

Jewish Observer

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

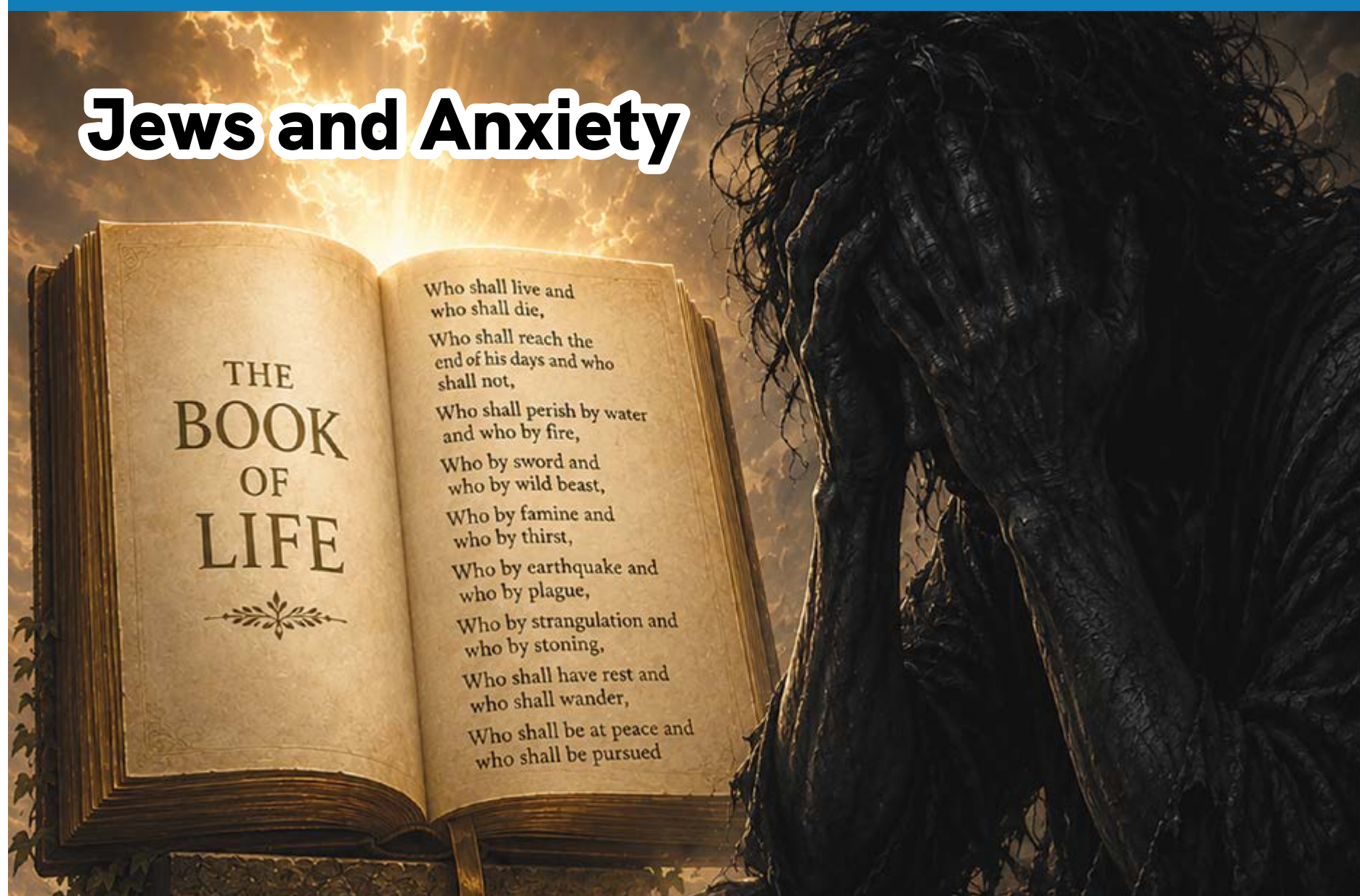
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Jews and Anxiety



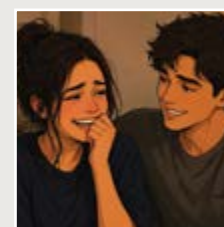
Who shall live and
who shall die,
Who shall reach the
end of his days and who
shall not,
Who shall perish by water
and who by fire,
Who by sword and
who by wild beast,
Who by famine and
who by thirst,
Who by earthquake and
who by plague,
Who by strangulation and
who by stoning,
Who shall have rest and
who shall wander,
Who shall be at peace and
who shall be pursued



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September 2026

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

Jewish Anxiety and 5787

Every year, on the Yamim Noraim, Days of Awe, synagogues are filled with a particular kind of quiet. It is not quite peace but rather a collective holding of breath, a communal reckoning with what it means to stand before the Almighty and wonder: Who shall live and who shall die? The High Holidays are built on accountability, on the belief that how we live and how we treat one another matters in the cosmic order of things.

But this year, as in many recent years, sitting in synagogue, opening a machzor and chanting the ancient words carry additional weight. The world outside the synagogue walls is not quiet. Antisemitism, long considered a relic of darker times, has surged to levels unseen in decades. Synagogues require armed security guards at their doors; social media has become a cesspool of age-old conspiracy theories dressed in the language of the moment. Jews have been reminded, in both explicit and implicit ways, that our safety in the places we call home is always conditional.

And then there is the war. The trauma of October 7th, the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, has not faded. It has settled into our collective psyche like a wound that refuses to close. Families in Israel are still grieving. The region is in turmoil. And Jews in the Diaspora have found themselves in the exhausting, disorienting position of mourning while simultaneously being told their mourning is illegitimate, political, or somehow complicit in the very suffering they, too, lament.

Yet Judaism has never promised its people an easy path. Our tradition was forged in exile, refined in persecution, and sustained by our stubborn, defiant insistence on life—l'chaim! Each year, as we stand before the King of Kings on Rosh HaShanah, we feel awe and trepidation. Our lives, our health, our livelihoods—everything is on the line. Unlike its secular counterpart, the Jewish new year triggers feelings of dread rather than celebration.

This issue of the *Jewish Observer* has anxiety as its theme.

Two books featured in this issue speak directly to this moment and to the stress and anxiety many are experiencing. Norman Lebrecht's *Genius and Anxiety: How Jews Changed the World* reminds us that throughout history, it has been precisely under conditions of pressure, exclusion, and uncertainty that Jewish minds and spirits have produced some of humanity's greatest contributions. Anxiety, it turns out, has never stopped us. If anything, it has propelled us. Former Syracusan Bonnie Zucker's new book, *Freedom from Panic*, offers an antidote to crippling anxiety. Together, these books offer a meaningful portal through which to approach 5787, one that acknowledges the weight we carry, and another that reminds us what we have always managed to do.

Anxiety is not limited to the Jewish community, of course. Jonathan Haidt's book *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* has sold over two million copies. Anxiety has become its own consumer category, spawning an entire

industry of products that promise calm: weighted blankets, fidget spinners, stress balls, worry stones, aromatherapy rollers, and an endless supply of "I'm fine" mugs and affirmation-slogan tees. There are clothing companies that sell apparel designed for anxious people. Cloudnine makes an "anxiety hoodie" with "discreet sensory tools built right in for kids, adults, and anyone whose nervous system needs a little extra support." A store named Status Anxiety sells merchandise to combat that very phenomenon, described as "the feeling we get when we compare how we're doing to those around us." The clothing line does not downplay anxiety but instead points out "how this pressure to be 'successful' can lead us to make decisions that ultimately leave us poorer—both financially and in spirit."

All this information about anxiety is definitely anxiety-provoking, so we also include an article about and examples of Jewish anxiety humor, because laughter has always made our anguish more bearable. And more positively, we also feature forward-looking articles about new leaders and new initiatives as well as Federation President & CEO Mark Segel's look ahead at the Federation's remarkable goals for 5787.

Our community pages are filled with news and pictures of all the wonderful activities which make Jewish life in Central New York vital and vibrant. Federation is delighted and thrilled to have sponsored activities as diverse as Jewish summer camps, travel to Israel, Jazz Fest, a Family Day at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, and, of course, Klez Fest. We are looking forward to year five of the Sunday Cinema Series, an exciting announcement from the Epstein School, a wonderful Campaign Kickoff celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and a Luminary Society get-together at the fabulously elegant landmark Mizpah Tower.

We also want to give a shout-out to a third book which readers may find relevant. Rabbi Caryn Aviv's 2026 *Unlearning Jewish Anxiety: How to Live with More Joy and Less Suffering*. Rabbi Aviv offers the following sage advice for us as we contemplate the new year. "We can respond to Jewish anxiety triggers with deeper awareness of our choices about how to respond," she writes. "We can resource ourselves with different strategies and better alternatives to the previous habits that amplified and increased our anxiety. We can recognize how the past haunts the present and still choose to nourish ourselves through pausing to breathe, re-center our bodies, and discern our response. We can grow our awareness, curiosity, compassion, and courage. And: We can also step into more power, more compassion, and more kindness, without catastrophizing, contracting, or collapsing into fear." She concluded, "This is our braided challah of tikkun atzmi and tikkun olam—healing ourselves and harnessing our insights and energy to heal the world." To which we say, Amen.

May 5787 be a year in which anxiety is not a burden but is rather evidence of how much we care about and love our complicated people, our many traditions, our complex lives and our ever-changing world. *L'shanah tovah tikateivu*. May you be inscribed for a good year.

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Board Chair.....Nan Fechtner
President/CEO.....Mark Segel
Editor.....Barbara Davis



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MESSAGE FROM MARK SEGEL
Federation President & CEO

THE YEAR AHEAD: Building on a Foundation We Laid Together



With the arrival of a new year, I find myself doing something I encourage all of us to do more often: pausing to look back before charging ahead. This column marks the beginning of my second full year writing in this space, and as I reread the columns I shared with you over the past year, a common thread emerged that I had not fully seen while writing them. Each one, in its own way, was about a community deciding who it wants to be in a difficult era—and then acting on that decision.

Last year in these pages, I wrote about the resilience woven through Jewish history—how generations before us took the harshest ingredients life offered and tempered them into something enduring. I wrote about security, and about the sobering reality that protecting our synagogues, schools, and gathering places has become a central obligation of communal life. I wrote about standing with Israel and with Jewish communities around the world in their moments of crisis. And in my final column of the year, following our 108th Annual Meeting, I reflected on all that we accomplished together in a single remarkable year. Looking back at those columns now, I realize they were not just separate essays. They were one continuing story: the story of Central New York's Jewish community rising to meet its moment.

So what comes next? A vision for the year ahead should not be a wish list. It should be a set of commitments, grounded in what we have already proven we can do. Here is where the Federation is headed in the coming year.

We will deepen our commitment to community security. Security is not a project with an end date; it is a posture we maintain together. This year, we will continue investing in training, technology, and our partnerships with law enforcement at every level. We are also taking a more active role in helping eligible local organizations pursue Nonprofit Security Grant Program funding—federal dollars that harden facilities and protect the people inside them. In addition, we have identified creative ways to find money to fund security needs for all our Jewish buildings. I am especially proud that our vision for this work extends beyond our own community. When we help our neighbors of other faiths secure their houses of worship as well, we are not diluting our mission. We are fulfilling it. And let's not forget our about Magen Circle security committee that is actively raising funds to build an endowment fund specifically to cover related expenses throughout the community.

We will strengthen our connection to Israel and to Jews around the world. At the very start of this fiscal year, our community will welcome a delegation from our Israel to learn about agriculture in Central New York. This will be exchange that turns headlines into handshakes and transforms an abstract connection into names, faces, and friendships. In a year when Israel remains at the center of global debate, there is no substitute

for genuine relationships. We will keep building them, and we will keep providing our community with honest information and the tools to engage thoughtfully with a complicated world.

We will tell our story better than we ever have. This past year we launched a new Federation website, and this year we are rebuilding our marketing and communications capacity from the ground up. That may sound like an internal administrative matter, but it is anything but. Every program that goes unattended because no one heard about it, every donor who never learns what their gift accomplished, every young family that doesn't realize how much Jewish life is happening here—these are failures of storytelling, not of substance. Central New York has a remarkable Jewish story. We intend to tell it loudly.

We will be careful and transparent stewards of your generosity. Our Annual Campaign and our Allocations process are the engine of everything else. Last year, our community exceeded its goal for the Jewish Observer Appeal—a vote of confidence in this very publication, and a reminder that when we ask clearly, Central New York answers. This year, through both the Federation and the Jewish Community Foundation, we will continue to ensure that every dollar entrusted to us is allocated thoughtfully, invested wisely, and reported on honestly. Philanthropy is a relationship built on trust, and trust is earned in the details.

We will widen the tent. A community that only tends to those already inside its walls is a community in slow decline. This year, we will focus on engagement across generations—meeting young families, students, newcomers, and the unaffiliated where they are, rather than waiting for them to find us. Some of the most meaningful conversations I had last year happened not in boardrooms but over coffee, at community events, and in the unscripted moments between agenda items. I intend to have many more of them.

We will invest in the next generation of leadership. Every strong institution in our community—every synagogue, school, and agency—exists because someone, decades

ago, raised their hand. Our obligation is to make sure the next generation of hand-raisers is ready. This year we will be intentional about identifying emerging leaders, inviting them onto committees and into decisions that matter, and giving them real responsibility rather than honorary titles. The measure of my tenure will not be what happens while I am here; it will be the strength of what continues after all of us have passed the torch.

How will we know, twelve months from now, whether this vision became reality? Some of it we can count: dollars raised, grants secured, programs launched, doors protected. But the measures I care about most are harder to quantify. Did a family that felt disconnected find its way in? Did a college student facing hostility on campus know that a whole community stood behind them? Did our institutions trust one another a little more in June than they did in July? Numbers tell us whether we are busy. Those questions tell us whether we are succeeding.

I want to close with something more personal. When I arrived in Syracuse a little over a year ago, I was a newcomer myself—a Floridian bracing for his first real winter, in a city where I knew almost no one. What I found here was a community that, for all the challenges of this era, has never stopped showing up: for one another, for Israel, for its institutions, and yes, even for its new Federation CEO. The vision I have described above is ambitious, but it is not mine alone. It belongs to our dedicated professional staff, our volunteer leadership, our generous donors, and every person who reads this paper and decides to be part of what comes next.

The story of last year was a community that rose to the moment. The story of this year, I believe, will be a community that builds on it—with strength, with purpose, and with each other.

I look forward to writing the next chapters together.

Anxiety and Hope

by Rabbi Ilan Emanuel, Temple Concord

We live in an anxious age. Many of the certainties we have grown up believing about society, democracy, the liberal world order, the American dream - all feel less secure, less certain, less stable. As Jews, we feel this even more, as the events of October 7 and the subsequent rise in antisemitism have shaken us to the core, intensifying worry about what it means to be a Jew today and what the future holds for us. And social media makes all of this seem closer and more visceral than ever before. Many of us know objectively that there were many things that we could have and should have worried about in the world when we were younger, but then it wasn't being pumped into our brains through a constant stream



of videos and posts on our phone.

In truth, these modern advances on anxiety merely deepen far older and more primal realities. Human existence has always been fraught, but Jewish sources tell us more about anxiety and how it works on us.

Proverbs 12:25 states: *De'aga ve'lev ish yash'chena ve'davar tov ye'sham'chena*. This can be translated in two ways: If there is anxiety in a person's mind, "let them quash it" or "dejects them." This ambiguity of translation tells us that anxiety is something that dejects us, that robs us of joy, and that we should quash such anxiety. On the other hand, Proverbs 28:14 makes an astounding and seemingly opposite statement: "Happy is the person who is anxious always..."

Maybe only Jews could declare that anxiety is a good thing. But most of us can think of a time when being worried about a possible outcome led us to act in a way that saved the day, while had we not been so concerned we would have missed it. On a deeper level, these verses together tell us that anxiety, focused in the right way, can serve a moral and spiritual purpose.

Proverbs 12:25 doesn't end by telling us to quash anxiety but by saying that we should "turn it into joy with a good word." We cannot truly remove anxiety from our minds, but we can channel it, turning the anxiety into hope! Malbim, a 19th century commentator, expands on Proverbs 12 by saying, "Anxiety is a spiritual strength, for it represents concern for the future." Anxiety and hope are intricately entwined, essential parts of each other, and our task is to take the concerns we all inevitably have and turn them into hope, to use the seed, the energy contained in anxiety, and make it not into more anxiety into something positive!

Maoz Inon, an Israeli entrepreneur and peace activist who lost his parents on October 7, declared, "Hope is not a feeling that I wait for. Hope is an action... It's something you are making... Hope is a communal endeavor, something we create together..."

As we contemplate the anxieties of our age and of our lives, we should do all we can to channel the anxiety and worry we all inevitably feel and focus it on creating hope together. In the words of a reading from the Reform movement's High Holiday *machzor*, "This is the season of hope, like mist rising at sunset, like dew descending at dawn; our hopes beautify and nourish everything they touch. Our hopes make us partners in creation, pursuers of peace, people who aspire to a world of justice."

Genius & Anxiety: How Jews Changed the World, 1847-1947 by Norman Lebrecht

reviewed by Wendy Evers Gordon, Ph.D.

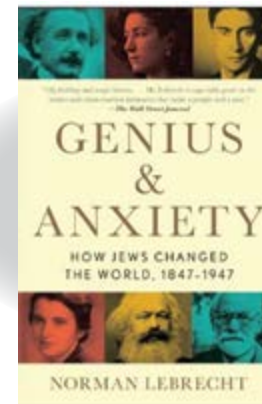
In *Genius & Anxiety: How Jews Changed the World, 1847-1947*, Norman Lebrecht advances the provocative claim that a distinctive form of "Jewish genius" emerged from the combination of high intelligence and profound, historically routed anxiety. He defines anxiety as not simply personal stress, but as an existential condition, shaped by centuries of insecurity, exclusion, persecution and displacement. According to Lebrecht, these pressures contributed to an extraordinary outpouring of creativity and intellectual achievement among Jews between 1847-1947.

The book is a combination of well-documented historical events with anecdotal storytelling, making it an engaging, often fascinating read. He discusses prominent Jews (Mendelssohn, Marx, Einstein, Freud among them) as well as lesser-known individuals including rabbis and cultural figures. One of the book's strengths lies in its smaller, human-scale stories. For example, Lebrecht noted that in the original writings of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, the character of Fagin was described, hundreds of times, as both a "criminal" and "a Jew". A Jewish woman, who had extensive correspondence with Dickens about his writings, convinced him to revise this explicitly antisemitic language in later editions of his book. This anecdote illustrates how personal relationships could challenge entrenched prejudice—an insight that is often more persuasive than the book's broader claims.

Lebrecht situates these stories within the broader historical context of 19th and early-20th century Europe, highlighting both rampant antisemitism and internal divisions within Jewish communities. He explores tensions between assimilation and cultural preservation, including debates over language, religious practices and identity. Some individuals embraced modern, secular identities in an effort to integrate, while others maintained or reclaimed traditional Jewish practices. Notably, many of the figures discussed in the book distanced themselves from Judaism altogether, sometimes even expressing antisemitic views. In the context of widespread discrimination, such choices can be understood as attempts to gain acceptance and professional recognition. As Lebrecht observes, many Jews, especially in Nazi-era Germany, were forced into literally life and death choices about identity and survival.

Despite the richness of its historical material, the book's central claim—that anxiety produces genius—is unconvincing. While moderate stress can enhance motivation and performance, high levels of stress tend to impair memory, creativity, and flexible thinking. Anxiety may accompany achievement, but correlation alone does not establish it as the cause of genius.

To be fair, Lebrecht appears less concerned with clinical definitions of anxiety than with a broader, existential condition shaped by historical experience. His argument functions more as a cultural interpretation than a scientific claim. However, his book often blurs this distinction: while adversity can foster resilience and motivation, the relationship is



complex and varies greatly; it is not a straightforward path to genius.

A more convincing explanation for the remarkable achievements may be historical rather than psychological. It may reflect what can occur when a persecuted, marginalized population gains access, often with outside support, to expanding intellectual and professional opportunities. Many of the notable Jews described by Lebrecht migrated to Europe's urban cultural centers, where they were exposed to educated elites and socially connected members of the non-Jewish population. This interpretation aligns more closely with mainstream scholarship and avoids overgeneralizing a single explanatory factor.

Ultimately, *Genius & Anxiety: How Jews Changed the World, 1847-1947*, is an engaging and thought-provoking book, rich in anecdotal and historical detail. Its portraits of individuals and its exploration of cultural and intellectual life are compelling. However, its central claim—that anxiety is the driving force behind Jewish genius—is an overreach. The book also overlooks the fact that creativity and genius can be found in many marginalized and persecuted people, including, but not unique to, Jews. The book succeeds best as a nuanced portrait of Jews who overcame pervasive persecution, exclusion and threats to their very existence during pivotal moments in history, rather than as a unified explanation for extraordinary achievements.

The Anxiety Epidemic and Careers

by Michael Gordon, Ph.D.

I've been struck by how many young adults I've encountered recently are leaving their high-flying jobs for positions that are far less stressful. At a family wedding, I learned of one relative who left a corporate marketing position to work for a small company that makes aprons for celebrity chefs. Another exited an impressive position in Hollywood to become a salesman for a roofing company his friend started. Still another substantially cut back on his work in a law firm, preferring instead to spend his time travelling, writing, and enjoying his family.

These are all highly educated and successful people who decided to opt for a lifestyle that allowed for less stress and more boundaries between work and their personal life. As one young fellow I met put it, "Hustle culture is no longer considered cool."

Had I decided to make aprons instead of going to graduate school, it would have been hard to find an oven big enough for my parents to insert their collective heads. Children of an immigrant Jewish family like mine were under pressure to reach for the occupational stars, regardless of the stresses and strains that might accrue along the way. Family was important, but only within the context of high achievement and acclaim. That's how our world worked.

The profound irony is that, in our family, the unquestioned rock star is the one person who isn't a doctor, lawyer, MBA, or Ph.D.—my brother, David. As you've read in past columns and perhaps in my *Book of David: On Caring for Siblings with Special Needs*, he's known far and wide for his cheery disposition, love of life, kindness to all, sound sleep, and the ability to inspire others to look past their worries and embrace the world. And he's been a bagger at a grocery store for most of his work life.

Several recent surveys have found that Millennials and Gen Zers, more than my generation, place higher value on work-life balance and mental health, often above salary or title. Other surveys report that interest has declined in finance, law and tech jobs. Even applications to top medical and law schools have dropped, purportedly due to concerns about burnout and the weight of educational costs. Nowadays, young workers rate mental health support and work-life balance as more important than high salaries or rapid promotion.

Everyone has a take on why this trend has emerged and what it says about the younger generation. Some claim that it represents a healthy rejection of a culture that put too much emphasis on lofty achievement and occupational success. Others laud the greater awareness that



maintaining mental health is at least as important as increasing one's income. Some say that COVID-19 and remote work options changed views about what's important in a job and the 9-to-5 routine lost its luster. Others regard the trend as reflective of poor motivation and selfishness, which will ultimately harm productivity and create a less competitive workforce.

Like all cultural shifts, this one surely is fueled by multiple pipelines. But at the top of my list is the impact of an ongoing phenomenon that gets far too little attention—what researchers are calling the "anxiety epidemic."

The term refers to the sharp increase in diagnosed anxiety disorders, self-reported stress, and the widespread use of anxiety medications and therapy among young adults. Factors such as student debt, job insecurity, social media comparison, climate anxiety, the potential impact of AI, and global instability contribute to this psychological strain. College campuses, workplaces, and even social spaces are now filled with conversations about burnout, panic attacks, and the difficulty of achieving balance. Anxiety disorders are rampant and have a profound impact on individuals, families, communities and the workplace.

If one is anxious, it doesn't help much to be told to buck up and beat the

stress. Being anxious is not a reflection of inadequacy. It can be a debilitating disorder that flows from the usual mix of genetics and personal history. And one way to deal with anxiety is by reducing those elements in life that trigger it. If you can't find a way to manage work stress, you will seek to put yourself in a more comfortable situation, even if it results in less income and disapproving looks from parents (who will survive having less to brag about).

While medication, therapy, and gummies can be part of the treatment, so can taking yourself out of situations you can't manage well, or at least advocating for healthy changes in job responsibilities. It does all of us a favor if educators and employers have to worry more about mental health and less about maximizing short-term gains in productivity.

I find it admirable when people do the right thing for themselves and their families, even if that means climbing to a lower rung on a career ladder. It's a sign of inner strength and good judgment, not weakness and poor decision-making.

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An Ancient Remedy for a Modern Plague

by Timothy Hayes, Ph.D.

A news report stopped me cold recently. As a retired clinical psychologist with 33 years in healthcare, I thought I had encountered most of the ways that human behavior and disease intersect. But the current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo presented something that sent me reaching not for a medical journal, but for a history book.

The outbreak—now surpassing 900 suspected cases and over 234 deaths, with the World Health Organization declaring it a public health emergency of international concern—is being driven in significant part by religious funeral customs. Mourners touching and washing the bodies of those who died from Ebola are contracting the virus and spreading it further.

Listening to this, I found myself thinking about the ancient Hebrews—and what I can only describe as their remarkable instinct for cause and effect.

Long before germ theory or

epidemiology, the Hebrew people constructed a system of laws that look strikingly like biohazard protocols. And most relevant to what is happening in the Congo today: detailed laws governing contact with the dead. The Book of Numbers lays it out precisely. Priests who handle bodies follow strict protocols. The community is protected not by scientific understanding, but by religious obligation.

What impresses me as both a clinician and a student of history is the sophistication of the mechanism. The Hebrews did not need to understand pathogens to avoid them. They only

needed to believe that God had declared the body unclean. The health protection and the divine command were fused into a single instruction—and that fusion made the rule essentially unassailable across generations; God said so.

Equally important—and this is where the Hebrew model feels most instructive—the funeral was not abolished. The protective measure was built into the manner of doing things, not into the elimination of the ritual itself. The community's spiritual life was preserved.

The Congo situation is almost the photographic negative of this. Outside health workers arrive with their science and ask grieving families not to touch the body of their mother, their father, their child. From inside that worldview, compliance feels not like a health decision but like a theological betrayal. And so the virus continues to spread.

The Hebrew model suggests a different path—one that global health officials are only beginning to explore. What is needed is not better science delivered by outsiders. What is needed is the equivalent of a Hebrew priest—someone who already holds spiritual authority

within the community—who can stand before the people and say: in the face of this plague, God is calling us to honor our dead in this new way.

Religious authority is a morally neutral instrument. It can protect entire populations across generations. It can also destroy them (as Jim Jones demonstrated at Jonestown). The tool is identical. The direction is everything.

I am a psychologist and a healthcare professional who spent a career watching how human beings respond—and fail to respond—to health information. What I know is this: people rarely change behavior because they are told to by strangers. They change behavior when the instruction comes from a source they already trust and love.

The ancient Hebrews somehow understood that God does not want you to die while burying your dead—and they found a way to make that truth sacred. The challenge now is finding who, in the villages of Congo, has the standing to say the same

Timothy Hayes, is a retired clinical psychologist and member of InterFaith Works of Central New York.



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NEW FEDERATION AND FOUNDATION LEADERS



Nan Fechtner Takes the Helm at the Federation

Nan Fechtner grew up watching her mother work at a job with no salary, no title on a business card, and no fixed hours—her mother called herself a “Professional Volunteer,” and she meant it as a vocation. That model took. Wherever Nan has lived, she has found the organizations that needed her and gone to work, and Syracuse has been the lucky beneficiary of her commitment for the past decade. Now she steps into her

most visible role yet: chair of the board of the Jewish Federation of Central New York.

It is a position she has earned the long way. Since joining the Federation board in 2022, Nan has served on the Allocations Committee and chaired the annual campaign for three years running. In each of those years the campaign met or exceeded its goal, sustaining the critical services the Federation funds across the community. Few people arrive at a leadership position already so knowledgeable about where the money comes from and where it needs to go.

Nan and her husband relocated to Syracuse in 2016 with their three mostly grown children, and she wasted no time in getting involved. She joined the board of RISE, a small refugee-resettlement nonprofit, where she served four years as treasurer and helped the organization as grow its annual budget from \$500,000 to more than \$1.5 million. Strategic planning, governance, human resources, fundraising—she touched all of it. Along the way she also lent her energy to the Barnes Mansion on James Street, the kind of quietly essential civic stewardship that rarely makes headlines but keeps a community’s history and character intact.

This pattern of building things and strengthening them stretches back across every place she has lived. The earliest chapter set the template: in Louisville, Kentucky, Nan partnered with the city’s Lions Club to create a fundraiser supporting eye research—designing the organization and committee structure from scratch, recruiting and managing volunteers, and running it successfully two years in a row before handing a healthy operation off to the next set of hands.

New Jersey came next, and with it eighteen years of deepening involvement. When Nan arrived in the late 1990s with a young family, she devoted herself into the Jewish Community Center where her children were enrolled, eventually chairing its Budget and Finance Committee, leading strategic planning, and serving on the Executive Board. In time she rose to Vice President for Strategic Planning at her synagogue, where she led an effort to redefine its mission and vision, develop and implement a five-year strategic plan, and launch a novel funding structure — all while chairing its Fundraising, Budget & Finance, and Long-Range Planning committees.

As she begins her tenure at the head of the Federation board, Nan is characteristically focused on the work ahead. “I am committed to working with community leaders and stakeholders to continue to strengthen our institutions,” she says. “As the lay leader of the Jewish Federation of Central New York, my goal is to support and partner with our local organizations to ensure that Jewish Syracuse remains vibrant, relevant and safe. I look forward to the work that we can do together.”



Kevin Rosenberg, MD Joins Federation Board

Kevin Rosenberg, MD, has been elected to the board of the Jewish Federation of Central New York, bringing to its leadership the perspective of a respected physician and a committed member of the Syracuse Jewish community. A vitreoretinal surgeon by profession, Dr. Rosenberg adds both medical expertise and a deep sense of communal responsibility to the Federation’s work on behalf of Jewish life across the region.

Dr. Rosenberg is a partner with Retina-Vitreous Surgeons of Central New York and a Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at SUNY Upstate Medical University. Board certified in ophthalmology, he

specializes in diseases and surgery of the retina and vitreous — caring for patients with conditions such as retinal detachment, diabetic retinopathy, and age-related macular degeneration. He sees patients across Central New York and is affiliated with Crouse Hospital, Upstate University Hospital, and the Syracuse VA Medical Center.

He earned his medical degree from the University of Michigan Medical School, completed his ophthalmology residency at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai, and pursued fellowship training in vitreoretinal disease at the Kresge Eye Institute in Detroit. An active clinician-researcher, Dr. Rosenberg has authored or co-authored numerous studies on retinal disease and surgical outcomes, contributing to advances in the care of patients with sight-threatening conditions.

A native of West Bloomfield, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, Dr. Rosenberg attended Hillel Day School from first through eighth grade, an education that, he says, instilled in him a deep and lasting Jewish identity. He completed both his undergraduate and medical degrees at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor before training in New York and Detroit. He met his wife, Michelle (nee Ravitsky), while he was in medical school and she was studying pharmacy at Wayne State University. Though the couple originally had no ties to Central New York, their nationwide search — he sought a high-volume practice with a significant clinical footprint, while both prioritized a community with a strong, active Jewish presence—led them to Syracuse, where Dr. Rosenberg was recruited by his partner, Dr. Jamin Brown, a fellow alumnus of the Kresge fellowship program. He has cared for patients across Central New York for eleven years. The Rosenbergs have four children: three attend the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, and the youngest is enrolled in the JCC Early Childhood Development Program. The family counts itself fortunate that Michelle’s parents moved to the area five years ago, keeping extended family close.

Dr. Rosenberg’s commitment to Jewish life runs deep and is rooted in family. His late grandfather, Herman Brodsky, made certain that all eleven of his grandchildren had the opportunity to receive a Jewish education at Hillel Day School, and from an early age Dr. Rosenberg came to regard Israel’s right to exist as a permanent Jewish homeland as paramount. He has visited Israel many times, most recently traveling there after October 7 to volunteer for two weeks at Soroka Medical Center in Beer Sheva, where he provided surgical care for patients with complex retinal injuries and conditions.

For Dr. Rosenberg, joining the Federation board is an expression of that commitment at a critical moment. He points to the sharp rise in antisemitism and the proliferation of biased media narratives since October 7, which he says have made it an increasingly challenging time to be Jewish. “I joined the board because I want to ensure that the Jewish community of Central New York knows they have the unwavering backing, resources, and advocacy of the Jewish Federation,” he said. His hope, he added, is for the Federation “to serve as a steadfast pillar of unity, continuous support, and strong advocacy for both the local Jewish community and the State of Israel within Central New York.”



David A. Holstein New Chair of Jewish Community Foundation of CNY Board

David A. Holstein has been named chair of the board of the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York, stepping into the leadership of an organization that serves as a financial backbone of Jewish life across the region. A longtime supporter of the Foundation, to which he has lent his counsel for many years, David brings deep professional expertise and a lifelong commitment to the

Central New York Jewish community to the role.

A partner of Bousquet Holstein PLLC, David serves as a member of the firm and on its Board of Managers. The firm, with offices in Syracuse and Ithaca, traces its roots to Green & Seifter Attorneys, founded in 1961, and took its present name in 2012 from Laurence G. Bousquet and David Holstein. For more than three decades, David has concentrated on estate planning, wealth preservation, and estate and trust administration, alongside a substantial business law practice. He is widely recognized

in his field, named in The Best Lawyers in America for Mergers and Acquisitions and Trusts and Estates, holds Martindale-Hubbell's AV Preeminent rating, and has been selected to Super Lawyers in the New York Upstate edition.

His commitment to community extends across Syracuse's cultural and educational institutions. David has been a board member of the Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science and Technology (the MOST) Foundation, the ESF College Foundation, and the Everson Museum of Art.

A graduate of Harvard University, David earned his bachelor's degree in 1972 and his Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School in 1975. He is admitted to practice in New York and Florida.



Marc Beckman, J.D. Joins Foundation Board

Marc S. Beckman is a partner and co-leader of the Health Care Practice Team at Lippes Mathias LLP in Syracuse. Marc was a founding member of Syracuse-based CCB Law, which combined with Lippes Mathias in 2024, extending the firm's 17 office footprint to Syracuse. He has been named to Upstate New York Super Lawyers annually since 2014 and has been recognized in The Best Lawyers in America since 2017, including being

named Lawyer of the Year for Health Care Law in 2020, 2023 and again for 2027.

Marc's commitment to Central New York's Jewish community runs alongside his legal career. He has served on the Jewish Federation's Board and its Community Planning and Allocations committees and served as chair of the board of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. Marc currently serves as legal advisor to the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center of Syracuse. His community leadership has been recognized with many honors: the Ner Tamid Award from the National Committee on Jewish Scouting of the Boy Scouts of America (2011), the inaugural Jeremy Blumenthal Award from the Syracuse Hebrew Day School (2016), and the Esther and Joseph Roth Award for Outstanding Jewish Community Leadership from the Jewish Federation of Central New York (2019).

In joining the Board of the Jewish Foundation of Central New York, Marc is decades of legal experience in healthcare, business, and nonprofit-adjacent regulatory matters, a long-standing record of Jewish communal engagement, and a deep and abiding commitment to the USA/Israel alliance remaining a bi-partisan priority through his support of AIPAC.



Kate Werner Jewish Federation and Foundation

Kate Werner is the new office administrator and grants coordinator at the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation. A native Central New Yorker and ten-year resident of DeWitt, her family belonged to Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas, where she became *bat mitzvah*. Kate was a student at the Combined School and the Epstein School. She was also a member of 4-H, where she learned one of her personal mottos: "*To Make the*

Best Better." Kate is a graduate of Cornell University.

Returning to the area, Kate rejoined CBS-CS, where she regularly leads Musaf and chants Torah, serves on the Sisterhood Board, runs the gift shop and sits on the Board of Directors as ritual vice president. Kate loves dogs and is always happy to show off a picture of her dog, Sophie, or see a picture of someone else's dog.

In her new position, Kate is the "hub" of the Federation office. She manages administrative projects and day-to-day office tasks. She is also the main point of contact for community members with donor advised funds and endowments at the Jewish Community Foundation where she processes grant distributions.

Kate is pleased to be working at the Federation and Foundation as she strongly believes in the mission to build and sustain our vibrant culture and community, and she is enjoying the opportunity to work with the broader Jewish community.

Jacquelyn Kall Miron Board Chair

Pomeranz, Shankman, Martin Charitable
Foundation, Inc.



Jackie Miron is a woman of many interests and talents: writer, runner, reader, reviewer, teacher, philanthropist. A native Central New Yorker who grew up in Fayetteville, she completed undergraduate work in accounting at SUNY Albany and began her career as a CPA in a Big Six firm. She earned her master's degree in secondary education in math and business at St. Lawrence University, married Steve Miron and then left the workforce to raise two sons, Jimmy and Danny.

Still, a certified teacher, public accountant, marathon competitor, and running coach cannot just sit around reading books. In addition to raising her family, Jackie worked as an SAT prep teacher at the Manlius-Pebble Hill School, a middle-school math teacher at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and a private math tutor. She became a trustee of the Manlius Library, wrote a monthly running column for the *Post Standard*, and contributed book reviews and articles for the *Jewish Observer*.

Somehow, in the midst of all that, she found time to write a book, *Run for Your Life*. The young adult book told the story of Lopez Lomong, a "Lost Boy" from Sudan who came to Tully in 2001 and went from local high school running champion to college standout to Olympic hero. He captivated the nation at the 2012 London Olympic Games when he carried the American flag during the opening ceremony. In writing the book, Jackie says, she wanted to break some new ground in the field of sports biographies. When she took her sons to the library, "they kept taking the same books out over and over again: Babe Ruth, Michael Jordan and Lou Gehrig, all wonderful sports heroes. But, after a while, I wanted the boys to read about other sports, immigration challenges, and to see how athletic achievement can change lives with dedication, discipline, and hard work."

Currently, Jackie is using her skills and interests in new ways. She still reads voraciously, puts in a lot of milege, (but slower) and writes for the *JO*, but much of her time is now taken up with philanthropic work. She served on the board of the On Point for College program which helps first-generation youth to get into college, stay there,

and succeed afterwards. It has led to mentoring, tutoring, and scholarship opportunities in Naples, Florida, where she spends half the year. Jackie has been volunteering at various non-profits in grant and scholarship reviews. She and Steve continue to support the Jewish Community in Syracuse, Crouse Hospital, Hospice, and Skaneateles organizations where they now spend the summers.

As a trustee of the Pomeranz, Shankman and Martin Charitable Foundation, she works to provide financial support to organizations within the Jewish community. She finds the work enjoyable, especially when she can "give hard-working leaders and their organizations the support they need to operate and succeed." The Foundation has been giving to up to 20 Jewish causes, and continues to give each year well into its second decade of existence. "We give to the things that are not so pretty...the HVAC, roofs, repairs, fixtures, equipment." Our latest concentration has been in community security. PSM has given millions, and will continue to do so, as long as possible.

NEW COMMUNITY LEADERS



Sara Temes, Pomeranz Jewish Community Center

Sara Temes, incoming president of the board of the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center of Syracuse, is stepping into the leadership of an institution at the heart of Central New York Jewish life. The role is a natural next chapter in a long record of service. Sara has served on the JCC board since 2010, serving as treasurer and vice president, and now takes the helm of the organization

she has helped guide for more than a decade.

Sara is a partner at Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC. She concentrates on commercial bankruptcy and reorganization matters and advises the boards and managers of financially troubled companies on restructuring strategy. A graduate of Wellesley College and the University of Pennsylvania Law School, she has been recognized in The Best Lawyers in America and as an Upstate New York Super Lawyer in her field.

Sara's commitment to the JCC has been honored more than once by the community she serves. She received the very first Leslie Award in 2016, recognizing an up-and-coming professional's service to the Center. In 2025 she received the *Kovod Gadol* Award, given for an extraordinary degree of commitment, energy and loyalty to the JCC and the greater community.

As she takes on the presidency of the JCC board, Sara brings both professional expertise in stewardship and governance and a deep, demonstrated devotion to the life of the Syracuse Jewish community.



Shira Boschan, Syracuse Hebrew Day School

Shira Boschan has been named chair of the board of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, taking the helm of an institution devoted to nurturing the next generation of the Central New York Jewish community through academic excellence and Jewish values. A longtime member of the school's board, she steps into the role as a third-generation community leader carrying forward a deep family legacy of service to Syracuse Jewish life. A graduate of the Wharton School of the

University of Pennsylvania, Shira is Vice President of People Development at Raymour & Flanigan Furniture. She is a member of the third generation of the Goldberg family to help lead the company, whose roots reach back to the start of Raymours Furniture in the late 1940s.

Shira grew up immersed in a family tradition that paired business leadership with deep philanthropic commitment. She also serves as a trustee of the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York. In leading the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, she brings both the perspective of a next-generation community leader and a family history that helped shape the very institutions she now leads.

"In today's world, a Jewish day school education—where students are immersed in Jewish life every day—is more important than ever for our community. I am deeply honored and proud to help lead SHDS, the school I attended as a child and where my own children are now students, alongside our exceptional Head of School, Melissa Klemperer. We will work hard each and every day to fulfill the SHDS mission to nurture innovative minds and compassionate hearts through academic excellence and Jewish values."

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Hannah Salomon, Rabbi Epstein School of Jewish Studies

Hannah Salomon is the incoming chair of the board of the Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Studies, taking the helm of Central New York's communal Jewish high school. The role is a natural step forward: Hannah served as vice president of the Epstein School's board and now moves into its top volunteer leadership position.

For more than fifty years, the Epstein School has been the gathering place for Jewish teens across Central New York — a community-wide setting for learning, friendship, and Torah lishma, learning for its own sake. Open to students in grades 8 through 12 from across the area's congregations and traditions, the school brings together teens of different backgrounds to study Jewish texts, build lasting friendships, and learn to make thoughtful Jewish choices in an increasingly pluralistic world. As incoming board chair, Hannah will help guide that mission into its next chapter.

Hannah is a member of the staff of Manlius Pebble Hill School in DeWitt, Central New York's independent PreK–12 school, where she brings an educator's perspective to her volunteer leadership in Jewish education. As she assumes her new position, she says, "I have always believed that being part of a community means showing up and giving back. As an active member of the Jewish community, it's an honor to serve as president of the Epstein Board. I'm excited for what's ahead, while recognizing the responsibility that comes with this role."



Joseph Dhara, Syracuse Community Hebrew School

Joseph Dhara, the new Chair of the Board of the Syracuse Community Hebrew School, was born and raised in India and came to the United States 27 years ago, settling in Central New York, where he has remained ever since. A Mizrahi Jew, he sees his faith and community life as rooted in relationships—with G-d, with fellow Jews, and with the wider community—and in the understanding and empathy those relationships foster.

Married for almost 23 years, Dhara has two sons. An electrical engineer by training, he has also worked in business development and retail sales, and for more than 20 years in education, serving as a math teacher, principal, district coordinator, and superintendent. He and his family love to travel to warmer climates, but Central New York always draws them back. A dedicated volunteer, he is president of the DeWitt Rotary Club and will become CNY Rotary President in two years.

Joseph says, "I am excited about the coming year for the Syracuse Community Hebrew School. SCHS is a collaborative model of three synagogues working together for our children, and I hope to keep improving our curriculum, our experiential opportunities, and our communication with parents and the community."

CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS:



Rachael Henriquez Porter, Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas

Rachael Henriquez Porter is the newly elected president of the board of Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas. A member of CBS-CS for more than two decades, Rachael steps into the presidency after several stints on the Board of Trustees, including terms as VP of Youth and Education, Recording Secretary, and Executive VP. Rachael served for several years on the board of the Epstein School and on the inaugural board of the Syracuse Community Hebrew School.

Born in Jamaica to one of the oldest Sephardic Jewish families on the island, Rachael grew up attending Synagogue Shaare Shalom in Kingston, a beautiful historic synagogue with sand-covered floors where she still goes when visiting her parents. She left Jamaica to attend Swarthmore College, followed by graduate school at Indiana University, and has been an adjunct professor of chemistry at Le Moyne College since moving to Syracuse almost 30 years ago.

Rachael and Kevin have three sons, all of whom celebrated becoming *b'nai mitzvah* at CBS-CS, and attended Epstein throughout high school. Their oldest son was a member of the inaugural Teen Trip to Israel and their twins went on the second trip.

Rachael says she is looking forward to doing her part in assisting CBS-CS and the Central New York Jewish community to continue to thrive and grow, navigating the balance between tradition and progress while paying attention to the congregation's mission, vision and values.



Aaron Spitzer, Temple Concord

Aaron Spitzer has been named executive director of the Temple Society of Concord, stepping into the professional leadership of one of the oldest Jewish congregations in the United States. Founded in 1839, Temple Concord is the ninth-oldest Jewish congregation in the country and the historic home of Reform Judaism in Central New York — a congregation deeply woven into the civic and cultural life of Syracuse.

Aaron's leadership also extends across the wider Central New York Jewish community. He serves as head of school of the Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Studies, the community's Jewish high school for teens in grades 8 through 12, where he helps guide the next generation's Jewish learning. Across both of these roles, he brings a commitment to community-building and the continuity of Jewish life in the region.

Aaron comes to the role already a familiar and trusted figure at the Temple. Before joining the professional staff, he served the congregation as a lay leader, including a term as first vice president of its Board of Trustees. That history gives him an unusually intimate understanding of the congregation he now helps to steward — its members, its traditions, and its aspirations. "Temple Concord has an incredible history," he notes, "but what excites me most is its future. It's a privilege to help lead a community with so much momentum and so much potential."



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A View from the Bima: How Two Rabbis Reimagined the High Holy Days

Over the past year, Rabbi Oren Steinitz has been thinking about the High Holy Days experience at Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas (CBS-CS). “When you stand on the bimah,” he says, “looking out at 300 people during the service, you notice many things you can’t see from the pews.” What he noticed wasn’t a lack of attendance, but a lack of connection.

“The services are long, and the amount of Hebrew can be overwhelming, especially if you did not grow up with regular shul attendance,” he says. “After many conversations with congregants of different ages and backgrounds, it became clear to me that one style of worship cannot meet everyone’s spiritual needs.”

CBS-CS prides itself on meeting people where they are, yet it became clear that during the most well-attended services of the year, many congregants were struggling to connect with the worship experience.

“It is a distinctive challenge for Conservative congregations,” Rabbi Steinitz explains. “The liturgy is expected to remain recognizable and rooted in tradition, yet our congregations include people with vastly different backgrounds and expectations. Some are perfectly at home in an all-Hebrew service. Others are returning to synagogue after years away, accompanying a Jewish spouse or partner, or exploring Judaism for the first time. The question becomes: How do you honor tradition while creating meaningful entry points for everyone?”

The answer, he concluded, was not to replace the existing service, but to broaden the congregation’s offerings. While the first day of Rosh HaShanah will remain unchanged, the second day will feature a new prayer experience. Together with newly ordained Rabbi Trish Abrams, Rabbi Steinitz has crafted a musical and reflective service honoring tradition while inviting deeper participation. The liturgy remains recognizably Conservative, while the experience emphasizes communal singing, thoughtful reflection, and active engagement.

“We are very excited about this new offering,” Rabbi Steinitz says. “The collaborative process challenged both Rabbi Abrams and me to step outside our comfort zones and pushed our creativity further than either of us could have gone alone.”

As in previous years, the service will be followed by a community luncheon. While RSVPs are required for security purposes, High Holy Day services at CBS-CS are open to everyone, and no tickets are required. To RSVP, visit tinyurl.com/highholidays-26.

Playmakers Author to Speak at Joint TAY/TC Program

by Karen J. Docter

What do the following have in common? Teddy Bear, Mr. Potato Head, GI Joe, Barbie, Lionel trains, Hot Wheels, Superman, Spiderman, Lil Abner, carousel horses, Popeye, Topps baseball cards, Groucho glasses, fake vomit, Archie comics, *Curious George*, *Where the Wild Thing Are*, Shirley Temple dolls, Madame Alexander dolls, *Eloise*, and Rubik’s Cube?

Well, aside from the fact that everyone reading this article loved at least one of these as a child, every toy mentioned (and there are so many more) was created and manufactured by Jews.



On Sunday, October 18th at 9:30 am at 450 Kimber Road, the Temple Adath Yeshurun Adult Education Committee and the Temple Concord Library Committee welcome Michael Kimmel, distinguished professor emeritus of sociology at Stony Brook University, to discuss his latest book, *Playmakers: The Jewish Entrepreneurs Who Created the Toy Industry in America*.

Playmakers recounts the previously untold story of the first-generation Jewish American toymakers who literally manufactured 20th century childhood. Professor Kimmel’s narrative begins with a family story. His great-great-uncle Morris Michtom created the Teddy Bear in 1902 and founded the Ideal Toy Company four years later. *Playmakers* then showcases the prominent first-generation Jews in the world of toys, comic strips, comic books, children’s books and developmental psychologists and parenting experts who composed that world.

Playmakers is more than the first full-scale history of the toy industry in the United States. It brings to life the colorful, imaginative, restless Jewish entrepreneurs who followed the promise of the American Dream and created an empire. In a lively and often funny presentation filled with images of toys, dolls, comic books and children’s books, Professor Kimmel explores the Jewish roots of the toys which shaped childhoods and of the books that were read to children and which they in turn read to their children and grandchildren. Impoverished Yiddish-speaking tenement Jews conceived and constructed a childhood they themselves never had.

For more information, email education@adath.org. Registration is required: tinyurl.com/PlaymakersSYR.



A New Year Under One Roof at 450 Kimber Road

This year, both Temple Adath Yeshurun and Temple Concord will celebrate the high holidays at 450 Kimber Road. For the past two years, the Jewish Community Center generously provided space and support so that Temple Concord could hold its high holiday services in the gym and auditorium. After careful consideration and sound testing this spring, Temple Adath’s and Temple Concord’s leadership determined that the building can serve both congregations for the high holidays this year.

Temple Concord’s High Holiday season opens with a family Selichot program on Saturday evening, September 5. The main Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services will be held in the ballroom. One of the most anticipated moments will come at the close of Yom Kippur, when the congregation will host its first in-person community break-the-fast since before the COVID-19 pandemic, generously sponsored by the congregation’s Brotherhood and Sisterhood groups.

The new year also opens another full year of programming at Temple Concord. Shabbat baBayit, where congregants open their homes to one another to welcome Shabbat, and intergenerational monthly Simchat Shabbat congregational dinners return for a second year. The Taste of Judaism series will explore the Jewish histories of Spain, Japan, Ireland, and China. The Regina F. Goldenberg series will bring Jewish authors to Syracuse both in person and via Zoom in partnership with the Jewish Book Council. The year’s adult B’nei Mitzvah classes will culminate in a celebration at erev Shavuot services. Additional programs include a series of Shabbat lunch-and-learn opportunities with Rabbi Emanuel, several organized social gatherings for parents of older teens and empty nesters, monthly Coffee with the President meetings during religious school, and a full calendar of programs for Brotherhood and Sisterhood.

In December, Mookey Van Orden and Temple Concord will hold auditions for *The Prince of Egypt*, the congregation’s first full-length musical, set for March 2027 and made possible by a grant from the Phillip L. Holstein Community Program Fund of the Jewish Federation of Central New York. All community members are welcome to audition, whether on stage, in the chorus, or behind the scenes.

All are warmly invited to celebrate the high holidays at Temple Concord. To learn more, reach Executive Director Aaron Spitzer at 315-475-9952 or aaron@templeconcord.org.

A Golden Opportunity

by Megan Coleman-Sykes, 5787 Federation Campaign Chair



When the Israelites were asked to build the *mishkan*—the portable sanctuary that would travel with them through the wilderness—the Torah commanded every adult to contribute a half-shekel, specifying that “the rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less.” The base of the community was built on a gift modest enough that everyone could give it, and equal enough that no one could buy a larger share of belonging. The Federation is the *mishkan* of our community, and it needs everyone’s support to keep it strong. Every gift matters, no matter its size. Each year, Federation hosts a community-

wide Thank You event, open to every member who has supported its work over the past year, whatever the size of the gift.

But the story has another twist. A call went out for materials for the *mishkan*: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson yarns; goat hair, ram skins, acacia wood, oil, and spices. The Torah says these gifts came from “every person whose heart moved them.” This freewill offering, called *nedavah*, teaches that the flourishing of the community is lifted up by those whose means allow them to give in abundance—to give gold.

When we gather to honor major donors, we are not crowning a class of people above the rest of us. We are doing exactly what our ancestors did when the gold was given to the sanctuary: saying thank you for the gold, aware all the while that the half-shekels and the goat hair matter equally. We do this because our tradition teaches that if we bless what is good, more of it will come.

In our community, the people who “give gold” have a name: The Luminary Society. Its members donate \$6,000 or more each year to the Jewish Federation of Central New York, gifts that sustain the many programs and institutions holding our community together. Each year, we gather to thank those whose hearts have moved them to give in this way.

In 2026, our Luminary Society members will be honored with an evening reception on October 18 at one of the most distinctive settings our city has to offer: the newly remodeled and reopened Mizpah Tower. For decades, The Mizpah was unused. Now this historic Gothic landmark has been brought back to life by developer Michael Green. The iconic six-story space was transformed into a wine sanctuary and luxury apartments. The Onondaga Historical Association is teaming up with Greene to speak to the Luminaries about this \$7 million architectural transformation. To make the event even more special, owner Tom Cerio has offered to take Luminary guests on a tour of his penthouse atop the tower. The evening will also feature a delectable array of kosher food and drink.

If, after reading this, you find yourself wondering what it would mean to take a place at that table, know that an invitation can be yours. The Luminary Society is not a closed circle but a widening one. A gift that reaches that level is welcomed not as the price of belonging, but as a freewill offering in the oldest sense: the heart, moved, giving what it is able to give. Whenever you are ready, there is room.

HADASHOT TOVOT



Katherine (Kiru) Morrisette is an award-winning author who just completed her bachelor’s degree in microbiology, immunology, and molecular genetics at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is an HHMI-affiliated microbiologist studying actinobacteriophages and recently discovered a novel species, known as AstralTadpole. She previously worked as a research assistant in a behavioral neuroscience laboratory at the University of California, Riverside that studies the etiology and effects of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in mouse models. She also taught a course at UC Riverside that she designed and developed, entitled “Emerging Cancer Treatments in the 21st Century.” In 2023, she gave a TEDx talk about the neuropsychology of failure, entitled “How to Fail Successfully,” which has been distributed internationally, and she is currently writing a book on the same topic. She later discovered a passion for criminal law and justice, working at Kavetsky Law and at the Law Offices of the Public Defender, County of Riverside. She hopes to become a criminal defense lawyer, a law professor, and a specialist in forensic law. To that end, she is attending Yale Law School this fall. Katherine is a graduate of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, Class of 2014.



Ithaca College Hillel has announced that Calle Schueler will serve as its next executive director. In this role, Calle will oversee IC Hillel and create meaningful experiences, programming, and community for the 1,100 Jewish undergraduate students at the college. Calle will succeed executive director Julie Boden Adams, who served IC Hillel for the past two years. Calle recently served as director of engagement and education at Temple Beth-El in Ithaca, where they directed the religious school, restructured teen programming, and led family and intergenerational programming initiatives. In addition to their work with Temple Beth-El, Calle is already deeply connected to the IC Hillel community, having led Shabbat services throughout the past year. “I am thrilled to be stepping into the role of executive director of Ithaca College Hillel and to build on the strong foundation laid by Julie Boden Adams and the many dedicated students, staff, alumni, and campus partners who have shaped this vibrant organization,” said Calle Schueler, the incoming executive director of IC Hillel. “I look forward to partnering with students to create a Jewish home on campus that reflects the diversity of their experiences and interests, giving them opportunities to learn, lead, connect, and find their own place within Jewish life and community. I am also excited to collaborate with the staff and student leaders of Muller Chapel to create spaces for dialogue, learning, and friendship across traditions and identities. My hope is to foster a welcoming center for Jewish life where all students can come together, build lasting relationships, and feel a genuine sense of belonging.” “Calle will bring significant higher education experience and deep knowledge of both Ithaca College and the broader Ithaca Jewish community. We’re delighted to have Calle stepping in to lead Ithaca Hillel at this critical juncture,” said Adam Lehman, president and CEO of Hillel International. Calle is a member of the Class of 2012 of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School.

Bo Garelick has a passion for languages.

Arriving at J-D middle school in sixth grade, he started learning French for the first time, while also working on his Hebrew at home with Morah Michal, and Yiddish, with books and the help of his Bubby. This year, he was given a Spanish textbook by a teacher at school and he taught himself that language, as well as learning some basic Italian because those languages are similar. Without ever taking a class, he sat for the National Spanish language exam and scored exemplary. In the spring, he received an award and letter of recognition for receiving the highest score in all of Central New York on the national French language exam. In March, he decided to start teaching himself Chinese and he is avidly working on learning that language as well.



Back-to-School at the JCC

by Ashley Schmitz

As families settle into new school routines, the Sam Pomeranz Jewish Community Center of Syracuse is once again opening its doors for a fall season of learning, friendship and enrichment for children from infancy to sixth grade.

For the youngest members of the community, the Jerome & Phyllis Charney Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) provides a nurturing environment where children ages six weeks to five years old can build confidence, develop new skills and establish a lifelong love of learning. Through hands-on experiences in art, language, literacy, math and imaginative play, children strengthen their social, emotional, physical and intellectual development while preparing for kindergarten.



Families with children in kindergarten through sixth grade can also take advantage of the JCC's Before School and After School Programs. Before Care begins each weekday at 7 am and is offered to students in the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and Jamesville-DeWitt school district. The After Care Program runs from 3 to 6 pm and is offered to SHDS, Jamesville-DeWitt and Fayetteville-Manlius school districts. The JCC provides complimentary bus services to transport students from the

Fayetteville-Manlius School District and Ed Smith Elementary while students in the Jamesville-DeWitt School District are transported directly to the JCC pending the parents' coordination with their specific school.

Once enrolled in the After Care Program, students are provided several opportunities to stay active, engaged and supported throughout the afternoon, whether finishing homework, making crafts, participating in gym activities or simply spending time with friends. This support extends beyond the regular school week with Vacation Camps and School Closure Care, giving children a fun, active place to spend school holidays, teacher conference days and more. Vacation Camps and School Closure Care is available to both members and non-members while a JCC Family membership is required to enroll in the Before and After School Care Program.

Children looking to be more active after school can also enroll in one of the JCC's Youth Athletics Enrichment Classes. Open to ages three through sixth grade, the program includes gymnastics, dance, rookie sports and ninja warriors.



Enrichment classes are open to the entire community, with discounted rates for families with a JCC membership.

"Starting a new school year is an exciting milestone for every child, and we're proud to provide a place where they feel supported, encouraged and excited to learn," says Pamela Ranieri, Director of Children's Programming. "Whether it's a baby's first classroom experience or an elementary student joining us after school, we strive to create an environment where every child

feels safe, confident and valued."

For more information or to register for the Before and After School Program or Vacation Camps, visit jccsy.org/children-and-teens/school-age/ or contact Kevin Smith at ksmith@jccsy.org. For information or to register for enrichment classes, contact Sherri Lamanna at slamanna@jccsy.org.

JCC Writers' Group Builds Community through Creativity

by Ashley Schmitz

Writers of all experience levels and genres are invited to find inspiration, sharpen their craft and connect with fellow storytellers through the Jewish

Community Center of Syracuse's Writers' Group, led by Community Programming Director Raven DiSalvo-Hess. Meeting from 1 to 3 pm on the second and fourth Sunday of each month, the group offers two distinct experiences designed to support writers at every stage of the creative process.



The second Sunday meeting focuses on a shared writing prompt, giving participants time to write, share their work and receive constructive feedback from fellow writers. The fourth Sunday is dedicated to workshop-style discussions, where participants can submit up to 2,000 words in advance for thoughtful group critique. Regular attendance is

not required as writers can pick and choose which session(s) to attend, allowing them to participate in the format that best fits their schedules and creative goals.

The JCC Writers' Group welcomes anyone looking for dedicated time to write, learn and grow alongside a supportive community of fellow writers. "I'm excited for this group to give local writers a place to connect with one another as they develop their writing skills," says DiSalvo-Hess.

To learn more about the Writers' Group or to register for upcoming sessions, visit jccsy.org/writers-group.

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JCC Introduces New Reformer Pilates Classes for Every Body

by Ashley Schmitz

A new fitness experience is coming to the Jewish Community Center of Syracuse, offering members and non-members alike an opportunity to strengthen, stretch and move with confidence through small-group Reformer Pilates classes. Using the Merrithew V2 Max Reformer, the JCC brings one of the fastest growing forms of low-impact exercises to its fitness schedule. Designed for participants of all experience levels, the classes combine individualized instruction with the benefits of a supportive small group environment.

Unlike traditional mat pilates, Reformer Pilates uses specialized equipment with adjustable spring resistance to provide a full-body workout that improves strength, flexibility, balance and posture. Because the resistance can be tailored to each individual, the classes are ideal for beginners, seasoned Pilates enthusiasts, athletes, and older adults. Each 55-minute class is limited to just four participants, allowing instructors to provide personalized guidance, proper form corrections and exercise modifications based on each person's goals and ability. The program follows the internationally recognized STOTT PILATES® method, focusing on core strength, stability, mobility and mindful movement.



Classes are held Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 9:00 to 9:55 am. Rates are \$39 per class for JCC members and \$45 per class for non-members. Discounted class packages are also available, with five classes priced at \$180 for members and \$220 for non-members, or ten classes for \$325 for members and \$400 for non-members. Those new to the Reformer are encouraged to begin with a private introductory session to build confidence and learn proper technique before joining a group class.

Whether one is looking for a fresh fitness routine, a low-impact workout that delivers noticeable results or a welcoming place to continue a Pilates journey, the JCC's new Reformer Pilates classes are designed to help every participant reach their goals.

To learn more or to schedule a first session, visit jccsy.org/fitness-center/#reformer-pilates-training

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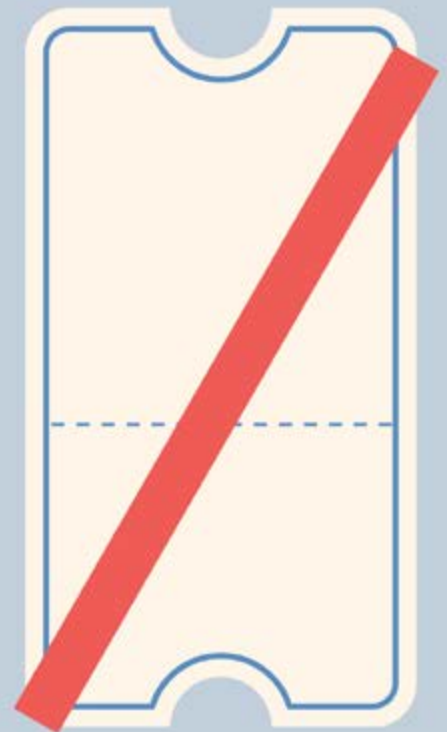
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Freedom from Panic: Evidence-Based Techniques to End Avoidance and Stop Panic Before It Stops You

by Bonnie Zucker, PhD

Anyone who has experienced a panic attack knows the particular terror of it: a racing heart, a sense of impending doom, the feeling that one's own body has become an enemy. For those caught in the panic cycle, Dr. Bonnie Zucker's *Freedom from Panic* is a genuinely useful guide, combining clinical rigor with a warm and human touch.



Zucker, who grew up in Central New York, is a psychologist specializing in anxiety disorders with deep roots in cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). She conducts psychotherapy utilizing a CBT approach to the treatment of generalized and social anxiety, panic disorder, and phobias, and that expertise is evident on every page of this book. She is not writing from a theoretical remove. She writes as a clinician who has sat across from countless people in the grip of panic and figured out, over years of practice, what actually helps.

The book's central strength is its accessibility. Zucker demystifies panic and distills CBT's research-backed strategies into a practical guide. She explains why panic happens physiologically and psychologically, thereby removing its mystique and its power. Understanding that a panic attack, however awful, is not dangerous is itself a therapeutic insight, and Zucker delivers it clearly and repeatedly. She leads the reader step by step through a proven recovery plan that is informative, pragmatic, and emotionally engaging and explains how to stop panic attacks and keep them away for good.

What separates this book from the crowded field of anxiety self-help is Zucker's tone. She never minimizes the genuine suffering that panic disorder causes, but she also never catastrophizes it. The message the book delivers is: *this is real, but it is also treatable, and you can get through it.*

Freedom from Panic is an excellent book for anyone struggling with panic attacks. It is science-backed, compassionately written, and eminently practical. Whether a person is newly acquainted with panic or has been living with it for years, Zucker offers both understanding and a clear path forward.

Epstein Launches Two New Teen Programs for 5787

by Aaron Spitzer

The Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Studies will kick off the new school year on Tuesday, September 22, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at 450 Kimber Road. The evening will begin with an exciting special announcement at 6:30 pm and the entire community is invited to attend. Students in grades 7-12 are welcome to stay for the first night of classes.

This year, Epstein students will not just learn about Jewish history, identity, and community; they will help shape how those stories are told.

Epstein is launching two new teen leadership opportunities: the Yom *HaShoah* Documentary Project and Student to Student.

Thanks to the support of a Philip L. Holstein Community Fund Program Grant, and in partnership with the Yom *HaShoah* Committee, Epstein students will help preserve the testimony of Central New York Holocaust survivors. Students will interview survivors, record their stories, and help create a documentary to be premiered at the community Yom *HaShoah* observance in 2027.

The *Shoah* course connected to this project will be taught by Dr. Eileen Angelini, who brings deep experience and passion for Holocaust education. Dr. Angelini earned her Ph.D. in French Studies from Brown University, where her research explored the impact of World War II on French authors. Her work has led her to interview and build relationships with Holocaust survivors, hidden children, Righteous Gentiles, and members of the French Resistance. She has also been honored by the French government as a *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques*.

In partnership with the Jewish Federation, Epstein will also launch **Student to Student**, a peer education program open to students in grades 10-12. **Student to Student** trains Jewish teens to speak with non-Jewish students in area schools about Judaism

and Jewish life. These are real conversations—teen to teen—about holidays, family traditions, Israel, antisemitism, Jewish identity, and what it feels like to be Jewish right now. For non-Jewish students, the program makes Judaism more personal and relatable. For Jewish teens, it builds confidence, public speaking skills, and the ability to answer questions honestly and thoughtfully. Alumni of the program have reported that **Student to Student** was the best preparation they received for life on campus, where Jewish students are often asked to explain, defend, or represent Jewish identity in charged and complicated moments.

Both programs are part of Epstein's larger goal of helping teens develop their own Jewish identities, speak about those identities with confidence, and prepare for life on campus and beyond. **Students interested in Student to Student or in any Epstein programs should contact Aaron Spitzer at aaron@epsteincny.org.**

NCJW Syracuse Section Gives to Federation's Magen Circle, Honoring Susan DeMari

The Syracuse Section of the National Council of Jewish Women has announced a gift of \$3,600 to the Jewish Federation of Central New York's Magen Circle, the giving society dedicated to raising funds for the security of the local Jewish community. The funds were raised through tributes made in honor of Susan Case DeMari celebrating her work as the Federation's founding security director.

DeMari was honored last year with Syracuse Section's Hannah G. Solomon Award, NCJW's highest honor, presented to an individual whose leadership has expanded opportunities for others and advanced causes NCJW holds dear, notably the wellbeing of women, children, and families. She was recognized for her pioneering work helping to build the community's approach to safeguarding synagogues, schools, and communal spaces at a time when the need for professional Jewish communal security was only beginning to be widely understood.

In directing this gift to the Magen Circle in DeMari's name, NCJW Syracuse Section continues a tradition reaching back to the organization's founding in 1893 by Hannah G. Solomon: using the collective strength of Jewish women to fund programs that protect and uplift women, children, and families. This gift extends that legacy into the realm of communal security. The Syracuse Section's contribution is earmarked to be used as part of a matching grant from the Tepper Foundation's Security Fund, administered through the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA). Launched in response to a sharp rise in antisemitic incidents nationwide, the fund has provided more than \$23 million in security grants to Jewish Federations and communal organizations across North America. It is directed specifically at protecting the youngest members of the Jewish community, funding security personnel and related safety measures at the sites where young children gather.

NEW YEAR – NEW SUNDAY CINEMA SERIES

For the past four years, the Federation has made a *shidduch* with ChaiFlicks to obtain licenses for members of our community who would like to share in the experience of watching a dozen movies and then participating in fascinating, intelligent, meaningful discussions about them.

ChaiFlicks is a premier niche streaming platform often described as the “Netflix for Jewish and Israeli content.” It offers a wide variety of ad-free programming, including award-winning films, popular TV series, and documentaries, which group members can also enjoy at their convenience.

Following is a list of the twelve movies we will view and discuss in 5787. The sessions are moderated (very well) by Sam Young and the discussions are compelling. *If you would like to participate in the 5787 Sunday Cinema Series, please email bdavis@jewishfederationcny.org no later than September 10. Participation is limited and licenses cannot be shared.*

October 11

Where Life Begins

A romantic drama set during the annual citron harvest in southern Italy.

November 15

No Name Restaurant

An ultra-Orthodox Brooklyn Jew stranded in Alexandria, Egypt is pressed into service as the desperately needed tenth man to save the last synagogue of what was once the world’s largest Jewish community.

December 13

Moos

A young Dutch woman who gave up her dreams to care for her father gets an unexpected jolt when a childhood friend arrives from Israel on Hanukkah.

January 10

All About the Levkoviches

A stubborn boxing coach hasn’t spoken to his estranged religious son in years until circumstances force a reunion.

February 14

The Names of Love

A French comedy about a young liberal woman who seduces right-wing men to convert them politically until she meets a middle-aged Jewish man who upends her whole system.

March 14

Operation Grandma

Three very different brothers—an army officer, an electrician, and a wimpy field trip guide—navigate a series of mishaps trying to bury their grandmother in her kibbutz cemetery.



April 11

The Other Story

Director Avi Nesher’s Jerusalem drama about two rebellious young women from warring families whose lives collide unexpectedly.

May 16

Frau Stern

A 90-year-old German woman in remarkable health whose daughter and granddaughter dote on her.

June 13

The Human Resources Manager

The HR manager of Jerusalem’s biggest bakery is sent on an unlikely journey after a foreign worker is killed in a bombing and the bakery is accused of indifference. Dark comedy with real heart.

July 11

Schachten

Victor Dessauer, son of a young Jewish businessman, resolves to take the law into his own hands in the late 1960s after failing to secure just punishment for the Nazi concentration camp commandant who tortured his parents.

August 15

Between Worlds

A tense moving Israeli drama. Set entirely in a Jerusalem hospital, the film follows a Jewish woman and an Arab woman whose paths cross after a terror attack.

September 12

Martha Lieberman: a stolen life

Berlin, in the war year of 1943. The upper class widow Martha Lieberman could never have imagined having to leave her beloved homeland at the age of 85.

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Jewish Anxiety Humor: Laughing to Keep from Crying

What's the difference between a pessimist and an optimist? The pessimist says things can't get any worse. The optimist says, "Yes they can." In Jewish humor, the optimist is not wrong. Another Jewish joke: two old Jewish men are sitting on a park bench. One turns to the other and says, "Could be worse." The other thinks for a moment and says, "How?" The first man shrugs: "I don't know, but it could be."

Both jokes capture something essential to Jewish humor: an intimacy with dread, a refusal to pretend that things are fine, and, uniquely, comfort in that shared acknowledgment. Jewish humor (and arguably Jewish existence) has long been inseparable from anxiety, and understanding why reveals how a society transforms suffering into art.

Jewish humor developed over centuries of lives lived in diaspora—in the ghettos of medieval cities, the shtetls of eastern Europe, in communities perpetually at the peripheries of societies that could turn hostile without warning. Lacking political power, and with physical safety never guaranteed, laughter became one of the few things Jews could hold onto. There is a Yiddish term for this: *bitterer gelekter*—bitter laughter. Humor was a way of staring at misery and refusing to be consumed by it. A joke was a small act of defiance, cosmic in scope.

In this, anxiety humor is distinct from neurotic humor. The neurotic says, "I'm worried about my job." The anxious Jew says, "I'm worried about my job, and also the universe is indifferent, and also somehow this is my fault." Woody Allen made a career of anxiety humor. His comedy doesn't just worry, it worries philosophically. In *Annie Hall*, Alvy Singer can't enjoy his childhood because he's already aware that the universe is expanding, which will eventually destroy everything, so why do homework? Anxiety isn't a character flaw to overcome; it's the only rational response to existence.

Jewish anxiety humor follows recognizable structures:

Catastrophizing as punchline: The joke escalates worry to its most extreme conclusion, and the extremity itself becomes funny. "My doctor told me I



need to watch my drinking. Now I drink in front of a mirror."

Preemptive defeat: The comedian doesn't wait to be rejected or harmed so they get there first. Self-deprecation isn't humility; it's armor. If I mock myself, your punch has nowhere to land. Groucho Marx gave the best example when he said, "I wouldn't want to belong to any club that would have me as a member."

The worried question as statement: Jewish comedic rhythm often ends on an unanswered question, implying the answer is too bleak to speak aloud. "You should live so long—but why would you want to?"

Inversion of expected comfort: Where other traditions offer reassurance, Jewish humor does the opposite. The famous Jewish telegram: "Start worrying. Details to follow."

The body as unreliable, aging and treasonous: Hypochondria that turns out to be justified is a recurring motif. "My doctor told me I had six months to live. I told him I couldn't pay the bill. He gave me another six months."

The Jewish mother as comic archetype: Simultaneously suffocating and devoted, weaponizing guilt with surgical precision, the Jewish mother is an anxiety delivery system. Her love is expressed as worry, her worry as guilt, her guilt as love. "Don't worry about

me. I'll just sit here in the dark." It's manipulative and funny precisely because the manipulation comes from a genuine, overwhelming terror that something bad will happen to the people she loves.

What unites these structures is not just subject matter but the particular relationship between the comedian and their dread. The joke is never an escape from anxiety; it's an insistence on looking directly at it and inviting the listener to look too. Jewish humor has always been communal humor. The laugh is never just at the joke; it's at the recognition of the background. A non-Jew hears the punchline; a Jew hears the punchline and also the whole history behind it. That doubling is part of what makes the laughter so specifically Jewish, and so specifically cathartic. When a room of people laughs together at their shared dread, the anxiety becomes manageable, held in common and somehow relieved.

That is the wisdom embedded in Jewish anxiety humor. A people that has experienced catastrophe—expulsion, pogrom, genocide—and responds with humor, has recognized something powerful: anxiety, when named and examined and shared, loses some of its power.

Anxiety Humor

Two Jews are sitting on a park bench.

One says, "How's business?"

The other says, "Terrible."

"How's your health?"

"Terrible."

"How are the children?"

"Wonderful."

"Thank God," says the first.

"Don't thank God yet," says the second.

"They want to move back home."

A Jewish mother calls her son.

"Are you eating?"

"Yes, Mom."

"Are you sleeping?"

"Yes, Mom."

"Are you happy?"

A long pause.

"Why? What's wrong?"

A Jewish guy checks into a luxury hotel.

The clerk says, "If there's anything you need, just ask."

The man replies, "Why? What's missing?"

Same guy buys a brand-new car.

On the first night he can't sleep.

His wife asks why.

He says:

"Somewhere out there is the first scratch."

"Why be happy today when something could go wrong tomorrow?"

"Jewish guilt is anxiety that has achieved consciousness."

I don't suffer from anxiety. I enjoy every minute of it.

Just because I'm worried doesn't mean nothing's wrong.

Paranoia is simply having all the facts.

The pessimist complains about the problem. The optimist ignores the problem. The Jewish mother calls every fifteen minutes to discuss the problem.

I don't jump to conclusions. I slowly and carefully panic my way there

Every silver lining has a cloud.

KATHY SOLOMON

June 30, 2026

Kathy Solomon, 78, died on Tuesday June 30th at Crouse Hospital after a 4 1/2 year battle towards recovery after a stroke.

Born in Syracuse on December 12, 1947 to Erwin and Helen Drumm, she had been a life resident of Syracuse until 2018 when she became a resident of Sarasota, FL and spent a good part of the year there.

Her life interests were taking care of her family, gardening, and homemaking. She was a very creative person who saw beauty where others would pass by and not notice. She loved to entertain, set a beautiful table and served wonderful meals. To be included on her guest list was always a privileged treat.

Her family includes her husband Paul of 52 years, their sons Josh (Sarah) and Zak, grandchildren Ella and Noah, her brother John (Mary Beth) Drumm, and Erwin Drumm. The family will have a private celebration of her life.

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PETER M. MATLOW

July 4, 2026

Peter M. Matlow, 87, passed away on July 4, 2026 in Delray Beach, FL, surrounded by his family. In 1939, he was born in Syracuse to Hyman and Rose Blumberg Matlow. He graduated from Nottingham High School and the Manlius Military Academy. Peter began his college studies at Michigan State, which he loved, and graduated from Syracuse University's School of Business. He was a huge fan of Syracuse University athletics.

After college, Peter joined the family's scrap metal recycling company based in Solvay with his father and brother. From 1980 to 2009, he was its sole owner and president. He was a lifelong member of Temple Adath Yeshurun and for many years a member of the former Lafayette Country Club and Solvay-Geddes Rotary Club. Peter was a Syracuse resident until retiring to Florida in 2012.

Peter was a devoted husband, father and grandfather. His family includes his wife Nancy of 54 years; their children Daniel (Johanna) Matlow, Hilary (Scott) Jones, and Robyn (Jason) Shiroff; grandchildren Tyler and Dax Jones; Maren, and Evan Shiroff; nieces Susan and Jennifer Matlow; and sister-in-law Marcy Matlow Berenson. Peter was pre-deceased by his parents Hyman and Rose; Nancy's parents Dr. Jerome and Eileen Wayne; his brother Richard, and his sister-in-law Candace Wayne.

The family is grateful to Dr. William Berkery of Syracuse, and his Florida doctors, Dr. Leor Skocyzlas, Dr. Eric Heller, Dr. Jared Jaffe, Dr. Eric Weiss, as well as countless nurses and hospital aides, without whom his long life would not have been possible.

Contributions to perpetuate his memory may be made to Temple Adath Yeshurun, Central New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, or the charity of one's choosing.

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DOUGLAS “DOUG” PAUL
July 20, 2026



Douglas “Doug” Paul passed away Monday afternoon at Crouse Hospital surrounded by the love of those who meant the most to him.

Doug was a devoted husband, loyal friend, and a man of quiet strength and resilience. Together for 42 years, he shared an extraordinary life with his beloved wife Leesa. Together they built a marriage founded on unconditional love, laughter, perseverance, and unwavering commitment. Through every joy and every challenge, they faced life side by side.

Doug will be remembered for his kind heart, gentle spirit, and determination. Despite the many health challenges he faced over the years, he continued to meet each day with courage and inspired those around him with his perseverance. His greatest happiness was simply being home with Leesa, enjoying the comfort of their life together and the companionship of their beloved dog, Molly.

He was predeceased by his parents, Audrey and Sparky Paul, and his brother-in-law, Tim Sprague.

His family includes his beloved wife of 42 years, Leesa Paul; his brother, David (Antoni) Paul; his sisters, Lori (John) Kozlowski, Linda (Scott) Eckler, Lisa (Fred) Mento, Diane (Guy) Raymond, and Debbie Caviness; as well as many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews, all of whom will cherish his memory.

Doug’s family would like to thank the physicians, nurses, therapists, and caregivers who cared for him with compassion and dignity throughout his illness. A celebration of Doug’s life will be private for the immediate family.

Contributions to Leesa to help offset medical expenses would be most appreciated.
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SARAH L. ALPERT
July 24, 2026

Sarah L. Alpert, 93, a life resident of Syracuse, passed away peacefully on July 24, 2026 at Menorah Park. Sally, as she was known, was born to Marshal Ackles and Louise Grillot Ackles in Syracuse in 1933. Sally worked for several local companies, but most proudly ended her career helping woman re-enter the workforce as part of the Displaced Homemaker Program. She was a member of Congregation Beth El until its close. Sally lived a life marked by kindness, empathy, and unwavering devotion to family.

Sally is survived by two sons, Benjamin (Patricia) Alpert and Samuel (Tracy) Alpert, six grandchildren, Victoria (Michael) Morgan, Rachel Alpert, Danielle Alpert, Gabriel Alpert, Nathan Alpert, and Zachary Alpert, and one great-granddaughter, Eloise Morgan. She was predeceased by her husband of 43 years, Louis Alpert, her son Joseph Alpert, and her 5 sisters (Merle Rickabaugh, Marylea DePaul, Nettie Williamson, Janice Rotunno, and Zephia Harris).

Funeral services will be conducted on Tuesday, July 28, 2026, promptly at 11 am at the Birnbaum Funeral Chapel, 3690 Erie Blvd East, DeWitt, NY, in the Fairchild and Meech building. Burial will immediately follow. There will be no calling hours. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Menorah Park of CNY.

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ROBERT J. MIRON
July 29, 2026



Robert J. Miron, whose judgment, integrity and quiet leadership helped shape the modern cable television industry while strengthening institutions across Central New York and beyond, died on July 29, 2026 at the age of 89.

For more than half a century, Miron stood at the center of some of the communications industry’s most consequential decisions. As Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Advance/Newhouse Communications, later Chairman of Discovery Communications, and a trusted adviser to generations of industry leaders, he helped build companies, forge partnerships, mentor executives and champion innovations that permanently changed how Americans received news, information and entertainment.

Yet those who knew Bob best rarely began by talking about his accomplishments. They talked instead about his judgment.

If there was an unusually difficult problem to solve, a promising idea to evaluate, or a complicated partnership to build, Bob Miron was often the person people sought. His influence came not from the volume of his voice, but from the confidence he inspired. People trusted him because his judgment was thoughtful, his ethics unwavering, and his word absolute.

John Malone, the cable pioneer and chairman emeritus of Liberty Media, recalled that whenever the industry faced its most difficult challenges, Bob was the one who stepped forward. “I first met Bob Miron in connection with NCTA Board activity,” Malone wrote. “Whenever

there was a difficult task to be led, it always seemed to me that Bob was the voluntary leader.” Malone would become Bob’s partner on many of the defining transactions of the modern cable industry, from Discovery Communications to the creation of Charter Communications. “Bob was a great partner,” he wrote. “He brought wisdom, common sense to every issue... It has been a great honor to be his partner, and his friend.”

Brian Roberts, chairman and chief executive officer of Comcast, described Bob as “the consummate gentleman” and “the moral conscience for an entire industry for over five decades.” “Mostly,” Roberts wrote, “I have sought his wisdom and unique perspective on business issues... but it is his perspective on family and ethics that define his special character.” David Zaslav, president and chief executive officer of Warner Bros. Discovery, whom Bob helped recruit to lead Discovery, called him “one of the great entrepreneurs of his generation” whose leadership and insight “changed my life for the better in so many ways.”

Syracuse University Chancellor Emeritus Kent Syverud shared “Bob Miron loved Syracuse University in action, not just in words. For more than six decades as a Whitman School graduate, and a devoted Life Trustee, he gave SU his time, his generosity, and his belief in what it could become. Miron Victory Court, where thousands of people pass through each year for some of the University’s most seminal academic, social, and athletic events, stands as a lasting testament to that commitment. Syracuse is stronger because of Bob Miron.”

Bob Miron possessed the rare ability not simply to recognize great ideas, but to transform them into enduring institutions. One of those ideas arrived in the mid-1980s, when cable entrepreneur John Hendricks shared his vision for a new television network devoted to discovery, learning and curiosity. Bob listened carefully, sketched a business plan on a dinner napkin, and helped assemble the investment and industry support that gave the young Discovery Channel the foundation it needed to grow into one of the world’s leading media companies. He remained one of Discovery’s guiding leaders for nearly four decades, serving first as a director and later as chairman of its board. That instinct to build defined his career.

After graduating from Syracuse University in January 1959, serving briefly in the U.S. Army, and beginning his career

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with the Newhouse organization, Bob helped guide Advance's expansion into the emerging cable television business. At a time when cable television was little more than a promising experiment, he saw extraordinary potential. Over the following decades he helped build one of the nation's leading cable companies, pioneering improvements in customer service, expanding programming through early microwave distribution, helping fund and guide C-SPAN, promoting Cable in the Classroom and other educational initiatives, and serving two non-consecutive terms as chairman of the National Cable Television Association, an unusual distinction reflecting the confidence his peers placed in his leadership.

Perhaps no partnership better reflected Bob's approach than the one he helped forge between Advance/Newhouse and Time Warner Cable. Where others saw competitors, Bob saw the opportunity to create lasting value through trust. The relationship endured for more than two decades and ultimately helped lay the foundation for Advance's ownership in today's Charter Communications.

Bob never wasted a good idea. If someone proposed an opportunity worth pursuing, he expected it to move forward. If someone made a commitment, he expected it to be honored. He believed good ideas deserved action, promises deserved follow-through, and difficult problems deserved solutions.

Those expectations shaped his family as much as his business life. His children grew up understanding that excellence was expected. Praise was never abundant, not because affection was scarce, but because confidence was expressed differently. Bob believed deeply in the potential of others, often seeing possibilities they did not yet recognize in themselves. He challenged each of his children to become the very best versions of themselves while reminding them of one lesson that guided his own life: "Life is not a dress rehearsal."

Behind those expectations stood unwavering devotion. He was his family's protector, their biggest fan, and the person they knew they could call before dawn because he would already be awake. Long before sunrise, the light in Bob's home office was almost always on. His children grew up expecting to find him there, reading, preparing and thinking about the day ahead. Industry leaders learned the same thing. If they called at five o'clock in the morning, Bob was already at his desk.

The love of Bob's life was Diane Goldblatt Miron. They met one summer evening at the Jersey Shore, where a flirtatious shoulder shrug across a crowded room began a partnership that would last more than six decades. As Bob's career carried them from New Jersey to Birmingham, Alabama, then St. Louis and eventually Syracuse, Diane became his indispensable partner. A teacher by training, she was present with Bob, with colleagues and friends, making every community they joined feel like family, and quietly being the heart behind Bob's public life. They recently celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary. Together they built what Bob always considered his greatest accomplishment, their loving family. He will be fondly remembered and deeply missed.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, and raised in Plainfield, Bob was the son of James Miron and Estelle Newhouse Miron. At Syracuse University, where he earned his degree in marketing in January 1959, he served as coxswain of the men's crew team, directing rowers much larger than himself with calm confidence and steady purpose, an early glimpse of the leader he would become. His relationship with Syracuse would span nearly seven decades. He served as trustee, vice chair and later Life Trustee of Syracuse University, helping guide his alma mater through periods of extraordinary growth and change. Together, Bob and Diane made transformative gifts supporting the Syracuse University libraries, Athletics and the S.I. Newhouse School of Communications. He and Diane were also proud supporters of Diane's alma mater, Kean University, where they supported a wonderful new student center. He also devoted years of service to the Syracuse Jewish Community Center, including serving as its president, reflecting his lifelong commitment to strengthening the civic fabric of the community he loved. As grateful patients, Bob and Diane became generous supporters of Crouse Health, helping establish the Diane and Bob Miron Cardiac Care Center and supporting initiatives that strengthened healthcare throughout Central New York.

Bob's leadership earned many of the communications industry's highest honors, including induction into the Cable Hall of Fame and the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame. Particularly meaningful was his selection as the inaugural recipient of The Cable Center's Bill Bresnan Ethics Award, recognizing the qualities colleagues believed defined him more than any title ever could:

integrity, humility, fairness and ethical leadership.

Away from work, Bob loved golf. Introduced to golf as a young boy by his parents and extended family in New Jersey, he remained an enthusiastic player throughout his life. The game appealed to the same qualities that defined him elsewhere: discipline, patience, honesty and the belief that there was always another round, and another opportunity, to do just a little better. And he had great commitment to life on the St. Lawrence River and the 1000 Islands region.

Above all else, Bob loved his family. He often measured success not by business achievements, but by the lives of those he loved. Together with Diane, he created a family that grew to include three children, nine grandchildren, a great-grandson, and generations who will continue to benefit from the example they set.

He is survived by Diane, his beloved wife of more than six decades; their children, Nomi Bergman (Neal), Steve Miron (Jackie), and Lisa Sidel (Jaret Seiberg); grandchildren Becca Hayworth (Justin), Jimmy Miron (Elizabeth Hodges), Dori Bergman (Brandon Hacken), Danny

Miron (Shay), Rachel Sidel, Anna Sidel, Allie Bergman, Ellie Sidel, and Josh Sidel; great-grandson Solomon Hayworth; his sister, Mitzi Miron Shure (Jerry Wische) and many nieces, nephews, cousins, cherished friends, and colleagues whose lives were enriched by knowing him.

The Miron family extends its heartfelt gratitude to the extraordinary physicians, physician assistants, nurses and caregivers at Crouse Medical Group, Crouse Health, and Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY for the exceptional care, compassion and friendship they provided to Bob and to the entire Miron family over many years.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Miron Cardiac Care Center c/o Crouse Health Foundation in memory of Bob Miron, continuing his lifelong commitment to strengthening the health and well-being of the Syracuse community.

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