

» SHAVUOT SAMEACH!

Jewish Observer of Central New York

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID, SYRACUSE, NY & ADDITIONAL OFFICES

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

JUNE 2025 | SIVAN-TAMMUZ 5785



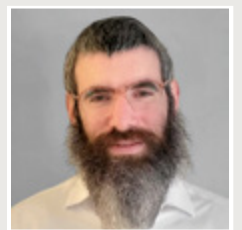
JEWES AND THEIR FOODS



LOOK:
BOOKS
AND FOOD
(4)



INSIDE:
NEW
AMERICANS
(9)



DON'T MISS:
CELEBRATING
ACHIEVERS
(12)

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

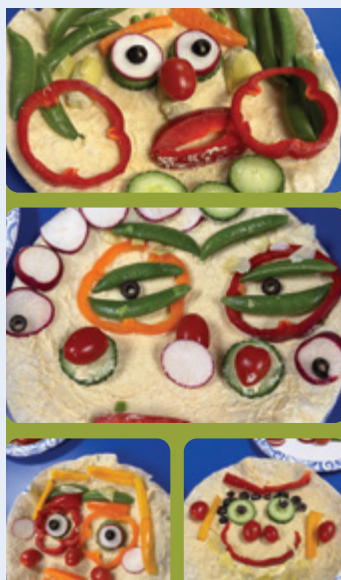
“Is Judaism Obsessed with Food?” is the title of an article by food writer Alice Level. She raises the following points: “Think about it: Not only does the Torah give us the laws of kashrut and regulate what we as Jews are allowed to eat on a daily basis, but it is also full of food references. Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden because of a forbidden fruit. Cain killed his brother Abel because G-d favored Abel’s food offering (fat from an animal) over his (fruits of the soil). Isaac favored Esau ‘because he did eat of his venison’ (*Genesis 25:28*). Jacob offered to give Esau a bowl of lentil stew in exchange for his birthright and Esau agreed. Jacob and his sons travelled to Egypt to buy grains because of a great famine in Canaan. While in prison, Joseph explained the dreams of Pharaoh’s cup bearer and baker. Later he saved Egypt from famine by solving Pharaoh’s dream and having him store vast quantities of grain. The story of Passover explains how the Hebrews had to leave Egypt in a hurry and had to take with them bread that was still unleavened. In the desert, they were fed manna for

40 years. Even our promised land is referred to as ‘the land of milk and honey.’” She points out that every holiday has a food connection. “On the seder plate, all our symbols regarding our sojourn in Egypt as slaves are food: bitter herbs, shank, eggs. Even the mortar Pharaoh made the Hebrews make has become charoset.... With Chanukah, there are fried foods, Shavuot features dairy products, and we eat sweet food for Rosh Hashanah. For Purim we offer food baskets to our friends and family. Even Yom Kippur is about food — or should I say the lack of — the focus of it being the fasting, preceded and followed by a very nice meal.”

Another article, “A Jewish Theology of Food” by Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus, addresses how Jewish food practices are an expression of Jewish theology. It asks, “How is Jewish food ‘God talk?’” and describes Jewish dietary practices and the laws of *kashrut* as “a kind of Jewish body-language,” explaining that “all these expressions of *kashrut* suggest that making conscious distinctions (*havdalot*) is an implicit or explicit act of the imitation of God.” It concludes that “a Jewish theology of food is an embodied metaphorical theology” and that “doing things with words and food [is] a kind of ‘culinary midrash’, a Jewish way of talking about and talking to God.”

So Jews and their foods have many ramifications and this issue of the *Jewish Observer* takes delight in exploring them. Our cover features culinary art from Syracuse Hebrew Day School artists and our reviews feature books that are all about Jews and food but are not, for a change, cookbooks. We are also proud to share stories about Jewtica, a festival in nearby Utica that is all about Jewish food and about a new coffee brand that was created specifically to support Israel. Our *d’var Torah* likewise has a food connection, and our RAV Properties column features articles about the new ownership of Lipman’s Kosher Meat Market in Rochester and the intriguing story of kosher eggs.

We hope we have “whetted your appetite” for this issue, which also highlights new leaders in our community, the achievements of community members in *Hadashot Tovot*, and articles about New Americans in our community, as well as announcements of the recipients of prestigious recognition awards for accomplishments and service on behalf of Jewish Central New York. We also want to thank all of the generous donors to the *Jewish Observer* Appeal which closes this month—and to remind those of you who have not yet contributed to our community newspaper that June has 30 days on which you can make your much appreciated donations.



Cover Photo: Culinary Art at SHDS

by Diana Koester

Syracuse Hebrew Day School students recently explored the idea of food as art. Culinary art is a whole industry, after all. Younger students used food as their media. Kindergarteners experimented with pretzel twisting, rolling and shaping their dough, then dipping it in a baking soda/water solution and topping it with sprinkles or coarse salt. First graders showed off their skills with colors and patterns to create rainbow fruit salad compositions. Second graders crafted Picasso-style portraits out of tortillas, hummus and different veggies, showing understanding that art isn’t always stunningly beautiful—sometimes it’s fun and funky. Third and fourth graders drew pizzas with each slice displaying different toppings. Fifth and sixth graders did an upcycled china project, in which they took plates and mugs, smashed them (safely and well-supervised, of course) and crafted art from the shards.

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

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



President/CEO Mark Segel
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.

President Sharon C. Levite
Vice President/Chief Revenue Officer Barbara E. Macks

Publisher..... Barbara E. Macks

ART, EDITORIAL & PRODUCTION

Executive Editor Meagan Doxtad
Creative Director Jean-Pierre Thimot
Lead Designer Kimberly Miers
Senior Graphic Designers Josh Flanigan, Nicholas Vitello
Graphic Designers Rachel Kaznica, Tamarie Mitravich

ADVERTISING & SALES

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

FINANCE

Finance Manager Elizabeth Harvey

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@buffalospree.com.

To Subscribe:

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

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

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

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

MESSAGE FROM TODD PINSKY
Federation Board Chair

The Jewish Federation Welcomes Mark Segel



It is that special time in Central New York, when the cold gray winter gives way to the warmth and new growth of spring. As one chapter of 2025 ends, another begins. Spring brings the promise of new beginnings and anticipation for what lies ahead. This spring is even more special for our Jewish community as we begin a new chapter, welcoming Mark Segel as President & CEO of the Jewish Federation of Central New York.

I am so excited about the future and opportunities that lay ahead for the Jewish Federation of Central New York under Mark's leadership. His professional background in the banking/financial sector and varied

leadership roles for Jewish Federations in Florida (most recently as the Executive Director for Combatting Antisemitism for the Tampa Jewish Community Centers & Federation) make Mark uniquely qualified for this position. He brings experience in strategic planning, programming, fundraising, public relations, media, and security, all of which will serve Federation and our community well for many years to come.

Under Mark's guidance and leadership, Federation will remain committed to supporting our community's legacy agencies and programs, as well as new, innovative and collaborative ideas and organizations. Federation will continue to focus on raising funds for community-wide events and vital institutions such as the JCC, the Hebrew Day School, the Community Hebrew School, the Epstein School of Jewish Studies, and Hillel, as well as helping to fund other important entities that support our community such as Kosher Meals on Wheels, Jewish Family Services, the Beit Tikvah, and the Judaic Heritage Center. Ensuring that our community has safe places to worship and celebrate our culture and holidays will remain a top priority by continuing to convene law enforcement and security for our communal benefit, as well as combatting antisemitism. Our annual campaign to raise money for local and overseas organizations will remain a central focus, working to identify creative opportunities to support Jewish people in Central New York and Israel.

I thank all of our dedicated Board members and the community stakeholders and volunteers who participated in the search to identify our next executive leader. This was no small undertaking and I am very grateful to everyone who lent their time and expertise. I want to extend special appreciation to Barbara Davis for all of her work serving as the interim President & CEO since September 2024. Barbara helped guide Federation through its most challenging time and we owe her a debt of gratitude. We also appreciate the way Barbara and the entire Federation staff have worked so diligently to ensure a smooth transition of all office operations and Federation functions.

Throughout the process of identifying, recruiting, and onboarding our new President and CEO, I have had the pleasure of speaking to so many invested stakeholders in our community's success, including representatives of our local agencies, schools, temples, rabbinical leadership, and funders. I was overwhelmed with the heartfelt passion that our community has expressed, and I am energized by optimism for the opportunities that lay ahead for us as we begin this new chapter in our community under Mark's leadership.

MESSAGE FROM MARK SEGEL
Federation President & CEO

A New Chapter Begins: Nourishing Community Through Leadership and Tradition



As I step into the role of President and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Central New York, I am filled with gratitude and a profound sense of responsibility. The Jewish community of Central New York, with its rich history spanning over a century, has contributed so much to Jewish life in the greater Syracuse area, fostering connections, supporting those in need, and celebrating our vibrant heritage.

As you may know, I'm new to the New York area and the north in general. I can't keep count of how many times people have asked me if I'm nuts for moving from sunny Tampa, Florida to Central New York. While I may be nuts,

I have no doubt I made the right decision to join you here. I am so impressed by what I've experienced here in Greater Syracuse already.

In many ways, our community resembles a cherished family meal—each member bringing their unique flavor, yet coming together to create something greater than the sum of its parts. Just as traditional Jewish dishes like challah, matzo ball soup and kugel are passed down through generations, so too are our values of *Torah* (learning), *Tzedakah* (charity), *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world), and *L'Dor V'Dor* (from generation to generation). These values have guided the Federation's mission: to build a strong Jewish future in Central New York, Israel and worldwide through philanthropy, engagement, education, and advocacy. Our programs and initiatives are designed to enrich the educational, cultural, and social life of our Jewish community, ensuring that everyone can access Jewish tradition in meaningful ways.

Food, in particular, serves as a powerful symbol of our collective identity. It brings us together during holidays, life-cycle events, and community gatherings. Sharing a meal is an act of love, remembrance, and unity. As we break bread, we also break barriers, fostering understanding and connection.

In my new role, I aim to honor these traditions while embracing innovation. We will continue to support our partner agencies, provide essential services, and advocate for the well-being of Jews locally and globally. At the same time, we will explore new avenues to engage the next generation, ensuring that our Federation remains a dynamic and inclusive hub for all.

I invite you to join me on this journey. Whether it's through volunteering, participating in our programs, making new friends over meals, or making a meaningful gift to the Federation's annual campaign, each act strengthens the fabric of our community. Together, we can ensure that the Jewish Federation of Central New York continues to be a place where everyone feels at home—a place where tradition and progress coexist harmoniously.

As we look to the future, let's remember the words of our sages: "All Israel is responsible for one another." May we carry this responsibility with pride, compassion, and a shared commitment to nourishing both body and soul.

Why Do We Eat Dairy Foods on Shavuot?

by Rabbi Oren Steinitz,
Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevra Shas



Of the Three Festivals, Shavuot has always seemed to me like a bit of an underdog. Passover is the most widely observed Jewish holiday other than Chanukah and Sukkot just seems like a natural continuation of the High Holy Days. Shavuot, on the other hand, remains mostly unnoticed by many American Jews. Israelis—religious and nonobservant alike—have added a significant amount of content to the festival. Last year I wrote about the ways in which *kibbutzim* and other agricultural communities celebrate the holiday by presenting the first crops of the year in elaborate ceremonies. Other communities observe the holiday by holding extensive all-night study sessions in synagogues and community centers. Many popular speakers lecture in three or four different venues on the eve of Shavuot and, in places like Tel Aviv or Jerusalem, one can find talks by rabbis, professors, artists, musicians and even celebrities in countless venues. It is really a celebration of Jewish learning that I highly recommend.

While some American Jewish communities try to hold similar events, outside of the big cities they are usually few and far between. When asked about Shavuot, many American Jews would not mention the Giving of the Torah, the bringing of the first crops or the counting of the Omer. If there is one aspect of the holiday that is popularly known, it is the custom of feasting on dairy foods.

Like many popular Jewish customs (breaking the glass at a wedding comes to mind), the origin of the tradition of eating dairy foods on Shavuot is unclear. Rabbi Professor David Golinkin, perhaps the most important Conservative Jewish scholar of our times, attempted to trace the origin of the custom and encountered some interesting findings. The earliest mention of eating dairy foods—specifically a dairy cake—on Shavuot was found in the writings of 13th century French rabbi Rabeinu Avigdor Tsarfati, who admitted that while he had no idea where the custom came from, it might have something to do with the verse from the book of Numbers, “On the day of the first fruits, when you offer a grain offering of new grain to the Lord at your Festival of Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not work at your occupations.” (*Num. 28:26*). The first letters of the that phrase in Hebrew spell *chalav* – milk. Other explanations from

around the same period suggest that the the Torah was compared to milk and honey. Later Jewish sources take the custom for granted but suggest that the prevailing custom was to eat a dairy cake and fish fried in butter, rinse one’s mouth, and then have a meat dish as “there is no joy without meat and wine.” From the eighteenth century onward, we see many references to the custom, including some from the Sephardi world.

Many tried to explain the custom based on partial biblical verses, *gematria* (numerical value of letters) and other forms of *midrash*. A particularly interesting explanation appears in the *Mishna Berurah* and suggests that when the Israelites received the Torah at Mount Sinai (on Shavuot, according to tradition), they realized how elaborate the laws of kosher slaughter were and opted to eat dairy foods as they could not yet produce kosher meat. The fact that so many explanations and reasonings exist, strongly suggests that the explanations were given after the fact, in an attempt to justify a prevailing tradition.

Historians were generally puzzled by the custom, and suggested that it may have been borrowed from neighboring communities. Professor Theodore Gester refers to the Scottish celebration of May 1st, known as Beltane, when it was customary to eat dairy foods. Similarly, some districts in Germany had the custom of drinking milk in the weeks following Easter. While these explanations are not necessarily sufficient or convincing, one may ask *why* all these different groups opted for dairy foods around springtime? The explanation is simpler than we might expect. Shavuot falls during the calving season. Milk was mostly available in spring and summer and in order to preserve the milk before it spoiled, it was used to produce butter and cheese...

Whatever the explanation is, have a wonderful Shavuot, and enjoy your dairy foods.

HOME EQUITY
THINK SPRING
SPECIAL

Turn the Equity in Your
Home Into Cash!

ASK ABOUT OUR
SPECIAL RATES



315-468-6281 • GeddesFederal.com

2208 W. Genesee St., Syracuse • 240 W. Seneca St., Manlius



DR WILLIAM TUCKER



DRY EYE SPECIALIST
NEW PATIENTS WELCOME • FREE PARKING

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

315.637.1010

Be a part of the community.
Support the Jewish Observer

To Subscribe:

Email bdavis@jewishfederationny.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.



Forbidden: A 3,000-Year History of Jews and the Pig

by Jordan D. Rosenblum

Reviewed by Michael Gordon

Decades ago, I was at dinner with a non-Jewish friend who couldn't understand why I wasn't ordering the chef's special of the day—roast pork tenderloin. I explained that, while my parents and grandparents didn't keep strictly kosher, they did avoid pork according to our custom (although my mother was known to sneak a strip of bacon now and then at a buffet). By not ordering the pork dish, I felt that I was somehow honoring that long-held family stance and broadcasting I was a good-enough Jew.

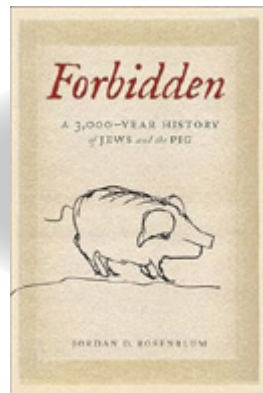
About five years ago another friend was watching me grill a veal chop when he asked, "Why not try a thick pork chop next time? It's fabulous if you cook it right." I gave him the same pat answer.

But the interchange did get me thinking again about whether avoiding pork made any sense for me. If I cooked bacon at home, would that make me feel any less of a Jew? Would it be an insult to my family's traditions? Would it somehow represent yet another reflection of my poor character to indulge in a protein people died to avoid? And, yes, is pork really as delicious as people say?

One more time with gusto, hedonism triumphed. I no longer felt the need to define myself by what I ate or didn't eat. My Jewish identity was surely strong and enduring enough that it could withstand ingestion of an occasional spare rib. And I didn't think memories of my forebears would be irrevocably sullied. As proof that old age can lead one to not give a damn even when one perhaps should, I concluded that I didn't have anything to prove to myself or anyone else regarding my religious faith or practice.

Jordan D. Rosenblum's book, *Forbidden: A 3,000-Year History of Jews and the Pig* is a must-read for anyone else who has wondered how it came to be that pork has been on the outs with Jews for millennia. He reviews the scriptural basis for the prohibition and how rabbinic interpretations have evolved over time.

But what makes this book fascinating and important is that it provides a sprawling and detailed account of how the pig became not only a litmus test for Jewish identity, but also a cudgel



against Jews and non-Jews alike, causing centuries of harm, both physical and otherwise. Rosenblum's account offers a stark example of how energetically we humans can project our fears, furies, and insecurities onto about anything, even a barnyard animal. In so doing, he shows how the pig has taken on a cultural significance that has pervaded not only religious practice, but also how societies have defined themselves and others.

The author romps playfully through three thousand years of history and across national borders to detail the pig's unwitting influence on all aspects of culture, from ancient to modern. You will find references to Dumbledore, Monty Python, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Shakespeare alongside accounts of Roman persecution, Jews willingness to subject themselves to torture and death rather than eat pork, and transgressive pig ingestion by Jews opposing traditional practice. He even discusses how many of us have come to dine at Chinese restaurants on Erev Christmas—all in a scholarly, non-judgmental manner.

Rosenblum's account gives many examples of how the pig has been weaponized against Jews over the course of history. One example: "Elvira del Campo is tried by the Inquisition of Toledo in 1567–1569 on charges including not eating pig. She confessed to this crime and was sentenced to torture. Sadly, Elvira del Campo was not alone in suffering, as many Conversos were hauled before the Inquisition and condemned over claims that, among other things, they avoided eating pig." However, even Jews who renounced their religion and ate pork never felt the Inquisitors accepted them as Catholics.

While I was certainly aware of how gentiles could use pork to mock and vilify Jews, I was surprised at how nasty our own people could be to one another when pig was involved. Indeed, Jews have often been their own worst enemy when it came to ostracizing those who were okay with eating pork. Here's an especially

extreme instance of what congregants did to a rabbi in the Messianic era who broke the no-trayf rule: "Sabbatian [was punished]—including receiving thirty-nine lashes, literally being walked over by Jews entering and exiting the synagogue, being forced to divorce his wife and declare his children bastards, being banished from his community, and being forbidden from interacting with any Jew ever again." That seems a bit harsh, no? I mean, maybe the lashes and having to be trampled by congregants. But declaring your kids illegitimate and never being able to interact with a fellow Jew?

This book hasn't changed my stance on pork consumption. If anything, it bolstered my conviction that adherence to such a prohibition nowadays reflects more a personal preference than a theological imperative. Obeying the Ten Commandments, that's critical. Declining a BLT, perhaps not so much.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

LAURIE KUSHNER
LICENSED REAL ESTATE
SALESPERSON

HUNT
Since 1911

7650 Highbridge Rd. Manlius, NY 13104
(315) 420-2668

realestatebylauriekushner.com

ACE Village Hardware

The most important part of any painting project starts with choosing the correct color. Gloria will come to your house for an in home consultation.

315-637-7696 | 204 South Manlius Street | Fayetteville

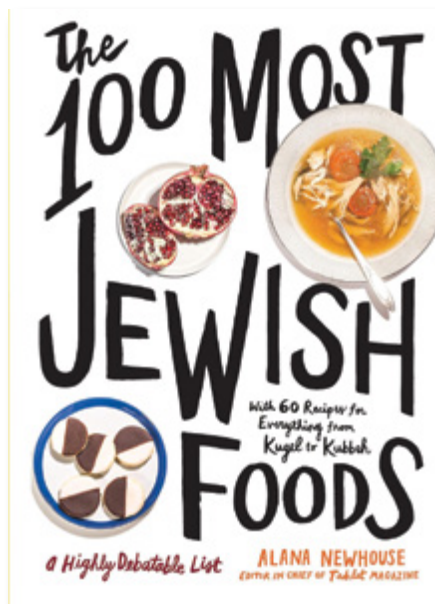
Two Books about Jews and their Foods

The 100 Most Jewish Foods: A Highly Debatable List

The 100 Most Jewish Foods: A Highly Debatable List, edited by Alana Newhouse of *Tablet* magazine, asks a group of writers, chefs, comedians and public thinkers — from Ruth Reichl to Zac Posen to Michael Solomonov — to weigh in on what makes a food “Jewish.” The book begins with an apocryphal quote from Albert Einstein: “Jews and food; food and Jews — that’s all there is.”

Despite the fact that there is no evidence that Einstein actually said this, the book proceeds from an alphabetical picture table of contents to a series of one hundred short essays connecting foods to Judaism, interspersed with recipes, anecdotes, and cultural reflections. All are interesting, most are amusing and some are truly aphoristic. Author/illustrator Maira Kalman, for example, writes about herring: “Herring have been swimming around in large schools for thousands of years. Occasionally, a predator comes and eats them. And yet they survive. The ultimate Jewish fish.” Literary critic and novelist Daphne Merkin says of horseradish: “Let the WASPs have their Worcestershire; leave it to the Jews to turn suffering into a craving.”

One expects to find traditional Ashkenazi dishes listed among the most Jewish foods and challah, cholent, rugelach, matzo ball soup, borscht, bagels and gefilte fish are there for sure, but the book’s range is broader and includes such dishes as Yemenite *jachnun*, Bukharian *plov* and Persian *ghormeh sabzi* as well as Israeli favorites such as *shakshuka*, *sabich* and *kubbeh*. There are some surprise entries: Bazooka bubble gum, Entenmann’s cake, Dr. Brown’s Cel-Ray tonic and Hydrox cookies. The entry for bokser by Marjorie Ingall notes, “If you attended a Jewish day school in the 20th century, chances are, you know from bokser. Every Tu b’Shvat, a long, flat, curved, brown carob seed pod showed up on your desk, and you loved it. Despite it’s being disgusting. Tu b’Shvat celebrates the beginning of spring, and the custom is to eat a new fruit. Bokser was invariably new, always thrilling; it was the only time any of us saw or ate it. We had no idea that bokser was the same substance certain hippie



moms tried to foist upon us, telling us it was ‘as good as chocolate!’ It wasn’t.”

Other memorable entries include *adafina*, a stew that originated as a Sabbath dish in Spain at the time of the Inquisition. Prepared on a Friday afternoon and eaten communally on Saturday, *adafina* went by several names: *trasmochado*, Spanish for “overnighted,” *hamin* from the Hebrew for “warm” and *adafina*, Arabic for “hidden.” The entry for seltzer says, “Only two kinds

of people truly love seltzer: Jews and clowns. Clowns spray to get a laugh; Jews don’t need to—we have good timing.” The entry on schmaltz says, “Schmaltz, or rendered poultry fat, was once considered so valuable to Jews in eastern and central Europe as a critical cooking fat that they stored it in vessels secured with padlocks. For most of the ‘80s, ‘90s and aughts, however, you couldn’t give the stuff away.” Gail Simmons’ article on pickles begins, “As far back as I can remember, full sour dill pickles have been the single most important food in my life. There’s no other flavor as satisfying, or that defines my family and my Jewish heritage as perfectly, as a pickle.” The clever entry for kichel says, “A cross between a bow tie and a fossil, kichel doesn’t seem to have much



to recommend it. Lacking the sweet icing of a black and white, the joyous colors of a rainbow cookie, or the fruity lusciousness of hamantaschen, kichel is nonetheless the quintessential Jewish cookie: it has been gracing synagogue kiddush tables after Shabbat services as far back as anyone can remember, widely ignored by even the hungriest of cookie-loving children. It is entirely possible that only a dozen of these cookies have ever existed, and that these same dozen have been there all along, put out week after week. Kichel is dry and brittle, filled with air. How could anyone know if it was stale? And yet. Something magical happens to Jews when they turn 40, kichel suddenly becomes delicious.”

The book proceeds from an alphabetical picture table of contents to a series of one hundred short essays connecting foods to Judaism, interspersed with recipes, anecdotes, and cultural reflections.

Eat Something: A Wise Sons Cookbook for Jews Who Like Food and Food Lovers Who Like Jews

Evan Bloom’s *Eat Something: A Wise Sons Cookbook for Jews Who Like Food and Food Lovers Who Like Jews* begins: “As Jews we can say this: our people—in general—tend to lack certain life skills. We can’t fix our own cars or replace our own appliances. We can’t talk without yelling or walk without talking or hide our feelings or help but feel anxious. But if there’s one thing pretty much every Jew can do, it’s eat.” *Eat Something* is a brash and humorous love letter to Jewish food, culture and identity. “Our lives, as Jews, revolve around food in a way that’s at once fanatical, logical and comical, and, to be honest, kind of pathological. Especially when family is in town,” write Bloom and co-author Rachel Levin. They offer idiosyncratic recipes for all Jewish occasions, including J Dating and Shiva offering such items as Intermarriage Meatloaf with Melted Onions and Big Macher Burger. Lots of cringeworthy photos accompany the text, which concludes, “Really, when you get down to it, a Jewish life is marked by meals. From bris to shiva and every major or makeshift occasion in between, we eat. Too much. Together.”



Our Community Leaders' Favorite Jewish Foods

Matzah Ball Soup was the clear winner among our community leaders, who were asked what their favorite Jewish food is. But there were also some surprises.

Todd Pinsky	Federation Board Chair	Matzah Ball Soup
Howard Port	Foundation Board Chair	Corned Beef
Mark Segel	Federation President/CEO	Chopped Liver
Jillian Juni	SU Hillel Executive Director	Potato Kugel
Melissa Klemperer	SHDS Head of School	Latkes with Sour Cream
Ora Jezer	SCHS Head of School	Taiglach
Alicia Gross	TAY Executive Director	Matza Ball Soup
Diane Sacks	TC Executive Director	Pastrami on Rye
Jeff Lefkowitz	TC President	Chopped Liver
Michael Gilman	TAY Co-President	Corned Beef
Lauren Thirer	TAY Co-President	Aunt Ada's Noodle Kugel
Marci Erlebacher	JCC Executive Director	My Challah
Ross Greenky	SHDS President	Pastrami on Rye w/mustard
Aaron Spitzer	Epstein School Head	Israeli Schnitzel
Anick Sinclair	Epstein School Board Chair	Matza Balls stuffed w/fried onions
Russ D'Amico	Menorah Park CEO	Chocolate Rugelach
Fran Ciardullo	Menorah Park Board Chair	Streit's Candy Slices
Phil Rubenstein	JCC Board President	My Mother's Tzimmes

Our rabbis named the following foods as their favorites:

Rabbi Beigel	Ariella's Home Baked Challah*
Rabbi Emanuel	Salade Cuite (matbuch)
Rabbi Jezer	Streit's Passover Matzahs**
Rabbi Lieberman	My Chocolate Babka
Rabbi Rapoport	Petchah
Rabbi Saks	Babka
Rabbi Shore	Cholent
Rabbi Steinitz	Pastrami on Rye

And our cantors opted for:

Cantor Eglash	Matza Ball Soup
Cantor Jaffe	Chicken Soup with Matzah Balls
Cantor Lieberman	Challah with honey

What happens when you ask rabbis about their favorite Jewish food:

* "I know what kosher food is, but I don't really know the definition of 'Jewish' food. Almost anything can be Jewish food. Falafel restaurants often sell pizza. I would expect that Jews in Italy enjoy pizza, which is not usually thought of as 'Jewish.' On the other hand, non-Jews enjoy matzo balls and kreplach." - I.B.

** "What is 'Jewish food?' Do you mean food that is popular with Ashkenazic Jews (here in the US) I can't think of any food that is uniquely Jewish. Actually the only food that I can think of that has not been absorbed by the Jewish community from others, and is still popular among the originating group, is our current version of matzah. I say current because in previous times (note the indecisive use of the term 'previous') is that in those days matzah was more like a pita which is certainly not a food relegated particularly to Jews. So even matzah may not be a 'Jewish food.'" - D.A.J.

Property Restoration Inc.
 Fire & Water Damage Restoration
 Emergency 24/7 & Holidays 315.454.0518

Offering Full Restoration and Construction Services

315.454.0518
 Art Diamond, owner

CHEERS TO THE SUPER DAD
 HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Jewish Observer
 of Central New York



This column features businesses owned by members of our community, as well as artists and musical programs and is generously sponsored by RAV Properties.

The History of Upstate's Only Kosher Market

Lipman's Kosher Market was founded in 1930 by Morris Lipman and a partner on Rochester's Joseph Avenue. In 1949, Lipman's son Albert bought out the partner and moved the business to Brighton. Lipman's Kosher Market has been the go-to kosher destination for the Rochester community since that time, supplying kosher meat and products to all of the Upstate New York region, including Buffalo, Syracuse, Geneva and Ithaca. Aharon Baruch, a former apprentice at Lipman's, purchased the market since 1993. Aharon and his team worked hard to maintain a high level of quality in their kosher products, taking pride in being "the only kosher market in Western New York."

Another Rochester kosher institution, Malek's Bakery, opened in 1977 by Hungarian Holocaust survivor, Lea Malek. It was sold to three local Wegman's employees, Don Russi, Chuck Treviso, and Jon Yaeger, in 2002. The bakery was sold ten years later to employee, Hoang Ngo. When Ngo wanted to retire, but have the bakery remain open, he sold it to Hillel Community Day School, which saw the need for a local kosher bakery for the Jewish community. Rochester native Naftali Hanau moved from Brooklyn to work for Hillel Community Day School in 2023 and was asked to manage Malek's.

As of January 1, 2025, Naf and Anna Hanau are the new owners of both Malek's and Lipman's. Naftali and Anna bring decades of experience in the kosher meat world to the upstate Jewish community. The Hanau's had always been interested in food and



customer service and had considered opening a deli/bakery/catering enterprise at some point, so the purchase of Lipman's follows that dream. Naftali and Anna Hanau bring decades of experience in the kosher meat world to the upstate Jewish community. The Hanau's had always been interested in food and customer service and had considered opening a deli/bakery/catering enterprise at some point, so the purchase of Lipman's follows that dream. Naftali says, "I grew up around the corner from Lipman's, and have a lifelong passion for making delicious meats and feeding people. After moving back to Rochester last

year, the stars have aligned and it's become clear to everyone that this is the right next step. We're grateful to Aharon Baruch for his years of service and are looking forward to continuing and building on his commitment to the community."

Lipman's is located at 1482 Monroe Avenue in Rochester and offers online ordering. Looking at Lipman's menu gets the salivary glands going. It includes deli sandwiches and take-out, catering, meat and poultry and groceries. Offerings include specialty sandwiches like the Lower East Side (3 oz each of Pastrami and Corned Beef on rye bread baked at Malek's) and French Dip; prepared foods available by the pound or to order by the 9x13 tray including chicken schnitzel, fire poppers, roasted vegetables, rice pilaf and more; raw kosher beef, chicken, turkey, veal, lamb and duck; and a wide selection of kosher and Israeli products, including Angel pita, Spring juices, CY yogurt, soup mixes, baking supplies, candy and more.

All items can be ordered online from lipmanskoshermarket.com. Lipman's makes monthly deliveries to Temple Adath Yeshurun in Syracuse. Customers are encouraged to join the email list to be notified about upcoming deliveries. Custom kosher catering for private or community events is also available.

What Makes An Egg Kosher?



Well, apparently it depends on how you define "egg" and how you define "kosher." First of all, for the purposes of this column, we are talking about eggs from kosher birds, like chickens, Cornish hens, ducks, geese and turkeys, not from fish, insects, reptiles or platypuses. How can you tell if a bird egg is kosher? The *Shulchan Aruch* states that only eggs which are pointy on one side and round on the other side are considered kosher. If both sides are round or both sides are pointy, the egg would have come from a non-kosher bird.

But it's not quite as simple as that. Even the eggs of kosher species of birds are not considered kosher if they were laid by a bird that was a *treifa*, defective, or removed from a *neva'ila*, the carcass of a dead chicken. The *Talmud* discusses the means by which one can verify the kosher origin of an egg but we won't go into that now.

It is not clearly stated in the Torah that eggs are permitted for food, but there is one reference to taking eggs from a bird's nest and it introduces a moral element. *Deuteronomy 22:6-7* says, "If, along the road, you chance upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs and the mother sitting over the fledglings or on the eggs, do not take the mother together with her young." This verse has been interpreted to be both an injunction against cruelty and a charge to encourage posterity.

Another critical factor in determining an egg's kosher status is whether it contains blood spots. Jewish law prohibits the consumption of blood and even a small amount in an egg renders it non-kosher. Because of this, eggs are checked before use, preferably by cracking them into a separate dish before mixing with other ingredients. If a blood spot is found, the egg must be discarded. While both fertilized and unfertilized eggs can be kosher if no blood spots are present, fertilized eggs have a higher chance of containing blood spots. For that reason, many kosher-observant individuals prefer purchasing eggs from farms that primarily produce unfertilized eggs.

Which brings us to Eggland's Best Eggs. Eggland's Best Eggs are produced regionally throughout the United States on farms that have instilled a culture of high-quality production and a commitment to conscientious care of their hens. Their hens are fed a proprietary all-vegetarian feed. Eggland's Best has strict regulations forbidding supplementation of diets with any antibiotic or administration of antibiotics to hens. It is a strict requirement that hens must be healthy and demonstrate normal production, flock livability, and food intake.

Kreher's Farm Fresh Eggs is a family farm in Clarence, New York which processes approximately 1,500,000 eggs per day. Since 1993, they have produced Eggland's Best Eggs, which the Orthodox Union certifies as kosher.

"With the help of an adult education center, I finished my high school diploma, and **it changed my life.**"

Jamie, Age 26

Find free adult education centers near you at FinishYourDiploma.org

ad Adult Education LITERACY FOUNDATION

JEW TICA-Come to schmooze, nosh, buy a tchotchke and ENJOY!

by Joe Silberlicht

In 1847, Abraham Cohen was the first known Jew to settle in a town along the Mohawk River known as Utica, peddling his wares to farmers, miners and loggers. Many Jews followed him from Eastern Europe and all around the country to make Utica their home. Cohen would have been first in line for knishes and latkes, tapping his foot to the sounds of traditional and contemporary music along with our neighbors from Central New York and beyond, at **JEW TICA**, the fourth annual cultural festival presented by the Jewish Community Federation of the Mohawk Valley. Join the fun on **Sunday, June 8, 2025, from noon to 6 pm** at the Jewish Community Center in Utica, New York.

The Jewish Community Federation of the Mohawk Valley presents...

JEW TICA

JEWISH CULTURAL FESTIVAL OF UTICA, NY

June 8, 2025 | 12-6PM | Utica JCC

NOSH: PLANT FORWARD RECIPES CELEBRATING MODERN JEWISH CUISINE
WITH EXPERT CHEF MICAH SIVA

Live Music by BOICHICK of Syracuse • Live Food Demos • Local Vendors • Delicious Kosher Food • Utica Zoo Mobile • Raffle Prizes • Bounce House • Family Fun • And More

Rain or Shine! All Are Welcome!

2310 Oneida St, Utica, NY
www.jewtica.com

This project is made possible through the City Arts Grants for Regional Arts and Cultural Engagement program thanks to a New York State Senate Initiative supported by the NY State Legislature, the Office of the Governor and administered by the New York State Council on the Arts.

The smell of food and sounds of music will fill the air with local crafters selling their wares, kids playing games, popular Jewish chefs sharing their secrets and the Jewish community of the Mohawk Valley celebrating their heritage. Micah Siva, chef and author of *NOSH!...Plant-Forward Recipes Celebrating Modern Jewish Cuisine* will share her favorite recipes. Expect tunes by **Boichik**, a Syracuse, New York, Jewish rock band featuring Cantor Kari Eglash of Temple Concord, Joe Eglash (director of the largest publisher of Jewish music in the world, Transcontinental Music), and local drumming veteran John Martin. **Boichik** jams on contemporary and familiar Jewish and Israeli rock music. Also enjoy outrageous contemporary accordion music, singer/songwriter Live Noah!, local trio Chap-O's playing traditional jazz from Jewish composers, and legendary Cantor Kal Socolof.

And the food, oh the food, just like Bubbe used to make (and more). Half Moon Cookies, invented in Utica, no matter what anybody says, "Jewtica Greens" and an expanded selection of kosher foods that anyone can enjoy, like falafel, cheesecake, blintzes, kishke, latkes, and pastrami and corned beef sandwiches. Wash it down with water, lemonade, beer, wine, fresh-roasted coffee or authentic egg creams. Nobody leaves hungry.

Street parking near the festival is limited. Visitors may park at Temple Emanu-El, 2710 Genesee Street, and take the free shuttle, running continuously from noon to 6 pm.



*Timeless Tunes,
Unforgettable Nights.
Free Admission!*

 The Spinners	 Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue	 Gunhild Carling
 Steve Smith & Vital Information	 Todd Rundgren	 Donald Harrison
 Matteo Mancuso	 Ada Rovatti Quintet	 Steve Slagle Quartet
 The Furious Bongos	 Al Chez & The Brothers of Funk	 The Steelheads

30 Bands • 15 Clubs • 4 Nights

June 25 - 29 • Syracuse, NY

**Downtown Syracuse Entertainment District
Clinton Square & Syracuse University Campus**

www.syracusejazzfest.com | www.VisitSyracuse.com

CBSCS Disney-Inspired Shabbat

Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevre Shas will host a Disney-Inspired Shabbat at the end of the summer, continuing a growing tradition of creatively-themed services that blend beloved music with the spirit of Shabbat.

The idea of integrating widely recognized music into Shabbat services began a year ago with Speakeasy Jazz Shabbat, which introduced a jazz-infused approach to Friday night prayers. Performed by Rabbi Oren Steinitz and a group of CBS-CS musicians, the service featured a mix of vocals, piano, violin, cello and drums. This spirit of collaboration has become a hallmark of the experience, with community members sharing their musical talents.

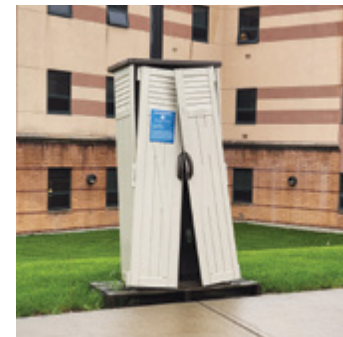
Planning for the Disney-themed service began soon after Speakeasy Shabbat, with the aim of creating an inclusive, intergenerational experience rooted in both joy and tradition. The more recent Billy Joel Shabbat, held on April 4, further highlighted the value of these gatherings in fostering community connection. Congregant Arel Moodie shared, "One thing I loved that Rabbi Steinitz said during the Billy Joel Shabbat is that this brought 100 people out for Shabbat services. There is more than one way to do Shabbat services and experiences like this are really fun and entertaining, mixed with goodness for the soul."

Songs for the Disney service were selected by Director of Youth and Education Kelly Klapper and Rabbi Steinitz to reflect a broad range of Disney's musical legacy, from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) to *Wish* (2023). Each song was chosen through a process that involved discussing the meaning behind traditional Shabbat melodies and identifying a Disney song that shared a similar message, emotional tone or theme. Musical selections also needed to align rhythmically with the flow of the Shabbat liturgy. An example of this approach is "You've Got a Friend in Me" from *Toy Story*, selected to accompany the final prayer of the service, *Adon Olam*. "For our concluding song, we chose the ultimate concluding song from the first-ever collaboration between Disney and Pixar," Klapper explained. "This is a song of meeting, even though it is also a song of ending. At the close of this song, we are able to meet each other for conversation and *oneg*." The thoughtful pairing of meaning and melody ensured that every selection in the service was both familiar and spiritually resonant.

All are welcome to attend. RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/disneyshabbat>.

Food Pantry Needs A Second Helping

A Jewish tradition dating back thousands of years is still meaningful for Jewish life in the 21st century. During the COVID pandemic, with food pantries and schools closed, food insufficiency became acute. The Jewish Federation of Central New York wanted to help people in the community who were struggling with the burdens of paying for rent and utilities in addition to purchasing basic food staples for their families. Thus was the *Matan b'Seter*/ Giving in Secret food pantry born.



In ancient times, in the courtyard of the Temple, there was a room set aside for anonymous giving and taking. Donors would deposit their gifts and others would take what they needed and it was all conducted in secret. Adapting this custom for the pandemic, the Federation created a special *Matan b'Seter* (Giving in Secret) cabinet to enable those in need to obtain basic staples, situated at Menorah Park. The Zames family built the cabinet, Josub David built the shelves. The community stocked the cabinet with canned and packaged vegetables, soups, meat, fruit, tuna, salmon, pasta, beans and peanut butter.

Anyone may donate to the box and anyone may take from it. It did not replace food pantries, Kosher Meals on Wheels or other social services, but it is something everyone in the community could do. Maimonides recognized this kind of giving as the second highest form of *tzedakah*, explaining that "to give to the poor without knowing to whom one gives, and without the recipient knowing from whom he received...is performing a mitzvah solely for the sake of Heaven." The pantry is filled weekly with \$100 worth of food from funds donated by generous community members and contributions from

the Pomeranz, Shankman, Martin Charitable Foundation, Key Bank and 5 Star Bank. Jackie and Neil Kassel volunteered this year to do the grocery pickups and stocking of the pantry. (Grandchildren Elisheva and Esther also help.)

The *Matan b'Seter* cabinet has done its job well for the past six years but sadly, the winter of 5785 was harsh and the sturdy cabinet which had weathered and withstood four Syracuse winters did not survive this one intact. The plastic has cracked and the shelves have fallen down as the walls are no longer straight. The time has come to purchase a replacement. **Anyone wishing to help with this cause is asked to donate by following this link and clicking Food Pantry: <https://jewishfederationcny.org/donate/>.**



The July issue of the Jewish Observer features

SENIOR LIVING

For advertising opportunities, contact:

Rachel Wasserman

rwasserman@buffalospree.com

716-725-1173

Keren Green

kgreen@buffalospree.com

347-400-9939

InterFaith Works Amid Swift and Devastating Actions

by Sonali McIntyre

When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am your God. Leviticus 19:33-34



For nearly 50 years, InterFaith Works of CNY (IFW) has been devoted to affirming the dignity of each person and every faith tradition, build racial and religious equity and create bridges of understanding among us. IFW is an anchor human services agency in our community. Over the decades, the agency has added programs to address the needs of people who are vulnerable, targets of oppression, and in need of a safe and fresh start.

The Refugee Act of 1980, implemented by Congress, standardized the resettlement services of all refugees in the US. The Act incorporates the definition of “refugee” used in United Nations Protocol and established the legal framework and policies for the US Refugee Admission Program (USRAP). Its purpose is to resettle people displaced by war, disasters and persecution. The process takes several years and requires federal authorities to rigorously vet refugees before granting them entry. During the vetting process, the average refugee spends years, sometimes decades, living in refugee camps. Since its inception, the program has allowed the United States to bring over three million refugees.

During the 2024 fiscal year, New York State resettled 6,234 individuals from 49 different countries. The Center for New Americans at IFW resettled 1,015 individuals. In anticipation of major

and potentially devastating changes to refugee resettlement with a new federal administration, resettlement agencies across the country participated in “The Push.” During this post-election/pre-inauguration effort, IFW resettled 430 people from all over the world.

USRAP is now on pause, meaning no refugees are being admitted to the US. Tens of thousands of refugee families are affected by these actions. Locally, the lives of 71 people have been directly impacted. They expected to reunite with family members already resettled in

Syracuse in January, but their dreams of reunification have been shattered.

By the end of February, the US Department of State attempted to terminate agreements with all ten national resettlement agencies for the remainder of 2025. These attempts are being challenged in court. A positive outcome would allow refugee affiliates to continue this humanitarian work. IFW anticipates a decrease of \$4 million in funding for 2025 without the reception and placement of refugees.

In a letter to supporters, Beth A. Broadway, President and CEO of InterFaith Works wrote: “We have taken measures to secure the agency’s ability to continue uninterrupted services agency-wide, including our services to elders, school-based dialogues, food pantries, and refugees. These measures include a decrease in operational expenses, salary cuts for agency leadership, and most unfortunately, laying off 19 talented and multilingual staff in the Center for new Americans.” She noted that 26 staff serving refugees would remain “to support the many families recently settled who will need our services for the next several years.”

The loss of staff has led IFW to turn to the community for support to navigate the challenging times ahead. The agency asked for help through advocacy, volunteerism and giving. As an advocate, IFW asks supporters to educate others about refugee resettlement and the benefits to our community, and to

raise awareness about its services and programs. There are several volunteer opportunities from building backpacks for school-age clients to providing transportation to appointments, assisting with resumés, and conducting mock interviews for New Americans preparing to enter the workforce.

Financial contributions are crucial while navigating extraordinary times like these. IFW appreciates and welcomes any level of support from individuals, business, and community groups. In her letter, Broadway emphasized that “Together, we will persevere. We will find ways to move through challenges, strengthen our impact, and maintain the important and life-changing work that InterFaith Works is known for.”

The IFW Development Department can provide more information about immediate needs, funding priorities and the impact of contributions at 315-449-3552 x220 or info@ifwcn.org.

SHDS Celebrates a New American

Ayala Goren, who was born in Israel and now teaches Hebrew at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, became a U.S. citizen at Naturalization Ceremonies at the Federal Courthouse in April. Her students and colleagues were on hand to congratulate her at the courthouse and back at school.



JCC's Distinctive Pre-K Program

by Shane Tepper

A visitor to a pre-K classroom in the Jerome and Phyllis Charney Early Childhood Development Program at the JCC will immediately notice something different. Children move freely between activity stations, deeply engaged in colorful art projects, building block structures, and exploring sensory tables. There's a palpable energy—a blend of joy, curiosity, and discovery.

This isn't your standard pre-K program.

"We have the classroom set up in a way that encourages children to move around freely and explore," says Amy Bisnett, associate director of Children's Programming. "We love to encourage their independence while still being there to support them as they figure out their world."

What truly sets the JCC's pre-K program apart is its commitment to following children's natural curiosity. Rather than rigid, predetermined curricula, teachers carefully observe each child's interests and design learning experiences around them. "Our teachers take special care in getting to know each individual child," explains Director of Children's Programming Pamela Ranieri, "This enables them to plan for not only the individual but the whole group as well. All of the units of study throughout the year are based on the children's interests."

This approach keeps young learners genuinely engaged in their educational journey. One week, a fascination with shadows might spark a science exploration; the next, an interest in grocery stores could transform the dramatic play area into a market where children practice math, literacy, and social skills simultaneously.

"It's like learning through play, but more in depth," Ranieri explains. "We really get to know the children and expand on their interests in order to engage them. Teachers might have an idea of what they think is going to happen with a provocation unit, but the children take it in a completely different direction and the teachers just kind of go with that."



Throughout the classrooms, carefully curated shelves hold natural materials in woven baskets—colorful blocks, art supplies, and open-ended toys that can be used in countless ways. "Materials are chosen, and switched out, based on the children's interests and how best to scaffold their learning," notes Bisnett. "All of our toys can be used in a multitude of



ways, enabling children to expand on their knowledge in all areas of development."

This thoughtful approach to classroom design reflects the program's philosophy that children learn best through meaningful play and exploration. While the casual observer might see "just play," educators recognize that math, literacy, science, and art are seamlessly integrated throughout the children's experiences. In the block area, children aren't merely stacking wooden pieces—they're developing spatial awareness, practicing engineering concepts, and solving problems. "While children are playing in the block area, they are working on furthering their development in all areas," Ranieri explains. "They are using both fine and gross motor skills while creating, stacking, and working through problems."

At the art table, vibrant splatter paintings and detailed watercolors aren't just creative expressions—they're opportunities for children to make connections to the world around them. "Art plays an important part in any child's development," Ranieri says. "We give them the tools necessary for artistic expression and encourage them to explore different mediums to create freely, because art is all about the process." Even the earliest learners encounter math throughout their day—counting objects, recognizing numbers, establishing one-to-one correspondence, and identifying shapes. "Math can be found in everyday activities!" enthuses Bisnett. "Even the earliest learners will find math emerged throughout their classroom environment."

Literacy flourishes as children engage with books strategically placed throughout the classroom and practice with various writing tools while hearing language modeled by teachers and peers. Science exploration is encouraged as children's

natural curiosity about the world around them drives discovery. "We encourage them to ask questions and challenge what they know in a developmentally appropriate way that gives them the opportunity to expand on their knowledge and understanding," says Ranieri.

The dramatic play area—complete with child-sized furniture, mirrors, and imaginative props—buzzes with activity as children work through problems, reflect on experiences, and gain confidence. "Children learn through exploration, trial and error, and by observing those around them," Bisnett explains. "Dramatic play gives them the opportunity to take what's been modeled for them and recreate it in their own way."

The JCC pre-K program extends learning beyond traditional classroom activities. Children visit the library weekly, participate in gym classes twice weekly, and have opportunities to explore youth athletics including gymnastics, rookie sports, dance, and "ninja warriors." These experiences build on classroom learning while developing the whole child—physical movement is just as important as cognitive development at this age.

Understanding the demands on working parents, the JCC offers extended hours that few other programs can match. Doors open at 7:00 a.m. and remain open until 6:00 p.m. "These convenient hours are perfect for anyone who has an early morning meeting, needs to beat the morning rush, or get a workout in before their workday starts," notes Ranieri.

This comprehensive philosophy permeates every aspect of the JCC's pre-K approach. Here, education isn't something that happens to children. It's something that unfolds naturally as they engage with their environment, guided by attentive teachers who respect their capabilities and nurture their potential.

For families seeking more than just childcare—a place where their children can truly thrive—the Jerome and Phyllis Charney Early Childhood Development Program offers an educational experience as unique as each child who walks through its doors. "It gets them ready to go to school, get their love of learning started at an early age and also gets them socially and emotionally prepared to be in the community," Bisnett says. This holistic preparation for both academic success and life skills is what truly distinguishes the JCC's approach.

For more enrollment information and to schedule a tour, visit jccsy.org/children-and-teens/early-childhood/or-call-315-445-2040.

Make a Splash! JCC Pool Set to Open May 24

Summer's approaching, and the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center of Syracuse is ready with its two heated outdoor pools opening Saturday, May 24 through September 1. The aquatic center is available to JCC members for recreational swimming, with swim lessons open to both members and non-members.

"The countdown has officially begun for many as we await the opening of the JCC's two outdoor heated pools," says Amy Bisnett, associate director of Children's Programming. "Spending time at the pool makes for a fun-filled activity for families, a great way to cool off, and a wonderful way to connect."

This year introduces online swim lesson registration starting May 1 at jccsy.org/pool. Three sessions of group lessons run throughout summer, with private options available. The J-Ray Swim Club offers competitive swimming for children, while adults can enjoy Aqua Fitness classes.

Pool hours extend during peak season, with early morning lap swimming available weekdays during summer. The large pool (3.5-9 feet deep) permits diving, while a smaller pool (2-3.5 feet) accommodates younger swimmers.

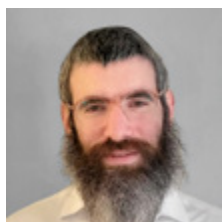
Safety remains paramount, with lifeguards having final authority. For details about programs, email aquatics@jccsy.org, call 315-445-2040, or visit jccsy.org/pool.



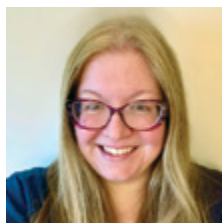
Pierson 4 Under 40 Awards

The Marjorie Oberdorfer Bronner Pierson and Theodore Pierson Family Endowment for the Jewish Future's 4 Under 40 award program recognizes the amazing young adults in our community who are working to make it a better place. The program annually celebrates four noteworthy Jewish Central New Yorkers, all 40 years old or younger, who bring energy and new ideas to religion, philanthropy, the arts, learning, social action and inclusion. These talented young adults are changing our community for good by building a more just society and creating community in innovative ways.

Four Jewish Central New Yorkers, chosen by a panel of community members from nominations made by the community, will each be awarded a donor advised fund of \$1,000 at the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York to be used to support an organization with which they have worked or a cause they support. The *Jewish Observer* is proud to introduce the Central New York Jewish community's movers and shakers, advocates, entrepreneurs, educators, philanthropists and community organizers who were selected as this year's winners. They will be recognized and honored at the Federation's annual meeting on June 18.

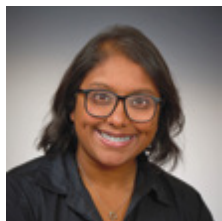


Rabbi Shmuly Haskelevich, the Chabad Rabbi at Colgate University in Hamilton, is a passionate and dedicated leader who has helped transform Jewish life at Colgate University and throughout the broader Hamilton area. As the Chabad rabbi, he, along with his wife and family, has built a warm and welcoming Jewish home, serving students and community members alike. Despite the personal challenges of raising a special-needs daughter, Shmuly remains unwavering in his mission to strengthen Jewish identity, foster deep connections, and provide a space where every Jew—student, faculty, or local resident—feels valued and supported. His impact extends beyond campus, creating meaningful Jewish experiences and ensuring that the region's Jewish population remains engaged and connected.



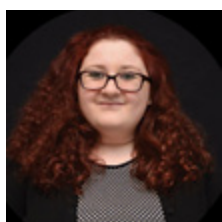
Kelly Klapper is the Director of Youth & Education at Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas. In

addition to serving as the principal of the Sunday Shul School, Kelly is also in charge of intergenerational and family programming. A dedicated and innovative leader in Jewish education, Kelly has revitalized youth programming, creating engaging and meaningful Jewish experiences for children and families, introducing initiatives like Shabbat Squad, Tot Shabbat, and Kids Rule the Shul. Her commitment to inclusivity is evident in her role in the CBS-CS Rainbow Alliance, ensuring that LGBTQIA+ individuals and allies feel welcome and supported. She actively collaborates with other Jewish educational leaders through SAJE (Syracuse Area Jewish Educators), strengthening connections between synagogues and enhancing community-wide learning. Kelly was instrumental in revitalizing teen engagement through the new BBYO chapter, creating dynamic programming that empowers Jewish teens to connect with their heritage, build leadership skills, and form lasting friendships.



Sonali McIntyre is the communications and events manager for InterFaith Works. Sonali's introduction to the Syracuse Jewish Community began at Temple Adath Yeshurun 14 years ago, where she played a key role in programming. Sonali converted to Judaism and has deep pride in her faith. Sonali teaches her interfaith family members about the customs, traditions, and practices of Judaism. When Sonali's father died, she leaned in to the Conservative Jewish community to say Kaddish twice a day, every day for a year. Knowing the disappointment when there wasn't a minyan, Sonali continues to go to services almost every day, twice a day

to be part of the ten, ensuring others don't feel that disappointment. Sonali has built up her Hebrew skills and learned to read Torah. She serves on the Day School Parent committee and has worked on projects with Federation, CBS-CS and Menorah Park and she sits on the New American Advisory Board, a partnership between InterFaith Works and the City of Syracuse.



Hannah Rembrandt is a graduate student at Syracuse University who teaches at the Syracuse Community Hebrew School, the CBS-CS Religious School and at Temple Concord. For the past three years, Hannah has been an invaluable educator, designing engaging and knowledge-rich lessons for 6th and 7th graders. She brings exceptional creativity to her teaching, incorporating her background in Speech and Language alongside her talents in cross-stitch and fiber arts to craft dynamic and immersive learning experiences. Hannah has contributed her skills to CBS-CS, teaching across various grade levels and fostering a love of Jewish learning. She

shared her artistic expertise as an art instructor at Temple Concord, further enriching the educational experiences of her students. In addition to her teaching, Hannah is an active member of the CBS-CS Fiber Arts Affinity Group, where she inspires creativity and connection through her passion for fiber arts.

Federation Roth Award to be Presented to Aaron Spitzer

The Federation is pleased to announce that the Esther and Joseph Roth Award in Recognition of Outstanding Jewish Community Leadership will be presented to Aaron Spitzer at Federation's annual meeting on June 18.



The prestigious Roth Award was established in 1979 by the friends and family of Esther and Joseph Roth and is presented in honor of individuals who have demonstrated outstanding Jewish community leadership.

Interim Federation President/CEO Barbara Davis explained why Spitzer was selected for this honor: "Aaron Spitzer is a big believer in Jewish continuity and the process through which to ensure this: education of both Judaism and love of Israel. As the head of the Epstein School for the last five years, he has worked tirelessly with teens. He inspires them to educate themselves, advocate for themselves, learn about and believe in philanthropy, in community and in Israel. He has played a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and connection within the Jewish community. He has moved the Epstein school into the mainstream local Jewish community by involving and including students in the events of other agencies, thereby nurturing awareness and support of the school. Aaron has organized and led two Teen Taste of Israel Trips to Israel successfully and has returned to Israel four times since October 7th to educate himself further on how to teach teens about the situation and how to deal with antisemitism on the ground. He has been the vice-president of the Temple Concord Board of Directors for three years. There too he has made many positive changes, especially, with youth. He is an active leader and participant in many Jewish community activities, including Yom HaShoah, Yom HaAtzmaut, Reverse Tashlich, KlezFest and the Purim Carnival. He has made significant contributions to the Jewish community through leadership, service, and dedication to improving the lives of others. His love of Judaism, his quiet humility and his wise insights are inspiring to see and to learn from."

Federation Board Chair Todd Pinsky said, "We are thrilled to present this award in honor and recognition of Aaron for his many years of leadership to the Jewish community and look forward to celebrating with him and the Federation membership at the annual meeting."

New Community Leaders



Aaron Spitzer *Executive Director, Temple Concord*

Temple Concord named Aaron Spitzer Executive Director effective April 15, 2025. In making the announcement, Temple President Jeff Lefkowitz said, “Aaron is no stranger to our community. A dedicated Jewish educator, leader, and parent, he served as the head of school at the Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Studies for the past five years, [leading] the program through dynamic growth and curricular innovation.” Aaron holds advanced graduate training in American History from Binghamton University and continues to deepen his professional learning as a Jewish educator and leader. He is currently completing the Pardes Institute’s Senior Educators Leadership Fellowship. In August, he will also participate in the Yad Vashem Seminar for Educators in Jewish Supplemental Schools in Jerusalem and in the fall he will begin the Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Master’s Certificate Program at Brandeis University. Aaron and his family have been members of Temple Concord since 2011. He and his wife Amy, an educator at Jamesville-Dewitt Middle School, are the proud parents of three teens—Judah, Marian and Arthur. In addition to teaching 5th grade in the Temple Concord religious school, Aaron served as first vice president of the Temple Concord Board.



Jay Sinclair *Syracuse Jewish Family Services*

Jay Sinclair is the new head of Syracuse Jewish Family Services. Jay is from the United Kingdom, where he was the CEO at Pathfinder Healthcare Development Community Interest Company a primary care organization focused on preventative healthcare, specifically the management of people with multiple long-term conditions. During his time as CEO, Pathfinder was recognized nationally as a leader in its field. Jay later founded Ark Home Healthcare, providing services to clients within their own home. Jay moved to Syracuse with his family ten years ago and quickly became engaged with the Jewish community. He served as chair of the board of the Hebrew Day School during the COVID pandemic and had to make quick decisions for the betterment of the students, the school and the community. He volunteered for Kosher Meals on Wheels, delivering meals and getting to know clients on a deeper level, when some of them had no one else to speak to in the day. As director of Syracuse Jewish Family Service, the human-services arm of The Continuum of Care Campus at Menorah Park, Jay’s experience will serve him well in taking on the challenges of the position. “Jay brings comprehensive experience in business, project and systems management to this work and he has been an active member in our community for many years,” says Russ D’Amico, CEO of Menorah Park. “We are confident that his leadership will significantly contribute to the continued success and growth of our agency.”

PREDIABETES CAPTURES 1-IN-3 ADULTS. BUT YOU CAN ESCAPE.



You can reverse prediabetes and prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. Take the 1-minute risk test today.

Be your own hero at DoIHavePrediabetes.org



crouse.org/ER

SHORTEST WAIT TIMES.

S Exclusive healthcare partner of Syracuse Athletics

CROUSE Emergency Services

To advertise in the

Jewish Observer
of Central New York



Contact Rachel Wasserman
rwasserman@buffalospree.com
716-725-1173

Or Keren Green
kgreen@buffalospree.com
347-400-9939

Parkinson's Symposium Addresses Critical Health Issues

In late March, a coalition of three organizations, sponsored by a grant from the Philip L. Holstein Community Program Fund of the Jewish Federation of Central New York presented a symposium on "Coping With Parkinson's Disease." The Federation, Menorah Park and The Parkinson's Foundation New York Chapter provided brunch and a program of knowledgeable speakers to an audience of people with Parkinson's and their care partners. Pamela Wells, Director of Grateful Patient, Family Engagement and Annual Giving at the Upstate Foundation, served as emcee. Nancy Nealon, Education & Outreach Director, Parkinson's Foundation, gave an overview of Parkinson's and discussed resources available from the



Parkinson's Foundation for those newly diagnosed and those who have had the disease for a longer period. Drs. Jennifer Corcoran and Sandhya Seshadri of the Department of Neurology, University of Rochester Medical Center (a center of excellence for Parkinson's care) discussed "Neuropalliative Care for PWP and Care Partners." Dr. Renante Ignacio, Medical Director of Menorah Park fielded many questions in his presentation,



"Ask Your Medical Director." Menorah Park Executive Director Russ D'Amico closed the program, telling participants that there will be a second symposium in the early fall, specifically geared toward issues of caregiving for people with Parkinson's. Another positive outcome of the program is that Jewish Family Services will be working with the Parkinson's Foundation to establish a local support group for those dealing with the challenges of this disease.



Federation Annual Meeting to be held June 18

The 107th Annual Meeting of the Jewish Federation of Central New York will be held in person on Thursday, June 18, 2025 at 7:30 pm at Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevra Shas. The entire community is invited to attend to join with the Federation Board of Directors to honor and celebrate the leaders and volunteers who do so much for our community.

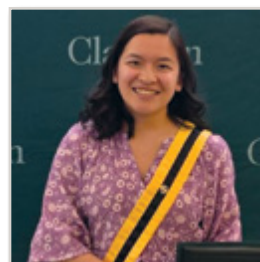
At the meeting, which will be followed by a dessert reception, Federation will present the Roth Award to Aaron Spitzer, recognize the 4 under 40 award winners, hold a vote of the membership on a slate of board members and hear from the new Federation President & CEO, Mark Segel.

HADASHOT TOVOT



The Syracuse Hebrew Day School production of *Finding Nemo* was a smash hit.

Syracuse BBYO has officially become a full chapter, thanks to reaching the milestone of 12 registered members. This is a huge accomplishment for local Jewish teens committed to building a vibrant and welcoming youth community. BBYO is a Jewish teen movement intended to build the identity of Jewish teens and offer leadership development programs. Jewish teens in grades 8 through 12 can become BBYO members and participate in regional and international conventions, develop valuable leadership skills, make lifelong friendships and engage in meaningful Jewish experiences. It is also a great way to stay connected with other Jewish teens, both locally and beyond. Membership is open to all 8th through 12th grade Jewish teens, without regard to synagogue affiliation (or lack thereof).



Meilin Lamanna was tapped into Phalanx, Clarkson University's highest recognized honorary leadership society of students who demonstrate leadership skills, active participation in campus activities, above-average academic achievement, outstanding character and high morals.

Sarah C. Reckess (second from right) was elected president of the Onondaga County Bar Association.



Yom haShoah Contest Winners

“Yom haShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, is a day for remembering victims of the Holocaust and reminding society of what can happen to civilized people when bigotry, hatred, and indifference reign,” said Ilene Mendel, a member of the community Yom HaShoah committee. She continued, “It is important not only to curse the darkness of the past, but to illuminate the future and to acknowledge the humanity in all people so that the world can become a better place for posterity. The history of the Holocaust offers an opportunity to reflect on the moral responsibilities of individuals, societies and governments, and to reaffirm the need for the people of Central New York to remain vigilant against hatred and persecution. The contest theme this year was ‘How does learning from our past help you prepare for the future?’” Mendel introduced the winners of the 2025 art and writing contest. The first-place winner was Rohan Karim, a 10th grader at Jamesville-Dewitt High School for his powerful image “It Can Happen Here.” Second prize was awarded to Judah Eglash, also a 10th grader at Jamesville-DeWitt High School, for his poignant poem “The Girl in the Yellow Dress.”



Rohan Karim, 10th grader at Jamesville-Dewitt High School, was first place winner for his powerful image “It Can Happen Here.”

**SMALL DONATIONS
MAKE A BIG
DIFFERENCE**

help where it's needed most.
SupportDisasterRelief.org

ad
COUNCIL

The Girl in the Yellow Dress

by Judah Eglash

**It all started with her black polka dots
Sprinkled on her yellow dress
And the way she walked around
Waddling a little bit every time she took a step
She was six, maybe seven
They watched her get scooped up
With the other little girls
To be carted off and taken elsewhere**

**Last night I cried
And with my tears sliding down my face
I sensed a weird feeling in my stomach
A little notion was crawling up my arteries
All the way up to my brain and from its pockets
It brought a loudspeaker
And it shouted to me, “go to sleep
Or else you’ll lay here forever”**

**She missed her parents desperately
She didn’t understand what was happening
After all, it all had happened so fast
And she had no clue that that little wave
That little motion the upper half of her hand made
Was the last motion her parents would ever see of her
Because she was taken down
Down to the Kingdom of Mud**

**I had seen the number six million times
So many Jews yet I can never seem to grasp
Each individual
Maybe some higher being could?
Maybe this being could greet each victim
And talk to them about their lives
And aunts and uncles
That is what God is to me**

**So they brought her to the Early Coffin
Where they lined her and her friends up by height
And took away their names
And threw off that colorful dress
As they marched single file into
The epitome of dark
Where they came out as dust
Waiting to be blown away by the wind**

**My brain recently has been filled to the brim
With novels, films, and poetry
So vast that I have to look up to see it all
But how can it ever get more personal
Than a list of names
When each name could be
That little girl
With a yellow dress with black polka dots**



Second prize winner Judah Eglash, a 10th grader at Jamesville-DeWitt High School, won for his poem “The Girl in the Yellow Dress.”

“I Saw It With My Own Eyes”

Epstein Students Reflect on the Teen Taste of Israel Program

by Aaron Spitzer

Thirteen tenth and eleventh graders from the Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Studies went on the fifth Teen Taste of Israel trip in February. This 13-day journey, sponsored by the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York, is designed to immerse Epstein students in the land, people, and culture of Israel. Students explored historic sites, met Israelis from all walks of life and wrestled with complex questions about identity, history, and the impacts of October 7th and the war in Gaza on Israelis as well as Diaspora Jews.

For many, this was their first trip to Israel and the history they’d been learning came alive. “Walking through the ruins of Masada, I felt the history of our people. The stories



that are so meaningful to our history define the resilience of the Jewish people,” wrote eleventh grader Noah Mowers. “The city towers and the dunes of the desert stand in unflinching Jewish pride,” wrote eleventh-grade student, Emma Waldman, capturing the symbolic and emotional power of the landscape. For her, floating in the Dead Sea was both surreal and revealing: “At first it was relaxing... then it was painful, stinging many parts of my body. Would not recommend.” Junior Remy Sinclair, also reflected on a moment by the Dead Sea: “The salty pebbles of the Dead Sea graze your feet, as you fathom the fact that you are at the lowest place on Earth. Your ancestors call out to you from above, guiding you on your way.”

Students also felt the emotional weight of Jerusalem. “Driving into Jerusalem and seeing the City of Gold, one thing came to mind: ‘I am home now,’ in the land of our ancestors for generations and generations,” Noah reflected. In the crowded and colorful marketplace of Machane Yehuda, tenth grader Judah Eglash felt a different kind of connection: “Shawarma in hand, walking through the bustling shuk, I heard the constant sounds of bartering and blaring music mixed with the smell of fresh fruits, and had a feeling of Jewish pride. Prior to arriving in Israel again, it was easy to feel alone as a Jew, but standing before

the Kotel and at Masada, I understood Israel’s long story of the connection of the Jewish people.”

For students, the trip inspired a new confidence in their Jewish identity. “I’m definitely going to be more proud and open about my Jewish identity,” wrote Remy, “I saw what Israel is going through with my own eyes,” he continued. Noah shared that the experience wasn’t just about seeing places, it was about feeling something deeper: “Before coming to Israel, I already felt a connection to being Jewish. But by walking the streets and hearing the sounds, I feel more tied to my Jewish identity and more inspired than ever.”

The journey also planted seeds of responsibility. “This trip helped me understand the importance of the Jewish tie to Israel,” Judah wrote, “I know I can use this trip as inspiration to educate my Jewish and non-Jewish peers.” The trip also prompted introspection and growth for students. In Remy’s words, “Looking off in the distance at a ruined, destroyed Gaza from the hills of Sderot really opened my eyes to the reality and tragedy of this war...In America, you see the images, the social media of the war...but it isn’t until you see it with your own eyes that you grasp how serious it is.” The trip also raised profound questions about Israel in this historical moment. “Before the trip, I only thought of Israel when it was in the news,” wrote Emma, “Seeing places that I’ve seen on the news, meeting people living there, deepened my understanding of what Israel is.”

Judah Eglash wrote, “Israel isn’t just a place of refuge. It’s a home for us, and our children’s children...The need for a Jewish homeland is more prevalent than ever.” For these Epstein students, that need, and that connection, now feels deeply personal.

Iron Dome Coffee: Brewing Pride, Power, and Purpose



Justin Yehuda, a 23-year-old entrepreneur from Tenafly, New Jersey, studied business and law at Cornell University and then took “the traditional corporate path that’s almost expected of people from Tenafly.” But the October 7th massacre, just months after his graduation, led him in a nontraditional direction. “My father is Israeli,” he explains, “and I have many family members in the IDF. Living in New York City, I felt a sense of guilt knowing that they are suiting up and fighting for the existence of their

country. It consumed me almost every second of the day; it became almost an unhealthy obsession with what’s going on in Israel.” He adds, “The open support for Hamas on the campus of my alma mater felt like a deep betrayal, and seeing the intense pro-Palestinian ‘protests’ through my window in New York City revealed to me that our way of life is in danger. As a result, I felt a burning urge in my heart to stand up for my community in its dire moment of need.”

So he left his consulting job and “took time to do something positive for Israel.” He decided to follow the “coffee with a cause” trend, creating community around high-quality coffee. He partnered with an Israeli supply company that gets its coffee beans from Brazil, and taste-tested 250 varieties of coffee to find some really good ones. “I was ridiculously caffeinated,” he recalls, but says that “what mattered most was the strength of the taste and the aroma. I want the aroma to fill the room. Some of the most meaningful and memorable parts of life are little things like the smell of coffee. What better than to connect that with saving soldiers?”

Yehuda named his company Iron Dome Coffee, after the Israeli missile protection system, because “the name is recognizable by everyone who loves Israel and shows strength.” He also gave each variety a name evocative of Israel: Jerusalem Sunrise Medium Roast, Sabra Spirit Dark Roast, Haifa Hazelnut, Chutzpah Caramel and Tel Aviv French Vanilla. “I want people to feel strong in their support of Israel and to feel secure and proud when they make Iron Dome coffee in the morning,” Yehuda says.

Iron Dome Coffee is an e-commerce company; its coffee products or Iron Dome merch—drinkware, swag, and wearables—are available online singly or by subscription. The coffee is Star-K kosher-certified. Customer feedback has been positive. “I’m proud that people say it smells amazing,” he says. “They also love the taste. Iron Dome Coffee is more than just any old cup of joe. Each cup represents our community’s unwavering support for Israel, our shared values, and our commitment to standing strong, no matter what. My goal is simple: to unite our community around the two things we love most — support for Israel and delicious coffee.”

The nonprofit organizations benefiting from Iron Dome Coffee sales are *Belev Echad*, which supports wounded IDF soldiers, Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces, Heroes to Heroes, a yearlong program for U.S. combat veterans of all faiths that focuses on goal setting, values exploration, spiritual reconnection and community reintegration and Magen David Adom, Israel’s nationwide emergency response network. More information about Iron Dome products can be found at irondomecoffee.com.



Small acts of kindness can have a big impact in making people feel welcome. When we reach out and connect with others, we can build a stronger community where everyone – regardless of their background – feels like they belong.

LEARN HOW AT
BELONGINGBEGINSWITHUS.ORG



ARTWORK BY STEVE SHAO @AMPLIFIER.ORG

EMERGENCY ALERTS
Emergency Alert
Severe Thunderstorm Warning

Mom



What supplies are we missing? 🙄🙄

Aunty

I'm not sure...

Ready has a list of resources

www.ready.gov/plan



Message



BEING PREPARED CAN BE AS EASY AS SENDING A TEXT.
VISIT READY.GOV/PLAN

MAKE

A family communications plan

SIGN UP

For local weather & emergency alerts

PREPARE

An emergency kit

EZKERA / REMEMBERING

ILENE DUNNER
MARCH 27, 2025

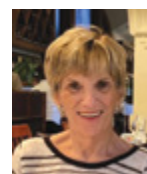
Ilene Dunner, 72, passed away at Iroquois Nursing Home on March 27, 2025. Born on July 28, 1952 to Harold and Naomi Dunner in Brooklyn, she had been a resident of Syracuse since 1993 when she and her parents moved here to be closer to family.

Ilene attended the ARC day program and resided at Liberty Resources Group Home. Her favorite things were spending time with her niece, pizza, root beer and chocolate. She enjoyed many types of music but especially Frank Sinatra. While at the group home she had the opportunity to travel with other residents to New York City, Atlantic City, Boston and Niagara Falls.

She was predeceased by her parents and a nephew. Surviving are her brother Gary (Judy Cohn), and her niece Cassandra.

Contributions in Ilene's memory may be made to Temple Concord. www.sisskindfuneralservice.com

PHYLLIS BUTIN
APRIL 15, 2025



Phyllis (Steinhart) Butin, 94, of Boynton Beach, formerly of Syracuse and Buffalo, passed away on April 15, 2025. Phyllis was predeceased by her devoted husband Max, of 65 years, and is survived by their children Carol (Allen) Klein of Sarasota, Rich (Hinda Klein) of Boca Raton, Marty (Barbara Freedenberg) of Gaithersburg, MD, Jill (Rod) Neuman of Tampa, eight grandchildren: Rachael, Andrew, Lauren, Alana, Jake, Sydnie, Jori and Mindi, and seven great-grandchildren.

Phyllis was the daughter of Jacob and Ray Steinhart and the sister of Seymour and Sidney. Her family owned Steinhart's Delicatessen, a beloved, iconic landmark in Buffalo where her mother was the cook and her father ran the restaurant that operated from 1922 to 1969. Phyllis attended Bennett High School and the University at Buffalo. She moved to Syracuse when she married Max and they raised their family in Fayetteville. She was an active member of Temple Adath Yeshurun. Phyllis will be remembered as a fun-loving person and an amazing cook who loved to entertain. Her love of family and friends was immeasurable and her stories will linger in our hearts forever.

To honor her memory, contributions may be made to Temple Adath Yeshurun in Syracuse or to a charity of your choice.

RICHARD FLEISCHMAN
APRIL 2, 2025

Richard Fleischman, 97, passed away at his home on April 2, 2025 with his loving family by his side. Born on May 5, 1927 to Pierce and Mae Kaplan Fleischman, he had been a life resident of Syracuse until retiring to Florida in 1996. Richard was a graduate of the Manlius Military Academy, and attended Syracuse University.

Richard was the president of Fleischman Furniture of Syracuse. The business had been established by his grandfather Issac in 1898. An accomplished pilot he was the past president of the Syracuse Flying Club, an avid skier and past member of Lafayette Country Club. He was a collector of cars; he called his garage his office. He built radio controlled aircraft and at 90 he traded his golf clubs for flying radio-controlled drones. He was a lifelong member of Temple Adath Yeshurun. He proudly served his country in the US Navy. He will forever be remembered for his humor, his love of chocolate, his weekly golf games or skiing with his best friends and the aroma of his signature pipe.

His family includes his wife Carole of 64 years, their children Frank (Karyn Korteling), Jill (Paul) Pasqualoni, Cyndi (Ken) Fiacco, Nanci (Neal) Solomon and grandchildren Ryland (Jakob), Rachel (Tyler), Shana, Nathan, Dylan, Dante, Louis, Nicky, Tito, Tatum, Cami and Preston, his brother Ivan (Melissa) and their son Mitchell, his sister in law Andi (Raymond) Stein and their children Louis and Wendy.

Contributions to perpetuate Richard's memory may be made to Trust Bridge Hospice Care of Palm Beach, FL, or Temple Adath Yeshurun. www.sissfuneralservice.com



MICHAEL W. HARRIS
APRIL 16, 2025



Michael W. Harris, 82, of Syracuse, New York, passed away on April 16, 2025. Born on March 3, 1943 in Brooklyn, New York, he lived in Valley Stream, Long Island. He was a devoted husband to Rebecca Harris, supportive father to Lisa Clark and Melissa Harris and loving grandfather to Michael Edwards.

Michael was an exceptional lawyer, using his vast years of experience to help many people. He dedicated his life to his law firm, Harris & Panels, working alongside his friend and business partner, Peter Panels. He graduated from Syracuse University and the University of Michigan Law School, as well as being a member of the Onondaga County Bar Association, New York State Trial Lawyers Association and the Association of Trial Lawyers of America.

Although law was his main passion, he always made time for his family and friends. He often spent his weekends watching a game on tv or enjoying good food with those closest to him. He left a lasting impression on so many people. His charm and intelligence made him one of a kind. He loved with all his heart and he shared his wisdom to help those in need. He lived a life full of love and will forever be missed by all who loved him.

He is survived by his wife, two daughters and a grandchild. Donations to perpetuate his memory may be sent to any organization closest to your heart. His memory lives on through the lessons he taught us and the love that he shared. He will forever be missed and always cherished in our hearts.

www.sisskindfuneralservice.com

ROBIN BRAUNSTEIN
APRIL 22, 2025

Robin Braunstein passed away at Francis House on April 22, 2025. She is survived by her husband Norman Weiner, their children Sam and Mollie Weiner, her brother Donnie (Elise) Braunstein, nephews Cory and Jamie Braunstein, brother-in-law Alan Weiner, cousins Dana and Rachael, her granddog Eugene, and “The Ladies”—Judy, Audrey, Donna, and Christine—who made this difficult time more bearable.

Robin graduated from SUNY Oswego and SU Law School. After practicing law for several years, with a focus on food insecurity, she established and, until her retirement, directed Oswego County’s Services to Aid Families, which provides support and shelter for victims of domestic violence. In addition, she actively served on the boards of a number of community groups in both Oswego and Onondaga counties, including CNY Pride and Partners in Learning.

After her retirement, she continued working with community groups. In addition, she especially enjoyed making hundreds of greeting cards for every occasion, being part of SU’s Hendricks Chapel Quilters, her book club, and her Zentangle group. She will be remembered for her commitment to fairness and service.

Family and friends would especially like to thank the staff and volunteers at Francis House for their kindness and support. Donations to perpetuate her memory may be made to Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevra Shas, Francis House, or Partners in Learning.

www.sisskindfuneralservice.com



Steven L. Sisskind

Sisskind

Funeral Service LLC

*Entrusting a most sensitive time
 into compassionate hands*



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



Smokey Bear is within us all.

For wildfire prevention tips, visit SmokeyBear.com

Advertise in the

Jewish Observer
 of Central New York

Contact Rachel Wasserman
rwasserman@buffalospree.com
 716-725-1173

Or Keren Green
kgreen@buffalospree.com
 347-400-9939

Joel M. Friedman

We continue the tradition of providing excellent service with integrity and compassion, while exceeding your expectations.

PRE-PLANNING & MONUMENT CONSULTATIONS ARRANGED AT YOUR CONVENIENCE

birnbaum

funeral service, inc.

Martin J. Birnbaum (1934-2025) Elaine R. Birnbaum (Ret.) & Joel M. Friedman
 1909 East Fayette Street | Syracuse, New York 13210 | birnbaumfs@cnyemail.com

birnbaumfuneralserviceinc.com | 315-472-5291



**From matzo ball soup to Bubbe's brisket to Shabbat challah,
Jewish food tells a story –
a story of resilience, of migration, of joy and gathering.
It's more than a meal – it's a legacy.
A Jewish legacy is what our forebears have left for us
and what we leave for future generations.**

You can ensure that your legacy lives on by creating a PACE fund or endowment
at the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York.

Honor the traditions you hold dear. Whether it's in memory of a loved one or in celebration
of your heritage, your fund at the Foundation can be the secret ingredient that keeps
our shared table alive for generations to come.

Let the world keep tasting our story.