

» CELEBRATIONS!

Jewish Observer

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

of Central New York

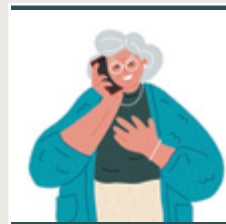
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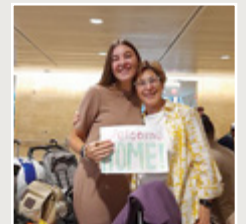
THE RETIREMENT ISSUE



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From the Editor



Barbara Davis

2025 is the peak year of Baby Boomer retirements, a phenomenon dubbed “Peak 65,” referring to the years 2024 to 2027 when more Americans turn 65 than ever before. In 2025 alone, over 4.2 million people, 11,200 every day, reach retirement age. So the theme the *JO* is addressing in this issue is retirement.

There are over ten thousand books about retirement on Amazon. They range from *101 Fun Things To Do In Retirement* to *125 Things* through *150 Things* all the way up to *1500 Fun Things*. There are guidebooks, activity books and coloring books. For some reason, a majority of the words written about retirement seem to begin with the letter P: planning, preparation, perseverance, patience, protection, play, purpose, pools, preservation and pasture. Books offer sage advice about husbanding resources and outsourcing husbands. They talk about investing, golfing, travelling, volunteering, fulfilling dreams and moving to retirement communities with lots of activities.

Yet the people who are getting pensions today are different from those in prior generations. First of all, more of them are women, since women began to enter the workforce in large numbers in the 1960s. Two-career families are also the norm rather than the exception today, so the challenges of retirement are different from the past, when mostly men retired. Also, people are living longer now and society has yet to wake up to that fact and make provisions and accommodations for an ever-growing cohort of seniors, many of whom will experience chronic health issues.

Another reason retirement is different in the 21st century is that Americans are practically glued to their employment. While many people spent years in unfulfilling jobs they cannot wait to leave, there are many others who have spent their adult years living the American Dream, to wit: working 137 more hours per year than Japanese workers, 260 more hours per year than British workers, and 499 more hours per year than French workers. And while the United States is the only developed country in the world without a single legally required paid vacation day or holiday (Europeans get at least four work weeks of paid vacation), most Americans don’t even take the vacation days to which they are entitled. Surveys show that slightly over half of all American workers leave at least a week, if not more, of vacation time unused each year. Because Americans tend to define themselves by their work, leaving their jobs means losing a part of themselves.

Thus the retirement picture today is a far cry from what it once was and the responses have to be different. The past can inform the present but it cannot define the future. There needs to be recognition of the psychological and emotional nature of retirement today, as well as the financial aspects. Retirement in the 21st century is serious business and deserves more than sentimentality and romanticizing. This month’s *Jewish Observer* takes both a serious and a lighthearted approach to retirement. The July issue seemed like a good one to deal with this topic, as it is the month when most people take vacation and can experience first hand what it is to wake up in the morning and not have a job awaiting them that day.

I myself have retired four times but am still working. After the third retirement, I wrote a book that was not aimed at those who had bought a retirement home on a golf course, traded their house for a boat and sailed off, or who already had a second career lined up, an all-consuming hobby to dive into, or who work out every day, belong to three book clubs, play tennis and bridge, volunteer at their local hospital, and babysit their grandchildren. Rather, it was intended for those who had had rich and fulfilling careers in interesting fields, with daily challenges and who now faced days with more hours than they previously thought possible, years that seemed to stretch out without purpose, and a partner who had suddenly become a stranger. I called the book *I Hate Retirement*. To my great disappointment, the book never found a publisher, even (or maybe because) it had a lot of funny cartoons. This issue of the *JO* gives me a second chance to address the theme of retirement, with a lot of help from knowledgeable community members.

The word for retirement in Spanish is, fortuitously, *jubilación*. So the July *JO* also focuses on the jubilation that attended the many community celebrations that also took place this year of thriving Jewish institutions whose longevity we hope will only increase. We include a report by new Foundation Executive Director Mark Segel on our Jewish Community Foundation, an institution created by visionary leaders and dedicated to assuring that our community will never retire but will also be vibrant and working on behalf of future generations. We take joy in reporting on the Day School’s 65th anniversary and the Syracuse Community Hebrew School’s 10th anniversary. We take pride in reporting on the Epstein School *siyum* at which the teens who are our future demonstrated how Jewish identity, commitment and values will continue to define our community.

Like graduation, retirement is but the end of one chapter and the beginning of another, a time for reflection, wisdom, and legacy-building. As we read in *Pirkei Avot* 5.21: “At 60, one attains old age; at 70, fullness of years.” So whether one is considering retirement in Central New York, Florida or Israel (all covered in this issue), we hope to provide our readers with useful information and insights into this new stage of life, the fullness of years.

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MESSAGE FROM MARK SEGEL *Federation President & CEO*

***“This is gonna be the best day of my life
(Woo, oh-oh, oh-oh, oh) My li-i-i-i-i-ife
(Woo, oh-oh, oh-oh, oh) This is gonna be the best day of my life
(Woo, oh-oh, oh-oh, oh) My li-i-i-i-i-ife.”***

Lyrics from “Best Day of My Life” by the American pop rock band American Authors

Those lyrics went through my head every morning of my first month as head of the Jewish Federation and Foundation of Central New York. And it was true each and every day. I loved the weather (mostly rainy) and I loved the temperatures (even on the day I had to turn on my heated car seat—a new experience) and I loved all the people I met, all the meetings I attended, and all the simchas I celebrated with our community.



I loved dancing with the children of the Day School at their celebration of Israel’s 77th birthday, rejoicing with Cantor Eglash at her 10th anniversary celebration, celebrating *Cinco de mayo* with the residents of Menorah Park and attending the dedication of our community Butterfly Garden. It was so meaningful to commemorate *Yom HaShoah* with our teens and community members and to again marvel at the incredible commitment of those teens as displayed at their graduation *siyum*. Being one of the more than 400 attendees at our community celebration of *Yom HaAztmaut* was a powerful experience. I learned about the history of our Jewish community on a visit to the Onondaga Historical Association and had productive and meaningful meetings with our Federation/Foundation staff.



Coming up north and meeting y’all has been amazing. I am thrilled by the commitment and enthusiasm of the professional and lay leaders that I have met at meetings of the Federation and Foundation boards, their committees and at the President/Executives/Rabbis meeting. I have had the pleasure of meeting with local leaders such as Congressman John Mannion, Syracuse University Chancellor Syverud, InterFaith Works Executive Director Beth Broadway and Syracuse Orchestra Director Pamela Murchison, as well as the leadership of EndAntisemitismNow, 3GNY, our local schools district superintendents and the heads of local and regional law enforcement agencies. And this was only in the first 30 days. There are many more such meetings scheduled in the months ahead.



I don’t have a crystal ball, but I know there will be much to celebrate in our future... and many more opportunities to say, “This is gonna be the best day of my life!”

20 Years of Achievement: The Jewish Community Foundation of CNY

by Mark Segel, Executive Director, JFCFNY



Individuals can make a difference and together we can change the world. Our Foundation was established two decades ago to secure the future of the Jewish community and support its evolving needs. Its visionary founders raised two million dollars and established the framework that allowed the Foundation to grow its assets to thirty million dollars.

At its core, the Foundation is about legacy—preserving it, honoring it and helping individuals and families create one. Through planned giving and endowments, the Foundation empowers donors to support the causes they care about most, from Jewish education and synagogues to social services, cultural programming and medical science.

The Foundation acts as a financial backbone for many Jewish institutions in Central New York. It partners with synagogues, schools, cemeteries, the JCC and others, providing them with stability and the resources needed to thrive in a changing world. The Foundation doesn’t just offer investment security. It promotes the enduring values of *tzedakah* (charitable giving), *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), and *l’dor v’dor* (from generation to generation). It offers future generations responsible stewardship and seeks to provide families with the means to integrate philanthropic giving into their lives.

The Foundation is a trusted steward of the community’s funds. Transparency, professionalism, and deep community knowledge allow donors to be confident that their gifts are invested wisely and aligned with their values. The Foundation’s online portal provides a personalized and convenient online experience for donors to manage their giving and access donation history, tax receipts, and other relevant information. The Foundation also works collaboratively with financial advisors and attorneys, making legacy planning seamless and effective.

The Foundation provides a vehicle for donors to make a lasting impact on their communities. It offers flexible giving options, allowing donors to create specific funds or direct their gifts to particular areas of interest. Donors can establish donor-advised funds (DAFs) to manage their gifts and recommend grants to nonprofits. The Foundation can also help donors align their giving with their passions and the community’s needs through endowments.

As Central New York’s Jewish population evolves, the Jewish Community Foundation remains a stabilizing and visionary force. In an era of uncertainty, it offers a clear path for individuals to make a lasting difference. Its work ensures that Jewish life in the region doesn’t just survive—it flourishes. In supporting the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York, donors aren’t just giving money—they’re investing in a future grounded in community, compassion, and continuity.

Giving is personal but the Foundation is eager to work with members of the community to explore their values and to develop and execute smart giving strategies that align with their philanthropic passions. ***To learn more about creating a legacy and achieving your philanthropic goals, please contact Mark Segel at msegel@jewishfoundationcny.org.***

July 4th and the Torah

by Rabbi Daniel Jezer,
Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation
Beth Shalom-Chevra Shas



Fireworks, flags, parades, BBQs, parties—all are part of July 4th celebrations. Many incorporate into the festivities the Pledge of Allegiance or singing the national anthem. A few attend patriotic speeches extolling the virtues of democracy. Often there is reference to the history of democracy, tracing it back to ancient Athens, when 30% of the population had the opportunity to participate in direct democracy.

What most people do not realize is that democracy, as a political system, may have started in Athens, but the ideas and values that made democracy possible have their roots in the Bible.

The very first chapter of the Torah emphasizes the value of each and every person. God created a man and woman and saw that the creation was very good and blessed them. The rabbis ask, why was only one man and one woman created? God wanted the world to be filled with humans, so why did he not create myriads of people? This is to teach, the rabbis said, that no person can claim, “My parents were better than your parents.” We all are descendants of the same father and mother. The foundation of democracy is that all people are of equal value, each is blessed by God.

The Biblical books show a development of democratic values in the practice of religion. Until the destruction of the first Temple in Jerusalem (586 BCE) only the *Kohanim* (priests, descendants of Moses’ brother Aaron) were permitted to officiate at religious ceremonies. During the time of exile in Jerusalem, there was a religious reform. The role of the *Kohanim* was reduced, and the religious leadership was opened to the general public. This was the beginning of what has become our modern synagogue and academies of learning. This suffrage is a basis for a democracy.

The Torah is concerned that there be at least a modicum of economic equality. In our own country there are great fears that the growing disparity of wealth will have a deleterious effect on democracy. Today one percent of our population has almost 33% of the wealth of this country, and the top ten percent has 60-70% of the wealth.

The Torah prevents this disparity from occurring. When the Israelites came into Israel, after 40 years wandering in the desert, each family was given a plot of land. This distribution was through a lottery process. Only when a family became destitute, due to drought, fire, illness or some other calamity, would they sell their land. The Torah legislates that in the jubilee year, the 50th year of the cycle, land should revert to its original family. This prevents one family from purchasing large tracts of land and the former owners becoming low-paid farmhands with little chance that they or their descendants could break out of poverty. This would lead to a lopsided distribution of the wealth of the country. The Torah is not pollyannish and does recognize that there will always be rich and poor people, but is concerned to minimize the difference as much as possible.

Although the Torah and the other books of the Bible do not advocate for a democracy, the values that are espoused form the bedrock upon which a democratic form of government is based.

Is Retirement a Kind of Extended Sabbath?

A Reflection on *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* by Abraham Joshua Heschel

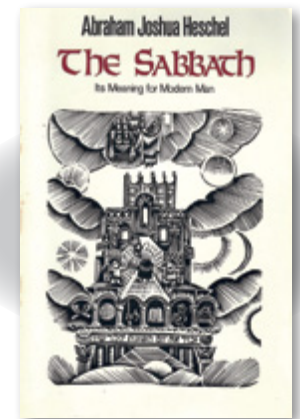
by Rebekah Tanner

Last summer events in my life conspired such that the ways in which my retirement years were planned, or maybe better said, imagined, were suddenly and completely changed. All the assumptions I had made about my future were abruptly invalidated. I did not know how to “be.” At first, I was determined to wake up daily and do whatever was written in my calendar. At the Jewish Community Center I went to senior lunches and exercise classes. Elsewhere, I showed up to volunteer. As the weeks passed, less was scheduled. I did not know what to do with the vastness of time at my disposal. I began journaling. I communicated with loyal friends. At lunch I sat with a group who laughed a lot. Folks were kind to me. I got through those first difficult months. I decided to attend the online Conservative Minyon where I found that expressing my gratitude for each new day in the company of others gave me a reason to wake up.

You see, I have always had a reason to wake up: there has always been something to “do.” I have been a driven kind of person, and throughout my life a lot of my energy and resources have been directed at meeting the needs of others. Suddenly, the only person I had to take care of was me. This change completely reversed the meaning of “retirement” for me because, as I understood it, my retirement was a cessation of employment, but not a cessation of work. I had taken early retirement some years previous to be a full-time caregiver at home. No longer in that role, I found that in many ways, I was a stranger to myself.

As winter approached, I gave myself permission to take good care of myself and “rest and nest.” Employing the “AgeWise” model through Jewish Family Services provided some structure, and I accomplished a number of significant milestones. I took a break from my involvement in volunteerism and for the most part, I lived in silence. No radio, no television. I read very little. I hardly made any art. I allowed my mind to learn to accept life in a liminal space, trusting that with the coming of springtime and longer hours of light and warmth, I would have figured a few things out.

And I have! I came to understand retirement as a kind of extended Sabbath: a distinct unit of time following a long series of periods of creative labors, in which rest was now the goal. I reread Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s classic work, originally published 1951, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*. If you have read anything written by Rabbi Heschel (1907-1972) you know he skillfully used metaphors. There is one from the prologue, “Architecture of Time” I want to focus upon: “Time to us is sarcasm, a slick treacherous monster with a jaw like a furnace incinerating every moment of our lives.” He continues:



“Shrinking, therefore, from facing time, we escape for shelter to things of space. The intentions we are unable to carry out we deposit in space; possessions become symbols of our repressions, jubilees of frustrations. But things of space are not fireproof; they only add fuel to the flames” Then he asks: “Is the joy of possession an antidote to the terror of time which grows to be a dread of inevitable death?”

In asking this question the Rabbi directed my gaze at what, it seems to me, is considered by many to be the most distasteful aspect of retirement: that it is a prelude to death. But Heschel does not leave me there, staring into the jaws of the monster. He creates a call to action by saying: “It is impossible for man to shirk the problem of time. The more we think the more we realize: we cannot conquer time through space. We can only master time in time.” Heschel points out that “While deities of other peoples were associated with places or things, the God of Israel was the God of events: the Redeemer from slavery, the Revealer of the Torah, manifesting Himself in events of history rather than in things or places. Thus, the faith in the unembodied, in the unimaginable was born.” He says of time that, “Every hour is unique and the only one given at the moment, exclusive and endlessly precious.”

In his discussion of the creation narrative Heschel notes that no object, no thing, and no place is called “holy.” It is not until all the work has ceased do we encounter the word “*kadosh*” when

we are told: “And God blessed the seventh day and made it *holy*.” It is only much later, after the People of Israel had caved to temptation and worshipped a thing, the golden calf, that the idea of holy space—the Tabernacle—is commanded.

By allowing myself to redefine my future not by what things I own or can accomplish, but by what holiness I can experience, I began to understand my retirement as Heschel articulates the meaning of Sabbath: “The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.”

With my newly evolving understanding of retirement as a restful cessation from doing what others expect, in which each precious hour is the only one that is given, I need not be preoccupied by the inevitable end of life. Rather, in the time that remains to me I desire to engage with what I consider the most *kadosh* way of using that time: *Tikkun Olam*, the healing of the world. I have long felt that my influence is only about as wide as the circle marked by my outstretched arms, but within that circle I have a responsibility to creatively and positively participate with the world around me. My thoughts on how I will make this new kind of retirement manifest have been transformed by my recent wintery solitude. They will surely continue to evolve as I focus on my own wellness, worship, socialize and communicate, resume volunteerism, make new art, and explore other ways to “be” in the peacefulness of sacred time.

Shabbat Shalom!

Rebekah Tanner is a retired information professional, having worked as librarian, curator, and academic tutor. She is a member of the Jewish Community Center, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and Temple Adath Yeshurun.

The Retirement Plan and Other Books with Retired Protagonists

***The Retirement Plan* by Sue Hincenbergs may not be everyone’s idea of an appropriate retirement book, as it involves a scheme by three wives to murder their husbands to collect their life insurance. Fast-paced with comic elements and a happy ending, it is a good example of a new genre of books featuring protagonists who challenge ageist stereotypes. Publishers have realized that Baby Boomers are now retirees and, while they may have stopped working, they haven’t stopped living, and are customers for books with characters who have lived long enough to stop giving a damn. In these works, retirement is viewed not as an ending, but as a time for reinvention, self-discovery, tackling long-delayed dreams and risk-taking. Listed below are some other books in this congenial category:**

The Thursday Murder Club

by Richard Osman

The retired residents of Cooper’s Chase star in a series of four novels in which they solve crimes and cold cases in their spare time. They are witty, nosy, and at least one of them is ex-MI6.

A Man Called Ove

by Fredrik Backman

Ove, a recently retired, curmudgeonly widower who lives in a solitary world with rigid routines and a short fuse, is drawn back into life when a boisterous young family moves in next door.

Olive Kitteridge

by Elizabeth Strout

Though Olive isn’t retired at the start of this book, her transition into later life forms the backdrop for this prize-winning portrait of a complex woman navigating aging, family and loss. In subsequent works, Strout builds a literary universe of related novels that explore themes of aging, isolation, grief, family tensions and redemption.

Major Pettigrew’s Last Stand

by Helen Simonson

When a reserved, retired English major begins an unlikely romance with a Pakistani shopkeeper, tradition and change, duty and desire clash. The novel explores how love and transformation aren’t bound by age.

An Elderly Lady Is Up to No Good

by Helene Tursten

Maud, an 88-year-old Swedish woman, prefers her life quiet—so quiet, in fact, that she’ll murder anyone who disrupts it. These darkly comic stories give a whole new meaning to the term “senior moment.”

The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared

by Jonas Jonasson

A quirky comic romp follows centenarian Allan, who flees his nursing home and

accidentally gets involved in a criminal conspiracy. Along the way, we get his bizarre life story, which includes inventing the atomic bomb and having drinks with Stalin.

Mrs. Plansky’s Revenge

by Spencer Quinn

A recently widowed 70-something woman gets scammed out of her savings and decides to track down the culprits herself. This cozy mystery becomes a comic revenge caper of international hijinks, and a hero who never backs down—unless her hip gives out.

Remarkably Bright Creatures

by Shelby Van Pelt

This unique novel explores themes of grief, loss, loneliness, love and redemption through the unlikely friendship that forms between Tova Sullivan, a widow working at an aquarium, and Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus.

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

by Rachel Joyce

Harold, a recent retiree, sets off on a spontaneous walk across England, confronting his past and discovering new purpose.



The Single Ladies of Jacaranda Retirement Village

by Joanna Neil

Subtitled “An Absolutely Laugh Out Loud, Heartwarming Read of Love, Friendship and Second Chances at Any Age,” this novel describes the reinvention of 79-year-old pensioner Peggy Smart, who fears she has become invisible, even to men in their eighties.

The Switch

by Beth O’Leary

A young woman and her 79-year-old grandmother switch lives and the grandmother takes a flat in London while the granddaughter moves to a Yorkshire village. Retirement is portrayed as a time for excitement and even romance.

Our Souls at Night

by Kent Haruf

An eloquent portrayal of a widow and widower, both retired, who begin a quiet, late-in-life companionship that stirs small-town gossip but brings comfort and love.

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RETIRING Without Regrets

by Michael Gordon, Ph.D.

My father retired at 58, in part because he could just manage it financially, but mainly because my mother had been diagnosed with multiple myeloma a few years prior. Her mother was also becoming increasingly infirm. He figured it made sense to retire and enjoy the time he could with wife and family. They joined my grandparents in Florida, made the most of their time together, and lived out their days in the sun.

Following my father's example, I retired from my full-time faculty position at the medical center at the age of 59. The timing was right: our kids were grown and self-sufficient, the university offered a once-in-a-lifetime buyout aimed at thinning the ranks of senior faculty, and our lifestyle was modest enough that retirement was affordable.

I also wanted to help our younger son build a business based on a software program I had designed. I had an entrepreneurial bent that wanted some more exercise. It proved to be a valuable investment of time and energy.

It's a fact that I was plain fortunate to be born at the right time to take advantage of that retirement program, had children who didn't need much more funding, and a wife who worked and managed our finances successfully. Yes, I know full well that others, for many reasons, have not had an early (or even late) retirement option open to them. I simply was lucky.

It took me a while to think through a life other than the one I had planned for, which was essentially working until someone carted me out of my office. Much of my personal identity and sense of self-worth was wrapped up in being a professor and clinician. It was odd to think of myself in any other way.

But I took the leap. Some of it was out of selfishness because I didn't see the point of continuing to work just to generate more income to pass on to heirs who didn't need it. Part of it was due to changes at the medical center that discouraged developing new programs. The rest was out of a general fear that I would miss out on a whole lot of fun if I continued the daily grind.

What I didn't know at the time I was making this decision was that there were other psychological retirement benefits I could not have anticipated. But I think they're important considerations:

You don't appreciate the burdens of responsibility until they are lifted – Three or four months after I retired, I woke up one morning and realized that my mind was completely free of job-related worries or concerns. I didn't fret about whether my patients were safe and progressing, whether our trainees were learning and content, whether my research program would generate meaningful results, and so on. I came to realize just how much stress I had been under all those years and how relieved I felt when it dissolved. The research suggests I might even live a bit longer as a consequence.

It is profoundly calming to know that, retired, you'll have much more

time to handle the bad stuff that will inevitably come your way – Sure, I did what I had to do to manage family medical emergencies or other sentinel events. But it wasn't easy juggling those responsibilities along with job demands. And I'm pretty sure I couldn't do as much as I might have to help those who needed it. Knowing that as a retiree I have far more bandwidth for crisis management has been a blessing.

Feeling you have to justify your post-retirement existence is plain silly – I retired because I could. I had worked long and hard to get to that point. I didn't feel I had any more to prove to anyone about my work contributions. And I knew enough to realize that, while I might have thought of myself as invaluable, I wasn't. Enterprises move on, and quickly. In my case, I could also keep myself busy with consultations, working with the company I had formed,

expanding my music career, writing, and traveling. Maybe I've not so much retired as I have re-engineered my life so I have more options for a good time.

I decided to write this article after I heard from a friend about his neighbor, a lawyer, who decided to put off traveling until he retired at seventy. He didn't make it. To quote that wisest of Yiddish addages, "Man plans. God laughs."

In his final hours, perhaps he said to himself, "Thank God I kept working so I could handle all those additional cases and cement my reputation in the community." It is possible that he truly loved being a lawyer and was happy to keep working until his final breath.

But I think he might have instead felt regret, thinking to himself, "Why didn't I stop working earlier so my wife and I could have traveled, spent more time with the grandchildren, and enjoyed our lives together?"

This last scenario is what I have desperately tried to avoid. In my final pre-shiva moments, I want few regrets and a head full of rich memories.

Retirement Wisdom

How to avoid stress at work: 1. Don't go to work.

What do you call someone who's always happy on Mondays? Retired.

Retirement is the time in your life when time is no longer money.

How many retirees to change a light bulb? Only one, but it might take all day.

Retirement: the pay sucks, but the hours are really good.

Retirement is not the end of the road. It is the beginning of the open highway

Money is something you have to make in case you don't die.

Retirement means no pressure, no stress and no heartache, unless you play golf.

Life begins at retired.

Retirement is a journey, not a destination.



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RETIRING Locally

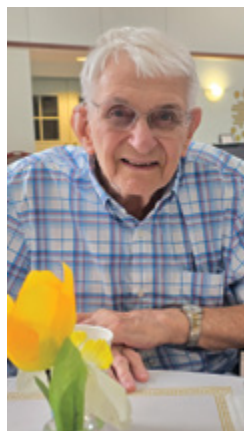


“Sweetheart – You’re thinking of moving? You’ve lived in this town for how long—30 years? 40? You know where everything is. You’ve got your Wegmans, your doctor who knows everything about you, and your synagogue where everybody knows your name. These things matter! And don’t get me started on your friends. You built a life here. You

know your neighbors. You eat lunch at the JCC with people who’ve known you since you got married. You don’t just find that kind of community on Zillow. Not to mention your sister (me) who lives 10 minutes away, who would never forgive you if you moved, and who is always there when you need a ride to an appointment or someone to go to the movies with. Now, if you’re thinking of moving closer to the kids, I understand that, but if you’re just looking for better weather, become a snowbird! Moving to a new state at your age can be hard and lonely—you’ve got to make new friends, learn new routines and find new doctors. The bottom line: you should retire where you feel secure, comfortable, and loved. And that’s right here, where your roots are deep.”

As people approach retirement, one of the most significant decisions they face is whether to remain in their hometown or relocate. Choosing to retire in one’s own community offers comfort, continuity, and emotional ease. Familiarity is a powerful factor—retirees who remain in their home region stay connected to the streets, services, and rhythms they’ve known for years, reducing the stress and anxiety that often accompanies a major life transition. Another advantage is the connection to existing social networks: friends, neighbors, and faith communities that provide not just companionship but a practical and emotional support. These relationships, often built over decades, can be a lifeline during health changes or personal transitions.

Syracuse was named one of the top U.S. cities in which to retire by *U.S. News and World Report*. Out of 150 cities, Syracuse was ranked 27th, with an overall score of 6.8 out of 10. The criteria include the happiness of local residents, housing affordability, tax rates and health care quality. Housing affordability and health care scored 7.1 and 6.4 respectively in the Salt City. Access to quality healthcare is very important to retirees. In addition to well-regarded hospitals and medical centers, Central New York has a strong presence of primary care providers and specialty clinics. CNY also offers “Four-Season Living,” with colorful fall foliage, snowy winters, warm summers, and blooming springs, abundant cultural and



educational opportunities, outdoor recreational opportunities and many clubs, religious institutions, and volunteer opportunities, which make it easier to stay socially connected.

For the Central New York Jewish community, one of the most attractive retirement options locally is provided by The Oaks at Menorah Park. More than just a senior residence, The Oaks is a home designed to support joyful, independent living in an atmosphere of calm, hospitality, and connection. Residents enjoy modern apartments, beautifully maintained grounds and programs that nourish the mind, body, and spirit. On top of all of that, living at The Oaks is affordable and includes all the amenities and transportation services one could need. An active lifestyle and social life are encouraged, and, as an added bonus, as residents age, Menorah Park’s clinical review team is available to assist with any transitions they may need to make.

At The Oaks, the friendly staff is dedicated to supporting residents’ quality of life with an expansive list of amenities and services including full-service kitchens, continental breakfast and dinner daily with choice of menu and weekend brunch. All utilities including cable and wi-fi are provided as is handyman service. There is weekly transportation to grocery stores and shopping and \$5 transport to medical appointments within a 10-mile radius. Twenty-four hour staffing that does safety checks and emergency pull-cords



in each apartment assure peace of mind. There is a beauty salon and barber shop and multi-purpose rooms for games, crafts and lectures. Monthly housekeeping, dry cleaning, and personal laundry service are also available.

The Oaks offers a weekly social hour before dinner and activities such as brain games and trivia, exercise opportunities like chair yoga, Tai Chi and Zumba, strength, balance and movement- to music classes, and a walking club. There are lectures on current events, local history, art, music and many more topics, as well as monthly nutrition talks, themed luncheons and dinners, visits by the DeWitt Library and nightly movies.

Sharon Birnkrant is a volunteer at The Oaks. She says that “The Oaks is a family community where each member exchanges ideas, aches, discoveries and challenges. Humor is the rule. Current events are discussed and opinions fly. Everybody looks out for everybody else. You’re never alone.”

Oaks resident Paul Beyer said that “the best part about The Oaks are the people” and Ronda Hegeman adds that “After working and retiring and coming to The Oaks, it feels like home to me. I like it so much that they are going to have to carry me out in a box.”

Heather Simmons, Director of Lifestyles for The Oaks, explains that “At The Oaks, we are resident-centered and person-centered. We want people to maintain the quality of life that they have had in this community. We want them to be able to adapt to the changes in their lives as they age



and to highlight areas of strength. As a board-certified music therapist, I use music as a tool to address any needs that people might have, both musical and non-musical. We collaborate with community volunteers and partners, both within Menorah Park and in the larger community. We take our residents to restaurants, shopping and on longer day trips. We build the activity calendar around what they want.”

“The Oaks is truly a hidden gem in our community,” says Fran Ciardullo, chair of the Menorah Park board. “Many people are surprised to learn that Menorah Park offers attractive private apartments for senior independent living on our campus. Our residents enjoy the close social ties that come with communal living and also benefit from all the activities and engagement with the larger Jewish community. The Oaks is a really great retirement option for Jewish seniors in Central New York.”

Happy 4th of July





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RETIRING to Florida

“At some point, every Jew must live in Florida. It’s in the Torah.”



Nobody knows who said the words quoted in this article’s title. Jews weren’t even allowed to live in Florida from the time Ponce de Leon claimed it for Spain until its acquisition by England in 1763. While there is reason to believe that some secret Jews, *conversos* or *marranos*, may have been living in Florida (beyond the reach of the Inquisition), history records the first official Jews to arrive in Pensacola in 1763 as Alexander Solomons, Joseph D. Pallaccios, and Samuel Israel. The Jewish history of Florida is retold in comprehensive and pictorial detail in Marcia Jo Zerivitz’s *Jews of Florida* and there is no doubt that, as Zerivitz states, “Jews have made ginormous contributions in every area in the development and success of Florida.” So while there may be no basis for the quote in reality, there is still truth to it.

Florida has the third largest Jewish population in the United States (after New York and California). The Jewish population of South Florida today is about 650,000, the single largest concentration of Jews (13 percent of the total population of South Florida) outside of Israel. This population is swelled every year by hundreds of thousands of Jewish “snowbirds,” who normally inhabit colder regions and migrate to warmer locales during the winter.

South Miami Beach was the winter destination of choice for Jewish seniors and snowbirds during the 1970s and 80s, including many Holocaust survivors. During the area’s golden age, more than 20,000 snowbirds would winter along the 2.5 mile stretch of beachfront, and the sounds of Yiddish filled the air. At the time, cities such as Delray Beach and Fort Lauderdale were off limits to Jews. But things changed, and as South Beach became younger and hipper, Jewish snowbirds moved to Delray, Boca

Raton and Lauderdale and other coastal areas such as West Palm Beach, Boynton Beach, Fort Myers, Naples, Tampa and Sarasota.

The warm climate, lack of state income tax, and retirement-friendly amenities attract many Jewish retirees to well-established Jewish communities with synagogues, kosher markets, Jewish schools, cultural institutions, and social organizations. Florida’s vibrant Jewish cultural life, including festivals, Holocaust memorials, museums, and community centers helps maintain a strong sense of identity for those relocating. The Jewish population is increasingly diverse, with many Jews from Cuba, Venezuela, and Argentina as well as one of the largest Israeli-American populations in the U.S.

Florida wasn’t always hospitable to Jews. “Always a view, Never a Jew” was a motto adopted during the 1930s by many housing developments, which listed their offerings “For Gentiles Only.” The slogan “Buy Gentile. Vote Gentile. Employ Gentile” was circulated by the White Front in 1939 and the stickers were posted on Jewish businesses in



Miami at the same time. After the second world war, things began to change. The 1948 Supreme Court decision in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, that courts could not enforce racial or religious restrictive covenants, made such practices illegal. The postwar economic boom, which led many Jewish families to move to Florida, resulted in increasing Jewish economic clout and challenges to exclusionary practices. The Jewish population of Florida in the 1940s was around 20,000. By 1950, it had grown

to around 63,000 and by 1970, had reached over 250,000.

Jewish snowbirds significantly augmented these numbers beginning in the 1950s, due to Improved air travel and highway systems, the increased affluence of middle-class retirees and the availability of Medicare. Century Village in Boca Raton, is a classic example of a snowbird community. Built in the 1970s, it was designed as a retirement haven for active older adults, many of them Jewish retirees from the

Northeast. It became a symbol of the snowbird lifestyle, blending leisure, culture, and a strong sense of community.

In 2020, it was reported that approximately 1.5 million Americans claim Florida as their “second home state,” during the winter months. The “snowbird effect” boosts Florida’s population by about 5% from October to April. A result of this phenomenon was the rise of jokes about snowbirds and Florida.

1. **What’s the Florida State bird? The Early Bird.**
2. **Why do snowbirds love Florida? You don’t have to shovel sunshine.**
3. **What do Floridians and snowbirds have in common? Both think the other drives terribly.**
4. **How do you know a restaurant is snowbird-approved? It opens at 4 pm and closes by 7.**
5. **What’s a snowbird’s favorite part of winter? Watching it on TV from Florida.**

Six Jews are playing poker in the clubhouse of their Florida retirement community. Abe loses \$500 on a single hand, clutches his chest, and drops dead at the table. Out of respect to Abe, they play the final hours of their game standing up.

At the end of the evening, Meyerowitz looks around and asks, “Nu? So who’s going to tell his wife?” They cut the cards. Pearlman draws the low card. They tell him to be discreet, be gentle, don’t make the sad situation any worse.

“Discreet? I’m the most discreet person you’ll ever meet! The soul of discretion. Leave it to me.” Pearlman goes over to the Abe’s condo and knocks on the door. Abe’s wife answers through the door and asks what he wants. “Abe lost \$500 in a poker game and he’s afraid to come home,” says Pearlman.

“Tell him to drop dead!”

“OK, I’ll go tell him.”

Summing up the pros of retiring to Florida:

1. No state income tax: Florida does not tax income, social security, pensions, IRAs, or 401(k)s.
2. Warm climate: Mild winters and year-round sunshine attract those looking to escape colder northern states.
3. Retirement communities: Florida is home to numerous 55+ communities with amenities like golf, fitness centers, pools, clubs, and lots of activities and social events.
4. Healthcare access: Major cities like Tampa, Miami, and Orlando offer top-rated hospitals and specialized geriatric care.
5. Outdoor lifestyle: Boating, fishing, golf, and beach access are widely available, encouraging an active retirement.

Summing up the challenges of retiring to Florida:

1. Coastal areas are prone to hurricanes: Consider flood insurance, storm preparedness, and elevation when buying property.
2. Heat and humidity: Summers can be brutally hot and humid— a health concern for some retirees.
3. Tourists and snowbirds: Areas like Orlando and Naples get crowded during peak seasons.
4. Homeowners Insurance: Because of natural disaster risk, property insurance can be expensive and complicated.
5. Property prices vary widely: While many areas are affordable, hotspots can be costly.
6. Rising antisemitism: Florida is a hotbed for hate groups.

In sum, while there are pros and cons to retirement to Florida, as Jerry Seinfeld said: “My parents didn’t want to move to Florida, but they turned sixty and that’s the law.”

RETIRING to Israel

People who retire to another country are called “ex-pats” because they have left their homeland. People who retire to Israel, make *aliyah*, a term which means “ascent,” represents the return of Jewish people to their ancestral home. People who retire to Israel are called *olim*—ones who rise up. Rather than being expatriated, they are being repatriated.

Retiring to Israel offers both rewards and challenges. It involves planning a life in a new country, embracing a new culture and learning a new language, as well as adjusting to retirement. But retiring to Israel has special benefits: Israel has one of the most advanced healthcare systems in the world, and offers comprehensive services at a relatively low cost. Retiring to Israel is not simply relocation; it can be the fulfillment of a lifelong dream of returning to the Jewish homeland. Israel’s climate and outdoor culture, beaches and parks encourage an active lifestyle year-round. And Israel is one of the happiest countries in the world.

Central New Yorker Joan Poltenson made *aliyah* in 2023. The *JO* is very fortunate that Joan accepted our invitation to describe her experience for our readers.

My Retirement in Israel

by Joan Poltenson

On September 21, 2023, after nine months of preparation, I arrived in Israel as a new *oleh*. I was met at the airport by a Nefesh B’Nefesh representative and taken to get a temporary ID card, a packet of information with “next steps” and 3000 shekels “to get you started on your new life in Israel.” I retrieved my luggage and went to my excited family, waiting to greet me.

We drove to my new home in the Golan Heights in a *Yishuv* (small community) called Hispin, where my older son and his family live. Selecting the right place to live is very important both for your long-term happiness and your ease of transitioning to Israeli life. Moving to a community with a large English-speaking population is probably the easiest and best choice. Since that was not my choice, I relied heavily on my Hebrew-speaking sons and daughters-in-law to make appointments, go with me to appointments, help me buy a car and drive me to the various cities that each appointment was located in. It is not an easy process. There is a saying here, “when making *aliyah*, pack your patience.” An option that I took before arriving was to sign up with a group called *Olim Advisors*. For a fee, they will make appointments for you and go to them with you. Unfortunately, they do not service the north, so they were of very little help. If you live in the middle of the country, it would be worthwhile. My intention was to not burden my family. My daughter-in-law was so efficient that she was able to get appointments more quickly than *Olim Advisors* and came with me to each one. Amazingly, I was able to complete all the necessary items by the end of November, including the purchase of a car.

Understanding and adapting to Israeli culture takes time. The best way to do it is to participate in as many activities in Hebrew as you can, whether it is a pilates or yoga class, seniors groups, or *ulpan*s (not necessarily the intense government-



sponsored ones). Learning the language is a challenge, especially for me, but I signed up for the weekly *Cafe Oleh Zoom* class sponsored by Nefesh B’Nefesh which focuses on everyday language needs such as grocery shopping, newspapers, Israeli holidays, etc. I also found a small group that meets weekly in Katzrin with a wonderful teacher, but there are many options and opportunities. I listen to Hebrew speakers a lot and find that even though you cannot pick up the language by osmosis (wouldn’t that be wonderful!) it really is helpful to reinforce what you may either already know or recently learned.

Most Israelis speak or at least understand some English, but, as soon as they hear you try to speak in Hebrew they will switch to English frustrating your attempts. Another life saver is Google Translate. It is far from perfect and often makes humorous mistakes



but it is very helpful reading grocery labels, talking to clerks in stores who have no idea what a quilt is, and translating a Hebrew lecture as it is being given. It has certainly made my day-to-day life easier. An example: My hairdresser doesn’t speak or understand a word of English, we take out our phones and communicate via Google. Works perfectly. There are other translation apps to use as well.

One of my biggest surprises, and not a happy one at that, was adjusting to the banking system. Do not come to Israel with a cashier’s check; it will be treated as a personal check and can take six weeks or more to clear. Fortunately, I had made arrangements before I arrived, so I was not dependent upon the cashier’s check. Another banking battle is charges for everything. Stand your ground but, better yet, do your



homework. Find a bank that has no charges or very few. Also insist on speaking to an English speaker, which should not be hard to do in most areas.

The transition has been relatively easy thanks to my wonderful family, and I am grateful to them and the many people I have met in these past 19 months. Israelis may be very vocal in their opinions, but they are kind and caring and very respectful of their “Seasoned Citizens.” The government even provides a special card if you are over 80 that allows you to go to the front of a line and, if you are over 65, you ride free on all public transportation. The young people, especially those in the army or doing *Sherut Leumi* (National Service) are helpful and respectful. There will be some bumps in the road but the joy of living in Israel, among these wonderful caring people is worth it.



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Jewish Community Celebrations

Photos by B. Fitz Photography and Bidi

The Central New York Jewish community had many anniversaries to celebrate in 2025. The Syracuse Hebrew Day School turned 65, the Epstein School of Jewish Studies marked 55 years and the Syracuse Community Hebrew School's head Ora Jezer and Temple Concord's cantor Kari Eglash were both feted for a decade of devoted service.



Federation also celebrated the successful completion of the community Butterfly Project at a *Cinco de mayo* party at Menorah Park. At the event, Federation President & CEO Mark Segel explained that “*Cinco de mayo* is not a national Mexican holiday. It is a regional holiday, more celebrated in the United States than in Mexico. But we enjoy celebrating it in our Jewish community, particularly this year, as for the first time in its history, Mexico has a female president—who also happens to be Jewish.”

At the conclusion of the musical program, guests were invited to see the Butterfly Garden and the Butterfly Project installation outside of the building. Segel explained that “Monarch butterflies, which are endangered, pass through Syracuse on their three-month-long journey to Mexico. Students of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, ably assisted by Dr. Joby Swerdlow and the gardening staff of Menorah Park, planted a pollinator garden to provide them with nourishment on their 3,000-mile trip from Canada. Members of our community, including some of the residents of Menorah Park, also painted 500 ceramic butterflies, each one representing one of the 1.5 children killed in the Holocaust. These butterflies have been grouped together to spell the word SHALOM, which means peace, and have been placed on the wall adjacent to the Butterfly Garden.”

Diana Koester, SHDS art teacher and coordinator of the Butterfly Project spoke eloquently of the artwork's significance:

“Some fun facts about butterflies: They taste with their feet. They smell with their antennae. They have compound eyes with thousands of lenses that enable them to see color, and ultraviolet light. This helps them to navigate and find food or mates. In other words, their ability to see color has a significant impact on their survival. As an artist, I find this idea fascinating. As a Jew, I find this idea utterly precious.”

“The Butterfly Project is named in honor of the poem ‘The Butterfly,’ by Pavel Friedmann, which was written by a child interned during the Holocaust in the concentration camp of Terezin. That camp was constructed and conducted to be a model of the Nazi lie that Jews and others were being imprisoned for their own protection,



that they were still being treated fairly and taken care of. None of that was true, of course. Terezin became the unlikely home of hundreds of Jewish artists, musicians, teachers, veterans, and indeed, many children, who found a tiny bit of refuge in limited opportunities to be creative with drawings and writings, under the tutelage of the adult prisoners who watched over them. In the end, 1.5 million children were killed in the Holocaust.

“The Butterfly’ speaks of a yellow butterfly fluttering skyward. Butterflies symbolize freedom, something which Pavel never knew again, but for which he still retained hope and courage. Our community has gathered with me this year to paint hundreds of ceramic butterflies, coming together with bright color and beauty to learn more and collectively carry the memory of a tragic time in our history. Each butterfly represents one of the 1.5 million children who were lost. Together, we have helped honor the legacy of these children.

“When you first paint one of these ceramic butterflies, the colors are rather dull and muted. It is only after an overglaze is applied, and they are then fired in the kiln at a very high temperature for hours, that these pieces transform into the vibrant icons we have installed into this commemorative art we’re revealing today. The process is truthfully much like what caterpillars go through in order to become butterflies. Indeed, we harken to this transformative experience in appreciating the resilience of the Jewish people, who endured such darkness, and whose pain we metamorphose into beauty and hope. Like real butterflies, we seek the brightness amid much that is grim, as a beacon of our survival and strength.

“It is my humble honor today to dedicate this art installation in honor of the children lost in the Holocaust, and in commemoration of our commitment as a people to maintaining hope, and to pursuing peace. Shalom.”

The Syracuse Community Hebrew School honored its founders and founding educational leader on May 28th.



A Space for All: A Reflection on Pride Shabbat at CBS-CS



by Kelly Klapper, CBS-CS Director of Youth and Education

The month of June holds powerful milestones and memories. June 26 marked the tenth anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling that legalized gay marriage. June 11 marked 26 years since Proclamation 7203, when President Bill Clinton first recognized Pride Month on a national level. And June 28 marked the 55th anniversary of the first Pride Parade.

Yet Pride didn't begin with parades or presidential proclamations. It began with a riot. With rage. With fear. It began when queer people stood up against relentless police brutality in a place they believed was safe—the Stonewall Inn.

Pride started as a refusal to be silent. A refusal to disappear.

Today, that same spirit feels more urgent than ever. Because now, more than ever, queer people—especially queer Jews—are afraid again.

Pride began as a refusal to be erased. A refusal to be silent.

That same spirit remains alive today, though perhaps more urgently felt. In a time marked by resurging antisemitism and growing anti-2SLGBTQIA+ rhetoric, many find themselves navigating spaces where core parts of their identities no longer feel welcome—or safe. For queer Jews, the tension between these identities can be especially painful, leaving some to wonder if there's any space to be whole.

Even within queer spaces once grounded in justice and radical inclusion, antisemitism has gone unchecked. And within Jewish communities, expressions of queerness are sometimes met with discomfort or silence.

And yet, at Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas (CBS-CS), something different is taking root.

On Saturday, June 7, the congregation gathered for its second annual Pride Shabbat—a service intentionally created as a sanctuary for queer and Jewish individuals alike, and for allies who believe in the power of shared belonging.

The event served as a joyful refuge. Members from across the Syracuse community came together to sing, pray, eat, laugh and celebrate together.

The CBS-CS Pride Shabbat offered something increasingly rare: a space where no one had to choose between sacred parts of themselves. It was a reminder that safety, inclusion, and joy can coexist—and should. In a time when so many are being asked to shrink, to split themselves, or to disappear entirely, CBS-CS affirmed the opposite: that all are welcome, and no one needs to hide.

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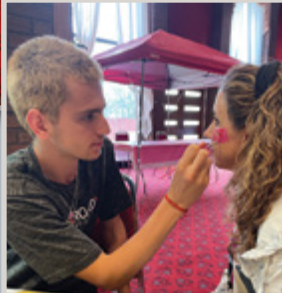
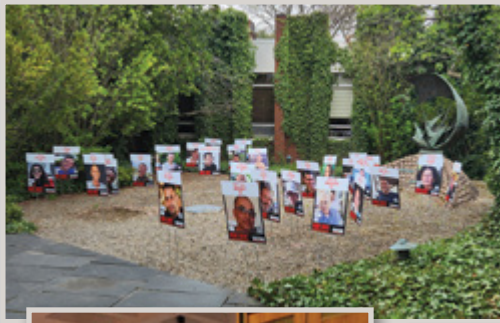
by Anick Sinclair; Photos by Lydia Johnson and Bidi

Federation threw a Spy Party to thank its faithful donors and their young families. It was a lively and entertaining afternoon seeing old friends and making new ones and of course, celebrating a very successful Federation Annual Campaign, which ultimately helps the entire local community. Campaign Chair Nan Fechtner thanked the community for donating to the campaign and noted that “it’s so great to have young families involved, so that the Jewish community will continue to be vibrant for our children.” The 5785 Campaign Cabinet and Epstein School teen volunteers were on hand to help with detective-themed arts and crafts, a photo station and even a maze made of police caution tape. PJ Library ran an activity and a light kids’ lunch was served. Guests were invited to earn a fingerprint in their passports at each activity station, which ultimately gained them a prize bag full of detective toys and treats. The raffle winner was the happy recipient of four detective- and spy-themed board games and messy fun was had by all the young Nancy Drews and Sherlock Holmeses at the event, held at Shaarei Torah on May 18.



YOM HA'ATZMAUT 5785

The Central New York Jewish community celebrated Israel's 77th anniversary of statehood with a community gathering featuring exhibits, food, shopping, music, activities, a trivia quiz and a drum circle. Mark Segel, the new President & CEO of the Jewish Federation, opened the *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* festivities, which followed a solemn *Yom haZikaron* service, by noting that "Tonight, we gather not only to mark a historic moment—the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948—but also to celebrate the enduring spirit, resilience, and achievements of the Israeli people. This is a time to honor the hopes, dreams, and courage that brought Israel into being, and the vibrant culture, innovation, and strength that continue to define it today. So whether you're here to reflect, rejoice, sing, drum, dance, or simply be in community, thank you for being part of this special occasion. Let tonight be filled with unity, pride, and the shared promise of peace and possibility."



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Epstein School's 5785 Siyyum

Photos by B. Fitz Photography

Aaron Spitzer, head of the Rabbi Epstein School of Jewish Studies, began the 5785 *siyyum*, or completion ceremony, by noting that it had been 585 days since October 7th and that 58 hostages remain in Gaza. He added “Even in moments of joy, we carry that pain with us—and tonight, we also carry a sense of purpose. Throughout this painful time, we have also witnessed something remarkable: an extraordinary surge of Jewish resilience, pride, and solidarity. Across Israel and around the world, Jewish communities have come together to support one another, to stand with Israel, and to raise their voices against antisemitism and hatred of all kinds. Our students have been part of this wave of resilience. You’ve worn your Jewish identity with pride, spoken up at your schools, created Jewish culture clubs, stood in solidarity with Israel, and shown the world

the power of Jewish commitment and courage.”

Studying the Holocaust is an important part of the Epstein School curriculum. Teacher Ryan Howlett explained that “Our 10th grade students have immersed themselves in the history of the *Shoah*—not only learning what happened, but also asking difficult questions about memory, justice, silence, resistance, and resilience.” The students then



shared solemn reflections about their learning.

Ninth grade students explored the values of *tzedakah*, *chesed*, and responsibility in their Teen Funders program, and learned how to turn Jewish principles into real-world action. Under the guidance of Rabbi Moshe Saks, they evaluated organizations and made thoughtful funding decisions. They presented a check from the Teen Funders to the newly established BBYO Program.

Spitzer described the Epstein Teen Taste of Israel program as “the pinnacle of the Epstein experience,” made possible by the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York, which subsidizes the program so that families need contribute just \$500 toward a \$6,000 trip. “This year, students got to see an Israel that’s still healing,” Spitzer said, “a place holding a lot of pain, but also strength and hope.” Teens who went on the trip spoke of what they saw, felt, and took away from the experience.

“One of the things that makes Epstein so special,” Spitzer continued, “is that our students don’t just show up to learn; they show up to lead. Through our *Shalshelet* program, students serve as *madrachim*: classroom assistants and role models at congregational schools and at the Syracuse Community Hebrew School. This work connects them to younger students, to Jewish learning, and to the generations that came before them. I’m proud to share that more than half of all Epstein students serve as *madrachim* in at least one school—and a quarter of them go even further, showing up at more than one school each week.”



Addressing the Class of 5785/2025, Spitzer said, “*Siyyum* means completion, and while tonight marks the end of this year at Epstein, it’s not the end of your Jewish learning, not even for our graduating seniors. This is just the end of one chapter.” The graduates presented a gift to Jay Sinclair, director of Jewish Family Services, in support of its Elder Shelter Program. Rabbi Shore and Cantor Eglash gave a blessing for the class and the graduates then addressed the audience.

Leora Zames said that “Leaving Epstein every week, I often found myself surprised at how much I had learned and or how my perspective had shifted around many different topics. A lot of the classes I took at Epstein helped me to understand



situations or stories with a different mindset. We’ve watched movies that were really interesting and helped me understand the Jewish experience outside my own. From Jewish art to Hebrew language to Rabbi Shore’s Jewish morals and values, all of the classes I took revealed something Jewish to be proud of. I have learned that it is so important to study major historical events as well as how to talk, debate, and teach about them. The trip to Israel gave me a foundation for communicating about October 7 and Israeli history in general and how resilient the Israeli people have been.” Jonah Sahm added, “On the topic of Israel, we were given the amazing opportunity to travel to Israel as a class in 2023. This experience was a lot of firsts, including International travel, both without our parents and as a group. This was my first time travelling intercontinentally and my first time going to Israel and I’m glad it was with you guys. I probably never would’ve gone if it hadn’t been for Epstein, and I never would have had that amazing experience and for that I am grateful.”

Ari Eglash said, “Epstein has reinforced and strengthened many of my Jewish values. I have completely fallen in love with the land of our people and wish I was there every single day. Epstein pushed me to go on the Heller High program which cemented my love for Israel, a major part of who I am. Community is also a key value that Epstein has enforced. This school is a place for Jewish teens from the entire Syracuse community to come and learn together. This is a wonderful way to see friends you don’t usually get to see or meet new people who have Judaism in common. I am so grateful to Epstein for this incredible opportunity.”

Dory Sinclair noted, “As we all close this chapter in our lives, and move on to our respective colleges, I know that the lessons we have learned here will follow us wherever we go. If I could give the upcoming Epstein classes one piece of advice, it would be to be open to all new

experiences. Whether it’s a new class that you’re unsure about taking, making new friends, or stepping out of your comfort zone, new experiences are what make Epstein great.

Epstein Board President Anick Sinclair closed the evening, saying, “This has been a busy but incredibly exciting year at Epstein. The Israel Teen Trip was extended from 10 days to a fortnight with expanded educational and volunteering opportunities. We sponsored Hillel Campus Programs at Ithaca College and the University of Rochester. We screened two films with speakers in partnership with the Federation and 3GNY. We had student-run Sukkot and Chanukah Programs and. Epstein students again were an integral part of the community at the Yom Hashoah ceremony, the Yom Haatzmaut celebration. We are so proud that philanthropy and volunteering are paramount throughout the Epstein experience. The Philanthropy in Action course not only encourages giving, but studies Jewish texts about *tzedakah* and why it is so important to give back. As a result, the students in this course donated more than \$1,500 to different charities this year.” She exhorted the graduates to “take pride in your achievements, stay curious, and never stop striving for excellence,” adding “The world is waiting for your contribution, and I have no doubt you four will make the world a better place. Whatever you choose to do we hope you have the Epstein education, love of Judaism and Israel, at your side always guiding you to do what’s right.”



Israeli Scouts Bring Cultural Connection to JCC Summer Camp

The JCC is excited to welcome the Tzofim Friendship Caravan again this summer. This year will mark the 40th anniversary of this beloved tradition. In July, the Tzofim Friendship Caravan will bring Israeli culture to life for local campers through a special performance and daylong visit. What began as a single visit has grown into one of the most anticipated events of the summer, connecting generations of Syracuse campers to their Israeli peers.

The Caravan, a group of ten Israeli teenagers selected for their talent and fluency in English, will spend the day participating in camp activities and sharing their culture through song, dance, and storytelling. Their visit culminates in a performance open to the entire Syracuse community on July 15 at 6:30 pm in the JCC gymnasium.



The Friendship Caravan has been fostering these connections since 1973, when the first group arrived in the United States with a message of hope and peace for Israel. Today, three different Caravans travel across North America each summer, visiting camps, schools, and synagogues. The performers spend a full year training and rehearsing before their tour, mastering songs

in Hebrew, English, and Yiddish that celebrate Jewish heritage and Israeli life.

This 40-year partnership has created a unique legacy. Parents who remember the excitement of Caravan visits during their own camp days now watch their children experience the same cultural connection, creating bonds between Israeli and American Jewish youth that span generations.



Tzofim of North America, the organization behind the

Caravan, promotes Jewish and Israeli identity through youth programs that emphasize leadership, community involvement, and cultural education. Their partnership with Jewish National Fund connects these values to concrete support for Israel's development and environmental initiatives.

The Caravan's evening performance is free and open to the public, offering the broader Syracuse community a chance to celebrate Jewish culture through music and dance. Even those who have seen previous Caravan shows will find something new, as no two performances are exactly alike.

Another meaningful aspect of this wonderful program is the opportunity for the JCC to host two teen Israeli Scouts over the summer. They will stay with various host families and become an integral part of Camp Romano. Welcomed as members of the JCC Camp Romano team, the Scouts will bring a piece of Israel to both campers and staff alike

"Summer camp isn't just about having fun, though there's plenty of that. It's about creating a sense of community, a space for kids to grow into their best selves, and a place where families can trust their children will be safe, cared for, and thriving," said Camp Director Amy Bisnett. "Including the Israeli Scouts in camp helps connect children to Israel and fosters understanding and acceptance among those who may not have had this experience before." The presence of both the visiting Caravan and the two Israeli scouts who spend the entire summer at camp creates multiple touchpoints for cultural connection. Through shared activities, performances, and daily interactions, campers will have unprecedented opportunities to learn about Israeli life and culture from their peers.

For more information about summer camp or the Tzofim Friendship Caravan visit, contact Amy Bisnett at 315-445-2360 or abisnett@jccsy.org, or visit jccsy.org/summer-camp.

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SEIZE THE AWKWARD

JCC Makes Waves with Summer Swim Lessons

by Shane Tepper

The Jewish Community Center of Syracuse is diving into another season of swim instruction with a program designed to turn hesitation into confidence and splashes into strokes. The JCC's summer swim lessons began in June but there are two more sessions running throughout the warmer months: Session 2 (June 29-July 26), and Session 3 (July 27-August 23). Families can choose between weekday lessons from 3:30-4:30 pm or weekend options from 10-11 am, making it easy to fit water safety into even the busiest summer schedules.

What makes the JCC's approach special is its thoughtfully structured curriculum that meets swimmers where they are. The preschool level welcomes children ages 3½-5 years into a gentle introduction to the water environment. Here, the focus stays on comfort, fun, and safety as little ones learn foundational skills like floating, gliding, and moving with assistance.

For children ready to venture deeper, Levels 1-2 builds the blocks for independent swimming. These classes help kids develop the confidence to float and glide without support, explore underwater, and begin coordinating the arm and leg movements that will eventually become recognizable strokes.

Level 3 expands into formal stroke development, where swimmers refine their technique in front crawl, backstroke, and elementary backstroke. They'll also improve vital safety skills like treading water and learn the proper technique for safe diving.

To accommodate different learning styles and needs, the JCC offers two instruction formats. Small group lessons bring together up to six participants for 30-minute sessions once weekly, creating a social yet focused learning environment. These lessons are priced at \$48 per session for JCC members and \$60 for non-members.

For those who thrive with individualized attention, private lessons provide one-on-one instruction tailored to specific needs and goals. Members can access these personalized sessions for \$40 per 30-minute lesson, with package options available, while non-members pay \$50 per session.

Beyond structured lessons, the JCC's summer aquatics programming includes the popular J-Rays Swim Club for children entering grades 1-6. From June 30 to August 22, this program meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 8-8:45 am, giving young swimmers a taste of team competition while improving their skills in a supportive environment. Participants must be able to swim front crawl across the pool width and tread water for 30 seconds. The program costs \$375 and requires a JCC family membership.

Adults aren't left high and dry, either. The center's Aqua Fitness classes offer a refreshing way to improve cardiovascular health and flexibility while the water's buoyancy takes stress off joints. These classes are free for members and available to non-members for \$10 per class.

The JCC's outdoor heated pools opened on May 24, featuring both a small pool perfect for beginners and a large pool with areas for various skill levels. The small pool provides a safe environment for young children still getting comfortable in the water, while the large pool includes both shallow and deep sections with a designated diving area.

Those interested in registering for swim lessons can do so online via jccsyr.org/swim-lessons. Due to the program's popularity, early registration is recommended. For more information about the swim lesson program or JCC pool, visit jccsyr.org/pool, email aquatics@jccsyr.org, or call 315-445-2360.



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The JCC of Syracuse has joined the 92nd Street Live programming network!

Be on the lookout for exciting and timely interviews and discussions streamed into the JCC.

Finding Your Story

When the COVID pandemic forced her to put her other work on hold, Syracuse native Jennifer Shulman took her career in a new direction. Combining 30 years of experience as a writer and focus group leader, she founded Jeneration Stories. The mission of the new company was to help people turn their personal stories into self-published books for family and friends.

When describing her new venture, Jennifer encountered an unexpected obstacle. People said, “I love this idea but I don’t have an interesting enough story to tell.” Jennifer explains that “This reaction always makes me sad. I know from experience that everyone has an important story worthy of sharing.” She created Finding Your Story, a workshop designed to help people see the value in their own life experiences. After a brief introduction into the art of personal storytelling, participants are led through an easy series of short writing exercises aimed at uncovering themes unique to them.

Jennifer says, “Personal storytelling goes beyond your bio. It is more than just a collection of names, dates, and facts. I guarantee that everyone’s story has one or more themes that can make it special and book-worthy. My goal is to help people find their themes.”

Jennifer has conducted this workshop at Coral Lakes in Boynton Beach, FL, at Congregation BJBE in Deerfield, IL, and at the Syracuse JCC’s senior lunch program. On August 19, she will be hosted by the Temple Adath Sisterhood. Finding Your Story is a fun, interactive, and judgment-free workshop. Sharing is voluntary and no writing or storytelling experience is needed. All are welcome. **For more information, go to www.jenerationstories.com.**



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Syracuse Hebrew Day School. 5th and 6th graders placed American flags on the graves of Jewish war veterans under Rabbi Shore’s supervision, an annual tradition for the past half-century. More than 1,000 flags are donated by Steven Sisskind and U.S. Army veteran Steve Nathan.



Historic Beth Joseph Synagogue Celebrates 120 years. The oldest synagogue in the Adirondack Mountain region, is celebrating its 120th anniversary on Sunday, July 13 at 2 pm. The public is invited to this special occasion at 57 Lake Street, Tupper Lake, NY. **For more information, go to <https://bethjosephupperlake.org>.**



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Syracuse Hebrew Day School Celebrates 65 Years of Excellence



This year marks an extraordinary milestone for the Syracuse Hebrew Day School as it celebrates 65 years of academic excellence, strong Jewish values, and deep community connection. Founded in 1960, SHDS has remained unwavering in its mission: to nurture innovative minds and compassionate hearts through academic excellence and Jewish values. In 2025, that mission is as significant as it has ever been.

SHDS continues to lead the way in innovative, whole-child education. SHDS students thrive in an environment that values creativity, curiosity, and individuality. Teachers take pride in ensuring that every student is accepted and loved. Small classes ensure that students receive individual attention, and that close relationships develop, not only over the course of a single year, but throughout each student's entire SHDS journey.



The school offers a wide range of in-school music and art opportunities, as well as an after-school drama program. This year's production of "Finding Nemo Kids" showcased the talent, teamwork, and confidence students develop through the arts. The music program, led by Sarah Wright, includes not only whole-class vocal instruction, but also small-group and individual instrument

lessons. Diana Koester, SHDS art teacher, worked with students and community members to paint and fire ceramic butterflies as part of the Butterfly Project, an installation at Menorah Park to honor the victims of the Holocaust.

STEM education continues to be a cornerstone of the SHDS curriculum. This year's SHDS STEM Club, led by Stacy Seidman, gave students the opportunity to engage in hands-on inquiry, exploring such topics as 3D printing, renewable energy, robotics, drone operation, chemistry, and coding. These projects encourage critical thinking, innovation, and teamwork—skills that prepare the students for success well beyond elementary school. At the 2025 Central New York Science and Engineering Fair, every one



of the fifth and sixth grade students received either honors or high honors accolades. In addition, sixth grader Ava Cronlund won the Award in Civil Engineering for her project entitled "A Flood-Free Future."

One of the school's proudest initiatives is its intergenerational learning programs, which bring students to Menorah Park to share Jewish holiday celebrations with senior residents and into the Early Childhood Development Program at the Jewish Community Center. Whether decorating sukkahs, lighting candles for Chanukah, delivering mishloach manot for Purim, reading a story, or celebrating Shabbat, these shared moments create meaningful bonds.

The Day School's commitment to Jewish values and civic responsibility was on full display in May, when students in grades 4 through 6 honored the memory of Jewish American war veterans by placing American flags at their gravesites ahead of Memorial Day. The flags were generously donated by Steven Siskind of Siskind Funeral Service, who has long supported community efforts to recognize Jewish veterans. For the students, this was not a field trip—it was a mitzvah, a sacred obligation. Through the act of *kavod ha-met* (honoring the deceased) and *hakarot hatov* (expressing gratitude), the children lived out the values the school teaches every day.



Community service is an important part of the school year. Sixth graders take a class in community service, which includes learning about the benefits of working for others, exploring different ways to be of service, and creating and implementing a project on their own. This year, sixth grade service projects included Ava Cronlund's "Ava's Blessing Bags," in which the student designed greeting cards to raise money to purchase items for bags that SHDS families could give away when they encounter someone in need. Phoebe Cronlund sold handmade "Phoebe's Friendship Bracelets" to raise funds for the Golisano Children's Hospital, and Yetta Waks volunteered as a tutor for students who were homeschooled.

Recently, the school came together for a joyous celebration of Lag B'Omer with the annual Color Games run by Physical Education teacher Kyle Simons. Students enjoyed a day of spirited competition, bonfires, marshmallow roasting, and plenty of *ruach* (spiritual energy). Students dressed in team colors and cheered one another on, showcasing the unity and joyful atmosphere that defines the SHDS experience.

At its core, SHDS is more than a school—it's a community. Programs like the Friday Shabuddy Walk (when students stroll with an assigned "buddy" with whom they might not otherwise get to spend time at school) build friendships across grade levels, while schoolwide Shabbat celebrations bring sacred traditions into the students' daily lives. Parents come together periodically throughout the year for Parent Breakfasts, during which timely Jewish topics are discussed, and they have the opportunity to laugh together at gatherings such as Parents' Night Out. These moments cultivate connection, meaning, and pride—values that stay with SHDS families long after graduation.

The 65th anniversary year has been filled with meaningful community events that reflect SHDS's rich legacy and forward-thinking spirit. One of the highlights was Casino Night, the school's most successful fundraiser to date. Parents, alumni, and supporters from across the region gathered for a spirited evening of entertainment, raffles, and community celebration. The event raised vital funds to support the school's expanding programs—and served as a powerful reminder of the lasting impact SHDS has had on generations of families.

With enrollment on the rise, and support from the Jewish Federation of Central New York and other community partners, SHDS is poised for continued growth and impact. As Head of School Melissa Klemperer shares, "This isn't just a celebration of the past 65 years. It's the launch of the future." For 65 years, SHDS has educated the hearts and minds of Jewish children in Central New York. And if this year is any indication, the next 65 will be even more extraordinary.

To see the SHDS difference in action, visit www.shds.org or contact Melissa Klemperer at mklemperer@shds.org to schedule a tour. Come discover the warmth, spirit, and excellence that define Syracuse Hebrew Day School.



Good News from Israel

In this issue, the *JO* resumes the inclusion of stories from Michael Ordman's weekly newsletter and blog series, "Good News from Israel." Ordman's work highlights the positive achievements, innovations, and humanitarian efforts emerging from Israel, counterbalancing the often conflict-focused international news narrative about the country. Ordman launched the initiative to shed light on inspiring developments in various sectors in Israel, such as medical breakthroughs, high-tech inventions, scientific advances, environmental and agricultural innovations, and humanitarian and coexistence efforts. He includes news about Jewish-Arab cooperation, Israeli aid to disaster-struck areas abroad, and programs aimed at fostering peace and inclusion. "Good News from Israel" serves multiple purposes: encouraging pride among Israelis and supporters of Israel, offering counter-narratives to negative media portrayals and inspiring readers with stories of hope, progress, and cross-cultural cooperation. The newsletter is distributed weekly in English and in translation in Hebrew, French, German and Spanish and is distributed via the *Jerusalem Post*, IsraelSeen.com and Ordman's own site, VeryGoodNewsIsrael.blogspot.com.

CHAI. In celebration of Israel's 77th Independence Day, internationally acclaimed singer Netta Barzilai has partnered with the Jewish Agency for Israel to release a new rendition of the iconic Israeli anthem "Chai." The 1983 Eurovision Song has been reimagined to reflect Israel's resilience in the face of current challenges.

<https://www.jns.org/netta-barzilai-teams-up-with-jewish-agency-to-drop-independence-day-tune/>

Saving the Syrian Druze. The Ziv Medical Center in Safed has admitted 32 injured Druze, victims of fighting in Syria during the past week. They include two pregnant women. The IDF has also has established a forward mobile medical triage facility near the Syrian village of Hader and is also protecting the Druze from massacres.

<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/middle-east/levant-turkey/artc-32-syrian-druze-so-far-treated-in-israeli-hospital>

Huge shopping mall opens in Ramallah. The grand opening of the Icon Mall in the Palestinian Authority city of Ramallah was accompanied by music,



mixed dancing, and fireworks. The mall is the largest in the PA-controlled region and even has a rooftop swimming pool.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/magazine/article/hjds5xe1xe> <https://iconmall.ps/>

Augmenting the Abraham Accords. Azerbaijan could be the next Muslim country to join the Abraham Accords. Its international stature is increasing, as is its ties with Israel. After 7 October 2023, citizens gathered around the Israeli Embassy in Baku, expressing support and sympathy with flowers and memorial candles.

<https://www.jns.org/azerbaijan-augmenting-the-abraham-accords/>

Saving babies in Ghana. An Israeli team from "Neonatologists for Africa" is training Ghanaian health care workers in modern neonatal resuscitation amid harsh conditions. It aims to reduce Ghana's infant mortality rate of 59 per 1,000 births (5.6 in the U.S.; 2.7 in Israel).

<https://www.ynetnews.com/health-science/article/by6y3h11yle>

An AI tutor for every 16-year-old. Israel is the world's first country to give every K-12 student access to a private AI tutor. Israel's eSelf (personalized AI agents) has partnered the Center for Educational Technology. Harvard University (surprisingly?) is providing academic guidance.

<https://www.calcalistech.com/technews/article/r1tkoce1gg>

Exporting fruit and veg to Azerbaijan. For the first time, in 33 years of diplomatic ties, Israel will export fresh agricultural produce (mangoes, avocados, and peppers) to Azerbaijan. It opens a new door for Israeli agriculture on the Modern Silk Road and could expand to other countries along the route.

<https://worldisraelnews.com/israel-launches-first-agricultural-shipments-to-azerbaijan/>

Jerusalem rising. Jerusalem is on the brink of a dramatic transformation. Developers are racing to reshape the city with hundreds of new towers, light rail lines, and mixed-use districts. From urban renewal to skyline redefinition, the future of Jerusalem is unfolding—faster than most imagined.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/business/article/s1owjl4cyx>

Ecuador opens diplomatic tech office in Jerusalem. President Isaac Herzog welcomed Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa to Jerusalem - the South American leader's first official visit to Israel. He also opened Ecuador's Innovation Research and Development Center in Jerusalem, with diplomatic status.

<https://www.jns.org/ecuador-opens-diplomatic-tech-office-in-jerusalem/>

How to boycott Israel. Some 14 years ago I wrote a series of blogs about all the vital products and services you must avoid if you want to completely boycott Israel. Now here is a recent, more up-to-date, more extensive "15-steps" article by Joshua Hoffman.

<https://www.futureofjewish.com/p/how-to-boycott-israel-a-guide>

10 Israeli inventions that are changing the world. Readers of this newsletter will already know these. PillCam, flexible solar panels, desert hydroponics, eco-friendly packaging, ReWalk exoskeleton, Watergen water from air, emergency bandage, AI medical imaging, lab-grown meat, and space technology.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaNFak3fbis>

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On Sunday, September 14 at 7 pm, the Jewish Federation of Central New York will present a concert of Music of the Jewish Experience, featuring cellist Julian Schwarz, pianist Marika Bournaki and violinist Giora Schmidt. The concert will take place at Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas and will have four parts. The descriptions below are illustrative of pieces that may be included.

The opening section is music of the Holocaust.

Robert Dauber: Serenata

Seranata is the lone surviving work of the brilliant young musician Robert Dauber, murdered at Auschwitz in his early twenties. It is a cabaret style work, full of pure joy, most likely used to entertain inmates at Terezin.

Victor Ullmann: Variations and Fugue on "Rachel" from Piano Sonata #7

This movement from the 7th Sonata of Ullmann draws on themes from his origins as a Lutheran (A Mighty Fortress is our God by Martin Luther), a Czech (a Hussite Warrior call from Czechoslovakia), a classically trained musician (BACH musical motto), and his Jewish ancestry (Jewish folk song "Rachel"). This exploration of identity culminates in a masterfully conceived fugue combining all these themes.

Gideon Klein: Duo for Violin and Cello

One of the most talented composers at the Terezin concentration camp, Gideon Klein was involved in most every musical aspect of life at the camp. He composed throughout his stay at Terezin, including this duo, his final opus, incomplete as he was taken to Auschwitz and murdered. The trailing off of music during the second movement is a haunting ode to his musical life cut short.



Left: violinist Giora Schmidt. Bottom Right: pianist Marika Bournaki and cellist Julian Schwarz



Alex Weiser's Pulitzer-Prize nominated song cycle "And All the Days were Purple." Weiser is director of music programming for the YIVO Institute of Jewish Research.

The music of Modern Israel will bring the program to a close.

Paul Ben-Haim: Suite for Solo Cello (1st Movement)

Maybe the greatest Israeli composer, Ben-Haim was prolific across all instrumental ensemble types, including solo works. This suite for solo cello is highly introspective, and features the instrument in all its ranges.

Joachim Stutschewsky: Frejlachs for Cello and Piano

Stutschewsky was a Ukrainian-born cellist who flourished in Vienna, Paris, and eventually Israel. He became the cellist of the celebrated Kolisch Quartet, working closely with Arnold Schoenberg. His writing draws on Klezmer themes.

Paul Schoenfeld: Cafe Music (3rd Movement)

Paul Schoenfeld made aliyah to Israel toward the end of his life and devoted most of his career to creating Western art music with Jewish folk music representation. Schoenfeld passed away in Jerusalem in 2024. Cafe Music is his most popular and audience-pleasing work. It has become a standard of the piano trio repertoire.

General admission tickets to the concert are \$18. VIP sponsorship, which includes two reserved seats and a private wine reception with the performers following the concert, is \$180. For tickets and sponsorships, scan the QR code.



Music of Russian/Ukrainian Jewry will be performed in the second section.

Josef Engel: Frejlachs for Piano Trio

Josef Engel, Russian-born in present day Ukraine, was the father of the Jewish art music movement in the early 20th century. He settled in Tel Aviv after collecting Jewish folk melodies throughout Eastern Europe. He used these melodies in his music, including "Frejlachs", which will be a recognizable tune for most American Jews (O Hannukah O Hannukah)

Alexander Klein: Elegy for Piano Trio

Klein was born in Russia and remained there throughout his life. Though he was raised as the son of Klezmerim, he developed a deeply personal compositional voice, using the advances in harmony of the Viennese. This elegy is one of the most hauntingly beautiful works for piano trio and serves as dedication to all Jews who have perished as a result of their identity.

Carl Fruhling: Piano Trio (2nd Movement)

Fruhling was a Ukrainian-born Austrian-Jew whose music was banned by the Nazis following his death in 1937. Throughout his life, Fruhling carried the torch of the great tradition of German art music while pushing the envelope in harmony and counterpoint, reminiscent of Wagner.

The third section of the program will feature the music of American Jewry.

Ernest Bloch: Meditation Hebraique for Cello and Piano

Bloch was a Swiss-American composer who was best known for his works of Jewish connection. This work was dedicated to Pablo Casals, the great anti-fascist cellist, written during Bloch's time as president of the Cleveland Institute of Music

Joseph Achron: Hebrew Melody for Violin and Piano

The *Hebrew Melody* of Joseph Achron is one of the most iconic instrumental works of Jewish connection, written by the Russian-Jewish immigrant who settled in Los Angeles.

Gerard Schwarz: Duo #2 from "Tryptich" for Violin and Cello (dedicated to Gladys Rubinstein) This work is a depiction, in musical form, of the relationship of a Jewish couple in their domicile. It is a conversation full of repartee, quips, and humor.

Alex Weiser: "Mayn Glik" from 'And All the Days were Purple' *World Premiere Arrangement for Piano Trio

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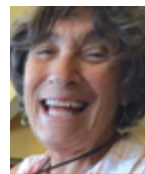
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BRENDA SILVERMAN
APRIL 24, 2025



Brenda Dale Silverman was born on July 9, 1945, in Philadelphia, PA. She died in Bellingham, WA on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at Hospice House. She is survived by her son Jason Ripper and by her grandchildren, Phineas and June Ripper.

Brenda earned two master's degrees and a PhD in sociology. Her studies had to do with gerontology and she had a career that suited her, as a social worker in a nursing home, for a decade. She was wonderful and skilled at helping the residents deal with all elements of their lives, from dementia to taking them shopping for pantyhose to helping them as they died. Brenda talked about this frequently, especially during the last year of her own life.

Brenda was a survivor, a strong survivor. Her mother committed suicide when Brenda was five and her father died in the yard when she was fifteen. From 2009 until her passing, she dealt with cancer, with a rare heart condition, and she even once fell into a woodchuck hole and hurt her back. Always, however, she maintained her vitality, her humor, her kindness, and her love of life. She also had a beautiful 37-year marriage to Mark Watkins, someone who loved her fiercely and who offered her stability and joyous adventures.

Brenda was a beloved grandmother, mother, and friend. She and Mark enjoyed traveling the world, going to local theater, visiting his daughters ,watching birds in the backyard at the feeder, canoeing and camping, and they read every historical marker they stumbled upon. Celebrate her life. She certainly did.

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LINDA BETTY NEWMAN
MAY 2, 2025



Linda Betty Newman, age 71, passed away unexpectedly on May 2, 2025, while in rehabilitation at the Van Duyn Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing in Syracuse.

Linda was born in Paris, France, in 1953 to Marjorie (Neikrug) and Max Newman. Her father Max was the director of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society ("HIAS") in Germany and later a beloved science teacher at Nottingham High School in Syracuse. Lewis Neikrug, her maternal grandfather, served as the European director of HIAS. Lewis and Max worked closely together to relocate Jewish refugees and provide relief in postwar Europe.

In 1954 the family moved to Dewitt, just outside of Max's hometown of Syracuse. Linda's early years were marked by wonder: a poetry prize, Beatlemania, horseback riding and summer camp, and family road trips and vacations. Her later passions included theater rehearsals, leaf-strewn painting projects, dolls crafted from apples, the companionship of her cocker spaniel, Crumpet, and a lifelong love of music.

Linda is survived by her brother Bob Newman of Grass Valley, CA; two ex-sisters-in-law, Marilyn and Wendy Newman, her niece Sarah (Bob) Demers of Groton, VT, great-nephews Robert III (Kera), Samuel (Marta), Max, and Patrick Demers, her nephew, Daniel (Kearie) Newman of Denver, CO, great-nieces Kori (Willow) Hannock, Kaileigh Newman (Donal), and Chloeanne (Ryan) Newman, great-great nieces Nora and Gwendolynn and great-great nephews Gryphon and Jack.

Linda was predeceased by her parents, Max and Marjorie (Neikrug) Newman, in 1978, her maternal grandparents May (Reich) and Lewis Neikrug, in 1989 and 1953, respectively, her brother Richard, in 2015 and Richard's wife Kristen Carpenter in 2023. A valued member of her community, Linda will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

The family extends their gratitude to the staff and residents of Homestead of Central New York, where Linda lived for many years, and to Siskind Funeral Home for their intervention and compassionate care

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**JANICE "JANCY" BALL
MAY 2, 2025**



We are saying goodbye to the one and only Jancy Ball. If you had the honor of knowing her you would understand how pale an obituary reads in comparison to the color of her life. She has bested cancer too many times. She deserves a Viking warrior send off, replete with a fiery pier floating off into a distant sunset, but we will have to just wrap her in enough grace and love to somehow show our communal gratitude that she touched our lives in the way only Jancy can.

Jancy was born on September 4, 1949 in Syracuse NY. She was a proud graduate of the Emma Willard School in Troy, NY. In her early career Jancy found her passion for backstage production work, and then later film productions. She then founded SHW Productions based out of the West Village, NYC.

When she moved back to Syracuse, Jancy's love of taking care of people found several homes. At Otro Cinco restaurant, she embodied the art of hospitality, creating a space where visitors and locals alike felt welcome and taken care of. Whether she was driving around town for Meals on Wheels or going for a joyride with her companion from Jewish Family Services, Jancy always brought the same level of care and intent to her work. Into her seventies, Jancy worked countless hours. But that was her lifeblood, it was the people she cared for and connected with along the way that solidified her purpose. It was almost like she knew she had a finite amount of time and went to work filling it with goodness and service every day.

Outside of her career path, there was so much more. Places, times and things that meant so much to her. The Fillmore. The Renaissance Faire. The Baroque Music festival. All the little tuck-ins in the West Village. Strolling through the MET. The beauty of silver jewelry and turquoise. All the kitties she cared for. Trips to California. Anything in nature. All the restaurants Jancy worked at over the years, developing families in each along the way. Jancy made friends everywhere she went, and it brought her so much joy when she was able to connect the beautiful people that she brought into her circle. We are all better people because of the love, grace, and selflessness that Jancy showed us.

Jancy has no children – but we were

all her children. If you were ever down on your luck, if you were ever pinned to the floor by life...that angel we call Jancy would be the one extending her hand to pick you up. You might not see Jancy every day, but on the days you needed her most, she was there. And these relationships, often forged in fire, were the offerings Jancy was most proud of. She did not count her success in the menial ways of men. What mattered was the pureness and volume of her love for others that needed her.

She was predeceased by her parents, Charlotte Rudolph Ball and Donald Jay Ball, ESQ. On her mother's side, she was preceded in death by her grandparents, Lena Levitt Rudolph and B.G. Rudolph, and her mother's siblings, Sara Lee Present, Blacher Rudolph, and Jack Rudolph. On her father's side, she was predeceased by her grandparents, Rachel Cohen Ball and Jacob Ball, and her father's brother, Ira M. Ball, ESQ. She was also predeceased by her sister, Kathryn Ball Gaubatz, and her nephew, Daniel Gaubatz. Jancy is survived by her sister, Judith Ball and several beloved cousins. Donations in Jancy's name should be sent to Hospice of CNY.

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**DONALD KAMP
MAY 19, 2025**



Donald Kamp, 96, passed away on May 19, 2025 in Charlotte, NC with his family by his side. Born on December 29, 1928 to William and Rose Bernstein Kamp he was a life resident of Syracuse until moving to Atlanta and then recently to Charlotte to be closer to his family.

Don was the President of Fulton Scrap Processors, Inc. of Fulton. The company was originally Fulton Iron and Steel Company which was founded by his father in 1915, and as a family business employed three generations of the Kamp family. He was a former member of Lafayette Country Club, and a life member of Temple Adath Yeshurun. Don was a wonderful man, a good and trusted friend.

He was a loving husband to Gertrude, father to Gary (Fran), and Richard, grandfather to Nathaniel (Kate), Matthew (Brandi) and Gregory (Kate), and great-grandfather to Barrett, Liam and Phoebe.

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