

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

A few years ago, we had Thanksgivingkah. This year, we will have Chrismukkah, with the first candle being lit on December 25th. And apparently, at some point in the distant future, there will even be a year WITHOUT Chanukah. Most of us won't be around in that awful year, 3031, but we can still ponder the tragedy.

According to Randolph College math and computer science professor Marc Ordower, in a TikTok video that's been viewed more than two million times, the reason there will be no Chanukah 1,007 years from now is that "no calendar perfectly captures the nuances of the Earth's orbit around the sun," and while the Hebrew calendar's system of leap years is designed to compensate for the discrepancies, it still manages to slip "one day against the seasons in about 215 years," As a result, Jewish holidays are gradually getting later and later, so that in the year 3032, Chanukah will begin on January 1st and will be celebrated again in December of that year.

Why have we not known about this outrage? According to Ordower in an article in *The Forward*, it's because "it's only been about 1,600 years since the Hebrew calendar was mathematized." To make matters worse, he adds that in around 15,000 years, "you'll have to have your Fourth of July hot dog on matzo." And we were hoping that things would improve in 5785!

But it looks like we will have to wait until the end of December before celebrating our holiday of lights, so to lighten things up in this month's *Jewish Observer*, we decided to turn to the subject of Jews and cats. Cats are the only domestic animal not mentioned in the Torah. And because cats figured prominently in Egyptian polytheism, their place in Judaism was not prominent, although (cat lovers take note) they were viewed more positively than dogs. The Talmud does contain references to cats, though, telling us that cats lived in Jewish homes and were valued for their ability to catch snakes. In *Pesachim 112b:10*, Rav Pappa warned against entering a house that had no cat, lest one step on a snake. And in *Berachot 56b:18*, we are told that dreaming of cats can be a signifier of change, although it is uncertain whether the change would be for the better or the worse. In *Eruvin 100b:29*, Rabbi Yohanan noted admiringly that "even if the Torah had not been given, we would nonetheless have learned modesty from the cat." And King David praised the exemplary hunting instinct cats in *Perek Shirah*, citing one who meowed the following: "I pursued my foes and overtook them, and did not return until they were destroyed." (Psalms 18:38).

So maybe there is a connection between cats and Maccabis and the IDF that makes this theme appropriate for this month's *JO*. In any case, we received a nice response from readers who were willing to share their felines' photos on our front page and we have some interesting cat-related articles inside. This issue also contains the wonderful speech about community that Anick Sinclair gave at the NCJW Hannah Solomon Award brunch, at which she was the 2024 honoree. The three delightful 6th graders at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, who will serve as this year's Snooper Sunday stars, have also reviewed eight kids' books featuring cats as well as three new Chanukah books. So if you are looking for a great gift for children or grandchildren for

Chanukah this year, please check out their evaluations.

Our "People of the Book" selection this month is *Golda Meir: Israel's Matriarch* by Deborah Lipstadt, reviewed by Angela Locke (whose son Josh Hershfield is the composer of "Rise"). December 8th is Golda Meir's *yahrzeit*. Meir was a remarkable woman and her prescience is not only astonishing but almost terrifying. Meir once said, "The world hates a Jew who hits back. The world loves us only when we are to be pitied." Her words ring tragically true in 5785.

5784 was a heartbreaking year for us as a Jewish community. In addition to the devastation of October 7th and the increasing rise in antisemitism which we saw in the schools and colleges and universities, we also lost our Federation head. But Judaism commands us to be positive, to let the wedding procession go ahead of the funeral procession. As we enter a new Jewish year and look ahead to a new secular year, we must remember the words of Jonah which we read on *Yom Kippur* and affirm "*Ivri Anochi*: I am a Jew, proud to embrace our heritage, our community, our history and our destiny, a proud inheritor of a brilliant tradition and a proud interpreter and conveyor of that tradition to future generations of our people."

Chanukah teaches us to always increase in matters of goodness and kindness. We celebrate the holiday by lighting first one, then two, then three, up to eight candles, illustrating the idea that while a single candle was good enough for yesterday, today and tomorrow need to be even better. We live in a world beset by many challenges: war, deprivation, racism, antisemitism, hunger, poverty, anxiety, depression, illness. And even though the one candle we light today may do little to alleviate these challenges, we cannot foresee what will happen if we light two candles tomorrow and three the next day.... Chanukah reminds us that we combat darkness through struggle and perseverance. We create light not just by lighting candles, and not just through our freedom to worship, but through forging sacred relationships with one another, united in the desire to make the world better, even if it's only one day at a time. *Chag Chanukah Sameach!*

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

phone: 315-445-0161
fax: 315-445-1599
jewishfederationcny.org



President/CEOMichael Balanoff
Board Chair.....Todd J. Pinsky
Editor.....Barbara Davis



The Jewish Federation of Central New York is a proud member of the Jewish Federations of North America.

PRODUCED BY



BUFFALO SPREE PUBLISHING, INC.

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Vice President/Chief Revenue OfficerBarbara E. Macks

Publisher.....Barbara E. Macks

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Submissions:

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

To Advertise:

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

To Subscribe:

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

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

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A+!

Re-envisioning Chanukah

by Rabbi Oren Steinitz, Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevre Shas

“אפילו בהסתרה, שבתוך ההסתרה, בוודאי גם שם נמצא ה' יתברך...” (חזקי גליק, ע"פ ליקוטי מוה"ר"ן ז"ל ג)

“Even in the hidden places within the hidden places, surely even there, the Holy Blessed One can be found” (Chezki Gluck, based on *Likutei Moharan* 56:3)



Chanukah is an unusual Jewish holiday. On one hand, it is probably the most widely observed Jewish holiday in America, where 68% of the Jewish population consider it to be “one of the three most important Jewish holidays,” compared to only 38% in Israel. I never took a survey, but I would guess that there are more Jewish-American children who can recite the Chanukah blessings by heart than there are those who can recite the *sh'ma*. We see public Chanukah gatherings in every city, and since 1979 even the White House has been having annual Menorah lightings. Moreover, ask any random non-Jewish person on the street, and chances are that this is the only Jewish holiday they know about. Some of my Christian clergy friends were even puzzled to learn that the time leading up to Chanukah is not very stressful for rabbis.

On the other hand, among the more observant population, Chanukah is often regarded as a “minor holiday,” that is not to be taken very seriously. It is not rooted in the Torah or even the Tanakh, and its minimal rituals are mostly home-based rather than lengthy synagogue services. The holiday does not carry the same gravitas as Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, or Passover, and its observance is mostly reduced to lighting candles, giving gifts and eating Latkes. Some consider it to be a “pediatric holiday,” which parents only highlight in a futile attempt to make Judaism more appealing to their kids who are bombarded with Christmas paraphernalia everywhere they go. In other words, it is almost “too much fun” to be taken seriously...

But is this reputation justified? Is there more to Chanukah than gelt and gifts? Is there a deeper spiritual meaning to the Festival of Lights?

Rabbi Dr. Or Rose from the Hebrew College rabbinical school in Boston calls our attention to a Hassidic teaching that offers a deeper insight to the Chanukah blessings. Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Barditchev, a well-known 18th century Hassidic teacher, focuses on the second of the two blessings recited over the candles each night: “*sh'asa nissim la-avoteinu, ba-yamim ha-heim ba-zman ha-zeh*,” a phrase often understood as praising God for performing miracles for our ancestors – the Maccabees – “at this time” of year “at that time” – centuries ago.

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak, however, notes that the words “*bazman hazeh*” can be understood differently – not “at this time,” but “within time,” meaning that “God’s participation in the events of Hanukkah took place within the bounds of nature, within the limits of space and time as we normally experience them, and not in a supernatural manner.” In other words, even though God did perform miracles for the Maccabees, God’s work in the Chanukah story was a lot more subtle than it was during the Exodus from Egypt when God split the Red Sea in half and freed the Israelites with great signs and wonders. Just because the Maccabees did not experience a supernatural intervention, the Barditchever explains, it does not mean that God did not work behind the scenes.

The way God worked in the Chanukah story, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak claims, is a model for understanding God’s involvement in our world in contemporary times – *ba-zman ha-zeh*. Even though we may wish to see great miracles happening to us (and who among us did not wish to see even a small miracle this past year?), it does not mean that God is absent from our world. In Hassidic and Kabbalistic teachings, God functions in our world in a state of *tzimtzum* (limited presence) – “active, but not easily perceptible.” *Tzimtzum*, the Hassidic masters tell us, offers us an opportunity to become active participants in God’s work; it is an invitation to us to take more initiative.

Over the past fifteen months we have been experiencing a lot of communal darkness. As we are lighting our *hannukiyot* this year, may we remember that instead of waiting for God’s light to magically appear, we must be partners in bringing the light forward. Our individual candles may seem insignificant in the great darkness of winter, but try and imagine the light emanating from all the Menorahs that Jews light around the world. Our role in bringing the Divine Light to the world may be limited, but together, we can make a difference.

Hag Urim Sameach!

» BOOK REVIEW

Golda Meir: Israel's Matriarch

by Deborah Lipstadt

Reviewed by Angela Locke

Golda Meir: Israel's Matriarch, by powerhouse Deborah Lipstadt, was published a mere two months before the October 7th *casus belli*. As that news came in, some of us awaited help from the 44 other countries who had citizens kidnapped by the brutal Hamas. Despite only drips and dribbles, accompanied by the endless UN blah-blah-blah, we then waited for the United States, France and Britain to confront and control the rampant antisemitic attacks in social media and on the streets. But, apparently, if we expect the Western world to stand behind us Jews, we don't know our history.

Golda Meir would not have been surprised. Golda Meir would not have expected help. Her Zionist credo was proved—and referred to in the book—again and again: “Jews (can) not depend on others to save them.” Not the only example, but by far the most horrific, Golda watched the Holocaust unfold, powerless to stanch the horror, as the Western world allowed millions of Jews to be exterminated. At a February 1944 meeting, she asked, “Why am I expected to believe that those who did not rescue millions of Jews from death will enter into a quarrel (with our enemies) tomorrow?”

Golda Mabovitch was born into poverty and antisemitic persecution in 1898 in Russian Kiev. One of the stories of her childhood is chillingly close to the recent stories we've all heard. With the Cossacks galloping into Kiev “brandishing knives and screaming ‘Christ killers,’” Golda stood with a friend watching “their fathers try to secure the home by barricading the entrance with wooden boards.” Even at a young age, Golda remembers feeling terrified at the ineffectiveness of those boards. She was luckier that day than some of the Israelis hiding in their safe rooms on October 7th. That childhood experience was the beginning of Golda’s belief that action taken in the face of hostilities had to be, first and foremost, *effective*.

Golda’s first speech was given at age twelve in Milwaukee where her family had been relocated by HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. She organized a public meeting, getting a newspaper to cover it. Her unscripted speech that day resulted in raising the money her school needed to buy textbooks. From Russia to America to Israel and around the world, Golda rarely wrote out her speeches.

Lipstadt, in her scholarly but accessible coverage, illuminates the Israeli history that Golda Meir lived through, influenced, and even, at times, directed. We learn, of course, about Ben-Gurion, but also about Moshe Sharett and Levi Eshkol, the White Paper and Britain’s role in the oppression of the Jews and the necessity of war to establish the State of Israel. We learn specifics of Meir’s work as Israel’s first labor minister, second foreign minister, and ultimately, its first and so far only female prime minister. We are given examples of the uncommon directness with which Golda spoke to world leaders. We learn of her emotional pain, but also her humor, her single-mindedness and her ability to touch the hearts of others.

But no discussion of Golda Meir can omit the Yom Kippur War. What was her culpability? Was the intelligence she received faulty? Did she ultimately think strategically, ensuring an eventual Israeli victory? One thing is certain—Golda herself “considered the war a spectacular failure,” one which led to her stepping down from office.

Lipstadt doesn't let Golda off the hook for any of her faults. This book is no flattering hagiography. Compassionate? Yes, but also fair, clear and complete. It is a highly readable, impeccably researched profile of the Mother of Israel.





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Jews and Cats



The students of Rabbi Elazar asked him: “For what reason does a dog recognize its master, while a cat does not recognize its master?” Rabbi Elazar said to them: “If it is established that with regard to one who eats from that which a mouse eats, eating that item causes him to forget, with regard to the cat, who eats the mouse itself, all the more so does eating it cause it to forget.” Babylonian Talmud. (*Horayoth* 13a) (Guess he never saw the maxim, “Dogs have masters. Cats have staff.”)

Rabbi Yonassan Gershom, a cat aficionado, noted in his blog, “Notes from a Jewish Thoreau,” that any ancient Jewish antipathy toward cats dissipated with the Jewish custom of using cats to control rat populations. As a result, Jewish communities tended to be less devastated by plague than their Christian counterparts. Furthermore, Jewish communities often began to keep cats to protect their parchment Torah scrolls from rodents, giving rise to the tradition, still maintained in some synagogues today, of the *shul katze* or synagogue cat.

In 2019, Corinne Engber wrote an article for JewishBoston entitled “Why All Cats Are Jewish.” She explained that “I’ve had cats my entire life and through extensive study of their mannerisms, I’ve deduced that cats and Jewish people have more in common than meets the eye.” These are the points she made to prove her assertion:

“1. *Cats are contemplative.* They interact with the world in a thoughtful, nuanced way. Instead of diving directly into a problem, cats examine their options.

2. *Cats are adaptable.* Humans didn’t domesticate cats, not in the way we’ve domesticated dogs. Cats arrived in early humans’ dwellings and we let them stay there, creating less of a master-pet dynamic and more of a roommate situation. Jewish people carve out our niche in any environment and excel even under the bleakest of circumstances.

3. *Cats are persistent.* The nine lives, always landing on their feet thing? Jewish through and through. Cats are tough and no matter how insistent the world is in stamping them out, they rise victorious.

4. *Cats know what they want.* They are relentless. Similarly, Jewish people are focused in pursuing their goals, whether that means a good job or degree or self-love and personal satisfaction.

5. *Cats have deep roots.* Their instincts were still as solid as those of their ancestors, and many Jewish people feel the same connection to the people who came before them.

6. *Cats love routine and ritual.* Jewish people, like cats, maintain a dedicated calendar and set of behaviors for certain days.”

Most Americans (70%) have a pet and it is assumed that Jews are no exception. But pet ownership raises issues in Judaism. *Chabad.org* devotes an entire page to the subject of “Judaism and Pet Ownership” and answers 18 FAQs: “May Jews own pets? How about dangerous animals? Is it OK to own a pig? How about neutering or spaying? Is it true that you need to feed animals before you eat? How about caring for pets on Shabbat? Anything to know about the firstborn animals? Does my animal need to keep kosher?, What can I feed my pets on Passover? Must a Jewish-owned pet fast on Yom Kippur? What does Torah say about causing animals pain? May we put our elderly pets to sleep? Do pets go to heaven? Is there a Jewish tradition about animal funerals? What to say when a pet dies? Can I say Kaddish for my departed pet? Can my (well-behaved) pet attend shul with me? How about bringing service animals to synagogue services?” It makes for interesting reading.

Cats have a special place in Israel today. The cat population of the Jewish state is at least two million and growing. Most of the cats are feral, living in the streets and fed by Israelis who leave food out for them. Because of their fecundity, it is estimated that the Israeli cat population may soon equal the human population.

Jewish cats are the theme of several humor books, although you may have to be an ardent Jewish cat lover to appreciate them fully. *The Jewish Cat Book – a different breed* by Rosenberg and Feldman is an illustrated compendium of miscellany relating to cats. *Love Story of a Jewish Cat* by Max Stein is an early graphic novel that recounts the saga of a cat romance. *How to Live with A Jewish Cat* by Sig and Pat Heavilin is a schmaltzy Yiddishy book, summed up by a “review” in the preface by Cher, a seal-point Siamese, who said, “I laughed all the way to the litterbox.” Another book that at first glance seemed to be about Jews and cats, *The Cat The Ate the Cannoli* by Rabbi Barbara Aiello, is actually a book about the Hidden Jews of Southern Italy and makes interesting reading but has nothing much to do with cats. *Hanukcats* is a small book filled with traditions Jewish Chanukah songs modified for cats, so “*Ma’oz Tsur*” becomes “*Matted Fur*” and “*Mi Y’malel*” becomes “*What’s That Smell?*”

Cats appear frequently in Jewish children’s literature. We asked sixth graders at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School to look at eight Jewish children’s books featuring cats. Here are their amewzing reviews:



And A Cat From Carmel Market
by Alyssa Satin Capucilli and Rotem Teplow, reviewed by Yetta

And A Cat From Carmel Market is a really amusing children’s book. Bubby goes to the Carmel Market for Shabbat and comes back with more than just what was on her shopping list. The book has really cute rhymes and repetitive lines so it’s very fun to read. The book also has bright and whimsical illustrations. I highly recommend this book for younger kids. When you’re looking for your next children’s book to read consider *And A Cat From Carmel Market*!

Mrs. Katz and Tush
by Patricia Pollaco, reviewed by Yetta

Mrs. Katz and Tush is a really touching story about a lonely old lady, Mrs. Katz. Her young neighbor, Larnel, gave her a cat and they formed a special relationship. Mrs. Katz named her kitten Tush, because she had no tail and all they could see was her tush. Mrs. Katz and Larnel learn what Black and Jewish history have in common. I think this book can be appreciated by all ages. It is a really meaningful story.



Appleblossom
by Shulamith Levey Oppenheim, reviewed by Phoebe

I think *Appleblossom* is a great book. It is about a boy and a cat, and their dilemma of him bringing her home. I like this book because it is about Passover and a talking cat. It creates a unique way to teach young children about Passover. I enjoyed the story because it was a shorter read and great for practicing readers. You should read this because it’s the cat’s paw-jamas!

Professor Buber and His Cats

by Susan Tarcov, reviewed by Phoebe

Professor Buber and His Cats is a good book about Ketem the cat and his desire to live with Professor Buber, while his friends are reluctant. I like this book because it is full of playful illustrations and is based on a true story. The story takes place in Israel and is about the adventure of eight cats: Ketem, Sheki, Sheleg, Mitzu, Luli, and Zusia. This book is a-meow-zing!



Cookie the Seder Cat

by Nechama Liss-Levinson, reviewed by Ava

I think that *Cookie the Seder Cat* is a great book, especially for young readers. I like how we go through the Passover seder with Cookie the Cat. The book teaches kids about preparations for Passover in a fun way. I love how there are fun pictures of Cookie in it. The book really has a great cat-titude.

Welcoming Elijah

by Lesléa Newman, reviewed by Ava

Welcoming Elijah is a great book for all ages. It shows the parallel experiences between Elijah and the boy and how they meet in the end. My favorite page is when the boy was listening to the Passover story and the kitten heard the leaves whispering in the trees. The artwork in the book is very colorful and vibrant. So cuddle up this Passover and read this paw-sum book!

Cats in Israel

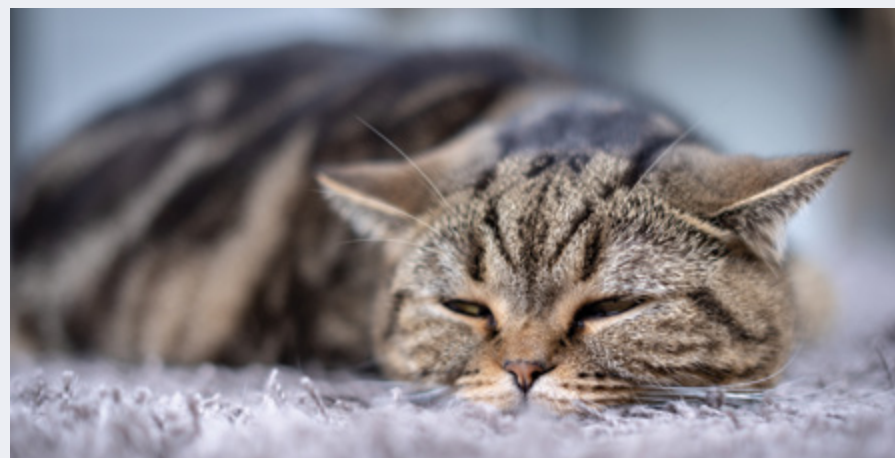


The issue of cats in Israel is complex and involves many different perspectives, including those of cat lovers, ecologists and people who are bothered by the overabundance of street cats. Israel's cat population is estimated to be anywhere from two to seven million and growing, thanks to the warm climate, which allows cats to reproduce multiple times a year, and the abandonment of pets by owners. Israelis in general like cats and often leave cat food outside their doors as well as bowls of water. They may not invite the cats inside or try to domesticate them, but they will make sure that they are well fed.

The large cat population's impact on the environment has been described as "cat-astrophic" as the feral cats kill small animals like birds and lizards, relieve themselves in public, carry disease and raid garbage. And while there are many efforts to control the feline population, including trapping and neutering, they have not had a significant impact. Israel would need to sterilize 80% of strays within six months to control the population. But, as with all things in Israel, there is division about doing this, even if the funding were available. Jews are the first known people to have adopted animal cruelty laws, and religious communities argue against sterilization as a violation of those laws.

Israeli Scientists Use Artificial Intelligence to Detect *Feline* Pain

Unlike dogs, who are very expressive about their feelings, cats' feelings are much harder to detect, particularly when they are in pain. This may be about to change. *Israel21c*, an online news source, recently described a feline veterinary breakthrough: the use of artificial intelligence to identify pain in cats. Called Dr. Dolittle-E, the new AI program examines photographs of cats to detect the subtle changes in their ear tips, eyes and whiskers that denote pain. A research team from the University of Haifa's Tech4Animals lab developed the program, using deep learning models and facial recognition analysis that was successful more than 70% of the time in identifying cats in pain. Their research was published in *Scientific Reports* and was based on a study of 29 British Shorthair cats. The researchers photographed female cats' faces before and after they underwent sterilization, while they were still under the influence of painkillers and after the painkillers had worn off. Artificial intelligence revealed that the cat's mouth, rather than ears or eyes, was the most important facial feature in accurate pain recognition.



These findings could revolutionize the way cats are cared for, enabling caregivers to photograph them to reveal pain, rather than handling them physically. The research paper, entitled "Automated recognition of pain in cats," explained that "facial expressions in non-human animals are closely linked to their internal affective states, with the majority of empirical work focusing on facial shape changes associated with pain. However, existing tools for facial expression analysis are prone to human subjectivity and bias, and in many cases also require special expertise and training." Using artificial intelligence to automatize pain recognition in facial images will make diagnosis more accurate and effective. The investigators plan to develop a mobile app that will let both veterinarians and cat owners snap a photograph to automatically detect pain, according to Anna Zamansky, a computer scientist at the University of Haifa and a co-author of the paper.



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Celebrating Nature Through Fashion In Paris

Syracuse designer Katya Krenina's latest collection, inspired by the beauty of nature, debuted at Paris Fashion Week in September. Katya explained that "each piece captures the colors and textures of the natural world. The models brought this vision to life on the runway, showcasing the collection's essence with grace."



Fayette's Soft-Serve Café is A Hit

The newly opened but already very popular Fayette's, co-owned by a local community member, describes itself as "your go-to spot in Fayetteville for desserts, coffee and baked goods." The Towne Center café offers soft-serve yogurt, ice cream and custard. "Choose from 14+ soft-serve flavors and over 40 toppings!" Fayette's encourages customers, and they do so enthusiastically. The shop also offers gluten- and dairy-free ice cream and uniquely flavored milkshakes. Their fresh baked goods include scones, brownies, pop tarts and rice crispy treats. "We keep expanding our menu and we also have locally sourced baked goods and coffee. We want to be a place that brings the community together," said a store manager.



New York State Baroque



This year marks the 36th anniversary of NYS Baroque, a chamber music ensemble that specializes in bringing historically informed performances to upstate New York. NYS Baroque performs music of the Renaissance, Baroque and early Classical periods on period instruments with what the *Syracuse Post-Standard* hailed as an "exquisite balance of sound and astounding synchronicity."

Led by Artistic Director and lutenist Deborah Fox, NYS Baroque offers a subscription concert series of programs performed in Syracuse and Ithaca. Repertoire ranges from orchestral to choral and chamber music. Orchestral music is performed without a conductor. NYS Baroque's artists are the finest American early music musicians on the local scene, complemented by guest artists from as far away as Australia.

The 2025 season includes the following programs: *Curiouser & Curiouser* on February 21st and 22nd; *Monteverdi Vespers of 1610* on April 4th and 5th and *Marches & Minuets* on May 9th and 10th. For more information, email info@nysbaroque.com.

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The Jewish Federation works hard to build a strong and vibrant Jewish future locally and in Israel through philanthropy, engagement, education and advocacy. Supporting and sustaining our community, always.

January 5, 2025 12pm-2pm
Shaarei Torah
4313 E Genesee Street

NCJW Hannah Solomon 2024 Award

Anick Sinclair was the 2024 Hannah Solomon Award recipient. At a brunch held in her honor, she spoke on the subject of “community.” Her remarks appear below.

COMMUNITY

by Anick Sinclair

Although I was born in London, my childhood was spent living in different countries in Africa. My father was a diplomat for the European Union, so my parents, my two brothers and I moved countries every 4 years. Different languages, different schools, different cultures, different communities. Because we were nomadic, community was very important to us.

Some countries had a large Jewish community, like Zimbabwe. Others had none at all, such as Mali and Lesotho. This meant my parents had to invest an awful lot to maintain a Jewish and kosher home. One of my earliest memories is set in the French-speaking, Muslim country of Mali in West Africa. At 5 am every single day, in the dark moments before dawn, I could hear the very loud call to prayer from the minaret of the local mosque. It scared me and I had terrible dreams about the faceless voice that would invade my bedroom. After finally confiding in my father, he put me in his car and drove me round to the mosque to show me the building and the people, and to assure me that the strain I was hearing was calling to the local community. Not my community, but nevertheless...community.

I remember being welcomed into local villages across Africa by tribal women dancing in brightly colored costumes, with loud singing voices and coruscating smiles. They were proud of the communities they had built, often in adversity and struggle. They understood the importance of community and that it was the only way to sustain a steady future for the next generation.

In Zimbabwe, we were lucky enough to arrive into a very old and strong Jewish community. My brothers and I attended the Jewish day school, and we were immediately integrated. In Lesotho however, there was no Jewish life at all. My parents had to have Kosher meat delivered from Johannesburg and we had to drive two hours across the border, into Apartheid South Africa, to attend



the synagogue in Bloemfontein. My parents, committed to us learning about community, drove the family there for chagim, bar and bat mitzvah lessons, simchas... and the orthodontist.

In Namibia, there was no way of getting kosher meat, so my parents maintained a pescatarian household for four years. Whatever changes they had to make, they ensured that we all grew up with both a deep knowledge, and a deeper love, of Judaism and a recognition of how vital an instrument community is, whatever form it takes.

At the age of 14, I was sent to a Jewish boarding school in the depths of Oxfordshire on a beautiful campus on the River Thames. Teens came from radically different backgrounds, from the US, Israel, everywhere in Europe including Russia. We spoke different languages in the dorms and had different relationships to Judaism. We were kids with a shared home and no tangible family to lean on. We were community. We could not have lived without that sustaining, overriding tenet.

As adults, my husband Jay and I were one of the first ten families to revive a synagogue in an area of London where Jewish life was dwindling. We had a powerhouse of a rabbi and rebbetzin, and today it is still the fastest-growing



community in London, with more than 500 member families.

Ten years ago, my family moved to Syracuse and we settled happily into the Shaarei Torah congregation and were welcomed and guided by the inimitable Rabbi and Deborah Shore. Two of my three sons attended the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and that was our natural introduction into the local Jewish community. Jay and I have been involved in a multitude of Jewish agencies, all in the interest not only being part of a community, but also and as importantly, of building community.

“You wear a few hats in this community,” Michael Balanoff used to say to me. The advantage and pleasure AND responsibility in this, is that I have the privilege of a bird’s eye-view. And here is what I see:

Syracuse Jewry is filled with people who care deeply about Jewish continuity and education.

- It is filled with people who have persevered through a phase of dwindling population but still fight with pride for their voice to be heard in the larger community.
- It is filled with people who are proud of their heritage and passionate about passing this pride on to the next generation.
- It is filled with people who give so much of their time in the name of maintaining and sustaining a small but mighty Jewish Community.

We are a community diverse in thought and practice. Still, our direction of movement must be the same. In a post-October 7th world, we have no right to strain these vital community ties. The “weak Jew” of the Holocaust is now vilified as the “strong Jew” of Israel. The global Jewish community is under scrutiny and under attack.

At a time like this, community cohesion must be at the forefront of our agenda. It is precisely in the worst of times that community rises to its “best of times.” This is only possible through the strong ties of a community that believes in itself and each other. Respect must be inherent, even while, maybe especially while, seeing each other’s differences. And ultimately, we are not so different.

We all strive to be a link in the chain of a sturdy community, for us and for our children and grandchildren. I want my sons to see us as an example of tenaciousness. To be proud of what they grew up seeing, even though I did not subject them to a nomadic lifestyle. And hopefully they will emulate this in adulthood.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks once said “Community is society with a face, the place where we know we are not alone.” The face of Syracuse Jewry is bold. It is proud. It is fragile but also strong. We are community. And we must do everything in our power to nurture it.

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Israel Quest CNY

Parents, please scan the QR code to access a landing page with age-appropriate activities for this month's Israel Quest theme: **Hanukkah in Israel!** The page is divided by age group, so it's easy to find something for everyone—whether it's Hanukkah stories, an I-Spy game, coloring sheets for the littles; family sufganiyot making and trivia games (with a special Hanukkah “spin”) for the family; or articles about new discoveries of Hanukkah related archaeological finds in Israel, and fun and challenging games for older kids and teens. Plus, in the spirit of the season, we encourage everyone to “share the light” by sending a Hanukkah greeting to Israel's lone soldiers. There's something meaningful and engaging for all ages to explore!



Questions, or want to get involved? Email IsraelQuestCNY@gmail.com.

News from the Hill(e)



Chancellor Kent Syverud, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Mary Grace Almandrez and Hillel Director Jillian Juni attended the College and University Presidents Summit on Campus Antisemitism, a gathering organized by Hillel International, AJC and ACE. Hillel is grateful to the Chancellor and his leadership team for their commitment to supporting Jewish students on campus.

135 Hillel students participated in *Mitzvot Shabbat*, helping students register to vote and ensuring that they have a plan on election day. Seventy students started cohort learning fellowships on the topics of Jewish learning, Israel and *tzedek* (justice). These groups are a key component of the ways in which Syracuse Hillel fosters community and provides education to our students.



Although most students will be off-campus for Chanukah this year, unlike last year, Hillel Director Jillian Juni notes that “Syracuse Hillel supports students on campus during holidays throughout the year, providing a welcoming community where friends are like family.”

NexGen Welcomes Fall

“Cider Sips And Autumn Picks: A Fall Gathering” was the title of NexGenCNY's September get-together. The group first went apple picking and then gathered to eat, drink and enjoy each other's company at Beak & Skiff.



Authors of *Open Judaism* and *The Hebrew Teacher* to Speak at Temple Concord's Goldenberg Series

by Chana Meir

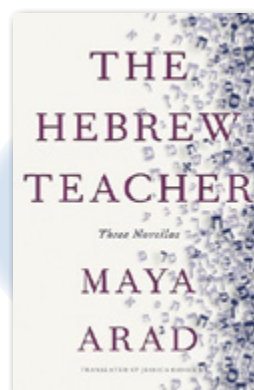
On Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 7:30 pm, Barry J. Schwartz will discuss *Open Judaism* as part of Temple Concord's Regina F. Goldenberg Cultural Series.

Schwartz describes his book, subtitled “A Guide for Believers, Atheists, and Agnostics,” as “a dynamic exploration of the remarkable array of thought within Judaism today.” He is the rabbi of Congregation Adas Emuno in Leonia, New Jersey, director emeritus of the Jewish Publication Society and author of books for



adults, teens, and children.

The Goldenberg Series continues on Thursday, January 2, 2025, at 7:30 pm, with Israeli author Maya Arad discussing her book *The Hebrew Teacher*. It comprises three novellas about crises faced by three female Israeli immigrants to the United States. Arad is the author of eleven books of Hebrew fiction, as well as studies in literary criticism and linguistics.



Both events are virtual and free. To receive the Zoom link, register by clicking on the link on the Events Calendar at templeconcord.org.



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חדשות טובות

Hadashot Tovot



Paula M. Trief, PhD, SUNY Upstate Medical University Distinguished Service Professor, has received the Richard R. Rubin Award from the American Diabetes Association. The award recognizes outstanding scientific achievement in the understanding of behavioral aspects of diabetes. The award presentation will take place in June at the ADA's 84th Scientific Sessions.



Zamir Choral Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting Jewish choral music, is recipient of a significant gift from Cantor Robert Lieberman and Rabbi Vicki Lieberman. This underscores the creation of a first-of-its-kind institute to train conductors of Jewish choirs, the organization told eJewishPhilanthropy. The Liebermans say they hope their donation will inspire Jewish music to thrive and resonate around the world.

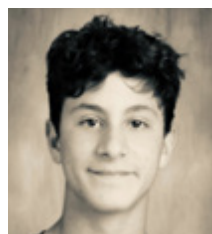


Pamela Wells, Director of Grateful Patient, Family Engagement and Annual Giving at The Upstate Foundation, displays the very successful result of the Foundation's recent Call In For Cancer, which supports patient care, research and vital programs for those battling cancer in our community.

Richard Friedman, former Federation President/CEO, received the first Paladin Award from NC Knights of Pythias Grand Chancellor for his mentorship and exhibiting the Order's highest values.



Abe Goldberg (5th grade) received the September Student of the Month for curiosity and teamwork at Wellwood Middle School.



Boaz Garelick was accepted in the 2024-2024 cohort of Millstone scholars through the Tikvah Fund.

Syracuse Hebrew Day School Partners with Rescue Mission for Successful Hygiene Drive



Syracuse Hebrew Day School celebrated the culmination of its successful hygiene drive with a special visit from the Rescue Mission of Syracuse. The event not only highlighted the school's commitment to community service but also gave students a meaningful opportunity to engage in hands-on learning about giving back.

Over the past few weeks, SHDS students, families and staff worked together to collect hygiene items such as soap, toothbrushes, shampoo and more. These donations were placed in a unique sukkah (a temporary hut used to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Sukkot) made entirely out of a cardboard box. The students decorated the sukkah with colorful artwork and messages of kindness, transforming it into a symbol of generosity and community spirit.

The representatives from the Rescue Mission shared their work and mission with the students. They explained how their organization puts "LOVE INTO ACTION"



by providing shelter, food, clothing and hope to people in need across Syracuse. The students were captivated as they learned how simple acts of kindness—such as donating hygiene products—can have a profound impact on the lives of others.



SHDS Interim Head of School, Melissa Klemperer, expressed her gratitude for the outpouring of support from the school community. "We are thrilled with the response to our hygiene drive. It's inspiring to see our students learning the importance of helping those in need while connecting this effort to the values of Sukkot. We are so grateful to the Rescue Mission for joining us and sharing their powerful message."

The donated items will be used by the Rescue Mission to support individuals and families in crisis, offering them the dignity and care they deserve. The collaboration between SHDS and the Rescue Mission underscored the school's dedication to social action and giving back to the greater Syracuse community.

Fighting the Winter Chill

By Sonali McIntyre

Syracuse winters can be cold. Bitterly so. With closed eyes, imagine arriving in Syracuse for the first time, fresh off a flight from a much warmer climate, and facing cold and snow. What is the first thing you put on? A warm coat, right?

In its 2024 fiscal year, InterFaith Works Center for New Americans resettled 1,015 refugees from countries around the world: Afghanistan, Burma, El Salvador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Moldova, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen, and more. For New Americans, warm coats aren't on the packing list. Many of these individuals arrive without adequate winter clothing. To fight the winter chill, InterFaith Works is partnering with the greater Syracuse community for a winter coat drive.

From now until the end of December, approximately 350 individuals are arriving, ranging from newborns to young children and from teens to adults. All sizes of winter coats are needed. Remarkably, these 350 coats will only provide InterFaith Works' clients through the end of December. What about the rest of the winter? Before warmer weather arrives for spring, InterFaith Works anticipates needing a total of 1,500 coats.

While this is a heavy lift, InterFaith Works is thankful to work with incredible like the Jewish Federation of Central New York and the Jewish Community Center who will help to lighten the load. Barbara Davis, interim president/CEO of the Federation said, "The Federation and the JCC will take full responsibility for getting new coats in the sizes and numbers requested for children ages 0 to 15 years old." Community members are asked to drop off new, unused coats at the JCC front desk between 8 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday. Only coats in children's sizes are needed in the following numbers: 12 baby girls; 12 baby boys; 20 age 2-5 girls; 20 age 2-5 boys; 20 girls 6-11; 20 boys 6-11; 25 girls 11-15; 25 boys 11-15. Federation will update the tally weekly, to assure that the correct sizes are provided. *For more information, email bdavis@jewishfederationcny.org.*



CBS-CS New Year's Eve Hanukkah Party

by Kelly Klapper

Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas (CBS-CS) invites members and guests to ring in the New Year at its special New Year's Eve Hanukkah Party on December 31, 2024. The evening will begin with a Family Party from 7 to 9 pm, featuring fun activities for all ages. Attendees can enjoy a variety of games and snacks, with a special performance by Jeff the Magic Man, entertaining both children and adults alike. At 9 pm, the family party will conclude with a Dreidel Drop, adding a festive twist to the traditional ball drop.

Following the family party, the community will gather to light the Hanukkah candles, celebrating the Festival of Lights in a joyful and meaningful way. Afterward, children can either head home or bring sleeping bags to participate in a pajama party and movie night, supervised by certified babysitters, in the CBS-CS school wing, providing a fun and relaxing space for younger attendees.

Adults are invited to continue the festivities with a Decade Party from 9 pm to midnight, with attendees encouraged to dress in the fashion of their favorite decade. The evening will feature games, treats and entertainment, including a lively trivia competition and a decadent dessert bar to start the new year on a sweet note.

The celebration will conclude with the televised New Year's Eve ball drop, followed by a champagne (or sparkling grape juice) toast to welcome 2025. CBS-CS encourages members and guests to attend this night of community, celebration, and tradition.

RSVPs are required. Please visit <https://tinyurl.com/cbscshny> to reserve a spot and be part of the festivities.

Kids' Chanukah Book Reviews

Accidental Miracles

Reviewed by Ava

Accidental Miracles is a great book about a little girl who made some accidental Hanukkah miracles. I love that in this book it explains what Hanukkah is and what it celebrates in a way a little kid would understand. It shows how getting unexpected things could spark new interests. The art in this book is very colorful and cute.

P.S. I don't think dogs like microscopes.



The Light From My Menorah

Reviewed by Phoebe

I think *The Light From My Menorah* is an amazing book. It is a heartwarming story about a boy who travels with the light from his *hanukiyah* around the world to see how different people spread their light. I enjoyed this book because it teaches young readers about the holidays that different religions celebrate around Hanukkah time. The colorful designs and pretty pictures add to the telling of this story helping to capture the interests of all who read *The Light From My Menorah*. If you like Hanukkah books a latke, you'll like this one!



The Case of the Disappearing Chanukah Candles

Reviewed by Yetta

The Case Of the Disappearing Chanukah is a fun Chanukah chapter book that incorporates the importance of the Jewish tradition of lighting the candles. It is about a few siblings in a Jewish family who are also detectives. They need to solve a case with Mrs. Rabinovitz whose Chanukah candles disappear. The children must learn to work together in order to solve this great mystery. Take a moment and find a quiet space where you can learn all about how this adventure ends. Will they solve the mystery in time for Chanukah?

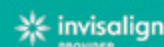


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Temple Concord's High Holidays at the JCC

by Chana Meir

As planning for the High Holidays began this year, Temple Concord was in a quandary. Administration and lay leaders of both Concord and Temple Adath Yeshurun had worked together to ensure a seamless transition when the congregations started sharing space in May. It was hoped that both could hold High Holiday services at the Kimber Road site, with Adath in its sanctuary and Concord in the ballroom.

But a snag arose — sound from each area bled into the other. It turned out that solving the problem would be costly and time-consuming and couldn't be completed before Rosh Hashanah. "We came to the realization that it would be a better idea to source an alternate location to hold High Holiday Services," said Diane Sacks, Concord's Executive Director. Different venues were considered but none were adequate in terms of accessibility, parking and seating for as many as 300 people. The site would also need to be transformed into something that felt like a worship space.

During the summer, Sacks reached out to Marci Erlebacher, executive director of the Jewish Community Center, about possibly holding High Holiday services there. Erlebacher was enthusiastic about the idea and quickly recruited Executive Assistant/Office Manager Erin Hart and Facilities Manager Gregory Earl to take part in the planning. Sacks and Concord's clergy, Rabbi Ilan Emanuel and



Cantor Kari Siegel-Eglash, toured the building and all agreed that the JCC would work well.

To prepare for services, prayer books, Torahs, the piano and sound system and two arks were carefully and reverently moved from Kimber Road to Thompson Road. Earl and his team assembled a stage in the JCC gym, with pulpits, a choir space, chairs and arrangements of fall flowers, turning the stage into a cozy bimah. A blue tarp spread on the floor protected it and hid basketball markings, while the basketball nets and scoreboards remained, along with strings of cheerful Israeli flags. "Assembling our prayer

space was no small task," said Sacks. "This setup needed to be taken down after Rosh Hashanah, to make the gym available for the JCC, and then reassembled for Yom Kippur." Set up was also required for a children's program and family services.

Sacks reported that Concord members shared positive comments about the decision to hold services at the JCC and about the unique worship experience. "I want to give a huge thank you to Marci, Erin, Gregory and their team at the JCC," she said, also expressing gratitude to Concord Facilities Coordinator Chet Hoisington, Director of Community Security Susan DeMari, the DeWitt police department, Tom Borowitz and the Concord security team and Temple volunteers. "They all worked so hard to ensure that the 5785/2024 High Holidays were spiritually fulfilling and enjoyable."

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SEIZE THE AWKWARD

Community Remembrance of October 7th

On October 7th, the one-year anniversary of Hamas' attack on Israel, the Jewish community came together to commemorate the event and to affirm in the strongest possible terms that Am Israel Chai. Two complementary events were presented by the Jewish Federation, the community's synagogues, the Jewish Community Center and End Antisemitism Now.



Photo courtesy of Jeremy Brinn

The evening event, planned by a committee headed by Youchi Holstein, Moree Shoemaker, Hadas Golan, Orit Antosh and Michal Downie, remembered lives lost, recognized the remaining hostages in Gaza, honored survivors and celebrated the heroes of October 7th. The event included displays featuring local Jewish artwork, literature focusing on the events of



Photo courtesy of Jeremy Brinn

October 7th and exhibits remembering those who were killed or kidnapped. "We are thrilled with the turnout with almost 600 people including the local leaders from all levels of government," said Brian Raphael, president of End Antisemitism Now, the event's sponsor. "We appreciate the support from our members of congress, state legislators, county leaders and city officials. The spirit of togetherness and unity displayed by our community was incredibly moving,"



The shorter morning event featured musical tributes to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the HaBayita concert of one thousand musicians calling for the return of the hostages, and the singing of HaTikva featuring people from Jewish communities around the world. The children of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School joined in the singing. Barbara Davis, interim president/CEO of the Federation, said, "We remember October 7th as a reminder. Even as we fight antisemitism locally, nationally and globally, even as we pray for the return of the living hostages, the recovery of the hostages who have come home, even as we pray for the souls of the killed hostages and the 1200 others slaughtered on October 7th, we assert that the Jewish people and the Jewish State need always to be vigilant and strong."



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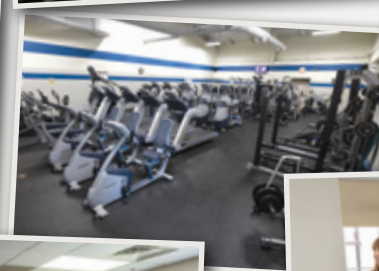
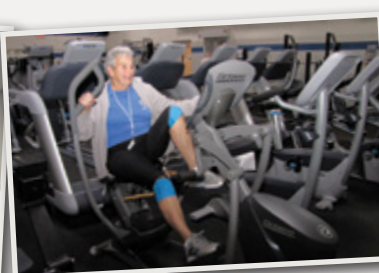


CROUSE
Emergency Services

New Fitness Members Can Join the JCC for \$1

by Carlett Spike

Not yet a member of the Neulander Family Sports & Fitness Center at the JCC? Beginning December 15th, new members can join for only \$1 through January 31st through the Dollar & a Dream promotion. Those who join in the month of December receive the rest of the month and the entire month of January for free. Join in January and get one month to the day of fitness. Plus, those who register through this promotion will receive an exclusive offer for a discounted one-year membership upon completion of the trial. "This is a great time to see what the JCC is all about," said Nick Finlayson, the JCC's director of membership. "Give us a try and see if our gym is the right fit for you." This offer is only valid for first-time gym membership. Trial membership excludes pickleball, personal training and TRX. **Those who are interested may contact Nick at nfinlayson@jccsyr.org to sign up or for more information.**



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Lighting the Chanukiyah



Join on the front steps of the JCC to light the menorah at 4:30 pm weeknights during Chanukah, beginning Thursday, December 26th.

Community Chanukah Party

The entire community is invited to attend the annual Community Chanukah Party being held at the Jewish Community Center of Syracuse on Sunday, December 15th from 12:30 to 3 pm. In addition to a variety of delicious refreshments, attendees can partake in facepainting, crafts and inflatables for the children. The Community Chanukah Party is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Central New York and is free to attend.



COMMUNITY CHANUKAH PARTY!

Sunday, December 15
12:30 - 3 pm

Schayes Family Gymnasium
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FREE EVENT!

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- Crafts
- Entertainment
- Face Painting
- Games
- Refreshments
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Osem Toasted Couscous 8.8 oz. 2/\$5 with AdvantEdge Card	Meal Mart Egg Rolls With Mushrooms & Vegetables 25 oz. Meal Mart Meat Balls in Marinara Sauce • 33 oz. \$15.99 12⁹⁹ with AdvantEdge Card
Lipton Recipe Secrets Soup and Dip Mix 1.9-4.5 oz. • Kosher Varieties 2/\$5 with AdvantEdge Card	PICS Cold Smoked Atlantic Salmon 4 oz. • All Varieties 6⁹⁹ with AdvantEdge Card
Manischewitz Broth 17 oz. • All Varieties 2/\$6 with AdvantEdge Card	Kedem Tea Biscuits 4.2 oz. • Select Varieties 4/\$3 with AdvantEdge Card
Manischewitz Matzo Ball & Soup Mix 4.5-5 oz. • Select Varieties 2/\$6 with AdvantEdge Card	Bosco Chocolate Syrup 22 oz. 3⁹⁹ with AdvantEdge Card
Farmers Horseradish 8.5 oz. 2/\$5 with AdvantEdge Card	Carmit Chanukah Coins .42 oz. • Milk or Dark Chocolate 5/\$2 with AdvantEdge Card
Breakstone's Whipped Butter 8 oz. 3⁴⁹ with AdvantEdge Card	Streit's Chanukah Candles 44 Ct. 89¢ with AdvantEdge Card

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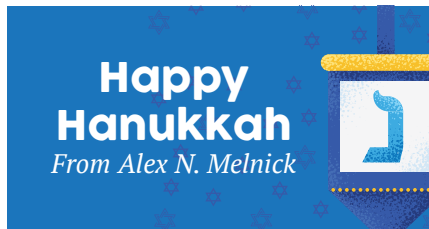


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Positive News in a War

Quiet heroism is everywhere. Reporter Canaan Lidor lives in the north of Israel. He was looking for ordinary brave people who are inspiring others. He found people eating outside bomb shelters; zoom-learning schools; sharing safe rooms with neighbors; plus ex-pats returning to Israel to defend the country.

<https://www.jns.org/in-israels-targeted-north-quiet-heroism-is-everywhere/>

Pre-school program to treat PTSD. NGOs SASA Setton and Alumot Or have partnered with Israeli bank Hapoalim to set up early-years centers of educational excellence in areas most affected by October 7. The program will help hundreds of children aged 3 to 6 who have experienced trauma, along with their parents.

<https://nocamels.com/2024/09/innovae-israeli-project-supporting-negev-preschoolers-in-wartime/>



Galvanizing Jewish advocates. Eitan Chitayat, creative director and founder of Tel Aviv-based international Natie Branding Agency, has dropped all his commercial work to focus on promoting Israel to the world. He created the slogan “I’m that Jew” and urges his 100,000+ followers, and all of us, to be advocates for Israel.

<https://www.israel21c.org/since-7-10-everything-takes-a-backseat-to-my-advocacy-work/>

https://www.instagram.com/eitanchitayat_words/?hl=en

Starlink for the north. Dozens of satellite internet stations from Elon Musk’s Starlink have arrived in Israel’s north for government offices, hospitals and emergency centers. Israel’s Communications Ministry approved Starlink’s use, enabling Israelis to access broadband services if ground-based communications are disrupted.

<https://www.jns.org/starlink-stations-arrive-in-israel-for-embattled-north/>

Quiet diplomacy at work in Europe. Israel has many supporters in Europe, “but they are in need of relevant information,” says IDSF’s Brigadier General Amir Avivi. Meetings between IDSF and Italian Chamber of Deputies officials resulted in the Italian Parliament’s lower house passing a multifaceted pro-Israel resolution in July.

<https://www.jns.org/italian-pro-israel-resolution-shows-power-of-quiet-diplomacy/>

<https://idsf.org.il/en/team-members/brigadier-general-res-amir-avivi-2/>

Wolt rider delivers baby. Magen David Adom began medical training of 1,000 Wolt delivery drivers. Ilan Buaron had already been trained, when he was called while delivering pizza. He knew what to do. He didn’t deliver pizza, he delivered a baby instead. The ambulance team ate the pizza.

<https://unitedwithisrael.org/israeli-food-order-worker-delivers-baby-instead-of-pizza/>

1-2-3. Motti, a United Hatzala volunteer EMT, rushed to an Ashdod apartment to deliver a baby – the second in two days. It is rare for an EMT to deliver one baby at home, and extremely unusual for two on consecutive days. It was also the third birth that he had helped deliver in the same month. <https://israelrescue.org/stories/united-hatzalah-volunteer-delivers-two-babies-in-two-days/>

11th down. Einat had already brought 10 children into the world. But her 11th was the first to be born underground. The maternity ward at Israel’s Rambam Medical Center had been relocated to the level minus 3 car park. Nevertheless, a healthy baby was born and all 10 siblings came to visit mother and newborn.

<https://unitedwithisrael.org/defying-hezbollah-missiles-israeli-woman-gives-birth-to-11th-child-in-underground-facility/>

An Israeli Arab and Israeli Jew at Harvard. Tzur Goldin has devoted years to campaigning for the return of his dead brother, Hadar Goldin, who is still held in Gaza. Abboud Ashkar, is a Christian Arab entrepreneur from Nazareth who has become a symbol of coexistence in Israel. Both promote Israel at Harvard University.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sjsyqrzca>

Why did Malawi vote with Israel? Malawi supported Israel in the recent vote in the UN General Assembly. There are 700 Malawians working in Israel and 10,000 more are expected by the end of 2024. They work in agriculture, construction, elder care, and tourism.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/business/article/s17vgs11ac>

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

1. Publication Title: Jewish Observer of Central New York 2. Publication Number: 1079-9842 3. Filing date: September 6, 2024 4. Issue Frequency: Monthly 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 12 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$36.00 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publications: 5655 Thompson Rd., Syracuse, New York, 13214 Contact Person: Michael Balanoff Telephone: (315) 445-0161 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: 5655 Thompson Road, Syracuse, New York, 13214 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor: Publisher: Barbara E. Macks, 1412 Sweet Home Road, Suite 12, Amherst, NY 14228 Editor: Barbara Davis, 5655 Thompson Rd., Syracuse, New York, 13214 Managing Editor: Barbara E. Macks, 1412 Sweet Home Road, Suite 12, Amherst, NY 14228 10. Owner: Jewish Federation of Central New York, 5655 Thompson Rd., Syracuse, New York, 13214 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None 12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates): Has not changed during preceding 12 months. 13. Publication Title: Jewish Observer of Central New York 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: September 1, 2024 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation: a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run): Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 2500; No. Copies of Single Issue Published nearest to Filing Date: 2500 b. Paid Circulation: (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 491; No. Copies of Single Issue published Nearest to Filing Date: 442 (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 1759; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 1766 (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 0; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 0 (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 0; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 0 c. Total Paid Distribution: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 2250; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 2208 d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution: (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 0; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 0 (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 0; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 0 (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 0; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 0 (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside of the Mail: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 145; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 145 e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 145; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 145 f. Total Distribution: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 2393; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 2353 g. Copies not Distributed: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 105; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 147 h. Total: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 2500; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 2500 i. Percent Paid: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 94%; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 94% I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete: Barbara E. Macks, Publisher

ARLENE RUTH LESSER

October 17, 2024

Arlene Ruth Lesser, 83 passed away on October 17, 2024 at her home in Fayetteville. Born in Brooklyn on November 7, 1940, she had been a resident of Syracuse since 1963.

In 1985 Arlene and her late husband Sidney established Jewelry on James which flourished and continues under the ownership of their daughter Lori and her husband Tom Marini.

Arlene had a passion for fashion and jewelry. She was the life force behind their business while managing their home and children's lives as well. Taking care of her family was always her first mission. She loved beautiful things which was so clearly evident in the jewelry she designed and created. She was a most determined person.

Her family includes her children Michael (Susan), Lori (Tom) and Steven (Jennie), grandchildren Tommy (Tina), Sarah, Morgan (Zak), Alexander, Genevieve (Owen), Chloe (Logan) and Michael, great-grandsons Dean and Matthew and her sister Ferne (Morty) Kleban and her sister-in-law Dawn (Stan) Berger.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in her memory may be made to Make a Wish of CNY.

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RAYMOND WERTS

October 31, 2024

Raymond Werts, 91, passed away on Thursday at the Syracuse VA Hospital. Born in Syracuse on May 11, 1933 to Israel and Eleanor Werts, he had been a life resident of Syracuse. He was a graduate of Central High School and had a BS in accounting. He proudly served his country during the Korean War from 1953-1955.

Raymond was an investigator for the NYS Division of Human Rights. He also served his union as a representative in contract negotiations.

He was a dedicated member of Temple Adath Yeshurun, the Lions club, a board member of Hazak seniors group at Temple Adath and was honored to have been awarded the Alan Small Volunteerism award from Temple Adath as well.

His family includes his wife Denyse of 49 years, their son Zev (Patti) and their grandson Noah.

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

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GERTRUDE (KAPLAN) GREENMAN

October 30, 2024

Gertrude (Kaplan) Greenman, age 103, died October 30, 2024, in Framingham, MA. Born in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, NY, Gertrude graduated from Tilden High School.

During WWII, Gertrude worked for the Army Air Corps. In 1946, she married Theodore Greenman. The couple had three children: Karen (Allen) Block, Bernard "Bud" (Melinda) and Marlene (Gary) Heller. They lived in Brooklyn, NY; Colorado Springs, CO and settled in Valley Stream, NY, in 1953, where they were among the founders of the Tree of Life synagogue. They stayed in Valley Stream for 32 years, before retiring to Boynton Beach, FL, in 1986.

After her husband's death, Gertrude relocated to Framingham, MA. She worked for the Town of Hempstead for 30 years, retiring in 1985. She was an avid card and mah jongg player. She and her husband loved to travel and visited many countries by plane and cruise.

Gertrude is survived by a sister, Myrtle "Mimi" Taylor. She is the grandmother of Myles (Edie) Block and the late Gary Block, Robyn (Mathieu) Gerbush, Jeff (Rebecca) Heller, Aileen (Matthew) Gordon, Scott (Evelyn) Greenman and nine great-grandchildren.

BETTE S. SIEGEL

November 6, 2024

Bette S. Siegel of Silver Spring, MD., beloved wife of Donald I. Siegel, devoted mother of Hannah, Esther (David LeBlanc) and Micah (Rachel) Siegel, loving grandmother of Ezra and Caleb Siegel and Layla and Adam Leblanc, dear sister of Laurie Siegel, died on November 6, 2024. Memorial contributions may be made to Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas, Jamesville, NY, <https://www.cbcs.org/donations>. Indicate "Kiddush Support Fund." [A tribute to Bette, former editor of the *Jewish Observer*, will appear in the January issue.]

Happy Hanukkah

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Joel M. Friedman



The Fifth Night of Chanukah

Chanukah is the most celebrated Jewish holiday in America because it's fun, it's family and it's about gifts. But because many became concerned about the emphasis on acquisition, a new custom arose called **Fifth Night**. **Fifth Night** is the time when families make a difference by donating to a worthy cause instead of receiving gifts. For one eighth of the holiday, many people focus on others rather than on themselves.

Two of the best **Fifth Night** vehicles available to our Central New York Jewish community to make gifts to others are the Jewish Community Foundation's Donor Advised Fund (DAF) program and the Perpetual Annual Campaign Endowment (PACE) program.

With a Donor Advised Fund, you get an immediate tax deduction for the amount you put into your DAF (*minimum to start: \$5,000*) and you can give as many gifts to 501(c)3 entities as you want (*minimum gift: \$100*) by using the online portal or emailing the Foundation office.

A PACE fund is a permanent endowment of your annual campaign gift—a lasting legacy that will continue to make an yearly donation in your name to the Central New York Jewish community forever (*minimum to start: \$10,000*). It is also an immediate tax deduction.

Fifth Night is a wonderful new Jewish tradition and you can extend its meaning throughout the year through a DAF or PACE. Just email bdavis@jewishfoundationcny.org to let us know of your interest in establishing one or both of these accounts.

It will make Chanukah especially bright this year. *Chag sameach!*