leave the Eggplant hungry.

A typical review on social media reads: "Cute homey diner feel... Endless coffee refills. Friendly staff. Very busy for breakfast on weekends when waits can get long. Basic fare with eggs in all forms. Hence, the name "egg-plant"... Eggs Benedict are a specialty. Not too expensive. Very good overall." That pretty much sums up a Central New York institution which has provided the community with a half-century of outstanding food service.

As the breakfast food industry continues to grow, we can only wish the Eggplant continued success offering an extensive menu, reasonable prices and good service as it reaches for the century mark.

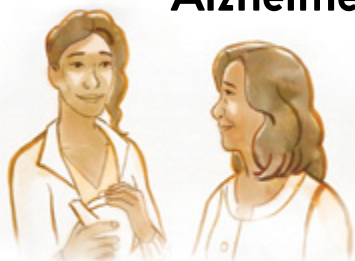
Upstate Jewish Staff and Students Confront Antisemitism



At a meeting in the office of Congressman Brandon Williams, dozens of SUNY Upstate Medical University students and staff discussed an atmosphere of insecurity and fear at the hospital as a result of antisemitic incidents and speech and what they perceived as a lack of administrative support. Speaking anonymously, medical students told of a lack of response from University officials to their expressions of concern. Congressman Williams took notes during the presentations and

afterwards told those present, which included many members of the Jewish community, that “we can’t have an institution that allows antisemitism” and that “in the face of antisemitism, you can’t stay neutral and you can’t stay quiet.” Addressing the October 7th attack on Israel, the congressman said, “What Hamas did cannot be legitimized. It was inhuman. Not inhumane, inhuman. Hamas should be destroyed.” Williams asked the students and faculty how they wanted him to proceed, noting “My goal is to stand against antisemitism.” Following the discussion, the congressman held a brief press conference at which he criticized SUNY Upstate, saying there is a climate of fear and retribution against Jewish people and that the University is “failing to live up to its own values to provide a safe environment.” He added, “Let me be clear, no one should be afraid to go to school. Yet, that’s exactly what’s happening at SUNY Upstate. SUNY Upstate has allowed some form of bigotry, specifically antisemitism, to thrive. And yet, they often go after minor infractions of bigotry expressed by others in the community. Why do they have this selective enforcement against bigotry?”

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Shaliach Shachar Mario Mordechai

The Syracuse Hebrew Day School welcomed Shachar Mario Mordechai from Israel to the school community on October 27. Mordechai — who will be known to the students as “Mr. Mordechai” — is a *shaliach* from Israel who will teach *ivrit* to students in 2nd, 4th and 5th grades as well as bring Israel to the entire school community.

Mordechai is a multi-talented person. Born in 1975 in Haifa, he grew up in Kiryat Bialik and most recently lived in Tel Aviv. He has published four volumes of poetry, all of which attracted critical attention. In 2010, he won the Tel Aviv municipality’s nationwide “Poetry on the Roads” contest, which posts poetry in public places, and he received the 2017 Prime Minister’s Award for creativity in poetry. He was Poet in Residence at Johns Hopkins University in 2018-19. His book of poems, *Make Room For the Rain*, was awarded first place in poetry by the Rachel and Leib Goldberg Foundation in 2021. The book was written in the United States, when Mordechai lived for two years in Baltimore and one year in New York City.

Mordechai has been described as an explicitly political poet, who speaks in his own name, as the son of an Israeli soldier severely wounded in the Six Day War in 1967. He has also taken on the persona of the Tunisian street vendor



whose self-immolation set off the Arab Spring. According to poetry columnist Ilan Berkowitz, he is a “brave artist” who, when he appears to be asking the question “who’s on our side,” that is, Israel’s side, in fact interrogates the meaning of “us”. In Mordechai’s case, this turns out to include the Palestinians.” Critic Amir Becker, examining the way Mordechai balances poetry and politics, judges that Mordechai fulfills a condition voiced by Pablo Neruda that political poetry must be armed with “content and substance and intellectual and emotional richness.”

Shachar is an outstanding spokesperson for Israel. He has made informed and impassioned presentations for SHDS parents and for the Federation board, based upon his extensive knowledge of Israel’s history and his knowledge of the etymology of place names and national nomenclature.

An Example of Moral Courage

Jamesville-DeWitt High School senior Rami Al-Mudamgha is serving as the 2023-24 ex-officio student board member on the Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District Board of Education. At the October 16th Board of Education meeting, Rami made the following statement:

“Before I give them the actual contents of my report, I want to preface this. I’m sure all of you know about the events have been going on in Israel and Palestine for the last week. I’d like to say, as an Arab and a Muslim, that the events that have been triggered by Hamas for the supposed advancement of Palestinian liberation have horrified, saddened and embarrassed me. There was no political or religious reason for what they’ve done, and there’s absolutely no moral justification for their crimes. I feel a deep sense of grief for the innocent Israelis who’ve been kidnapped and killed, and I’d like to ask the board for a moment of silence now.

In Islam there’s a concept called ‘the people of the book.’ This is the term for believers of other Abrahamic religions, such as Christians and Jews. As Muslims, we are supposed to protect our Jewish and



Christian brothers and sisters. I believe that most Muslims, myself included, are disgusted with the actions of Hamas. They do not speak for us, nor for the innocent Palestinians who remain oppressed. I’m very sorry to have to report such a dark topic but I hope that someday Israelis and Palestinians will be able to live in peace with one another.”

Community Hebrew School Explores the Jewish World

by Ora Jezer

The Syracuse Community Hebrew School has been on an incredible journey, exploring Jewish customs and traditions from around the world. As part of this adventure, students have been delving into the *nusach* of Northern African Jewish communities, trying out diverse foods for Shabbat and holidays and discovering similarities in the way Shabbat is observed.



It's amazing to see how much the students are interested in Jewish communities across the world. They love coming to Hebrew School, learning Hebrew and having discussions about the meaning of prayer. It's also wonderful to hear about the video of a *niggun* they sent as part of their partnership with the Igbo community and the WhatsApp video pen pal program.

The third and fourth graders are gearing up to lead *zmirot*, *brachot* and *tefilah* to kick off Shabbat at their first SCHS Shabbat dinner, and there are debates about what constitutes a true Shabbat meal, as they search for the ultimate Shabbat experience.

SCHS is indeed fortunate to have five excellent clergy members who lead prayer and introduce new *niggunim*. It is truly a blessing to have such dedicated and talented clergy guiding our spiritual journey.

TC Shabbat Shirah to Feature Author in Residence Ellen Leventhal

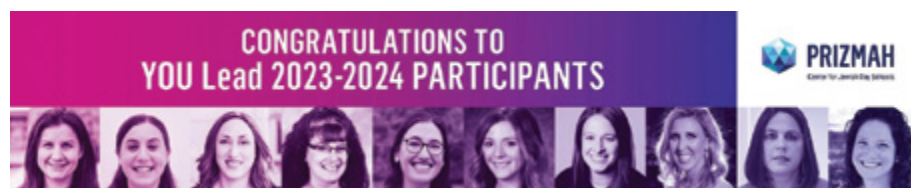
Temple Concord will mark *Shabbat Shirah*, the Sabbath of Song, by welcoming Ellen Leventhal for a three-day celebration of the work of Debbie Friedman. *Debbie's Song*, Leventhal's children's book, is an examination of the life of the hugely influential late Jewish songwriter Debbie Friedman. The celebration will take place January 26 through 28 and will feature events for both children and adults. The entire Jewish community is invited to attend.

The weekend kicks off Friday evening with Shabbat services, at which Leventhal will speak and TC's adult choir, the Kneset Shalom Singers, will offer a selection of Friedman's songs.

On Saturday, Leventhal will join the morning Torah study of *Parsha Beshalach*, containing the seminal Song of the Sea. Saturday evening, following Havdalah, Leventhal will present an author talk and will be joined by TC's own Joe Eglash, editor of the definitive anthology of Friedman's work. This in-person talk may be joined remotely as well.

Finally, throughout Sunday morning, Leventhal will engage with religious-school students across various age groups, highlighting the significance of music to our Jewish life and identity.

This author-in-residence weekend is part of TC's Regina F. Goldenberg Cultural Series and is supported by the Jewish Federation of Central New York, the Jewish Book Council and TC's Library Fund. All events are free; some events require registration. **For details and to register, go to the Calendar section of TC's website www.templeconcord.org or contact the Temple office at 315-475-9952.**



PRIZMAH is the network for Jewish day schools, partnering with day schools, yeshivas, philanthropists and communities from all denominations, helping them grow their reach and impact and tackle the challenges on their paths to success. YOU Lead is Prizmah's signature leadership development program. It provides a research-informed, cohort-based and highly personalized leadership development experience for school professionals who aspire to deepen their leadership capacity in their current role, and for roles they will hold in the future. Over nine months of synchronous and asynchronous learning with expert coaching and mentoring, participants gain the practical tools, resources, skills and knowledge they and their schools need to excel.

The program is designed for Jewish day school professionals with leadership responsibilities (not including current heads of school) who want to develop their leadership skills. YOU Lead combines in-person learning, online modules, cohort building and 1:1 coaching with experienced mentors to support the development of capacities and dispositions – such as emotional intelligence and curiosity – that are central to effective day school leadership. Relevant program sessions focus on a range of pragmatic skill sets, including: best practices for hiring and supervision, talent development, adaptive leadership, time management, how to deliver effective feedback, and much more. The YOU Lead curriculum is informed heavily by Prizmah's research on school leadership and provides highly personalized support that promotes professional growth and addresses leaders' most pressing priorities.

The Syracuse Hebrew Day School's Director of School Affairs Melissa Klemperer has been selected to participate in YOU Lead this year. She will participate in online learning modules and interact with leading experts in Jewish education through monthly virtual cohort meetings, which focus on dilemmas of practice. Throughout the year, each participant presents a professional challenge they are experiencing, and the group uses a protocol to help the presenter gain new insight into the challenge. YOU Leaders have twice-a-month confidential one-on-one coaching calls with their mentors to work through their most pressing leadership challenges and questions. At the beginning of the program, Melissa joined with other YOU Leaders for a two-day in-person gathering for valuable learning and relationship-building.

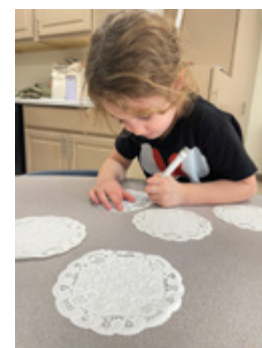
New After School Clubs at the JCC

by Carlett Spike

A new year means new happenings at the JCC. Both regulars and newcomers can explore these programs and upcoming events. The JCC's After School Program now offers three new clubs for children in K- 6th grade who are enrolled in the After School program. Parents can sign their children up for:

- Art club hosted by Ms. Kim. This club will give children the opportunity to practice various art techniques to create their own masterpieces.
- Kindergarten club. A group for kindergarteners to explore and learn with kids their own age, as well as develop new friendships.
- Book club. Open to both younger and older children, the group will read age appropriate books (chapter books for older kids/picture books for younger ones) and discuss or participate in a project related to the reading.

Parents can reach out to Kevin Smith at ksmith@jccsy.org for more information.



Community Creates Chanukiyot for the Everson Museum Festival of Lights

The email came from Adam Carlin, Director of Learning & Engagement at the Everson Museum of Art, headlined *Am Israel Chai*. It said, “I am reaching out regarding the Everson’s Festival of Trees and Lights program. I am not sure if you ever have gotten a chance to experience it, but it is a wonderful celebration of the holiday season and a fundraising opportunity for the museum. Throughout the building, there will be trees donated and decorated by different organizations or community groups which are for sale. We would like this year to have a strong Jewish presence with decorated menorahs around the museum.”



Four organizations in the Jewish community were tapped to participate this year: Federation, the NexGen team, the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center and the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. The results were on display at the Everson during the month of December. The *chanukiyah* of the Jewish Federation of Central New York was created by Leora Zames, a graduate of the Day School, a junior at Christian Brothers Academy and a student at the Epstein High School of Jewish Studies. NexGen’s *chanukiyah* was created by Sandra Malinowski, who is a content creator for Upstate Hospital in the Human Resources department. The third menorah was created by Children’s Programming at the JCC under the direction of Alana Raphael.



The *Or shel Shalom* or “Light of Peace” chanukiya was created by Diana Koester and the fourth graders of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. They described the thinking that went into their work: “This *chanukiyah*, originally an abstract metal design which gave the appearance of being constructed of railroad nails, was already a statement piece, evoking a sentiment of overcoming difficulty and strife. The artists chose to take white and blue crayons and melt them artfully all over the metal framework, a nod to the wax drippings of candles when we light the menorah. White and blue were chosen in honor of Israel. Stubs of crayons were then set into the candleholders to mimic candle stubs, and a light dusting of gold glitter was applied while the crayon wax was still wet. Mrs. Koester crafted a white dove out of oven-bake clay, which she then fused to the *shamash* of the *chanukiyah*. The dove is carrying an olive branch, the end of which takes the shape of the letter *shin* representing *shalom*, peace. The dove sits at the *shamash* so that we may lead with a light of peace. May this *chanukiyah* conjure feelings of hope and faith, and may we all share in more light and more peace in time to come.”



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EZKERA / REMEMBERING

HAROLD J. HONIG
October 31, 2023



Harold J. Honig was born in Syracuse on November 6, 1935 and passed away there on October 31. He graduated from the University of Buffalo with a degree in pharmacy and was a proud member of the Rho Pi Phi fraternity. Although his first job as a pharmacist was in New York City, he returned to Syracuse and worked for many local pharmacies in Central New York. His customers appreciated his good advice and sense of humor. He had a great relationship with all of the Syracuse physicians.

Harold and Doris S. Heft celebrated their 63rd anniversary this past May. They have 4 children all named with the initials "JLH". Jeffrey, Judi, Jonathan and Janet all grew up in the DeWitt household.

Harold's favorite hobby was eating. He enjoyed fine dining and was always excited to take his family and friends to his favorite restaurants. He enjoyed traveling including cruises, the Indy 500,

Vegas for blackjack and craps (betting Hard 8). His other hobbies included golfing, photography, cars, collectables, going to amusement parks (He rode roller coasters into his late 70s.) and travelling to see his children and grandchildren.

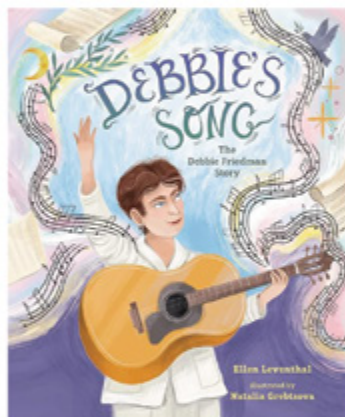
He was exceedingly generous to his grandchildren and dozens of charities. Mostly, he will be missed for his wicked sense of humor and interest in people.

He was predeceased by his parents Bernard and Bertha Honig, his close Aunt Sadie (Larry) Epstein and grandson Michael Boland. He is survived by his loving wife Doris; children Jeffrey (Cille) Honig, Judi (Tim) Boland, Jonathan (Tina) Honig and Janet (Shawn) McDonald; grandchildren Heather (Andrew) Burns, Madeline Honig, Jillian Honig, Daniel Boland, Evan Honig, Ryan Honig, Andrea Honig, Matthew McDonald, Gavin McDonald and Emily McDonald; and his brother Ethan (Amy) Honig.

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Join us for a Community Shabbat Shirah, the Sabbath of Song—January 26–28, 2024

This three-day celebration of the work of Debbie Friedman, will feature author Ellen Leventhal whose children's book, titled *Debbie's Song*, examines the life of the hugely influential, late Jewish songwriter Debbie Friedman.



The celebration will take place at Temple Concord, and will feature events for both adults and children.

The weekend kicks off Friday with Shabbat services, at which Leventhal will speak and TC's adult choir, the Knesset Shalom Singers, will offer a selection of Friedman's songs as a Sermon in Song.

On Saturday morning, Leventhal will join the Torah study of Parsha Beshalach, containing the seminal Song of the Sea.

On Saturday evening, following Havdalah, Leventhal will present an author talk and will be joined by TC's own Joe Eglash, editor of the

definitive anthology of Friedman's work. They will discuss Friedman's profound influence on Jewish music. Light, kosher refreshments will be provided.

This author-in-residence weekend is part of TC's Regina F. Goldenberg Cultural Series and is supported by TC's membership in the Jewish Book Council and TC's Library Fund.

Regina F. Goldenberg
CULTURAL SERIES



LAWRENCE FISHER
November 11, 2023

Lawrence Fisher, 93, passed away on November 11 at SUNY Upstate Hospital. Born in Brooklyn on June 18, 1930 to Samuel David and Ethel Breen Fisher, he had most recently been a resident of The Inn at Menorah Park.

Larry spent his professional career as a sales representative in the New York area. He was successful in his relationships with his customers and the business they trusted to his guidance and expertise. Prior to retiring, he represented KAR Products.

He had proudly served his country in the US Army from 1951-1953. His beloved wife Miriam passed away this past February 19. He is survived by their son Steven.

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**PHILLIP ALAN
SCHWARTZ**
November 11,
2023



Phillip Alan Schwartz, 83, passed away on November 11. Phil was born on January 29, 1940 to Edward and Mollie Schwartz in Springfield, MA. He had been a resident of Syracuse since 1965 when he came to begin his career as a research scientist for Bristol Myers. He met Sandra Schuls shortly after, and they were married a year later.

Phil was a graduate of the New England School of Pharmacy and then earned his master's degree from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. He retired from Bristol Meyers after 35 years and then was a pharmacist for Rite Aid in many Syracuse locations.

He was a member of Temple Adath Yeshurun and Rho Pi Phi Pharmaceutical Fraternity. He will forever be remembered for his generous and kind ways. He never put himself first.

His family includes his wife Sandra of 57 years; their daughters Laurie (Dr. Harold) Horowitz, and Michelle (Alan) Bach, granddaughters Pamela, Hannah, and Iris, his brother Sidney (Miriam) Schwartz, his brother-in-law Philip (Joan) Schuls and many nieces and nephews.

Contributions in his memory may be made to Temple Adath Yeshurun.

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NANCI MARLEY BRONSTEEN
November 17, 2023

Nanci Marley Bronsteen, devoted and loving wife to the late Robert Bronsteen for over fifty years, extremely proud mother of Elizabeth and John and friend to their partners Steve and Megan and grandmother to her very special grandchildren Lily and Michael.

Nanci was a graduate of Finch College. During her professional career she was the assistant editor of Glamour Magazine. Nanci was supported with love and caring by her late parents Harrey and Lillian Marley, and sister Sue and her husband Don Newhouse, their children, and Bob's late parents Edward and Belle.

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**PHYLLIS FLEISCHER EDELSTEIN
CARR, NEE STERN**
November 1, 2023

Phyllis passed quietly in her Manlius home on November 1 after a brief illness. Beloved wife, mother, sister, Phyllis spent over forty years as a stockbroker, the most recent at Morgan Stanley's Syracuse office as a vice president specializing in bonds. She was educated at Nottingham High School and Syracuse University. A wonderful cook, she loved entertaining friends, skiing and summers at Thousand Islands. After retiring at the age of 84, bridge became her obsession. She will be missed by family and friends who loved her warmth, her personality and her love of a good time.

She is survived by Dick Carr, her husband of 25 years, sons Mitchell (Kim) Fleischer, David (Ruth, deceased) Fleischer, Barry (Whitley) Fleischer, sister Linda Stern and grandchildren Jack, Ellie, Evan, Lilah and Caleb.

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