

» VETERANS DAY:
Honoring those who serve

Jewish Observer

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November 2026

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

I feel somewhat rueful that this November issue of the *Jewish Observer* does not have Thanksgiving as its theme as Thanksgiving is my favorite American holiday. But my regret is tempered by the fact that I have ignored November as Jewish Book Month for seven years. So we are not canceling Thanksgiving, just refocusing the issue's theme on the books that we are the people of.

They say that the only constant in life is change. I was reminded of that recently—as if the daily news were insufficient reminder—when I was called for grand jury duty. When witnesses were deposed, they were sworn to tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” but did so “under penalty of perjury,” rather than with any help from God. I also learned that “acts of God” in insurance and legal documents are being replaced by “unforeseeable natural events” and realized that even sneezers are now blessed without divine intervention. Apparently even The Almighty is subject to redaction.

The world of books is not immune to change either. Publishing has been reshaped by digital disruption and market consolidation. The Big Four publishers dominate bestseller lists. Amazon controls roughly half of print sales and most e-book sales, but on-demand printing now allows small and niche presses to survive without large print runs. Self-publishing has lost its stigma and broken down traditional publishing gatekeeping. Independent bookstores, declared moribund if not extinct in the 2010s, somehow rebounded in the 2020s. AI-generated manuscripts now create giant slush piles at publishing houses, forcing authors to swear that they wrote their books without help from Claude or ChatGPT and e-books now constitute 15-20% of adult fiction sales. Audiobooks are the fastest-growing book format.

There's an irony to this latter fact: the flourishing audio book format is also the oldest book format. Long before Gutenberg, stories were told, not read. Homer's epics were recited by bards. The Torah was read aloud on market days. Silent, solitary reading is a relatively recent phenomenon, which became widespread centuries after the printing press was invented. Now, with audiobooks, the bard's voice and the *ba'al koreh* have been supplanted by a narrator and a pair of earbuds.

In 2026, American publishers will put out roughly 4.2 million book titles, compared to 400,000 a decade ago, and only 10,000 a century ago. Thousands of those books are published by, about and for Jews. The “People of the Book” sobriquet can also be applied to Israel, which out-publishes far larger nations, with a per capita book publishing output comparable to or higher than that of the United States and China, despite those countries having roughly 35- and 145-times Israel's population.

One can find many lists of popular Jewish books on *My Jewish Learning's Top 100 Jewish Books* or the American Jewish Committee's *Books That Make Us #JewishandProud*, but we thought it would be much more fun to survey the *JO* readership to learn what Jewish books they love most. We are delighted to share the resulting selection of *JO*'s readers' favorite books. There are some unique and intriguing titles on the list. We also are pleased to celebrate some of the people and places who help connect us with the books we need and love: our community's librarians and synagogue libraries, as well as the much-loved PJ Library. Our RAV Properties column also features two local organizations who share our love of books, authors and book clubs, Friends of the County Library and Syracuse Stage.

The Federation partners with and promotes community organizations like Friends of the Community Library and Syracuse Stage because a strong Jewish future depends on a vibrant, connected Central New York. These partnerships extend Federation's civic leadership beyond the Jewish community itself, reflecting the value of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) in action. By supporting local arts, literacy, and culture, the Federation helps sustain the pluralistic community in which Jewish life is woven, while building goodwill and relationships that strengthen its standing across the region.

As November is also the month in which Veterans Day falls, we are pleased to highlight aspects of our community's history and present related to service in the armed forces. Our local history goes back to the Civil War and continues to the present day. Anyone who goes into the lounge at the JCC will see walls of photos of Jewish Syracusans who served their country in the armed forces and we are proud to include aspects of that legacy in this issue.

So even though this issue is not about Thanksgiving, it really is about thanksgiving. It is about being thankful for all the wonderful people who make up our community, both professionals and volunteers, those who serve in the military and those who serve in the arts, in our schools, in our synagogues, who write the books we read and who make our lives better in ways big and small. Thanksgiving is timeless and was never meant to be limited to one day a year—it belongs in every issue, every season, all year long.

ERRATA: The *dvar Torah* in the October issue of the *JO* contained an inadvertent error by the author. The verse (Psalm 29:11) which concludes the article should read: “*May the Lord give strength to His people; may the Lord bless His people with peace.*”

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MESSAGE FROM NAN FECHTNER

Federation Board Chair



As I wrote this article, Rosh Hashanah was behind me, and the Yom Kippur holiday was fast approaching. For me, the days between the holidays are days of reflection, soul searching and a quest for renewal. I try to take a deep dive into my relationships not only with family and friends, but also with my community. Have I lived up to my best intentions? Have I really put my best effort forward? Have I been the best version of myself?

This year, there was an added dimension for me to these days of awe. Having answered the call of the community to serve as the chair of the Federation Board, I had taken a hard look at our organization, from staffing to community

events, fundraising, and finances. Are we living up to our stated mission of building a strong Jewish future in Central New York through philanthropy, engagement, education and advocacy?

With the sudden departure of the CEO, asking the hard questions was even more critical. Are we serving the community as best we can? Are we good stewards of the funds that the community has entrusted to us? Are we meeting the needs and requests of the community? What I have discovered over the weeks of digging into our structure is that our finances and our community responses are fundamentally sound.

The staff that has been either hired or retained over the last year are all top notch and have kept the Federation humming along. They have allowed us to continue to meet community needs and to fulfill our mission within the community.

We have professionalized the office communications and presentations to the community. Our campaign continues to grow and expand. We have worked to make our financial reports more accurate and straightforward. And we have continued to provide excellent and appropriate security when the community calls.

I have been working closely with our interim CEO Barbara Davis to master an understanding of our finances and ongoing projects, and I am happy to say that the Federation is in good shape.

Our Board has continued to develop and take an active role in our events, fundraising and financial oversight. While we are an organization in flux, we have continued to be the Federation that you, our community, expects us to be. We continue to meet the needs of the community through allocations and grants, and through events that bring us together to remember, learn and celebrate.

All this is possible because you, the Syracuse Jewish community, are Federation. You make what we do possible. We are *your* Federation, meeting your needs and answering your calls. We, the professionals and the lay leaders, serve you, our constituents. We work hard to hear what you need and want of us. Sometimes we might miss the mark, but we are always trying to improve and adapt to the changing needs of Jewish Syracuse.

As we move into this new chapter in the Jewish Federation of Central New York we hope that you will be part of shaping our future. We cannot do this work alone. We need you, our community to work together with us to make Federation the best that we can be, serving the needs of all of our community. I hope that you will join me in building upon the work that we have always done. Together, we can meet any challenge that comes our way.

Syracuse Stage presents *The BOOK CLUB Play*



A comedy about books and the people who love them will be presented by Syracuse Stage from January 27 - February 14, 2027.

The BOOK CLUB Play has been described by *The Washington Post* as: "authentically amusing... a comedy of modern literary manners."

Group rates for Syracuse Stage productions generally are open only to groups of ten, but for this production, book clubs of six members are invited to attend at the special reduced group rate. Tickets start at \$35 at SyracuseStage.org/BookClub. **Contact Tracey White at Trwhite@syr.edu or 315-443-9844 to book a group.**

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Simon and the Words of Thanksgiving

*by Rabbi Daniel Jezer, rabbi emeritus of
Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevre Shas*



The preparation for the trip was almost complete. Simon looked over his field with a sense of satisfaction and anticipation. The year had been good to him. King Hezekiah, the king of Judea had not raised taxes that year. As Simon viewed his crops he was thankful that the rains had come in their season, sufficient for his crops to grow in abundance. There was no drought that year. At Passover time he had harvested a good barley crop and now, just before Shavuot he had cut his winter wheat. The grapes were fleshing out; there would be good wine, and the olive trees were foretelling a successful year for olive oil.

With a heart filled with gratitude to God for the bountifulness of his harvest he anticipated his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, as was the custom of the time. He imagined giving his basket of the first fruits to the priest and with great pride and happiness give thanks to his God who had provided him with all.

Simon placed the basket of fruits that he was going to dedicate as a thanksgiving to God on his donkey and began his trek to Jerusalem for the festival of Shavuot. As he approached the city he was joined by throngs of other farmers, each with his thanksgiving to God: a basket of fruits and wheat from the new crop. The mood was jubilant, and the wine flowed.

Upon arriving at the city, Simon was welcomed by a priest who was to guide Simon through the ritual of the thanksgiving. Simon was overjoyed for now he would thank God for his good fortune.

The priest took the basket from Simon, laid it in front of the alter and instructed Simon to recite the words prescribed in the Torah: “My father was a fugitive Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers...and became a great and populous nation... The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us...We cried to the Lord our God...The Lord freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand...He brought us to this place, and gave us a land flowing with milk and honey.” (Deuteronomy 26)

Simon repeated the narrative as he had been instructed. Finishing the words, he stood silent, crestfallen, dejected. Recomposing himself, he

bitterly rebuked the priest. “I left my family, and fields to come on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to praise and give words of thanksgiving to God for my crops and you have me recite a history lesson!”

The priest, who was wise beyond his sacerdotal position attempted to placate Simon, “What are you?” he asked. Without hesitation, Simon answered, “a farmer.”

“Yes,” said the priest, “You farm the land and tend to your crops, but you are not just a farmer. You plant, and you harvest and that is how you earn your living. You are a person created in God’s image with the ability to be a successful farmer. You are a person created in God’s image who has the ability to fulfill the Torah’s goal for you, to raise yourself up above the here and now life of an animal. An animal knows about its daily life as you know about the daily life of your fields. The Torah desires that you rise above that, yes, to farm, and also to use your abilities to think, to know your values, to be unique. At this time of joy and happiness, of thanksgiving for your crops you need remember who you are. You are Simon the son of Eliezer of the tribe of Judea whom the Lord God saved from the tyranny of Egypt and brought us to this land of milk and honey. You must know who you are and that is the importance of reciting the story of our people.”

Simon listened to the words of the priest and then quietly mumbled his own words of Thanksgiving and returned home.

Shield of David: A History of Jewish Servicemen in America's Armed Forces

by Chaim M. Rosenberg

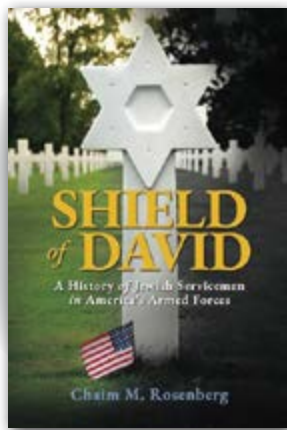
Reviewed by Robert Glatter

From the muskets of the Revolutionary War to the deserts of Iraq and Afghanistan, Jewish men and women have stood in the ranks of America's armed forces for nearly 250 years. In *Shield of David: A History of Jewish Servicemen in America's Armed Forces*, historian Chaim M. Rosenberg traces that long and often overlooked service record, and the result is both a work of solid scholarship and a moving tribute.

Rosenberg begins with the earliest Jewish settlers who arrived in New Amsterdam in 1654 seeking religious freedom and follows their descendants and coreligionists through the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War (fought, poignantly, on both sides), the Spanish-American War, two World Wars, and the conflicts of Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Along the way, he documents how the military itself evolved to accommodate its Jewish servicemembers, from the appointment of Jewish chaplains and the provision of kosher food to the eventual placement of the Star of David on the graves of the fallen.

What elevates the book beyond a straightforward chronology are its human stories. One of the most striking involves the identity of the anonymous sailor's counterpart in the famous V-J Day photograph in Times Square: the nurse in white was Greta Zimmer, a Jewish refugee who had fled Vienna as a teenager while her parents remained behind. Details like this one, rescued from the margins of history, are what make *Shield of David* memorable rather than merely comprehensive.

Rosenberg, a historian who has written widely on New England and Jewish American history, brings a researcher's discipline to the material without letting it grow dry. The chapters move briskly from war to war, but he pauses often enough to let individual soldiers, sailors, chaplains, and nurses step forward from the historical record. The book also touches on the postwar period, noting that the end of the draft and the creation of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973 opened new, non-military avenues through which American Jews would go on to distinguish themselves in the sciences, the arts, government, and business.



For a readership that has long taken pride in Jewish contributions to American civic and cultural life, this book offers a valuable companion volume: a record of Jewish sacrifice and service in uniform, told with care and evident respect. It is a fitting reminder, especially for readers with family members who served, that the story of American Jewry has always included the story of American arms. Highly recommended for anyone with an interest in American Jewish history or military history more broadly.

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My Favorite Jewish Book

The *Jewish Observer's* call for readers' favorite books yielded a wonderfully eclectic list.

Some were childhood favorites which retained their value when their readers were adults and others were new ways of looking at Jewish life and history. **Mike Fixler**, shown with his great-granddaughters, wrote that "My favorite book, after all of these years is ***The Promise*** by Chaim Potok. This book, (one that led me to read all of his other books) combined great historical fiction with some of the true dilemmas and drama that has faced us over the many years." Other readers' favorites appear below.



Joseph and His Brother

by Thomas Mann

This long and difficult book made the book of Genesis come alive for me and made me love Rachel.

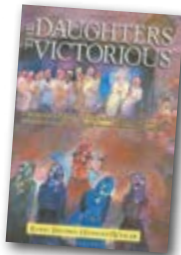
— **Jef Sneider**

The Daughters Victorious

by Shlomo (Stanley) Wexler,
former rabbi of Young Israel
of Syracuse

Equality for women in the Torah. Dramatizes "Pinchas."

— **Sherine (Medjuck) Levine**



It Could Always Be Worse

by Margot Zemach

It's a children's book, but it is so applicable to adults' lives.

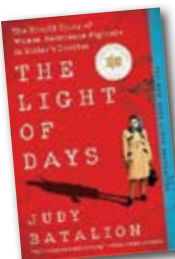
— **Ellyn Roloff**

The Invincible Bridge

by Julie Orringer

The Invincible Bridge is a compelling family story set during but not entirely defined by the Holocaust.

— **Sam Young**



The Light of Days

by Judy Batalion

The Light of Days narrates and highlights the stories of young women who were a part of the Resistance in Poland.

— **Eri Solomon**

Thistlefoot

by Gennarose Hethercott

Thistlefoot is an interesting modern-day conflict through generations.

— **Sarah Young**



All Of A Kind Family

(5 books)

by Sydney Taylor

...because they are fun to read and you learn a lot about early Jewish life for immigrants and about Jewish holidays.

— **Judy Stanton**



The Cat in the Hat (Hebrew version)

by Dr. Seuss

"I like the ending, and I like that it's in Hebrew."

— **Nadav G.**

Meet the Latkes

by Alan Silberberg

"I like how Grandpa tells the story of Chanukah, and the book is funny!"

— **Jack G.**

New Year at the Pier

by April Halprin Wayland

"I like it that they all say sorry for the things they did wrong."

— **Asher A.**



Sammy Spider's First Rosh Hashanah

by Sylvia A. Rouss

"I like it because Sammy didn't know what Rosh Hashanah was, and he went into the house and investigated and made his own Rosh Hashanah celebration."

— **Emma R.**



White Bird

by R.J. Palacio

"I like it because it's a grown-up graphic novel about the Holocaust."

— **Rachel H.**



Book Club Review: Michener's *The Source*

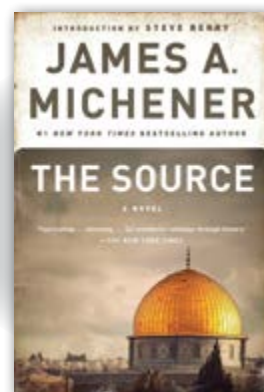
by Angela Locke

A few months ago, I saw that Karen Docter, director of Temple Adath's Adult Education program, was leading a multi-month exploration of James A. Michener's *The Source*. I'd never read it, so I joined. Karen's helpful documents and heartfelt commentary, as well as the insights brought to the discussions by the intelligence of the participants—Ruth Borsky, Rebekah Tanner, Carol Lipson, Norene Lavine, Sybil Schultz—deepened my appreciation of Michener's accomplishment. *The Source* is a deep and seemingly endless book.

Archaeology must be like that, digging through layer after layer of evidence. But what Michener masters is telling the stories based on the evidence, the brutal, poignant, terrifying, heart-breaking, triumphant stories that make up the history of the present-day Middle East, more specifically, of Israel and the Jewish people.

If Leon Uris's *Exodus*, published in 1958, is a trek of thousands of miles (Uris was said to have travelled more than 12,000 cumulative miles for his research), James Michener's *The Source* is a trudge through thousands of years. Though a "tell," an

archaeology dig site, has to begin at the top, the closest to us in time, Michener begins his exploration at the "bottom," about 12,000 years ago, in the fictional town of Makor in the Galilee. The "remembered history of Makor begins" with a cave-dweller named Ur who drinks at a spring, the source of life since those who, about a million years ago, "had wandered up from Africa." Makor in Hebrew means "source," and water, this specific water, is a central point, the source of the civilizations and settlements that Michener, through his brilliant and well-informed imagination, reveals to us. Each chapter finds us in a



different era, from the Mideastern cave dwellers of 10,000 BCE to the Canaanites of 2200 BCE, continuing, chapter by dense chapter, all the way to the Israel of 1964.

Michener alternates telling the current story—interesting in and of itself with the characters working at the tell: the main archaeologist, an Irish Catholic, and his assistants, an Israeli Arab Muslim, an Israeli Jewish man and an Israeli Jewish woman—with the lives pieced together from each level of the dig. You might not think we can relate to ancient characters, but there are themes that tie us to our ancestors. Why is there so much brutality in the world, particularly (later) against the Jews? What decisions do/can we make

in the face of tyranny? What took our G-d so long to appear? And was it our idea of G-d that evolved, moving from the multiple gods of pagan days to the One, or did G-d Himself evolve?

The chapters on the Talmud; the codifying, enforcement, and evolution of Jewish law; the rabbinical arguments; in other words, the development of Judaism, are the most interesting, most fun, and most tragic. The Jewish people have withstood stifling limitations put on us, from outright enslavement to the stripping of our rights to land, business, and liberty. And as a people, though at unimaginable cost to uncountable individuals, we have come through the worst possible horrors. James Michener knows our stories, and he has told them in spellbinding detail.

The Source is not an easy read. The history is brutal. The graphic descriptions of the ways man has created to torture his fellow human beings were, in places, impossible to read. The density of the information can feel oppressive. I had difficulty with certain depictions of historical figures. But Michener gives the world a book about the roots of Jews in Eretz Israel. We will read it. But what about the world?

Bringing Jewish Books and their Authors to Central New York

by Mike Fixler

Around the second week of May each year, five eagerly anticipated boxes of books arrive at Temple Concord from the Jewish Book Council (JBC). For over ten years, Concord has been a member of the JBC, which curates and offers books on subjects ranging from memoirs by famous and not-so-famous Jews, fiction involving Jewish subjects, Jewish music, Jewish-themed cookbooks, and much more.

TC's Library Committee peruses the books to prepare for the Jewish Book Conference that takes place in late May. Library committee members "attend" the virtual conference, during which authors make two-minute pitches for themselves and their works, over three to four days. The committee then chooses authors for TC's Author Series making sure to include a wide variety of genres.

Most of the presentations, happening about once a month, are on ZOOM and are free to attend. There have also been occasional in-person events, such as "tastings" with authors of Jewish cookbooks and a Children's Book Fair with several authors. Authors of children's books are always in person, which the committee believes increases student interest and engagement. The committee has also teamed up with the Jewish Federation, the JCC, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Central New York and local religious schools to co-sponsor attendance at the JBC conference and some of the presentations.

TC is excited about this year's lineup of wonderful authors and their books. Community members are encouraged to keep an eye on the *Jewish Observer* and Community Happenings throughout the year to follow the author sessions and register to attend.





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A Look at Local Collections

Ask four Central New York synagogue librarians what their shul library is like, and you get very different answers because no two Jewish collections in this community look, feel, or function the same way.



If Temple Concord's library has a throughline, it is librarian Sally Cutler's bumper-sticker pitch: "Jewish writing—knowledge, inspiration, entertainment—*L'dor v'dor*." The TC library is a deliberately-shaped institution, and Cutler credits the people behind it. "Having a diverse and engaged TC Library Committee" is what she likes best about her role. "This small, dedicated group works together in so many ways," she says, "for example, by planning and then moderating our annual Author Talk series, by deciding on acquisitions (using the Collection Policy we developed a number of years ago), and by keeping our LibraryThing database up to date." The library also plays an important role in TC's Religious School, with ongoing "Library Time" sessions led by Maggida Jessie Kerr-Whitt.

The collection itself defies the assumption that a synagogue library is static or dated. "They may assume that all the books are about religious practices and that they are old and out-of-date," Sally says of first-time visitors. In reality, membership in the Jewish Book Council Network brings in over 150 newly published titles each year, spanning "history, fiction, the Holocaust, biography, memoir, spirituality, and so forth," alongside a growing children's and young adult collection.

In the same building, the library at Temple Adath Yeshurun tells a different story, about adaptation rather than curation. "I wish I could say I am the librarian at TAY," Rebekah Tanner admits, "but really what we have is a multi-use room with a lot of books that are 25+ years old." Rather than a reading room, it has become the congregation's gathering point: "People come to a variety of public programs there. We hold meetings, relax between services on Yom Kippur, and we do the monthly singing *Kabbalat Shabbat* service live and on Zoom from there."

The room's real transformation came when Temple Concord moved to 450 Kimber Road and Rebekah and others turned a cluttered space into something functional under real constraints—construction on the cantor's office meant lost square footage and a hard cull of the collection. "We weeded about 600 titles," she says of the project she personally coordinated, calling it "massive." The books found a second life beyond TAY's shelves: "Most of the books went to the Eastwood Rotary, which forwarded them to Rotary International's program: Books for the World." What the room becomes next is still an open question—one Rebekah expects the congregation's own long-range planning to answer.

At Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas, the library's defining trait isn't its programming or its footprint—it's a very unique cataloguing system. "In the 1980s, the CBS-CS librarians—Florence Beer and Helene Shrier decided that extant systems

(Library of Congress, Dewey) wouldn't work," explains current co-librarian Gwen Kay. "Everything is Jewish—so they created their own system. A is for Art, B is for Bible (many subcategories, as you'd imagine), all the way to Z (Travel, because T is Theatre)."



That homemade logic sits inside a library with a genuinely devoted following—including some unexpected regulars. "We've had a lot of young tween and teen readers," Gwen says. "They enjoy sitting in comfy chairs and reading (sometimes during services). They likely think they're 'getting away with something,' but in fact it's a win-win." Co-librarian Robin Young shares the same delight in catching readers in the act: "I love seeing people reading during services, and if I'm staring, it's because I want to know what you are reading!"

Neither librarian will commit to a single favorite Jewish book. "It changes depending on the last thing that I read," Gwen says, currently championing the titles behind Jean Meltzer's *Jewish Joy Box*. Robin agrees, pointing to recent favorites like *Night Owls* by A. R. Vishny and Helene Wecker's *The Golem and the Jinni* series—alongside her "absolute favorite Jewish YA author," Sarah Young.

Different histories, different footprints, different systems entirely—but the same underlying purpose. Whether it's a committee-run collection with a formal acquisitions policy, a converted multi-use space still finding its second act, or a self-invented cataloging system dreamed up by two librarians in the 1980s, each of these libraries reflects the congregation that built it. Together, they tell a wider story about how Central New York's Jewish community keeps its books and its readers connected.



The Sam Pomeranz JCC is home to two distinct library collections serving very different stages of Jewish life.

For the youngest members of the community, PJ Library—"PJ" for pajamas—delivers free Jewish bedtime stories, CDs, and DVDs each month to families raising Jewish children from birth through age 8 across Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego Counties. Beyond the books, the program hosts family events built around a Jewish value or tradition, giving parents

and children a chance to connect with other Jewish families while building Jewish life at home—from pool parties and food pantry drives to the PJ Library podcast, "Have I Got a Story for You."

Locally, PJ Library is a program of the JCC of Syracuse, supported by the Pomeranz, Shankman and Martin Charitable Foundation, the Jewish Federation of Central New York, Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas, Shaarei Torah Orthodox Congregation of Syracuse, Syracuse Hebrew Day School, Temple Adath Yeshurun, and Temple Concord. Once children outgrow PJ Library, PJ Our Way picks up the thread for ages 8½ to 12, letting kids choose their own monthly book from a rotating shortlist of Jewish-themed titles. Miriam Klagen coordinates the program locally and is the contact for sign-ups and events.

At the other end of the collection is the Jerome and Phyllis Charney Holocaust Information Resource Center Library, established by Dr. Alan Goldberg, professor emeritus of Syracuse University's School of Education and director of the university's Holocaust and Genocide Initiative. Goldberg donated his personal collection of several hundred volumes—history, biography, essays, and some fiction and poetry—with support from the Jerome and Phyllis Charney Foundation and the Joseph Elman Family Endowment Fund for Holocaust Studies. "Memory without action does not honor those who perished," Goldberg said of the collection, which includes many titles that are not available through the Onondaga County Public Library. The collection is catalogued online and open to researchers, educators, and the public.



Jewish Women and Libraries:

“The Best Man in America is a Woman”

Librarianship today is one of the most female professions in America—roughly four out of five librarians are women. It’s easy to assume that this was always the case but women were not, historically, given library positions. Rather, they were excluded because the profession, like most professions, simply hadn’t opened its doors. When the doors were finally unlocked, the reason had less to do with equality than with economics and ideology. Library work paid poorly compared with other professional paths open to men and librarianship fit naturally with Victorian concepts of feminine virtue: patience, order, nurturance, and moral purity, which made women ideally suited to managing collections and guiding readers, especially children.

In 1887, Melvin Dewey, who created the decimal classification system that still organizes library shelves worldwide today, opened the first American library school at Columbia College. The inaugural class of twenty included seventeen women and three men. Why was there such an imbalance in a school designed to prepare graduates for a profession that, for most of the nineteenth century, was a man’s domain, staffed by educated gentlemen from established families who treated the work as a branch of scholarship?

Dewey’s motives for pushing so hard to admit women—against the objections of Columbia’s own trustees—are still debated. He cast himself as a reformer building a modern, efficient profession, and some historians credit him with genuinely believing that college-educated women would raise the field’s caliber and public standing. Others point out that women could be hired for a fraction of the salaries that men commanded and the rapidly expanding public library system needed cheap labor. Still, Dewey was one of the more vocal boosters of women in the profession, at one point recommending Katharine Sharp to head the new library program at Chicago’s Armour Institute with the memorable declaration, “The best man in America is a woman.”

The gender of the library field changed. When Dewey opened his school, one in five librarians was a woman. By 1900, three in four were. But there was still a gap between numbers and authority. Despite women filling the majority of library positions, library directorships, university library systems and the top ranks of professional associations remained disproportionately male. Scholars

described the profession as “female-dominated in numbers, but male-dominated in organizational control,” a pattern that repeated in pay as well as in title. The same qualities used to usher women into the field—passivity, deference, helpfulness—were cited as reasons they weren’t suited to run it.

Jewish librarians ran into a second barrier. Jewish women had trouble finding library positions at all until the 1940s and 1950s. It wasn’t until the late 1940s that the Jewish Book Council began actively encouraging synagogues, Jewish community centers, and schools to build libraries as a way of deepening interest in Jewish books and Jewish culture more broadly. Before that, there were often no institutional libraries for Jewish women to run, even if they had been trained to do so.

The infrastructure that eventually gave Jewish women a professional home was built largely by women themselves, starting in the 1950s. Miriam Leikind, the first full-time librarian at The Temple in Cleveland, became the field’s

organizing force, convening educators, rabbis, and fellow librarians and making the case that Jewish libraries needed to cooperate rather than operate in isolation. Leikin carried that vision across North America. In June 1962, she and a colleague co-founded the Jewish Library Association, after both the American Library Association and the Special Libraries Association declined their request for a dedicated Judaica section. That new association represented synagogue, school, and center libraries. A separate, older body—the Jewish Librarians Association, founded in 1946—had been serving the academic and research side of the field, the university and archival Judaica collections. In 1966 the two merged into the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL), which remains the profession’s umbrella organization today.

In striking contrast to the pattern in the broader field, where women filled the ranks for generations before being handed real authority, in Jewish librarianship, women led almost without interruption from the start. Every person who served as AJL president between the 1966 merger and 1996 was a woman. Having built the institution, they kept running it.

OUR COMMUNITY’S LIBRARIANS



Dawn Marmor held Onondaga County Public Library’s highest position, executive director, from 2020 through 2025, capping a career that began at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and led her through management of the Solvay Public Library and OCPL Beauchamp and Betts branch libraries before advancing into system-wide administration. She has a keen interest in equitable access and outreach, and the future of public libraries.

student engagement and outreach activities. Previous positions included Head of Instructional Services and Reference and Academic Engagement Librarian. In her various roles, Abby has developed the library’s information literacy program, provided reference and instruction services to students, served as liaison to campus departments, and coordinated a variety of events for the campus community. A former board member and president of Syracuse University’s chapter of Beta Phi Mu, the international library and information studies honor society, Abby is an active member of the American Library Association.

Abby Kasowitz Scheer is head of the Department of Learning and Academic Engagement at Syracuse University Libraries where she has spent her career as a librarian. Her department is responsible for the Libraries’ virtual reference services as well as



Robin Young started her library career in her teens as the Sunday School librarian, pushing a cart to different classes. She went on to get a master’s in library science in 1991, before the internet was widely available. She was the Jewish Music Librarian for Gratz College in Pennsylvania and has been a school librarian for over three decades, mostly at the Syracuse City School District’s Edward Smith Pre K-8 where she is the Library Media Specialist. She writes: “I love books - reading them, talking about them and learning about new ones! I also love to bake and cook, play board games and all sorts of crafts.”

Jewish American Veterans

Jewish Americans have fought and died for the United States in every conflict since the nation's founding. From the American Revolution to Iraq and Afghanistan, they have carried rifles, flown aircraft, and given their lives for a country that did not always fully welcome them. Theirs is a history of a people who held a deep Jewish identity alongside an equally deep American one.

The presence begins at the nation's birth. Haym Salomon, a Polish-born financier, raised and personally loaned enormous sums to keep the Continental Army supplied, refusing repayment for much of it and dying nearly penniless in 1785. Francis Salvador, the first Jew elected to a colonial legislature, became one of the first Jews to die in the Revolution. Uriah Phillips Levy endured ferocious antisemitism in the Navy, was court-martialed six times, and still rose to become its first Jewish commodore.

The Civil War divided Jewish communities along with the country. About 10,000 Jewish Americans served, roughly 7,000 for the Union and 3,000 for the Confederacy. General Ulysses S. Grant issued General Order No. 11, which expelled "Jews, as a class" from the military districts under his command but Lincoln revoked it within weeks.

250,000 Jewish Americans served in WWI, representing 5.7% of military personnel while being only 3.3% of the population. The Jewish War



Veterans of the USA, founded in 1896, became the institutional voice for Jewish service members and remains the oldest continuously active veterans' organization in the country.

In World War II, more than 550,000 Jewish Americans served in every branch and theater, while learning that the enemy was exterminating their people in Europe. Many had relatives in Poland, Germany, and Hungary. When the concentration camps were liberated, Jewish soldiers walked through the gates of Buchenwald and Dachau, some finding relatives among the survivors.

Service continued through the Cold War. Tibor Rubin, a Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor, held off a Chinese assault single-handedly in Korea and sustained fellow prisoners in a POW camp. Passed over for years, he finally received the Medal of Honor in 2005. Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, father of the nuclear Navy, overcame entrenched prejudice and served until age 82, the longest active military career in American history.

Prominent Syracuse Jewish Veterans

Captain Solomon Light

When Colonel Henry A. Barnum organized the 149th New York Volunteer Infantry at Syracuse in the late summer of 1862, the regiment took shape as a kind of miniature portrait of the city itself. Company B was largely German. Company C was largely Irish. Company A was Jewish recruited from Temple Society of Concord, one of only a small handful of identifiably Jewish companies raised anywhere in the Union Army. Captain Solomon Light led a roster of three dozen men with First Lieutenant Samuel Bronner and Second Lieutenant Matthew Westcott. The regiment, nicknamed the 4th Onondaga, mustered into service at Syracuse in September 1862, and marched out for the defenses of Washington.



Before they left, the Jewish women of Syracuse created a flag in the regiment's state colors with the inscription "Donated by the Jewish Ladies of Syracuse."

Company A participated in the bloody fight at Chancellorsville and in the defense of Culp's Hill at Gettysburg, where the regiment stood with Greene's Brigade in one of the battle's pivotal stands. Solomon Light held the captain's commission over a company that Syracuse's Jewish community had raised, outfitted, and sent off under its own flag.

Sergeant William Shemin

William Shemin was born in 1896 in New Jersey, the son of Russian Jewish immigrants, but Syracuse became his home. Trained as a forester before the war, he enlisted in the Army in 1917 and was sent to France with Company G, 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment, 4th Division. In August 1918, near the Vesle River outside Bazoches, his platoon's officers and senior noncommissioned officers were killed or wounded in a sustained German assault. Shemin took command. Witnesses later described him springing from the trench again and again, in full view of German machine guns, to drag wounded comrades to safety. Badly wounded himself, he refused evacuation until his men were accounted for. He was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second-highest award for valor. After the war, Shemin used his veteran's benefits to study forestry at Syracuse University's College of Forestry.



Many who knew Shemin's story believed that he deserved the Medal of Honor, and for decades there was quiet suspicion that religious discrimination kept it from him. Congress eventually passed the William Shemin World War I Veterans Act, directing the Department of Defense to review such cases, and on May 14, 2015—nearly a hundred years after the battle—President Barack Obama presented the Medal of Honor posthumously to Shemin's daughter at the White House. Asked once about the medal he didn't yet have, Shemin responded: "War is not about medals. I love my country. I love my men. That's all that counts."

David Ginsburg

David Ginsburg was born in Russia and came to the United States in the early 1900s. He enlisted in 1917 and served in both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps, logging more than ten years of military service, including time later in the Army National Guard. World War I took him to Belleau Wood, one of the deadliest and most storied battles fought by American troops. Decades later, in 1999, the French government recognized his service with the Legion of Honor, France's highest distinction, for his valor in the battle. After the war, Ginsburg delivered milk in the Syracuse area, then worked for thirty years at the Jewish Community Center. When he died in 2000 at the age of 101, he was believed to be the oldest surviving former Marine drill sergeant in the nation.

The Jewish War Veterans in Syracuse: Onondaga Post No. 131

The Jewish War Veterans of the United States, founded in New York in March 1896 by veterans of the Civil War, came to Syracuse in 1936. From its earliest years the local membership turned its organizing energy against the Nazi movement then surfacing in Central New York, picketing a German-American Bund headquarters on East Genesee Street and a downtown bank that had displayed Nazi insignia—a fight against antisemitism abroad and at home that would define the organization's character.

Onondaga Post No. 131 grew rapidly in the years after World War II, as thousands of Jewish servicemen returned to the city. Outgrowing rented space on Cedar Street, the post looked to a house at the corner of Westcott Street and East Genesee Street, which had been built as a private residence. The house was acquired by the post in 1947 as Syracuse's Jewish institutions were migrating eastward, and the stretch of East Genesee Street from Westcott Street to Fellows Avenue became the community's new center. Within a three-block span stood two Orthodox synagogues, the Jewish Community Center, and the VFW post.

For more than four decades the house was as much a hub of Jewish communal life as a veterans' hall. Downstairs, a members' lounge opened onto a poolroom, while upstairs held a large meeting room and the caretaker's apartment. To one side was a dedicated memorial room preserving the names of Syracuse-area Jewish war dead, equipped with a small ark and a Torah scroll. The Post hosted the city's first Jewish bingo, along with regular meetings and memorial observances, and before erecting a building of its own, Congregation Young Israel held its religious services there. Generations of local leaders served as post commanders, among them attorney Morris B. Swartz, Ephraim Shapiro, former chairman of the Onondaga County Legislature, former State Assemblyman Hy Miller, Burton Lowitz, former DeWitt town supervisor, Judge Maurice Schneider, and Jack Schultz, DeWitt town justice among many other worthy citizens who passed through its doors.

By the late 1980s, membership had drastically declined. The building itself had grown costly to heat and maintain and the Jewish institutions that had once anchored the neighborhood had moved further east. As the community dispersed to the suburbs, the post made the decision to sell and relocate to the Jewish Community Center on Thompson Road, the community's new hub.

The house itself was saved from demolition in 1997, restored by the University Neighborhood Preservation Association, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004, and converted to condominiums. Its second-floor meeting room, where a generation of Syracuse's Jewish veterans once gathered, still stands intact behind the Queen Anne facade. Photographs of Syracuse's war veterans are today displayed in the senior lounge of the Pomeranz Jewish Community Center.



A Home Away from Home: The Fort Drum Jewish Congregation

Fort Drum is home to the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) and, since 2024, also to a small but resilient Jewish community that finally has a sanctuary to call its own. The Fort Drum Jewish Congregation



maintains an active presence on post and welcomes Jewish soldiers, family members, retirees, and civilians who serve or live in the North Country.

For years, Jewish worship at Fort Drum was a makeshift affair. Congregants would set up a room inside the Main Post Chapel for Friday night services and holidays, then take everything down so the space could revert to other uses. As Chaplain (Capt.) Rabbi Daniel Kamzan, the 10th Mountain Division (LI) Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion chaplain, put it, "It was a body without a soul."

That changed on July 18, 2024, when Fort Drum chaplains and community members gathered inside the Main Post Chapel to dedicate a new Jewish sanctuary. The ceremony centered on the unveiling of a traditional mezuzah—a small parchment scroll inscribed with Hebrew verses, affixed to the doorway as a reminder of Jewish heritage and covenant with God—an honor given to lay leader Ethan Yoder. Full use of the new space arrived that Hanukkah, beginning December 25, 2024, when the community lit candles in a sanctuary that was, at last, entirely their own. Sergeant First Class Gideon Schwartz put the milestone in context: "It's something that's pretty rare... we have our own mission and we're always a small part of the population." Most military installations across the country do not have a dedicated synagogue space at all.

The sanctuary sits within the larger Fort Drum Religious Support Office, which coordinates worship for a range of faith traditions on post. The sanctuary includes a kosher kitchen. Beyond weekly Shabbat services, the congregation hosts challah bakes, holiday observances, and educational programming open to anyone on post, regardless of faith background, and invites the wider Fort Drum community to share a meal. Chaplain Kamzan jokes that "our Friday service is a 20-minute service with three hours of food... the food is elevated by Jewish conversation, and the Jewish conversation is elevated by the food." He speaks of the sanctuary in terms that go well beyond square footage: "This is how we grow our community and get people excited about their faith. For our Jewish community, this is their home away from home."

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TAY Veterans Shabbat

In recognition of Veterans Day, Temple Adath Yeshurun will host a special Shabbat morning service on Saturday, November 14 at 9:15 am to honor and thank veterans for their service. All veterans are invited to receive honors during the service.

The morning will be followed by a Lunch & Learn, co-sponsored by the TAY Altman Adult Education Fund and Mrs. Ruth O. Borsky in memory of her husband, Lieutenant Colonel Donald M. Borsky and in honor of her brother, retired Lieutenant Colonel Arnie Oskin, who will be the keynote speaker.



Lieutenant Colonel Oskin enlisted in the United States Army Infantry and further trained as a combat medic and neuropsychiatric medic assigned to burn, detox, drug/alcohol addiction, triage and psychiatric treatment units. He earned a direct commission as a 1st Lieutenant in 1972 and was assigned to the 395th Army Medical Evacuation Hospital, the 801st Army Combat Support Hospital Battalion and the 330th Medical Brigade, First and Fourth Army. His duties included administration, plans, operations, training, security, suicide response, disaster critical incident stress debriefing and serving as executive officer and commanding officer of reserve medical hospitals and battalion. In 1996, Lieutenant Colonel Oskin was deployed to the 67th Army Combat Hospital in Wurzburg, Germany, where he served with NATO Forces during the conflict in Kosovo. He was assigned as deputy & acting chief of the Social Work Department, which included the roles of domestic violence treatment officer, clinical supervisor of ten mental health

clinics, leader of a parent university, suicide response, youth outreach, and continuing education unit training of clinical professionals.

He established "Operation Fiery Vigil," a triage and treatment unit for NATO forces being deployed to the Persian Gulf during Desert Shield and was assigned as the Deployment and Rear Detachment Officer In Charge for the 801st Combat Support Hospital for Medical Units assigned to Kuwait, Abu Ghraib and Bagdad. Lieutenant Colonel Oskin was honored as the 1987 Navy & Marine Corps Social Worker of the Year and by the Great Lakes Navy Midwest Region as the Outstanding Professional in the 1980s and 1990s. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in June, 2000.

For more information, visit adath.org or email info@adath.org. There is no cost to attend the Lunch & Learn, but RSVP is required at adath.org.

Rabbi Trish Abrams' Call to Serve

Rabbi Trish Abrams grew up around military clinics and helicopter missions, the daughter of a mother who had built her own career in military medicine. Abrams is a fourth-generation Army officer, and she recently discovered that her family's line of military service runs even deeper than she knew. "I have the privilege of coming



from a long line of Army officers," she said. "Recently I've been doing more research and discovered my direct line of ancestors receiving an Army commission goes all the way back to the Revolutionary War. It is an honor to continue this tradition of service." Today, Rabbi Abrams carries that inheritance forward in a new form. She serves as a member of the United States Army Chaplain Corps and holds the rank of 1st Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserves, redirecting the family tradition of care toward the spiritual well-being of soldiers.

Rabbi Abrams describes her path to ordination as an answer to the call of "Hineni"—"Here I am." But it was a call she resisted for years before finally responding. "What made me hesitate was the difficulty of the Army when it comes to the constant physical requirements, and the difficulty of going through rabbinical school with a learning disability," she explained. "I still have trouble with Hebrew reading and cantillation, which means I have to continually practice, especially when it comes to trope. Because of these difficulties, I ran away from my calling for many years."

The turning point came during the pandemic, when she enrolled at the Academy for Jewish Religion (AJR), a transdenominational, pluralistic rabbinical school, through a program supported by the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund. The program allows seminary students to serve part-time while completing ordination, with the goal of transitioning to full chaplaincy afterward. "I told myself to 'just try,'" she said, "and since then I've managed to push through the mental and physical tasks that have come my way by committing to military chaplaincy."

Pluralism is essential to Abrams' work. "One serves many different kinds of people. AJR's curriculum exposed me to the entire spectrum of Jewish belief and practice, helping me to better understand and serve all Jews no matter the level of observance." Much of a chaplain's work centers on advocacy. Asked what a Jewish soldier on a mostly non-Jewish base needs most, Rabbi Abrams pointed to religious accommodation: "They usually need religious accommodations to ensure that they are able to eat kosher, observe the holidays and Shabbat, grow and maintain a beard if they consider it a part of their observance. Chaplains are responsible for advocating for those needs and helping the soldier to have those accommodations put in place for them."

That advocacy takes place within a chaplaincy that remains overwhelmingly male—a reality Rabbi Abrams says is often overlooked. "I think people aren't aware of how incredibly challenging it is to be a female rabbi in the Army," she said. "There is currently only one on active duty, I'm in the Reserves still, and we have another reserve female candidate attending Hebrew Union College. This is it. The chaplain corps is very male-centered, as is the Army, and one can find bigotry and sexism very easily behind chapel walls and offices. It is even more challenging now due to the political climate we are in. What keeps me motivated to continue my work is the knowledge that soldiers still need pastoral care, regardless of who is in charge."

That same insistence on being taken seriously extends to how she is addressed. "I would like to be introduced as Rabbi Abrams," she said. "I think it's important for women clergy to receive the same respect as our male colleagues, whom the community is a lot less likely to call Rabbi or Cantor [first name], but with females it comes out like that automatically. I've spent six years in seminary and have endured so much I can emphatically say that I absolutely worked my butt off for this title."

Service to community runs through Rabbi Abrams' household as much as her career. Her husband, Rick, is enjoying retirement after 21 years of active-duty Army service and now volunteers with security at Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevre Shas as well as with Cub Scouts Pack 22. The couple's sons attend the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. "It's important for us to teach our kids how important it is to understand that communal care is our responsibility," Rabbi Abrams said. "Service to God, country, and our neighbors is our purpose in this life."



Epstein School becomes the Shore School



Hannah Salomon, board chair of the Rabbi Jacob Epstein High School of Jewish Studies, made a momentous announcement on the school's opening night on September 22. "Tonight I want to share something significant with you—something a year and a half in the making," she began. "Many of our students have come to us and shared their discomfort with being associated with the name 'Epstein'—a name that, through no fault of our founder, now carries associations in the wider world that our students didn't choose and shouldn't have to carry. Their honesty gave us the push to take a hard look at our name."

"I want to be very clear about something: this change reflects zero disrespect toward Rabbi Jacob Epstein, of blessed memory, who helped found this school and was—and remains—a deeply respected figure in our community," Salomon continued. His legacy matters to us. That's why, going forward, we will honor his memory each year with an award given in his name to an outstanding educator in our community."

Going further, she noted that "A name change also gave us an opportunity: the chance to honor someone who has spent decades committed to our students—a current, dedicated rabbi, educator, and mentor. As many of you know, Rabbi Shore is beginning his 36th and final year teaching at our school. Thirty-six—*chai* times two—felt like exactly the right number to mark this moment. Rabbi Shore has poured his time, energy, and heart into Jewish education in this community for longer than most of us have been part of it. Some of you may remember that during our 2023 Teen Taste of Israel trip, he happened to be in Israel on his own vacation—and he took time out of that vacation to be with our students at Yad Vashem, to walk with them through one of the most challenging experiences of the trip, simply because he didn't want them to face it without him."



Saving the best for last, Salomon announced, "For many years, Rabbi Shore has been teaching our students Ethics—helping them learn to think Jewishly, which means to think critically, and to ask hard questions. So tonight, I'm proud to announce: our school will now be known as The Rabbi Evan Shore School for Jewish Teens."

On May 25, 2027, *Lag B'Omer*, the newly-named Shore School will hold a community-wide celebration in Rabbi Shore's honor. Further, Salomon said, "with a new name comes a new look. Diana Koester will be teaching a new elective this year called 'Chai Resolution: Jewish Graphic Design,' and our

own board member Gil Kanter has connected us with a graphic design student who will be helping lead the design of our new logo. So our students themselves will help shape this next chapter, visually and otherwise."

She concluded: "This is a big year for us—a year of honoring where we came from, and stepping into who we're becoming."



HONORABLE MENSCHEN

A column featuring community members who perform acts of lovingkindness with no expectation of reward. Mensch is a Yiddish word that is used as a high compliment to describe an honorable, decent, and deeply good human being—someone with integrity, compassion, and a strong moral compass who can always be counted on.

Martin A. Hewitt is Special Counsel, Capital Markets at Fried, Frank, Harris Shriver & Jacobson LLP. In his professional life, Martin is a commissioner on the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging, Chair of the American Bar Association Sub-Committee on Cannabis Law, fellow at the American Bar Fellowship and immediate past chair of the American Bar Association Committee on the State Regulation of Securities.



Since moving to Central New York, Martin, former president of Temple B'nai Shalom in East Brunswick, NJ, has devoted much of his time to serving the community. He is the president of the Syracuse Orchestra and serves on the board of the Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science and Technology in Syracuse, New York. In addition, Martin works pro bono for Election Protection, the nation's largest non-partisan voter protection coalition, which is led by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. He deals with hurdles in the voter registration process, voter ID issues, precincts opening late or closing early, and voter intimidation. "For me, it boils down to helping people along the many stages of the voting process to ensure that their right to vote is not infringed upon and their vote is counted. From voter registration to voting day (or early voting), I have been fortunate to help others so that the entire experience is less onerous and stressful."

Martin dedicates his time and expertise to supporting voters' rights because he believes in democracy: "I am doing what I can do, as my father did what he could do by flying in the Army Air Corps in World War II. That may sound a tad corny, but, as a country, we are at a crossroads. The work of Election Protection ensures that those who have physically defended this country have not done so in vain." Asked in what ways he thinks election protection work has evolved over time, Martin replied, "I think the issues are becoming more urgent. The number of instances of efforts to keep voters off the voting rosters as well as increased voter intimidation has increased markedly over time. Luckily, the entire Election Protection team has risen admirably to these challenges and more."



The Legacy of Rod Serling: Faith in the Individual and the Power of Storytelling

by Karen J. Docter, TAY Adult Education Committee Chair

“There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man’s fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area we call the Twilight Zone.”

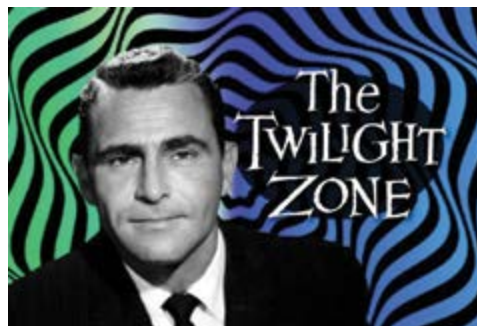
— Opening introduction to the first episode of *The Twilight Zone*, October 2, 1959

Syracuse native Rod Serling’s defining achievement, *The Twilight Zone*, on the CBS television network from 1959 to 1964, was rarely about technology or invention. Rather, *The Twilight Zone* featured ordinary people grappling with a world of insecurities, fears and discrimination, where individuality was squelched and personhood marginalized. Even as it appeared that Serling wrote about rulers or governments or extraterrestrials, he was actually mirroring through fiction the

failings and flaws of our own society. That imagery continues to be relevant today. Serling compelled viewers, for five television seasons, to confront themselves and their morality and to consider how and why individuality and justice matter.



On Sunday, November 8 at 9:30 am at 450 Kimber Road, the Temple Adath Yeshurun Adult Education Committee welcomes author Amy Boyle Johnston to discuss the enduring legacy of Rod Serling, creative genius behind the iconic television program. Johnston spent two decades researching the history of Rod Serling’s career. She examined twenty-three Serling archives, including those of the Department of Defense, the Military History College and Antioch College, and interviewed actors, producers, and writers from Serling’s early days in radio through his contributions to the television medium.



In 2015, Johnston published *UNKNOWN SERLING: An Episodic History, Volume 1*. The book remains a seminal reference for historians studying Rod Serling’s interactions with other science fiction legends and his classified work during the Cold War.

Johnston interned at the George Eastman International Museum of Photography and Film and taught “The History, Craft and Theory of Moving Images” while a graduate student at SUNY Brockport. She earned her Master of Fine Arts in Visual Studies from the Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY in 2005 and is on the board of the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation. Her work has been published in *The New York Times*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Los Angeles Weekly*.

There is no charge to attend the program, but reservations are necessary. Register at www.adath.org. For more information, email education@adath.org.

Front Row Players’ 10th Anniversary

by Deborah Cavanagh

In September 2016, Director Chris Rogers, Assistant Director/Choreographer Shannon Tompkins, and Music Director Dr. Kay Paulson welcomed 13 adult actors eager to develop their performance skills and share their passion for the stage with their community.

Front Row Players welcomes actors of all abilities. The end goal is not a perfect show, and yet each semester and show is perfect for what it teaches.



They have learned important lessons: never limit expectations, always challenge others with respect and positivity, and approach the process with inventive creativity.

Three years ago, they held their annual “Take The Stage” fundraiser at Temple Adath

Yeshurun as part of Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion month. With leadership from Rabbi Saks and Executive Director Alicia Gross, they have continued this partnership and are thankful to call TAY their performance home.

As they prepare for their 10th-anniversary show, *A Practically Perfect Disney Cabaret*, at TAY on November 21 at 7 pm and November 22 at 2 pm, Front Row Players is grateful for the support they have received from their families, sponsors, and community and look forward to sold-out houses at the show.



Finding Love in the Impossible

by Eileen Angelini

3GNY volunteer Leah Goldberg will share her grandmother’s story, “Finding Love in the Impossible: The Story of Susy Taubner,” on Wednesday, November 11 at 7 pm, as part of 3GNY’s *Stories Live: WEDU Wednesday* series. The program will take place at the Sam Pomeranz JCC and on Zoom. There will be a pre-presentation reception at 6:30 pm. The presentation is co-sponsored by 3GNY: Descendants of Holocaust Survivors and the JCC.



Leah Goldberg grew up in Omaha, Nebraska and moved to Syracuse in June 2013. She has been very involved with the Jewish community, serving on the board of the Jewish Federation of CNY and as a member of the National Leadership Cabinet. She chairs the Syracuse Hebrew Day School development committee and volunteers for 3GNY, speaking about her grandmother.

Leah’s grandmother Susy Taubner was born in Budapest, Hungary and was forced to move to the Budapest ghetto when the Nazis arrived in November 1944. She was able to survive the nightmares of the multiple concentration camps and the infamous Helmbrechts Death March with her older sister by her side. Somehow Susy’s story of the Holocaust, antisemitism, horror, and hate became a beautiful forever-love story.

More information is available at www.3gny.org/wedu. Past WEDU Wednesday presentations can be seen on 3GNY’s YouTube channel @3GNYWEDU. Educators looking to bring 3GNY WEDU speakers into their classrooms should contact WEDUscheduling@3gnewyork.org.

Rabbi Ain To Present Her Book, Watch How You Go

by Joan Bordett

Rabbi Rachel Ain of Sutton Place Synagogue in New York City will return to Congregation Beth Shalom-Chevre Shas on Sunday, November 8, at 11 am to discuss her new book, *Watch How You Go: Jewish Wisdom for Your Journey Ahead*. Rabbi Ain served as CBS-CS's rabbi from July 2004 through June 2011. Rabbi Ain will share why she wrote the book, explore its key themes, and answer questions. A reception will follow at 11:45 am, with signed copies available for purchase.



Part memoir, part reflection, and part teaching, *Watch How You Go* is wholly heartfelt. Rabbi Ain explores faith and doubt, work and life, hope



and meaning, time and land, and universalism and particularism in today's complex world. She offers grounding, insight, and connection

for anyone seeking spiritual roots in uncertain times. As Dan Senor, host of *Call Me Back* and coauthor of *The Genius of Israel* and *Start-Up Nation*, says, "At a pivotal moment for Jewish identity and continuity, this book offers a compelling roadmap for resilience and passing Jewish values to future generations."

The event is open to the public, but registration is required. To register, visit or call the CBS-CS office at 315-446-9570.

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JCC Holiday Celebrations for Every Generation

by Ashley Schmitz

The Jewish Community Center of Syracuse is preparing for a season filled with traditions, togetherness, and plenty of festive activities. From classrooms full of holiday spirit to gatherings for seniors and opportunities to shop for a good cause, there will be something for community members of all generations to enjoy.

The Thanksgiving fun begins in the Jerome & Phyllis Charney Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP), where Preschool and Pre-K students will celebrate Friendsgiving on Monday, November 23. The children will sit down together for a special meal featuring turkey, potatoes, cranberry sauce, and other festive favorites. It will be an opportunity for the children to enjoy a holiday tradition with their friends and classmates before heading into the Thanksgiving break.

Once December arrives, the ECDP classrooms will trade turkeys for dreidels as Chanukah preparations get underway. From December 7 through 11, students will take part in Chanukah

Spirit Week with the Syracuse Hebrew Day School. The festivities will continue in each classroom on December 9, when students will celebrate with Chanukah-themed activities and enjoy sufganiyot as a special holiday treat.

The ECDP's Chanukah festivities will culminate on December 11 with a Family Chanukah Shabbat Concert. Families will gather for a morning of music and celebration, bringing children, parents, and the ECDP community together for a memorable end to the holiday season.

The holiday calendar is just as busy in the JCC's After School Program. Children from all local school districts can spend the day off school on Wednesday, November 25 at the Pre-Turkey Day



Vacation Camp, which provides a safe and fun environment from 9 am to 4 pm, with options for Early or Late Care available. The yearly After School Chanukah celebration is on Wednesday, December 9 featuring dreidels, songs, sufganiyot, and other holiday-themed activities. And when winter break arrives, children can keep busy at Winter Break Vacation Camp, running December 28 through 31.

Seniors will also have several opportunities to gather and celebrate throughout the holiday season, beginning with a Thanksgiving Luncheon on Wednesday, November 25. A Chanukah Luncheon will follow on Friday, December 4, and the year will come to a close with a special New Year's Eve Dinner Celebration on Thursday, December 31. "It's so wonderful to give community members the chance to celebrate the holidays with family and friends," says Raven DiSalvo-Hess, Director of Senior Programming. "Every year I look forward to bringing some extra joy to people's holiday season." **Additional details about this year's senior holiday events, including menus and live entertainment, can be found at jccsy.org/seniors or by contacting Raven at rdisalvo-hess@jccsy.org.**

To appreciate and remember the importance of Chanukah, the JCC invites the entire community to the lighting of their menorah. Community members can gather at the JCC's front steps, on weeknights during Chanukah, at 4:30 pm to see the menorah shine bright.

Holiday shopping will also have a

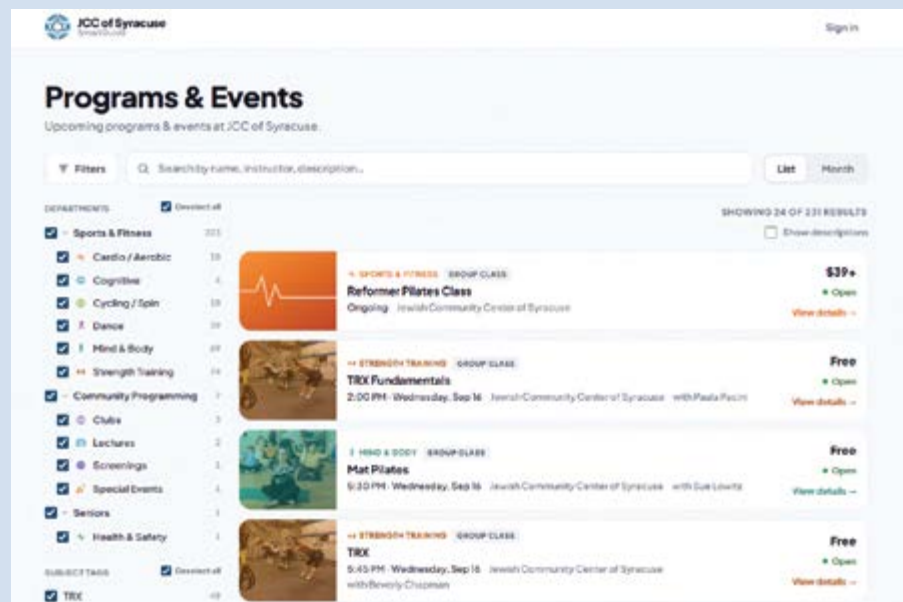
place on the JCC calendar with the return of the popular Shopping Soiree. This annual fundraiser will feature local vendors and a variety of unique finds, making it a chance to browse for holiday gifts while supporting the JCC's Early Childhood Development Program. **The date is still being finalized, so shoppers should keep an eye out for an announcement with more details or visit jccsy.org/shopping-night.**

The annual Gift Card Fundraiser will provide another way for community members to support the JCC's ECDP and Children's Programming while checking a few items off their holiday lists. Gift cards from retailers and services make convenient gifts for friends and family or an easy option for everyday shopping. A wide variety of gift cards are available, including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Carrabba's, Home Depot, and more. Orders for pick-up on Thursday, December 3 must be placed by Tuesday, November 24, while orders for pick-up on Tuesday, December 22 must be placed by Monday, December 14. **Learn more or place orders at jccsy.org/holiday-gift-cards.**

From little ones celebrating with their classmates to seniors gathering around the holiday table, the JCC offers plenty of opportunities to enjoy the traditions and connections that make this time of year special. **For more information on ECDP and After School festivities, visit jccsy.org/children-and-teens or contact Amy Bisnett at abisnett@jccsy.org. For the latest updates on holiday programming, visit jccsy.org.**

A Better Way to See What's Happening at the JCC

Finding a class, program, or event at the JCC just got easier! The JCC has launched a new online catalog designed to create a simpler, more convenient experience for members and guests. Visitors can browse upcoming programs, search by name or instructor, and filter by department, class type, day, time, and more all in one place. The new scheduler is the first step toward making it easier than ever to discover, plan, and participate in everything happening at the JCC. Stay tuned as more features and improvements are added. For questions or to experience the scheduler firsthand, visit jccsy.org.



Move, Play & Grow this Winter with JCC Youth Athletics

by Ashley Schmitz

Regardless of the time of year, there's no shortage of ways for kids to stay moving at the JCC. The Youth Athletics Fall Session is already underway, but there's more fun ahead with the Winter Session beginning in December. Young athletes can look forward to opportunities to run, jump, tumble, dance, climb, and discover a new favorite activity.

Classes are available to both members and non-members and are designed for pre-K to sixth grade. To make participation easier for families, the JCC also offers before-class care and transportation for students in the F-M schools, all public schools within the Jamesville-DeWitt School District, and Ed Smith School. Fees may also be eligible for prorating, depending on enrollment



Gymnastics

Flip into a new season with gymnastics. Young athletes will build strength, balance, and coordination while



practicing skills on the floor, beam, bars, and vault. Team and Pre-Team Gymnastics is available by tryout or coach approval.

Tumbling Tots

Big movement starts small! Tumbling Tots introduces 3-year-olds and pre-K students to gymnastics basics while building balance, coordination, and confidence through beam, bars, and tumble tracks.

Ninja Warrior

Ready for a challenge? Kids can swing, climb, leap, and conquer a custom obstacle course inspired by the popular competition show, building strength, agility, and focus along the way.

Ballet

Every dancer must start somewhere. Ballet helps children develop flexibility, coordination, strength, and confidence while learning the fundamentals of dance.



Jazz & Tap

Step, shuffle, and tap into the rhythm. Students learn upbeat choreography while building coordination, strength, confidence, and self-expression.

Rookie Sports

Designed for 3-year-olds and pre-K, little athletes can run, catch, kick, and throw their way through Rookie Sports while learning the basics of different sports.

Whether a child is ready to tumble across a mat, take the stage, conquer an obstacle course, or learn the basics of a new sport, Youth Athletics has a class ready to get them moving. For more information or to register, visit jccsy.org/youth-athletics or contact Sherri Lamanna at slamanna@jccsy.org or 315-445-2040 x126.

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STANLEY RUBENSTEIN
September 4, 2026

Stanley Rubenstein, 94, passed on September 4, 2026 at Menorah Park. He was born in Syracuse on January 2, 1932 to Henry and Alice Rubenstein. He met his future wife, Rosalie Fox, when he came to her sweet 16 birthday party. They were married on May 30, 1953 while he was in the military service and they settled in Providence, RI while he served in the Navy at Quonset Point during the Korean War.

In 1955 they returned to Syracuse and both found jobs at Jacob's Office Equipment Co. After a period of time, they purchased the company and renamed it Jacobs Business Interiors which they owned for 25 years. He enjoyed giving time to Rotary International through the Rotary Club of Eastwood and did community work for many years. He also volunteered at the Carrier Dome concessions stand for 36 years with their share of the profit going to Eastwood Rotary.

He enjoyed traveling with Rosalie and visited many countries in Europe, Japan, Hawaii, and Argentina. After many years of going abroad, they spent part of 18 winters in Florida visiting relatives and friends. Together they also enjoyed basketball and baseball; had seasons tickets for a few years for the SU basketball team, and for many years with the Syracuse Chiefs.

Surviving are their sons Mark (Cheryl), and Hal, grandchildren Sarah (fiancé Casey), Jessie and Jacob and great-granddaughter Nina Rose.

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JAY MARGOLIS
September 6, 2026

Jay Margolis, 76, died on September 6, 2026 at St. Joseph's hospital. Born on July 17, 1950 to Henry and Shirley Margolis he was a lifelong resident of Syracuse.

He was a graduate of Nottingham High School class of 1968 and attended Onondaga Community College. He enlisted in the US Air Force and then spent the next 25 years with the Onondaga County Sheriff's department. He was honored to have received the Sheriff's Medal of Honor, one of the highest honors to be awarded.

After retiring from the Sheriff's Department, he joined The Home Depot in the millwork department and was associated with the Dewitt store for 25 years. Jay loved playing blackjack at the Turning Stone Casino and golfing. He was an avid Red Sox fan and followed SU sports.

His family includes his wife Natalie of 43 years, daughters Joy Margolis, Rebecca (John) Sellmeyer, and Toni Barnes, grandchildren Rhiannon, Boz, EJ, and Rachel and his brother Elliot.

The family would appreciate that contributions to perpetuate his memory be made to the American Cancer Society.

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DAVID MELTZER
September 11, 2026

David Meltzer passed away on September 11, 2026. He was born on January 31, 1956 in Syracuse to Roz and Mort Meltzer. He graduated from Jamesville-Dewitt High School, and then the Culinary Institute of America. David worked in various restaurants in New York City, then for the past several decades was associated with both the skating rink at Rockefeller Center, and the Wolman Rink in Central Park. He was an avid SU sports fan, a voracious reader, and a "Dead Head."

He is survived by his wife Marianne, his brothers Eric (Brooke) and Howard (Brenda), his sisters-in-law Susan (Charles) Cassalia and Carolyn (Ronald) Crotty, his nieces and nephews Emily, Carly, Isabel, Morgan, Kelsey, Tracy, Matthew, Ronald III, AJ, his great-niece Gabrielle and his aunt Joan Warshow and uncle Sheldon Warshow.

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RICHARD LEVINE
September 13, 2026

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Richard Levine, beloved father and friend who passed away peacefully on September 13, 2026 surrounded by the love of his family.

Richard, 77, a lifelong resident of Syracuse, graduated from Nottingham High School. He went on to receive a master's in education and later his juris doctor both from Syracuse University. From working in the music industry with some of



his favorite bands and working in real estate, Richard found his true passion returning to the teaching field helping ENL students where he felt he made a real difference every day.

He was a kind, devoted father who always put others first. He enjoyed spending time with his three kids, whether it be watching their favorite football and soccer teams play or catching up on his favorite shows. One of his favorite joys in life was attending all three of his kids' soccer games, cheering them on.

Richard was an avid writer who wrote The Mogen David of Barth on the Baltic, a book which detailed his father's heroic time in WWII, when, as a prisoner of war, he secretly conducted Jewish services under the Nazi regime. He had a great taste in music and was a talented pianist who also loved to play the guitar. A chess aficionado and a food connoisseur, Rick loved all good food but enjoyed dinners at Santangelo's and Dinosaur BBQ the most. He was guaranteed to brighten the room with his sense of humor, seemingly making friends everywhere he went.

Richard is survived by his loving children Jacob (Morgan), Daniel (Jessica) and Rozi (Katarina) and his brother Ron. He was predeceased by his parents Henry and Leslie and his brother Jonathan. He will be greatly missed and forever remembered by all who knew and loved him.

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PHYLLIS REICHER
September 15, 2026


Phyllis Reicher, 102, beloved wife, mother and grandmother, dedicated educator and child advocate, and top-flight athlete and adventure traveler, died on September 15, 2026 surrounded by her family. Born in Syracuse, she was in the second graduating class of The Putney School in Vermont and earned her bachelor's degree at the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 1945 where she studied animal husbandry. She received her master's degree in early childhood education from Syracuse University in 1972, where she pursued research with Professor Margaret Lay-Dopyera.

Following Cornell, Phyllis worked as the "play lady" in the children's ward at the Syracuse Memorial Hospital, where she met Dr. Norbert "Norb" Reicher, an obstetrician and gynecologist. They were married in 1947, and she used her animal husbandry skills on their five children. Phyllis taught at the Syracuse University Nursery School and Skytop Daycare and later was a pre-school teacher in the East Syracuse Minoa and Syracuse City School Districts, including Frazier Elementary School. She retired in 2000 and continued to work with students in kindergarten and first grade classrooms in the Syracuse City School District, volunteering for more than 15 years.

Committed to advancing the lives of children and their families, Phyllis served on many boards including the Syracuse Association for the Education of Young Children and Huntington Family Center. More recently, she volunteered at the Syracuse Health Department, filing birth certificates for newborns, some of them the offspring of her pre-school students, decades earlier. She

would often boast of seeing her students out in the community, including her mail carrier for several years and her butcher at a local market. Phyllis also volunteered with the Cazenovia Library, sorting children's books for the annual book sale, and with the InterFaith Works of Central New York literacy program.

Phyllis led an athletic and adventuresome life. She was an early ski racer at The Putney School and Cornell and later taught skiing at the Cazenovia Ski Club. She rollerbladed and biked extensively in Central New York and Florida and kayaked on her beloved Cazenovia Lake. She enjoyed adventure travel, including kayaking in the Arctic, trekking in Tibet, biking across France and snorkeling in Honduras. You can listen to Phyllis reminisce about her life on StoryCorps.

Phyllis is survived by her children Tom (Mary), Andy (Tessa Huxley), Doug (Camille Tisdell), Dan (Carole Parker) and Eden Anker (Phil); daughter-in-law Rita Reicher; grandchildren Martha, Alexander, Erica, Zina, Bryn, Madeline, Jon, Haley, Will, Graham, Alyssa, Kimberly and Jessie; and great-grandchildren Scarlet, Henry, Josie, Lucy, Margot, Luke and Nova, and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated caregivers who provided comfort and support to Phyllis in her later years. They are especially grateful to Anntonette (Toni) Clarke, whose exceptional kindness, attentiveness and compassion were a true gift to Phyllis and their entire family. Toni's presence brought comfort, dignity and warmth to Phyllis and they are forever grateful.

Contributions in Phyllis Reicher's name may be made to the Huntington Family Centers or the Syracuse City School District Educational Foundation.

MARJORIE SCHWARTZ
September 17, 2026


Marjorie Schwartz, 84, passed away peacefully on September 17, 2026. Born on July 8, 1942 to Harry and Emma Roth, she had been a resident of Syracuse for more than 60 years. She was a pre-school teacher at the Jewish Community Center for more than 20 years, affectionately known to her students as "Mrs. Shorts." Marjorie was also a long-time member of Temple Concord and an active volunteer with Helping Hounds.

She is survived by her children Robin (Michael) Dorris, David (Sandra Katz) Schwartz, Shari Schwartz (fiancé Joe Gingold), and Beth (Gregg) Engel and grandchildren Emma (fiancé Chris Somes), Stephen, Lillian, Cara, Samuel and Evelyn.

Contributions may be made to Temple Concord.

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