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Jewish Observer of Central New York

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

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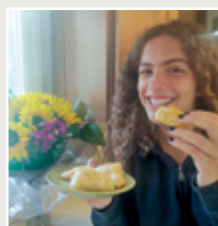
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AUGUST 2021 | AV-ELUL 5781

COMMUNITY VOICES about ISRAEL and ANTISEMITISM



INSIDE:
A JEWISH TEEN'S
EXPERIENCE
(2)



DON'T MISS:
JEWISH COOK
OF THE MONTH
(8)



LOOK:
SCHOOLS CELEBRATE
A UNIQUE YEAR
(10-11)

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Jewish Federation of CNY
5655 Thompson Road
DeWitt, NY 13214

August 2021

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

Sometimes the most complex problems can be stated in the simplest of terms. Years ago, I heard a political scientist say, "Israel can be two of three things: large, democratic and Jewish. It cannot be all three." And therein lies the rub.

The Israeli-Palestinian clash which has once again grabbed newspaper headlines and space on social media has, regrettably, also intersected with issues of racism and social justice. The vision statement of the Jewish Federation of Central New York is clear on where we stand on these issues: **Federation advocates for the support and security of the State of Israel and safeguards, defends and advocates for the civil, economic, and religious rights of the Jewish people.**

Yet at the same time, we realize that many members of our community are struggling with these issues and trying to reconcile what they see and hear with the Jewish values Federation espouses: *Torah* (Jewish learning), *tzedakah* (charity, respect, and social justice), *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *I'dor v'dor* (identity and continuity from generation to generation). We have heard from many readers of the *JO* who have asked us to adopt positions, respond to attacks, take stands.

As a community newspaper, the *JO* seeks to represent and appeal to all the sectors of our community. That is why, in this issue, we are presenting a variety of views, including some with which we – and perhaps you – do not agree. We are particularly concerned with providing as much factual information as possible, particularly for the benefit of the tweens and teens who are experiencing, probably for the first time, significant antisemitism on social media. As Holocaust deniers become emboldened by those who claim news is "fake," as photography and videography increasingly become digitally manipulable so that it is hard to distinguish fact from fiction, as increasingly polarized media and political discourse affect everyone's perception of "reality," we have a special burden to help our young people (and ourselves) find valid sources of information and strategies for standing up for what they believe.

Let there be any doubt about where the *Jewish Observer* stands, however, we want to be clear that our support for Israel is unwavering and unconditional. One has only to contrast the founding statement of the State of Israel with the founding statement of Hamas to see which side people who love humanity and peace must take:

"*Eretz Israel* was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books." *The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, May 14, 1948.*

"The land of Palestine is an Islamic *waqf* [holy possession] consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgment Day. No one can renounce it or any part, or abandon it or any part of it. Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it." *Hamas Covenant, August 18, 1988.*

Perhaps the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unresolvable and antisemitism will always rear its ugly head, as it is written, "The Eternal will be at war against Amalek throughout the ages." Just because we can define a problem doesn't mean we can solve it. Still, if there is to be any hope of a resolution, we must listen to one another, hear one another, reason with one another, even if we disagree with one another. We hope this issue of the *JO* will provide readers with information, understanding and hope. *May the One who makes peace in the heavens, make peace for us and all the people Israel.*

D'var Torah

Tikkun Olam - Responsibility for the World

by Rabbi David Kunin



As we move into the 21st century and examine our institutions and foci, it is particularly important to reassert that the modern Jewish concern for social justice and the environment is not only essential, but also is an authentic reading of our ancient sources. These issues are rooted in the Torah, rabbinic, medieval and modern interpretations of our holy texts. Our tradition teaches that we are partners with God in the transformation and perfection of the world (*tikkun olam*). These commitments are ones that are essential to pass from generation to generation.

The Torah commands us to "love the stranger as we love ourselves," and to remember that all humanity was "created in the image of the divine." The rabbis teach "that which is hateful to you, do not do to another" and that we are all *b'nai Adam*, children of the same parents, Adam and Eve. Rabbi Nicole Roberts writes, "Thirty-six times our Torah calls for treating the stranger, the widow, and the orphan with dignity and not oppressing them; in the Torah's commandment to feed the needy from the corners of our fields; in the Torah's call to be stewards of the earth and to give our animals a day of rest. To claim that these ideas are not authentic to Judaism, stated clearly, boldly, and inscribed in our sacred texts, is simply myopic." These are universal concerns. Together they express our understanding of the essence of the Torah. Our tradition teaches that the world and all its teeming life were created by God. We are part of creation, created even after the insects. We therefore cannot possess the world, but instead are stewards, commanded to care for creation.

The world we live in is far from perfect, and humanity is at the root of many of these challenges. Poverty and inequality persist across the globe, and intolerance (most recently antisemitism) is a rising concern. Species extinction, environmental degradation and global warming cannot be denied. Our world is broken and in need of repair. *Tikkun olam* does not replace the *mitzvot*, but instead expresses a communal commitment to fulfill the *mitzvot* through which the world and humanity are transformed.

Some religious authorities have created a dichotomy between ethical (*mitzvot ben adam l'havero*) *mitzvot* and the ritual *mitzvot* between man and God (*mitzvot ben adam l'makom*). To them, ritual is of primary importance with ethics, due to its essential universality, taking a distant second. This focus, however, is undermined even within Jewish ritual itself. On Yom Kippur we are commanded to do *t'shuvah* (repentance) for the transgressions between one person and another before we do *t'shuvah* for transgressions towards the Divine. In some interpretations, if we do the first, God's forgiveness is automatically provided for the second. Our rabbis realized that unless the community was whole and undivided by ill feelings and conflict, there could be no true connection with God.

Some contend that providing food for a soup kitchen is commendable, but is only a *mitzvah* if those served are Jewish. While there are texts that support this, there are many others which demand a more universalistic interpretation. The prophet Amos, for example, demands that we shed our particularistic arrogance. We were not the only people redeemed by God; so too were the Philistines and the Ethiopians.

As we build our communities and institutions, *tikkun olam* must remain at the heart of all that we do. In the words of a Hassidic master, the world will only be redeemed when we are not the same today as we were yesterday. It will only be redeemed when we fully embrace our responsibility for *tikkun olam*.

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of Central New York

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Message from Neil Bronstein

Chair of the Board
of the Jewish Foundation
of Central New York



I suspect that Alex Holstein is peering down from above and feeling extremely proud. Alex steered the Foundation for the first seven years as chair of our board of directors. He planted the seed and spearheaded the raising of our initial meaningful dollars. The assets under management at the Jewish Community Foundation of CNY have recently surpassed 20 million dollars.

The dream of Alex and other leaders is continuing to flourish. This past year, about 25% of the annual Federation campaign was the result of monies disseminated from permanent endowments at the Foundation. In addition, many thousands of dollars have been generously distributed from donor advised funds to a wide range of worthwhile causes within the Jewish community as well as many other charities locally and around the world.

Our investment committee, until recently chaired by Steve Miron, continues to outperform many other charitable foundations. We are fortunate that Neil Hoyt has agreed to take over for Steve, ensuring that our community and its funds are in excellent hands.

Our Foundation fundholders strongly believe that because we raised our families and prospered in this community, it is our responsibility to ensure its future by creating endowments. To those who are retired or are considering retirement in the near future, I urge you to consider joining us. You can be a part of a group that sees their charity doing so much good every year. Most recently, with COVID wreaking havoc, the additional monies flowing to the community were critical. If one of our Foundation volunteers contacts you, please take the time to listen to our story, or if you so desire, contact your accountant or attorney to see how our Foundation may fit into your financial planning. I really think you will be glad you did.



Jewish Federation
OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

FEDERATION STATEMENT ON ANTISEMITISM

In an increasingly unstable world, Federation supports legislation, funding and actions that enhance the physical safety of our institutions, condemn global antisemitism and allow communities to counter emerging threats, from cyberattacks to terrorism.

Locally, we have a robust community security system that is carefully aligned with local law enforcement. We have sponsored programs and messaging that define, trace and condemn antisemitism and offer meaningful avenues for productive countermeasures. We partner with other faith communities to combat antisemitism and other forms of hatred. We work with the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Federations of North America, as well as with our local and national political representatives, to support legislation that criminalizes hate crimes. We work behind the scenes with the university community and others when antisemitic incidents occur. The Federation's Community Relations Committee proactively works to fight hate and takes action when necessary to stand up for the safety and security of our community. Our community recently participated in a national and very dramatic rally against antisemitism. The August issue of the *Jewish Observer* will devote significant space to ways to help ourselves and, especially, our young people, deal with antisemitism as it is manifested on social media.

There are those who want to know what they, as individuals, can do to counteract the rise in antisemitism in our country. Federation stands with national Jewish communal organizations throughout the U.S. in support of the bipartisan Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act (H.R. 2383; S.B. 1086). In addition, we support the resolution introduced by Senators Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.) and James Lankford (R-Okla.), co-chairs of the Senate Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Antisemitism, condemning the recent rise in anti-Semitism (S. Res. 252) and calling on elected officials, as well as faith and civil society leaders, to denounce and combat all manifestations of antisemitism. To influence these measures, you can contact your local congressional representative to express your support for this legislation.

Working together and working with others in the larger community, we can be effective in stopping those who seek the elimination of Judaism, the Jewish people and the world's only Jewish state.

What Federation Does To Fight Antisemitism

Educates the community

- Community Program on Antisemitism on Zoom – over 200 people in attendance
- Distribution of ADL guidelines to university on combatting antisemitism on campus
- *Yom HaShoah* Program and Youth Contest
- *Jewish Observer* issues devoted to issues of antisemitism, diversity, the Shoah

Calls out manifestations of antisemitism

- Federation has been involved with administrators at Syracuse University, LeMoyne College, local school districts and any other institutions where there have been antisemitic incidents
- Federation works with InterFaith Works to deal with the issue of antisemitism
- Federation has called out acts by the Syracuse Peace Council that verge on antisemitism
- Federation has sent letters to the *Post Standard* to denounce antisemitism and express support of Israel
- Federation, through its security liaison, works closely with law enforcement to monitor and react to antisemitism
- Federation sponsors a biannual conference on antisemitism for local law enforcement personnel which involves national leadership in the field

Rallies and supports Israel and those who decry antisemitism

- Federation participated in the recent national rally by major Jewish organization and political, educational and civic leaders condemning antisemitism and all hatred
- Federation supports the work of the Anti-Defamation League
- Federation robustly promotes support of Israel
- Federation raised \$100,000 in a show of community support for Israel

Federation promotes a positive image of the Jewish community through the Jewish Observer and social media.

Federation encourages community members to join with the Anti-Defamation League and other national organizations in taking activist positions which, by law, Federation itself cannot do.

Federation helps people find connections to express their concerns in a positive and effective manner by calling members of Congress to urge action in the fight against antisemitism.

Federation regularly expresses gratitude to our law enforcement partners and our political representatives who clearly state that attacks on the Jewish community are reprehensible, unacceptable and illegal.

Community Voices

On these pages, the Jewish Observer presents some of the impassioned voices of members of our community on the critical issues of antisemitism and the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. Of particular concern is the impact of these discussions on our youth. The situation for young Jews is serious. A recent notice was recently circulated at Schenectady High School, for example, suggesting that educators refer to the actions of the Israeli government as “ethnic cleansing” and “colonialism.” Two of the pieces that follow specifically address ways in which our young people can deal with this kind of situation.

A Jewish Teen’s Experience of Antisemitism on Social Media

Social media spreads information faster than any other media. Social media also enables the spread of unreliable and false information faster than any other media. Argumentation in the age of social media, especially on Instagram, takes the form of competing postings. Over 70% of the American public uses some type of social media, but the heaviest users are young adults, teens and tweens, most of whom visit a social media site at least daily.

A rise in antisemitism has been directly attributed to the use of social media. The American Jewish Committee issued a report in 2020 revealing the negative impacts of the “digitization of antisemitism,” and the Anti-Defamation League reported that “roughly 4.2 million anti-Semitic tweets were posted and reposted on Twitter” in a one-year period.

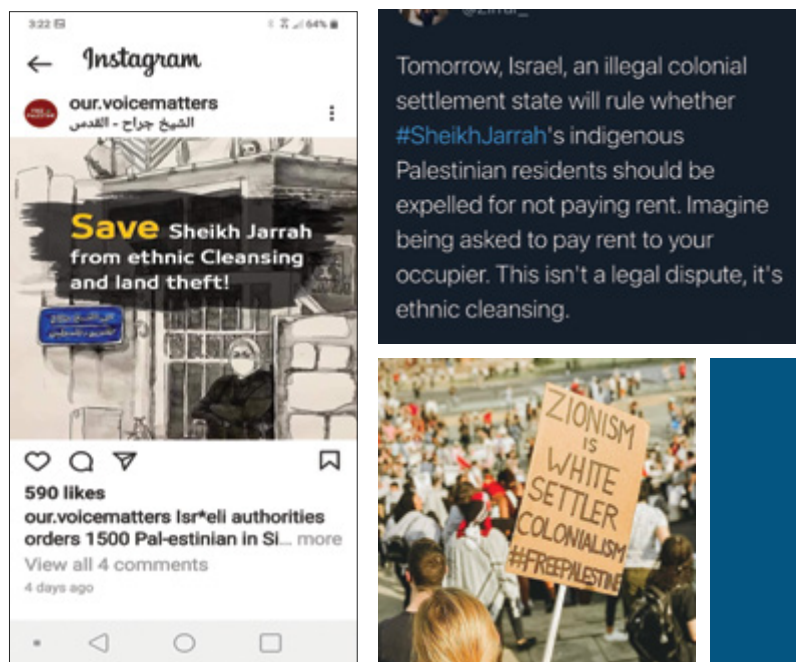
In order to help JO readers understand the nature of this problem and how it is affecting our young people, we reached out to Henia Zames, a rising senior at Christian Brothers Academy and a graduate of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. Following is her description of the issue as she has experienced it.

A Teen’s Perspective

by Henia Zames

In the 21st century, it’s easy to find yourself surrounded by daily news throughout social media regardless of what it is. One thing that people fail to realize is that with the privilege of social media comes the ability to formulate opinions whether or not they are discriminatory. Now more than ever, antisemitism is prevalent on social media. I can’t seem to escape it and am especially upset when it comes from the people I least expect.

Here are some examples of harmful posts I’ve seen on social media:

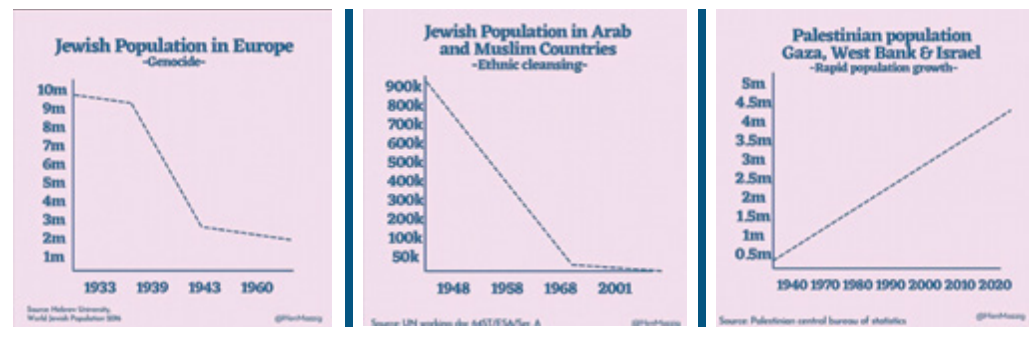


During the past few weeks, due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, teenagers would immediately stand with the side of the conflict that gets the most social media publicity. This conflict has years and years of history behind it. It cannot be summed up in an Instagram post. Very few people find it necessary to think and educate themselves before reposting an infographic they find on Instagram. Their thoughtless actions are then funneled into antisemitic behavior which can be incredibly disheartening.

I have seen people that I thought respected both my religion and culture post what they think Jewish people should believe during a time like this, when they, themselves, are not Jewish. I have witnessed people try to forcefully blame Jewish people for the Zionist beliefs that they may have

seen other individuals exhibit without a second thought. This all occurs right behind a screen. Not only does this frustrate me, but it scares me to think that as a young Jewish woman, I have to be defined by what other kids my age post on their social media platforms.

I attempted to counter these antisemitic posts and Instagram stories with information and statistics I read up on, like the following, related to accusations of “ethnic cleansing:”



Then I received a message. Someone, not Jewish or Israeli, reached out to me to let me know that I was heard. “Before people started talking about Palestine and Israel, I never really saw this much antisemitic content,” she wrote. “I have never seen this much blatant antisemitic rhetoric.”

The words of this individual finally made me feel that as a young Jew in today’s society, I was taken seriously. I felt respected because of my religion rather than feeling vulnerable and unsafe. Knowing that my pain and my fear was recognized became a catalyst for me to do more research and educate myself more on the facts and what I should say and do during this time as a Jew in America. I felt encouraged to reach out to my Israeli friends and family and make sure that they were okay. The words of this individual allowed me to empathize with other young Jews in my area, understanding that I must not be the only one that feels this way.

Antisemitism is something that is generally overlooked. A recent study by the American Jewish Committee reported that nearly half of Americans are not even familiar with the term “antisemitism.” Generalizations and misinformation spread throughout the media contribute to further antisemitism. Truthfully, most of us just want peace. We want to be more than just another voice in the crowd. We want to be seen. We want to be heard. Antisemitism is not going to go

Richard D. Wilkins has long been active within the Syracuse Jewish community, and beyond.

A Multi-Front War

by Richard D. Wilkins

A classic Jewish telegram: “Start worrying. Details to follow.”

No such warning is needed now. Israel’s security situation remains fraught, antisemitism is exploding worldwide and Jewish community cohesion is collapsing. Post 4th Gaza War, unexpected Israeli Arab-Jewish tensions linger, while Iranian encirclement, linking Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Gaza and Yemen proxies, hardens. Israeli politics remains unstable.

The Israel-Palestinian conflict resembles no other. In the court of world public opinion, Israel’s strength is its greatest weakness, Palestinian weakness, its undeserved strength. Despite committing enormous war crimes, Hamas’ manipulative propaganda summons sympathies worldwide, from social, broadcast and print media, academia, human rights groups, international organizations and even from within the Jewish community, immensely enabling its immediate goal of supplanting Fatah and ultimately destroying the Jewish State. Israel has the means, but not the will, to totally demolish Hamas. The Palestinians have the will, but not the means, to achieve total victory. Only their acceptance of an end of conflict can

alter such unstable equilibrium. Till then, this is a conflict that can only be managed, not resolved.

The war unleashed a torrent of antisemitism, unprecedented, post-Holocaust, in brazenness, variety and sheer magnitude. There were verbal taunts from auto cavalcades, gang assaults at public venues, graffiti and other damage at communal sites and genocidal chants at pro-Palestinian rallies. Response from political leaders, university presidents, human rights groups and the media has been nil or muted. As the “canary in the mine,” rampant antisemitism eerily presages accelerating civilizational collapse. Jewish defense agencies, groups and individuals need to vigorously confront such spreading hatred. This is no time to be silent.

How disheartening that so many, especially young Jews, exhibit disaffection with Israel, even to declaring “solidarity” with its enemies.

Unfortunately, emotions, not facts, now rule. They have internalized incessant anti-Zionist societal messages and are now unable or unwilling to dismiss them. Israel and Jews have been late to the pivotal media battleground. This is a war we dare not lose.

Joel Hammer, PhD, is a retired psychologist living in Syracuse. He recently sent the following to the Jewish Observer.

Do We Care?

by Joel Hammer

Recently, the world has witnessed unmitigated warfare against Israel and Jews everywhere, including major cities in the U.S. What strikes me is that rather than send in the IDF to once and for all destroy the Hamas infrastructure and establish martial law in that lawless area, Jerusalem agrees, under considerable world pressure, to a ceasefire. What that does is legitimize Hamas as a body worthy to negotiate with. We are again back to square one, until the next barrage of rocket attacks, perhaps this time from both Gaza and from Hezbollah, the latter a much deadlier threat.

Hamas and its Palestinian supporters in Israel and the contested territories have won the psycho/political battle of seriously hurting Israel and disrupting life for Jews, Christians and peace-loving Moslems. I believe that in many circles in the “civilized” west, Africa, western and middle Asia, Hitler would win more accolades than

Einstein, Jonas Salk, Gandhi or Mother Theresa. Antisemitism is beyond hate. It is a pernicious virus which morphs from generation to generation. That is why, for Jews, memory is power, and essential for survival. Amalek comes in many forms.

The consequences of rejecting every offer made by Israel for the creation of a Palestinian state since the partition must be borne by Israel’s neighbors, who, incidentally, care naught for the Palestinians, resulting in Arabs killing more Arabs in the region than during all of Israel’s wars.

With the Taliban back in business, and Syria, Iran and Turkey vying for the next caliphate, does anyone really believe that allowing Hamas and Hezbollah to continue their war of attrition against Israel is productive? The west betrayed the Kurds. Does anyone care? The world continues to betray the Jews. Do we care? And if not now, when?

Rabbi Brian Walt retired last year as rabbi of Ithaca’s Reform Congregation Tikken v’Or. He recently addressed the Syracuse Peace Council. These remarks were excerpted from https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/when-silence-is-betrayal/

When Silence is Betrayal

by Rabbi Brian Walt

I am a member of the Jewish Voice for Peace Rabbinical Council, a growing group of rabbis who believe that support for the rights of Palestinians is central to our Judaism. Many of us have witnessed realities in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories that most Jews never see, no matter how many times they visit Israel. It’s easy to ignore oppression when you are determined to do so. Israel’s destruction of Palestinian homes, segregated ID system, systemic discrimination and unabated settler violence remind me of what I witnessed as a young person growing up in South Africa. Once one has seen these realities, one cannot be silent.

It is uncomfortable today for Jews who support Israel as people around the world take

action to support freedom for Palestinians. The solution to this discomfort is not to smear and attack human rights defenders and supporters of the grassroots boycott, divestment and sanctions movement for Palestinian rights, but to join with those who are working for universal human rights for all, including Palestinians.

At the heart of the Torah is a sacred commitment to the dignity of all human beings. Jewish religious tradition and our historical experience as a people call on us now to support equality and freedom, without exception. As a rabbi, I support those who work to make the world a more just place for us all. It’s time we all stand up and do the right thing.

Rabbi Erez Sherman is the rabbi of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles and a graduate of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and the Rabbi Epstein School of Jewish Studies. He recently authored this article for jewishjournal.com.

How Could Rabbinical Students Ignore Israel’s Right to Defend Itself?

by Rabbi Erez Sherman

I was aghast to read a letter signed by close to 100 rabbinical students– future leaders of the Jewish community who will serve in pulpits, on college campuses and within Jewish organizations– which shamefully ignores Israel’s right, let alone duty, to defend her citizens.

As a rabbi who sat in those houses of study both in New York and in Jerusalem, it pains me greatly to see the lack of support and understanding of Israel from these students. I would like to address their points directly.

You claim that our tears must be directed to injustices. But where are your tears for the millions of Israeli civilians—Jews, Muslims and Christians—who have been huddled in bomb shelters for the past week because a terrorist group has rained nearly 3,000 rockets on them?

Where are your tears for the residents of Kibbutz Aza, Netivot and Sderot who have been terrorized by those same rockets ever since Israel evacuated Gaza more than 15 years ago? Visit their communities where for years balloons have floated over the border for children to run after, soon to find out the string was attached to an explosive to inflict harm.

Instead, you seem embarrassed that Israel has been forced to have an army strong enough to defend its inhabitants. Here is the simple truth, quoting Rabbi David Wolpe, that you blatantly

ignored: “If Hamas stopped raining rockets on Israel, it would be over. If Israel stopped defending and retaliating, it would be slaughter.”

You ask how we as Jews who were involved with racial reckoning in our communities this past year are not using our voices now to implicate Israel with racist violence. Racist? From the one country in the Middle East that has embraced more than 100 different nationalities and where Muslims have the most amount of freedom, rights and educational opportunities in the region? Where Israeli Arabs sit on the Supreme Court and in the government and run hospitals?

Finally, you conclude: “We need to look at the realities we have been denying, allow ourselves to feel the hurt, and build from there.” I completely agree — let us begin together with the reality that the State of Israel has not just the right, but the responsibility, to defend its citizens. Let us also not deny the reality that the biggest enemies of the Palestinian people have been their corrupt, Jew-hating leaders, who use Israel as a scapegoat for their failures, endanger the lives of their own people, and, in Gaza, build rockets and tunnels rather than schools.

» Book Reviews

Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth by Noa Tishby

Reviewed by Irving G. Raphael, MD

Any group discussion about Israel today frequently becomes very passionate, heated and punctuated with loud disagreement. Is Israel a national homeland or a modern example of colonialization? Is it a thriving democracy or, like its neighbors, an autocratic government? Is it a place for equality for all religions, races and genders or an apartheid state? Is it a country yearning for peace in a very rough neighborhood or a military occupier instigating wars? We are told this is a very complicated problem dealing with this tiny sliver of land in the Middle East – but it really isn't.

Noa Tishby addresses all of these issues in her timely book, *Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth*. I will admit up front that I have a natural bias. I have travelled often to Israel with family; I have worked, studied and lived in Israel; I count many Israelis as family and friends. Tishby methodically addresses and strips away the myths, lies, distortions and the various political agendas to explain ancient and recent history and current events – and the result is that Israel and

the problems surrounding it are not as complex as we have been led to believe.

Tishby has a unique perspective with respect to Israel. Her grandparents emigrated from Russia and Germany during the early years of the Zionist dream begun by Theodore Herzl at the end of the 19th century. She refers to Herzl as "Theo." Her grandparents and parents were among the many who lived on a *kibbutz*, worked miracles on the land and helped found the State of Israel. One was an ambassador in



the early government. Like most Israelis, she spent two and a half years in the military as a teenager. She then starred on a popular Israeli TV series and later moved to Hollywood where she sells and produces Israeli productions to the US media. She is a self-proclaimed peace activist, a liberal and a staunch defender of most (but not all) of what goes on in Israel.

Tishby divides history into three stages: the first 3000 years until the late 19th century, the 20th century up to 1948 and the last 73 years with the creation and survival of the State of Israel. She deftly weaves her family story in with the events of the last century, making much of the book very personal. She helps us understand

the "Palestinian Problem" by dividing them into three distinct groups – Israeli Arabs (who have all the rights of other Israelis), West Bank "Palestinians" under the Palestinian Authority, and residents of Hamas-run Gaza. (The quotation marks are used because, as Tishby explains, there is no such country as Palestine and never was.)

Tishby devotes many pages to past and current antisemitism and how it relates to anti-Zionism. She also deals with the origins of such movements as BDS. (A warning to readers sensitive to vocabulary. Tishby frequently resorts to the vernacular for emphasis, e.g. "the good sh-t about Israel is drowned in the flood of negative sh-t." This is one of the milder examples.)

I feel it is important to read this book because, as Tishby writes, "Israel is misunderstood not only by the people who were intentionally educated to misunderstand, but also by the people who should really know better." For all who care about Israel (which hopefully, in our lifetime, will be living in peace with its neighbors), Noa Tishby's book is a must read – perhaps even more than once.

Ten Ways You Can Respond to Antisemitism

- 1 **Educate yourself** about antisemitism, particularly the "new antisemitism" (antisemitism comingled with the demonization of Israel).
- 2 **Engage Jewish friends** and friends of different faiths in conversations about their experiences and thinking regarding antisemitism.
- 3 **Avoid using anti-Jewish language** or making references to Jewish stereotypes, even in jest. Diplomatically bring such stereotypes to the attention of others when they engage in such behavior.
- 4 **Speak out** against antisemitic jokes and slurs. Silence can send a message that such slurs and derogatory remarks are acceptable.
- 5 **Learn more** about antisemitic myths and stereotypes, and share what you learn with others.
- 6 **Read news accounts** and opinion pieces about both the history of antisemitism and its current manifestations.
- 7 **Create a discussion**, study or book group to learn more about antisemitism.
- 8 **Regularly review** a variety of news sources for information and examples of antisemitism. When newspaper, magazines or television reporting seems antisemitic, respectfully communicate your dissatisfaction.
- 9 **If you encounter an antisemitic website, contact the Anti-Defamation League** and/or the site's host carrier to complain and request that the site be taken down.
- 10 **Donate money** to organizations that fight antisemitism.

Dr. Savedoff

Jewish News From Around The World



Architect's rendering of ToHa Tel Aviv office complex. Image courtesy of Ron Arad Architects/Israel21c.

Tel Aviv skyscraper wins international design award. The Chicago-based Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat chose Tel Aviv's two-year-old ToHa skyscraper as the overall winner in the office building category of its 18th annual awards program.

Israel joins UN's ECOSOC. For the first time, over two thirds of UN members voted Israel onto the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Israel's UN Ambassador Gilad Erdan said it was a "recognition of our innovation and creativity, which serves to benefit all nations of the world." <https://unitedwithisrael.org/israel-elected-to-uns-prestigious-economic-and-social-council/>

First country to ban sale of fur. Israel has become the first nation in the world to ban the import and sale of animal furs to the fashion industry. The one exception allows fur to be used for religious purposes and so it permits the import of *shtreimels*, the cylindrical fur hats worn by many Hasidic men which are often made from the tails of sable. <https://www.peta.org/blog/israel-bans-fur/>

Vegetable walls for California seniors. Israel's Vertical Field has been chosen to provide its vertical farming systems to assisted-living homes in California managed by Calson Management. If successful, the pilot scheme in Vallejo, California will be expanded to seven more centers. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/vertical-field-to-erect-farm-installations-for-seniors-in-california/>

Cigarettes come to an end on Israeli beaches. Volunteers from Israeli NGO "Clean the Butts" scour Israel's beautiful beaches to remove discarded cigarette ends. Many are turned into artwork, while the remainder are shipped off to a recycling facility in Ireland. The NGO volunteers also sell pocket ashtrays to beachgoers. <https://www.israel21c.org/meet-the-people-on-a-mission-to-make-beaches-butt-free/>

Top European rabbis say religious practice under 'severe threat.'

European Rabbis have said religious practice is under "severe threat" right across the continent, in the sternest warning of its kind in years. The remarks were made in Geneva this week at a meeting of the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) to discuss Jewish life in the region. CER president Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt said: "Everywhere in Europe, our religious practice is severely under threat. The continued efforts made by several European nations to restrict our ability to observe important religious customs and traditions are increasingly worrying and problematic." <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/top-european-rabbis-say-religious-practice-under-severe-threat/>

Women climb the tech ladder. Many Israeli organizations aim to help promote opportunities for women to join the Israeli hi-tech industry. Now Jerusalem-based Fem JLM has launched a program – FemForward, offering lectures, mentors and networking to help women in tech progress into management. <https://www.calcalistech.com/ctech/articles/0,7340,1-3908699,00.html>

Sweden's largest church supports circumcision for Jews and Muslims. Document on male circumcision says the practice 'does not in itself contravene the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' and affirmed it is 'significant identity creation' for faith groups. <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/swedens-largest-church-supports-circumcision-for-jews-and-muslims/>

Acre Arabs to help repair Jewish businesses. Arab mobs wrecked the Arabesque Hotel, owned by Evan Fallenberg, and the Effendi Hotel and Uri Buri restaurant, owned by Uri Jeremias, in the Israeli city of Acre. But most of the Arab community was appalled by the events and has rallied round to help repair the damage. <https://www.israel21c.org/israeli-hotelier-restaurateur-to-rebuild-after-akko-arson/>

More Jewish-Arab solidarity. Arab and Jewish medical staff at Sheba Medical Center in Tel Hashomer and at Rambam Medical Center in Haifa, joined together in solidarity events last week. Rambam used social media to showcase Jews and Arabs working together, displaying messages of peace in Hebrew and in Arabic. <https://unitedwithisrael.org/jewish-and-arab-health-professionals-in-israel-unite-in-solidarity/Arabs-pitch-in-Jerusalem>

Arabs pitch in Jerusalem. 60 Israeli Arabs, Palestinian Arabs and UAE Arabs presented their startup ideas at a JVP "tech-pitch" event in Jerusalem. They included an eco-friendly hotel run by Jews and Arabs, music training for young Arabs and Jews, and an app to learn Hebrew and Arabic. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-arab-palestinian-tech-pitch-night-brings-silver-of-hope-to-fraught-ties/>

Jews and Arabs tech seminar in the South. Israeli-Jews, Israeli-Arabs and Palestinian Arabs have been attending a two-week tech seminar organized by Tech2Peace at Moshav Hatseva, in the Arava desert. The aim is to promote peace and personal relations through 3D design, app development and web building. <https://www.calcalistech.com/ctech/articles/0,7340,1-3909039,00.html>

The Israeli Arab that founded a Unicorn. Wagde Zabit describes growing up in the Israeli Muslim Galilee town of Kafr Mand. As a five-year-old he received a present of his first computer. Much later he graduated from Israel's Technion to co-found Israeli cybersecurity startup Orca Security, now worth over \$1 billion.

<https://www.calcalistech.com/ctech/articles/0,7340,1-3908829,00.html>

UAE opens its Israel embassy. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has opened its new embassy in the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange building. Israel opened its own embassy in Abu Dhabi in January. <https://unitedwithisrael.org/historic-this-arab-ally-opened-new-embassy-in-israel/>

Israel to Marrakesh flights. Israeli airline Israir launched direct flights between Israel and Morocco's Marrakesh on July 19. Israir expects that the route will attract hundreds of thousands of Israelis and are scheduling five services a week.

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/307323>

Alerting device for hearing impaired. One team at the JCT LevTech women's hackathon developed an electronic bracelet alarm for the hard of hearing. It vibrates when it detects a rocket siren and thus alerts the wearer to the need to get to a bomb shelter. It can even differentiate from other alarms or similar sounds. <https://unitedwithisrael.org/israeli-women-hackers-invent-rocket-alert-for-hearing-impaired/>

As strong as spider silk. Israel's Seevix Material Sciences has developed SVX - synthetic spider silk fibers that are five times stronger than high tensile steel but only one-fifth the weight. SVX was genetically engineered using a unique DNA sequence plus a fermentation process using bacteria, sugar, yeast and water. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/the-other-web-startup-says-it-has-produced-material-as-strong-as-spider-silk/>

Honey without bees. In the land of Milk and Honey, Israel's Bee-io Honey is developing cultured honey in the laboratory. It uses natural nectar and an "artificial bee stomach," to simulate the enzymatic activity, conditions and processes that occur in the bee's stomach. Bee-io Honey has just listed on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. <https://nocamels.com/2021/05/bee-io-honey-merge-whitestone-group/>

Israel can be good for your health. It's official. Researchers at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have published the findings of their longevity study of 1200 Israelis that began in 1990. Participants aged 85-90 with a high optimism score had a 20% higher rate of survival over those who were less optimistic. <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/307287>

Out of the Box Mitzvot



Thou Shalt Ride, the local affiliate of the Jewish Motorcyclists Alliance, is a Jewish motorcycle club that annually raises funds for projects dedicated to Holocaust education. This year, Joel Stein (not pictured), Dave Channin, and Dave Feldman met at Montour Falls and rode along Seneca Lake to Seneca Falls as part of the annual Ride to Remember.

The **Semicolons** is a team that annually raises money for the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation to help those affected by these digestive diseases. COVID curtailed their big in-person event but the small but mighty contingent had a successful Take Steps Walk and fundraiser under the leadership of Abby Kasowitz Scheer.



TAY Onsite and Online

by *Sonali McIntyre*

Through the pandemic, "*Kulanu b'yachad*/We are together," has been Temple Adath Yeshurun's mantra. As a community, the TAY family has remained connected through virtual programs, telephone calls, emails, newsletters, and more. Synagogues across the country, Temple Adath Yeshurun included, have been challenged to reimagine, innovate and create new opportunities for

congregants to connect in meaningful ways during the pandemic.

As COVID restrictions have slowly and safely been lifted, TAY is pleased to offer *both* onsite and online programs and services. Most recently, the congregation began to gather for Shabbat morning services in the Goldberg Sanctuary and outdoor programs or services like a Kabbalat Shabbat service with Rabbi Zehavi and Cantor Jaffe and Rising Song, a monthly singing program with Cantor



A Trip Down Memory Lane

A \$50 prize will be awarded to the first person who can correctly identify all those pictured in this 1985 Boy Scout Reunion photograph. Another \$50 will be donated to the JO Appeal. Send entries to the *Jewish Observer* at jo@jewishfederationcny.org

The newly expanded version of the *Encyclopedia of Jewish Women* contains entries by three local Central New Yorkers. Elana Shever, associate professor of Anthropology and chair of the Sociology and Anthropology Department at Colgate University, and her daughter Ariella wrote the entry on a writer/journalist named Adeline Cohnfeldt

Lust. Elana wrote the original entry while in college. She was thinking about getting a doctorate in anthropology and welcomed the opportunity to do original research, even though it was not in her field. This was before the internet was a research tool, and she remembers sitting in the elegant reading room at the main branch of the New York Public Library to read Lust's novel and the other writings she could locate. Now, she and Ariella mostly use internet resources, like geneology.com, immigration and census records and newspaper archives, to fill in more of her story. Ariella, who is a rising 7th grader at Manlius Pebble Hill School, says, "I helped by reading the first entry and asking questions I wanted to know more about. I looked for answers or clues in the texts my mom found. A lot of time it seemed like we were getting nowhere, but somehow, we found a lot more information about her, especially her early life."

Jaffe and monthly Tot Shabbat services on the playground with Alicia Gross. All of these programs were also held via Zoom, allowing those who aren't able or aren't yet comfortable to attend onsite to still participate in synagogue life and connect with their temple family.

Plans are underway for ancillary groups like HAZAK and Sisterhood to begin meeting and developing programs. In July, HAZAK gathered together for the Town of DeWitt's Concerts in the Park and enjoyed music and good company. Sisterhood is planning a Meet & Greet for the women of the congregation to get together for a relaxed schmooze in August.

While the future is uncertain, one thing remains: "*Kulanu b'yachad*/We are together." Whether it is a virtual gathering, onsite program or a combination of the two, Temple Adath Yeshurun's clergy, professional staff and Board of Directors are looking forward to continuing to build meaningful connections, together with its members.

The photograph of Robert Lieberman that accompanied the article on RAV Properties did not contain an attribution to the photographer. The portrait was taken by Alec Erlebacher. The JO sincerely regrets the omission.

Community Leadership Tackles the Hard Issues

Every six weeks, Federation convenes the leaders of the Jewish community to discuss issues of common interest and concern. At the end of June, for the first time in over a year, the presidents of the boards of all synagogues and partner and affiliated agencies, their executive directors and the community's rabbis gathered together in person to discuss the implications of the recently-issued Pew Report on Jewish Americans.

Federation President/CEO Michael Balanoff opened the meeting by asking, "How can we all get together to face the future?" He stressed that "It's important that we talk to each other, help each other and work together to make a better Jewish community. We cannot do it alone. Federation wants to listen. Can we think outside the box, be innovative, do fewer things and do them better? What are the priorities in terms of engaging Jewish people?"

He then tossed out the question, "How do you think the Pew Report findings affect the Jewish community of Central New York?"

Melissa Harkavy, executive director of Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas, jumped right in. "We buck the trend," she said, "We work together. We don't have the same level of polarization as in bigger cities." Ora Jezer, education director of the Syracuse Community Hebrew School, noted that the Pew Report says that the various branches of Judaism don't mix, "but here we do. At the Community Hebrew School, we are all together."

"I don't want to be Boston or New York City," stated Rabbi Evan Shore of Shaarei Torah Orthodox Congregation of Syracuse. "I want to be Syracuse." The JCC's executive director, Marci Erlebacher, agreed, stating that "we have put too much emphasis on what we're NOT. The smallness of our area is what is attracting people. We have a jewel in the community, and we need to identify what is really good and build on it."

The leaders stressed that the Central New York Jewish community has a lot going for it. "We are a welcoming community," said Fran Ciardullo, president of the board of the Rabbi Epstein School. "This community is nice," agreed Hillel director Jillian Juni, adding, "That is an asset. People are nice. There is a wealth of beautiful things in this town." JCC board chair Steven Sisskind stressed that "we have opportunities here and so much that is positive. Apologizing for

what we do wrong is the wrong direction to take."

The participants nevertheless acknowledged that there is room to improve and grow. There are untapped populations to the north of us and many unaffiliated families. Interfaith families often drop out of the community after their children become *b'nai mitzvah*. College graduates frequently feel there is nothing Jewish for them to do. There is a need for adult programming, programming for seniors and intergenerational programming.

The importance of education was

emphasized by all participants. Rabbi Shore noted that his synagogue's membership had increased by ten percent because we have a day school. "If we don't educate our children, we will not have a community," he said. Day School head Laura Lavine noted how a grassroots effort to connect with non-Jewish and interfaith families through a "What Your Child is Learning" program had brought many people to greater interest and observance. Jeff Lefkowitz, incoming president of Temple Concord, likewise saw an increase in participation when Zoom allowed people from all over the country to come to services. "That little bit of outreach made a big difference," he reported.

Rabbi Yehoshua Zehavi of Temple Adath raised a significant issue with regard to "Jews of no religion," a category that the Pew Report singled out. "Jews of no religion' could feel like bad news," he said, "but there have always been Jews who were not members of synagogues, who did not pray or believe in God or have a Jewish education. Yet it is still important to them to identify as Jewish. What does that mean for us as a community?" He

suggested that we need to do more that is not tied to a denomination, and that it is a strength that we do "interdenominational and collaborative" activities. He said that "people are not coming to a community looking for services (prayer or other). They are looking for a community in which they can express themselves as Jewish. They want to be part of the Jewish people."

Judith Huober, director of Jewish Family Service, concurred, emphasizing the need for personal connections. "Find something that people need and connect. Offer education and the opportunity for self-exploration and growth," she recommended. "Make it an outreach that is sometimes intellectual, sometimes religious, sometimes cultural, sometimes spiritual." New Community Hebrew School board president Micaela Cooper added, "We to find the hook. We need a great idea to reach out to the 'Jew-curious.'"

The meeting was adjourned by Michael Balanoff with the promise that the next meeting would be devoted to following up on the ideas and suggestions that had surfaced at this session.

Magen David Adom Thanks Our Community



"Thank you so much for your community's extraordinary pledge of a life-saving ambulance for the people of Israel!" So begins a letter from Magen David Adom to the Jewish community of Central New York. It goes on to say, "With your generous support, Magen David Adom will be adding a new state-of-the-art Life Support Ambulance to our existing fleet of over 1,200 life-saving vehicles. Once the vehicle arrives in Israel and is incorporated into MDA's fleet, your ambulance will be tracked,

and you will receive annual reports on the lives saved and individuals treated thanks to your generous gift. On behalf of the paramedics, EMT's, and staff of MDA and AFMDA, we thank you for your support of our lifesaving mission."

The *Jewish Observer* is proud to list the names of those who donated to this wonderful project. This list complements the list of First Responders which appeared in the July issue.

Adam Alweis, Karen and Ken Alweis, Anonymous (14), Nancy and Norm Barnett, Rabbi Irvin and Jane Beigel, Nancy and Peter Benson, Joan G. Bordett, Jan and Neil Bronstein, Jayne and Larry Charlamb, Lynn and Cecile Cohen, Michael Cynamon, Joe and Tamara David, Joe and Susan DeMari, Cantor Kari and Joe Eglash, Miriam and Colin Elman, Norma S. Feldman, Shana and Mike Gadarian, Marsha and Robert Glatter, Nettie and Ronny Goeler, Alan Goldberg, Daniel and Ellen Goldberg, Seth and Leah Goldberg, James Goldstein, Tina Finneyfrock and Eli Goldstein, Mireille Goodisman, Gramet Family, Aviva Habib, Dr. David Hurwitz, Rabbi Daniel and Dr. Rhea Jezer, Rita and Allan Kanter, Daniel Kornfeld and Aliza Milner, Neal Kurn and Sue Yaffee Kurn, Martin Levine, Ari and Jessica Malzman, David and Ruth Miller, Marcia and David Mizruchi, Lynn and Marvin Koss, Bonnie S. Leff, Meryl and Jeffrey Lefkowitz, David Lubin, Bonnie Levy and Stephen Faigen, Bobbi and Cliff Malzman, William and Alice Newman, Anita Botnick Persoff, Rabbi Yaakov and Chanie Rapoport, Rebecca and Jim Resig, Elyssa Rosenbaum, Diane Sacks, Rick and Jamie Schamp, Family Sinclair, Jef Sneider and Gwen Kay, Phil and Alicia Spevak, Judith and Jeffrey Stanton, Jeff and Cindy Stein, Pamela and Richard Strauss, Holly Salop Wallace, Lois Weiner, Ellen and Howard Weinstein, Jack Wells, Kate Werner, Leora Zames, Talia Zames, Rabbi and Ashira Zehavi and First Responders Cantor Robert and Rabbi Vicki Lieberman..



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Jewish Cook of the Month



Danielle Downie

Danielle Downie is a graduate of F-M High School who is headed to Syracuse University to study film. Her interest in cooking was sparked by her grandmother. "My sisters and I were lucky to have our grandmother Lily come every summer (except last year) to spend time with us," Danielle says. "We grew up eating her delicious dishes, and soon I started helping her and my mom cook and write down the recipes. I also love reading cook books, especially about Middle Eastern cuisine."



What is your favorite cooking secret/trick/hack/shortcut?

Butter. No one adds enough butter to their dishes, typically in fear of its fat content, but butter is what can bring a dish together. Also you can use its wrappers to grease your pans or baking pans with ease.

Could you please share a favorite kosher recipe that isn't terribly complicated?

This is a recipe for *bourekas*, a popular baked pastry in Sephardic and Israeli cuisine.

Where did you learn to cook?

The first memories I have of cooking are with both my grandmothers. Each has taught me different things about American and Israeli cuisine. As I grew older, I watched a lot of videos from channels like Bon Appetit where I collected different tips and tricks.

Why do you like to cook?

I like to cook because I find it very interesting. I like how there is one end goal and yet several different ways to get there. Want some chicken for dinner? You can roast, fry, batter, marinate and grill it to perfection. The possibilities are endless.

What is your favorite dish to prepare?

My favorite dish is Israeli salad, even though it's super simple. It can elevate any meal since it's fresh and zesty.

Bourekas

Ingredients:

- 1 package Pepperidge Farm Puff Pastry Frozen Sheets (2 sheets make 24 small or 18 large)
- 2 small eggs, whisked
- 2 ounce block of feta cheese
- 1 cup Mexican shredded cheese
- 3 tablespoons oil
- 1 cooked potato, mashed
- 2 small onions, chopped
- 5 portobello mushrooms, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Leave the frozen pastry sheets out until they reach room temperature. Roll the pastry sheet until ¼ inch thick and divide into 12 even squares. Put a teaspoon of desired filling on each square. Keep the edge of each square clean so the dough will adhere to itself. Fold into a rectangle or triangle and pinch the edges together. Brush the top with the whisked egg. Place on a lined baking sheet and cook for 10 minutes or until golden brown at 350 degrees. Best served right out of the oven.

Fillings:

Cheese filling: combine feta, shredded cheese, one small egg and pepper until well blended.

Potato filling: caramelize small onion in oil, add potato and mix together, season with salt and pepper. Let cool before placing on dough.

Mushroom filling: caramelize small onion in oil, add mushrooms, and season with salt and pepper. Let cool before placing on dough.

JMAC Returns as KlezFest



The Syracuse Jewish Music & Cultural Festival (JMAC) is coming back this year with a new name: **KlezFest CNY**. With the name change, the festival is actually returning to its Klezmer music roots when it was called **KlezFest CNY** over a decade ago.

KlezFest CNY this year will be on Sunday, September 19, from 11:30 am to 4:30 pm at the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center, 5655 Thompson Rd., DeWitt. The outdoor festival is gearing up for an afternoon of safe, family fun and will feature live music for all ages, kosher food, children's activities, shopping and more. Admission is free, and there's free parking on and around the JCC campus.



Music is the driving force behind KlezFest CNY. Both local and national acts, including Klezmer music from PJ Library musicians, will take the stage this year. The lineup can be found on the festival website www.SyracuseJewishFestival.org.

For many, the festival's food is as important as the music. Va'ad-supervised kosher deli by The Oaks Catering will feature corned beef sandwiches, hot dogs and more. In addition, beer, wine, bottled water and soft drinks will be available in the food tent.

A variety of artisans and vendors will be on site and local community organizations and temples will staff informational tables. The Kid's Tent, hosted by the JCC, will feature puppet shows by the Robert Rogers Puppet Theater, face painting and crafts by PJ Library in CNY.



JCC's In-Person Exercise Classes Growing



As COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed this past spring and things started opening up, the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center's Neulander Family Sports & Fitness Center started bringing back more of its group exercise classes to meet in person again. For many of the JCC's Fitness members, attending in-person Line Dancing classes again was a beautiful thing. In addition to the pre-pandemic classes, from beginner to intermediate/advanced, JCC added a new Basic Line Dancing class. This class runs on Wednesdays from 10:15-11 am and is designed for those who have never line danced before or are just starting to line dance. Basic line dance steps and simple dance patterns are taught along with line dance terminology. It's a great introduction to line dancing and provides a smooth transition into the JCC's ongoing Beginner class. **For information about the JCC Fitness Center, in-person group exercise classes and membership options, visit www.jccsy.org or call 315-445-2360.**

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Things are starting to feel "normal" again at the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center. Fitness members are returning to work out in-person, there are many new faces and activities in summer camp and seniors are returning for in-person programs like mah jongg after more than a yearlong hiatus.

Geddes

Syracuse Community Hebrew School Year End Report

by Ora Jezer, Education Director and Andrea Waldman, Administrative Director

The Syracuse Community Hebrew School met over Zoom for the entire school year. *T'filah* was held from 4:00 to 4:30, classes from 4:30 to 5:00 and private/semi-private tutoring sessions after that. Sixty-two students were enrolled, 37 from Temple Concord, 9 from Temple Adath Yeshurun, 15 from Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevre Shas and one unaffiliated. There were seven classroom teachers and six tutors.

We began the year with a community-wide training on best practices in using technology to engage students on Zoom. Teachers used this knowledge to create lessons which inspired students to remain involved, and we had close to 90% attendance all year. This year synthesized a growing open communication relationship with our families. SHCS plans to continue with a form of small group instruction. In our parent survey, parents overwhelmingly complimented this new model for best practice for learning.

With our close relationship with clergy, we met many weeks focusing on best ways to make *T'filah* meaningful and participatory for the school as a whole. We had the majority of students lead parts of the service which has boosted the morale and attentiveness during *T'filah*. Parents commented that their students were excited to practice when getting ready to lead and parents were able to learn alongside their students. This created a more meaningful *T'filah* experience.

In partnership with clergy, a new siddur was created which we are very excited to



begin using in the fall. The Siddur is beautifully done donning three colors representing the three traditions of our supporting synagogues. Seventh grade takes part in *chevrotah* style lessons taught by SCHS staff and clergy which prepares students for their studies at the Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Learning. Clergy also visit the younger grades and bring another layer of meaning to prayers.

Thanks to generous funding from the Jewish Federation of CNY and the Pomeranz, Shankman, Martin Foundation and the participation of our member synagogues, SCHS is set up to continue providing a quality *t'filah*-based Hebrew education. When the Syracuse Community Hebrew School is back in person it will be held at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and Jewish Community Center building. There is so much excitement about the school being held in a true community setting. Over the summer the new *Siddur* will be printed and SCHS will make the move to their new space.

A Year Like No Other: The Epstein School in 5781

By Aaron Spitzer

In September, the 50th Epstein School year began, outside, at Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevre Shas. It was the first time students had been together since March.

Students learned weekly with our wonderful faculty: Moshe Alfasi, Rabbi Fellman, Ryan Howlett, Ora Jezer, Leah Eve Jezer-Nelson, Diana Koester, Rabbi Kunin, Scott Miller, Calle Schueler, Rabbi Shore, Mooky Van Orden and Samuel Young. Courses were creative and engaging: Ethical Dilemmas; Jews and the 2020 Elections; Modern Hebrew; Modern American and Israeli Relations; How to be a Jewish Antiracist; Jews and Sports; Studying the Shoah; Jewish History; Jewish Life After High School; Visual Arts; World Jewry; Jewish Lens. Guest speakers Rabbi Fred Dobb, chair of Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life and former NBA player, Danny Schayes were highlights.

More than 40% of the school's 50 students participated in Shalshelet [chain], which provided a small stipend to those who served as madrichim [aides] at synagogue schools or the Syracuse Community Hebrew School. Shalshelet participants' attendance (85%) far exceeded the eligibility requirement (60%). Among all Epstein students, attendance was high (72%). Students volunteered at RISE [Refugee and Immigrant Self-Empowerment]

throughout the year and more than 45% also signed up to volunteer this spring with Jewish organizations in Central New York, cleaning up synagogue and community grounds and assisting the JCC to prepare for pool season, among other projects. Ninth grader Jonah Jaffe's photo "Flame," was a winner in "The Jewish Lens 2021 International Competition."

In January, students participated in Rabbi and Dr. Jezer's Tu b'Shevat seder. At the Epstein School Virtual Justice Fair, students shared their fall learning and learned about volunteer, internship and summer opportunities from Etgar 36, Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation, RISE, Jewish Climate Youth Movement/Hazon and Onondaga Earth Corps. One of the evening's highlights was the performance of "Climate Song," by 11th-graders Max Newman and Max Oppedisano.

The school's Siyyum (completion) ceremony, scheduled to be outdoors, became hybrid due to thunderstorms. Seniors were in person and the rest of the school joined via Zoom. Emmy-winner Hughie Stone Fish and his brother Avery moderated a dialogue on antisemitism, maintaining Jewish connections and the power of tikkun olam. The nine graduates reflected on their Epstein experiences. Graduate Ryan Hinshaw offered this blessing: "May the Epstein School continue to provide our young people the education they need to grow and learn, instilling in them a love of Israel and Judaism, and may it enjoy another 50 years of success."

The Day School Celebrates Success Despite COVID

By Laura Lavine

The Syracuse Hebrew Day School exists because families and community leaders value an educated and active Jewish community and do what is necessary to provide students with the best possible foundational Jewish education. SHDS is an incredibly fortunate institution. Celebrating six decades of educating our community's children, it has remained a relevant, vibrant and necessary part of Central New York. We are grateful to our community because, without that support, we would not be the thriving learning community that we are today.

In 2020-21, with countless schools closed due to COVID, our community's only Jewish school came up with a way to teach our students in person, full-time, safely and effectively, and with the love and attention that is a hallmark of SHDS. We rose to an unprecedented challenge by requiring the wearing of masks, keeping our cohorts separated, using individual booths for students, distancing, temperature checking, using screening questions, performing



COVID testing, conducting morning meetings online throughout the school and revising numerous other practices. Thanks to the efforts of our families and employees, we had only a handful of people get COVID and we know that they neither contracted nor transmitted it at school.

The Day School has been here for our community since 1960. We enroll students from the different branches

of Judaism as well as from interfaith and non-Jewish families which makes for a diverse student body. The one thing our students, their parents and our staff have in common is a commitment to the well-being and educational achievement of each and every child.

Thanks to our very supportive Board of Directors and parent volunteers, we met our updated strategic goals, hired several new teachers, provided frequent

professional development opportunities, acquired and increased use of new technology, reinstated NYS assessments, accessed state aid, taught students in person and remotely simultaneously, created the Coalition of Nonpublic Schools in Onondaga County, were selected to participate in discussions with the NYS Education Department regarding "substantial equivalency" and distribution of aid, initiated individual music and art lessons, started weekly "Conversations with Rabbi Shore" and got one of our teachers admitted to a prestigious and rigorous year-long teacher development program. Enrollment increased by 60% and we are in the best financial shape we have been in for years.

Next year we will have third consecutive year of a full-sized Kindergarten class. In fact, it is expected to be the largest SHDS has had in many years. We are ready for 2021-2022 and it is because of all of the support we have received from our entire Central New York community.

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EZKERA / REMEMBERING

**LILA MAY FRIEDMAN
June 4, 2021**



Lila May Friedman, 94, of East Syracuse, died at her residence on June 4, surrounded by her family. She was the daughter of the late William and Sarah Kingsbury.

She was born in Boston, graduated from the Nurse's Cadet Corp in 1944 and worked as a registered nurse at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston. Before moving to Syracuse, she met and married the love of her life, Dr. Howard Friedman, in 1948.

In Syracuse, she worked at Dey Brother's Department Store and volunteered for CAVAC in Cazenovia. For over 16 years she volunteered in the emergency room at Crouse Hospital. Lila was an outstanding knitter, cook and gardener.

She is survived by her daughter Lisa and son Dain; granddaughters Andrea and Shaina; great-grandchildren Liam, Layla and Ava and her last surviving sister, Estelle Cohen.

Graveside service and burial were at Adath Yeshurun Cemetery. Contributions may be made to CAVAC in Cazenovia.

birnbaum funeral service, inc.

**ALAN JOSEPH STRAUSS
June 15, 2021**

Alan Joseph Strauss, 80 years old, passed away peacefully June 15th at Menorah Park with his wife and daughter at his bedside.

Born in Philadelphia on October 30, 1940 to David and Reba Sholtz Strauss, he was a graduate of Central High School and Temple University College of Pharmacy. Before moving to Syracuse in 2013, Alan and Esther were residents of Reading, PA where Alan owned Colonial Pharmacy, with two locations. They were members of Keshet Zion Synagogue where Alan had served as a past president. He was also a past president of the Berks County Pharmacists Association. In Syracuse, he was a member of Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevre Shas.

He is survived by his wife of almost 55 years Esther Gershen Strauss, their daughter Andrea (Lawrence) Strauss Koss, their son Ari Strauss, grandchildren Ben, Lauren and Adam and a brother, Wally Strauss. He was predeceased by a sister, Ethel Feldman.

Funeral services and burial were in Reading, PA. Donations in Alan's memory may be made to a charity of your choosing.

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**HILDA HERSHER
June 12, 2021**



Hilda Hersher, of Syracuse, died peacefully at age 94 at home on June 12, surrounded by her family. She was born on October 7, 1926 in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, NY.

Hilda, together with her husband Len, lived in the same home in the Westcott Street neighborhood of Syracuse for 64 years. She was a dedicated and hard-working supporter of her neighborhood organization and many other causes for the benefit of her community. Hilda worked in Syracuse as reference librarian for over 30 years, serving as Chief of Reference at the original Onondaga Public Library main branch on Montgomery Street.

She was predeceased by her husband of 66 years, Leonard Hersher, and is survived by her children, Michael, Jake and Lisa, nine grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren.

She was a kind, generous and loving human being who treated everyone she met with unusual respect and never lost her youthful and energetic hope for a better world. For this, and much more, she was much beloved by all who had the pleasure of knowing her.

Burial was at Beth El Cemetery. Donations may be made in Hilda's name to the Food Bank of Central New York (foodbankcny.org).

birnbaum funeral service, inc.

**ROBERT ALLEN SASSOON
June 13, 2021**

Robert Allen Sassoon, 70, of Syracuse, died June 13 at Van Duyn Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing in Syracuse. He was the son of the late Elais and Sylvia Sassoon.

Robert graduated from Nottingham High School and attended Northeastern University. For many years, he worked in a number of retail businesses including his own in Worcester, MA where his proficiency in business and accounting helped him succeed.

Survived by his many friends; brothers, Lewis (Amy) and Howard (Betsy); sister-in law, Lilian, wife of his late brother Jay; 11 nieces and nephews and 6 grand-nieces and nephews, all of whom will deeply miss their favorite Uncle Bobbie.

Graveside services and burial were in Beth El Cemetery. Contributions may be made to Temple Adath Yeshurun, 450 Kimber Road, Syracuse, NY 13224.

birnbaum funeral service, inc.

**CHAIM ROBERTS
June 13, 2021**

Chaim (Herbert) Roberts, 87, died at his home on June 13. Born in Boston, he had been a resident of the DeWitt area for almost 50 years. Almost 50 years ago, Chaim along with Rabbi Goldscheider and Rabbi Jacob Epstein, established the High School of Jewish Studies, later renamed the Rabbi Jacob Epstein Hebrew High School. Chaim was a teacher throughout his professional career. Prior to retiring, he was a teacher for the NYS Department of Corrections in Oneida. His dedication to his students made a tremendous difference in so many lives.

Chaim was an active member of the Shaarei Torah Orthodox Congregation of Syracuse and the Syracuse Men's Garden Club.

His family includes his wife Karen; their son Jonathan B. (Jaclyn, MD) Roberts and children Asher, Max (Chana), Hillel and Sarah; their son Lee A. Roberts; their daughter Rena (George) Tsounis and children Jadah and Ivah; their daughter Sarah Roberts and their son Moshe Roberts, MD.

Graveside services were in the Shaarei Torah Orthodox Congregation of Syracuse section of Oakwood Cemetery. Contributions in Chaim's memory may be made to the Congregation.

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**ALAN J. GOLDBERG
June 24, 2021**

Alan J. Goldberg, 90, died suddenly on June 24. Born in 1930 in Brooklyn to Leo and Lily Goldberg, he was a resident of Syracuse for over 80 years.

He was a graduate of Nottingham High School and received his BA and Juris Doctorate from Syracuse University.

Alan was a practicing litigator for more than 50 years and a partner in the Sugarman Law Firm. He was a highly respected member of the American College of Trial Lawyers, the New York State Bar Association and Onondaga County Bar Association. He served as past president of the Bar Association in 1986, was chairman of the Character and Fitness Committee and chairman of the Grievance Committee. Additionally, he was honored as a Distinguished Lawyer.

Alan was a man of integrity, both inside the courtroom and out. He lived by the code "keep your word and respect your colleagues."

A kind and generous man, Alan loved (and told) a good joke, cars, golf and skiing, which he did until his mid-eighties.

What he loved most of all was his family, which includes his wife of nearly 70 years, Barbara, and their daughters Ann (Mark) Wolkoff and Margery (Andrew) Kratz and grandson Noah Kratz.

Funeral services were at Temple Concord and burial in Adath Yeshurun cemetery. Contributions in Alan's memory may be made to The Food Bank of CNY or Jewish Family Service.

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