

L'SHANA TOVA

MAY YOU BE INSCRIBED & SEALED FOR A GOOD YEAR

FROM THE BOARD & STAFF OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION



# L'CHAYIM

Published by the Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties

September 2025 / 5785/5786

JewishFederationLCC.org

Volume 48, Number 1

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### New team members

Meet the two newest additions to our Federation team. Page 5

For the most current news and articles on the war in Israel, please visit our website at [JewishFederationLCC.org](http://JewishFederationLCC.org).

# JFED HITS THE ROAD

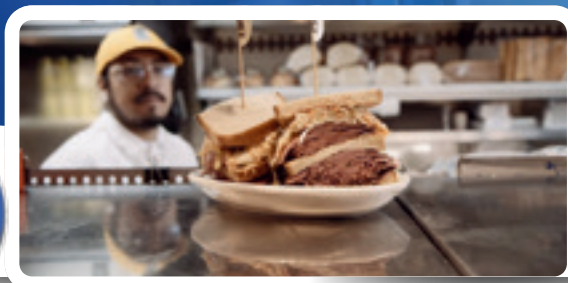
The Florida Holocaust Museum, St. Petersburg  
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**September 2025  
 Volume 48, Number 1**

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**L'CHAYIM** invites correspondence on subjects of interest to Jewish people. Partisan political opinions will not be published, but opinions on subjects affecting the Jewish community are welcome. All inquiries regarding copy for **L'CHAYIM** should be directed to the editor. All news material must be very clearly printed or typed (not in all-capital letters) and double-spaced. Electronic submissions encouraged. The editor reserves the right to edit for space and content.

Photographs should be clear, black-and-white or color prints. If you wish a photograph returned, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope of appropriate size.

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**OCTOBER ISSUE  
 EDITORIAL  
 DEADLINE:  
 Tuesday, Sept 2**



### OUR MISSION

To strengthen and enrich the Jewish Community by providing and supporting philanthropic, educational and social service programs locally, in Israel and throughout the world.

### OUR VISION

A Jewish Community that is based on Jewish values such as Tzedakah (benevolence), Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) and K'lal Yisrael (taking responsibility for one another).

## Our co-presidents' thoughts

Courtesy of Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties

**A**s we approach Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we embrace *Teshuvah* — a profound Jewish concept that goes beyond repentance, signifying a return to our core values and way of life.

*Teshuvah* invites us to acknowledge our missteps, seek forgiveness and take meaningful steps to restore our spiritual and moral health, as Maimonides teaches. By repeatedly grounding ourselves in moral and religious clarity, we guide our actions to strengthen this sacred return.

Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties supports our community's *Teshuvah* through opportunities to deepen relationships with each other, with Israel, with our history and with our spiritual roots.

### Karin's vision for community connection

Karin emphasizes the power of communal well-being. She encourages us to draw closer to others, invite new voices into our circles, and learn from their experiences. Participating in Federation events is a meaningful way to cement these ties while gaining wisdom.

Karin particularly cherishes the Senior Lunches, where participants share stories, gratitude and time together, fostering connections beyond their neighborhoods and strengthening our communal bonds.

We're also thrilled to celebrate the 30th Annual Film Festival this fall. Look for announcements about a month filled with inspiring films, engaging discussions and joyful celebrations. These films will illuminate our core beliefs, highlight the *mitzvot* as our guide, and infuse humor into our interactions with the world.

### Doreen's call for resilience and youth empowerment

Doreen challenges us to ensure resilience in the face of adversity — whether from physical threats or harmful words that sow chaos.

How do we empower our youth to confront antisemitism on college campuses? How do we strengthen their connection to Jewish teachings, culture and moral clarity? And how do we support them in building Jewish organizations that resonate with their worldview and today's society?

Our youth need our guidance to navigate these challenges. Through education and the collective efforts of parents, our local community and national networks, we can help them forge strong ties to Judaism and its values. This summer, we proudly awarded four college scholarships to support their journey, and we remain committed to guiding our youth toward a vibrant Jewish future.

### Our bond with Israel

The ongoing turmoil in Israel weighs heavily on our hearts. Beyond our fervent prayers for the hostages' safe return and peace for all, it's challenging to discern truth amid social media distortions.

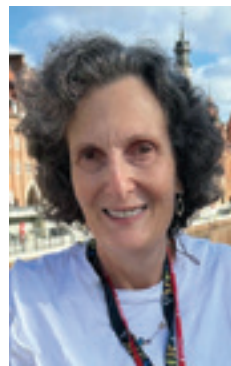
The Jewish Federation of North America channels emergency funds to vetted programs, and with your support, we'll continue this vital work. As part of a consortium of small Federations, we nurture a special relationship with Hadera, fostering one-to-one connections that deepen our ties.

Israel remains a powerful symbol of Judaism. During this season of *Teshuvah*, we turn back to our homeland and Klal Yisrael. To strengthen local support, we invite you to join our Interfaith Solidarity Gathering on Sept. 28th, where we'll broaden the conversation and build bridges with those who share our commitment to Israel.

### A wish for the new year

May the coming year bring personal growth, community solidarity, spiritual renewal, health and happiness. As you engage in *Teshuvah* this season, may you find new strength in returning to our shared values and purpose.

*Shanah Tovah U'metuka* — A good and sweet new year. 🕊️



Karin Fine



Doreen Kostel

## Candle lighting times:

**Sept 5: 7:25 p.m.**

**Sept 12: 7:16 p.m.**

**Sept 19: 7:08 p.m.**

**Sept 22: 7:05 p.m.**

**Sept 26: 7:00 p.m.**



## THIS MONTH'S ADVERTISERS

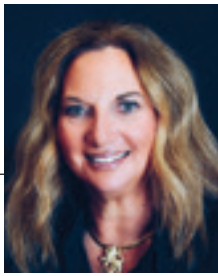
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# Open your home: Host Israeli teens this spring!

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

■ Debbie Sanford



A life-changing cultural exchange is taking place March 22–26, 2026. Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties invites local families to take part in this deeply meaningful opportunity — hosting Israeli teens as part of our 2026 P2G Teen Delegation Exchange Program.

From March 22 to March 26, 2026, we’re welcoming a group of outstanding young Israelis to Southwest Florida, and we need warm, welcoming families like yours to help make their experience unforgettable.

## Why host?

Hosting an Israeli teen isn’t just about offering a place to sleep. It’s about forging a connection across continents — sharing your culture, your traditions and your family life. Many of these teens are visiting the U.S. for the first time. The hospitality, warmth and understanding they experience here will shape their perception of American Jewish life for years to come.

This is also a powerful experience for your own teen: a chance to build friendships, discover cultural common ground, and maybe even form a lifelong bond. Past participants have stayed in touch for years, visiting one another’s countries again as young adults.

## Who can host?

We’re looking for Jewish families in Lee and Charlotte Counties with teens between the ages of 13 and 18 who are willing to:

- Host one or two Israeli teens (same gender preferred)
- Provide a safe, welcoming environment and meals
- Ensure participation in Federation-coordinated programming
- Commit to hosting from March 22 through March 26, 2026

Don’t worry — Federation staff will guide you every step of the way, from orientation to drop-off!


## Community-wide programming

Even if you can’t host, your family can still be a vital part of this incredible cultural exchange. We’ll be holding community-wide events and activities during the Israeli teens’ visit, including:

- Fun social outings with local and Israeli teens
- Israel-themed educational and cultural programs
- Joint community service projects

These programs are open to all families with Jewish teens, and they’re a wonderful opportunity to meet new friends and strengthen Jewish identity through shared experiences.

## How to get involved

If you’re ready to host — or simply want to learn more — please contact me at [DebbieSanford@jfedlcc.org](mailto:DebbieSanford@jfedlcc.org) or 239-481-4449 x6. 

# High Holiday security planning

By John Murtagh, Secure Community Network Regional Security Advisor-Florida West Coast

As the High Holidays approach, congregations and agencies should consider prioritizing security planning in light of heightened threats to Jewish communities.

As outlined by recent FBI and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) guidance, an “elevated threat” exists following two violent attacks: a Molo-tov cocktail assault in Boulder, Colorado, on June 1, and the May 2025 killing of two Israeli Embassy staff in Washington, D.C. The ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, although edging towards a ceasefire, may also inspire lone actors or foreign terrorist organizations to target Jewish centers of life.

The Secure Community Network (SCN), with funding from Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties, offers critical training to counter these risks. Courses are available that focus on situational awareness, countering an active threat using the “Run, Hide, Fight” protocol, and understanding bleeding control.


Situational awareness equips congregants to spot suspicious behavior, enabling



John Murtagh

rapid reporting to law enforcement, as urged by the FBI and DHS. The “Run, Hide, Fight” strategy prepares individuals to evacuate, seek secure hiding spots or confront an attacker as a last resort. Bleeding control training teaches life-saving techniques like applying pressure or using tourniquets.

Early planning, including facility threat, vulnerability and risk assessments, law enforcement coordination and community-wide training, is vital to ensure safety without deterring participation. Regular training reinforces preparedness, thereby fostering resilience. By integrating SCN training and heeding FBI and DHS warnings, congregations can create secure environments, allowing worshippers to practice their faith with confidence and peace.

To set up training sessions in preparation for the High Holiday season, contact me — your SCN regional security advisor — at [jmurtagh@securecommunitynetwork.org](mailto:jmurtagh@securecommunitynetwork.org) or 872-273-9830 today! 



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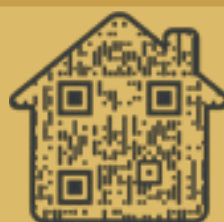


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The Jewish Federation Annual Campaign provides the resources to strengthen and enrich our Jewish community locally, in Israel and around the world.



**YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

## TRIBUTES

### *Honors & Memorials*

With a tribute gift you can mark a milestone, celebrate a special occasion, extend your sympathy or send wishes for a speedy recovery. It is a meaningful way to acknowledge friends or family and strengthen our Jewish community by contributing to the Annual Campaign.

A personalized tribute card will be sent to the honoree or bereaved on your behalf, reflecting a personal message if you wish.

#### **In Memory of Dr. Richard Davis**

He was a great clinician, a good friend, and will be missed.

*Charles Lerner*

#### **In Memory of Dr. Richard Davis**

*Debbie Sanford, Lee Strauss & Family*

*Stephen & Esther Wiener*

*Brian & Sara Krivisky*

*Kenneth & Gwenda Asher*

*Doreen Kostel & Jack Psiris*

*Karin Fine*

*Joli Golden*

Stay **connected**  
& **informed.**



### **Sign up for the Shalom JFED Newsletter**

Get the latest information on upcoming community events and cultural activities, breaking news items, updates from Israel and much more.

[jewishfederationlcc.org/newsletter](http://jewishfederationlcc.org/newsletter)

## HOW

### THE JEWISH FEDERATION SERVES

#### **Local Jewish Education and Culture**

- Community-wide Jewish Education and Cultural Programs for all ages
- L'CHAYIM published monthly to keep the Jewish community informed about local, national and international Jewish issues.
- CRC-Community Relations Council to address issues of anti-Semitism and Interfaith Relations.
- Israel Advocacy and Initiatives to strengthen local Jewish community ties with Israel. Holocaust education for middle and high school students in the community and a college campus Jewish life experience committee.
- Volunteer opportunities for all ages.

#### **Overseas**

- Funding to the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) for full-spectrum social services to Israel and Jewish communities in 60+ countries around the world.
- Partnership 2Gether relationship with the Hadera-Eiron Region in Israel.

#### **Jewish Community Foundation**

- An endowment that ensures future social and educational programming and support for our community.
- Needs-based college scholarships and study scholarships in Israel.
- Jewish camp scholarships.



Jewish Federation  
of Lee & Charlotte Counties

Jewish Family  
Services

#### **Local Seniors Services**

- Lunch Bunch, a monthly gathering with a free lunch for older adults to meet and schmooze.
- Holiday baskets and teen visits to seniors and senior facilities for Rosh Hashanah, Hanukkah and Passover.
- Holocaust survivor outreach.

#### **Local Social Services**

- Non-sectarian, individual & family outreach, information & referral services.
- South Fort Myers United Way House.

#### **Local Emergency Services**

- Food Pantry and gift cards.
- Emergency financial assistance grants to families and individuals in crisis.
- Local disaster outreach and assistance.

#### **Education, Arts & Culture Programs**

Israeli Folk Dancing

Jewish Social Club

Mah Jongg

Holiday Senior Visits

PJ Library

Federation Hits the Road-Day Trips

Holocaust Remembrance

Jewish Film Festival

Community Breakfast

Major Gifts-Pacesetters

Jewish Heritage Day

Lion of Judah

Women's Day

TRIBE

Annual Meeting

Men's Division

P2G Partnership Together

## What do you think?

### **L'CHAYIM wants to know!**

Send your letters and comments to Sharon Hood, L'CHAYIM Editor, at [sharon@marketcrank.com](mailto:sharon@marketcrank.com).

#### **Letters Policy**

Letters must include the writer's full name, full address and daytime phone. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. We reserve the right to edit for length and/or accuracy. Letters do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of L'CHAYIM nor its advertisers. We cannot acknowledge or publish every letter received.

## L'CHAYIM delivers!

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For ad rates and deadlines, contact **Bryana** at **239.481.4449 x5** or **Brigarcia@jfedLCC.org**.

# Meet Amy Hallock

*Federation's new community events manager*

By Amy Hallock, Community Events Manager

**H**i, I'm Amy Hallock, and I'm thrilled to join Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties as your new community events manager. I bring with me over a decade of experience in event planning and community engagement, and I'm excited to put that passion to work here.

I was born and raised in Longview, Washington, a small town about 45 minutes outside of Portland, Oregon. My husband Len and I have been

married for 20 years, though we've been friends for 36. (I used to joke, "I'd never date you," but here we are!) We have two grown children, three grandsons, and our beloved 9-year-old Goldendoodle, Georgie.

In 2021, we decided it was time for a change. We sold nearly everything we owned and moved 3,300 miles across the country to Fort Myers in search of sunshine and new opportunities.

Before relocating, I spent over 10 years working for our local Chamber of Commerce as the project manager, where I planned and executed a wide range of community events from Business After Hours and fundraising galas to business bootcamps, 5K fun runs, and even a Bigfoot-themed festival called "sQuatch Fest," which attracted attendees from 31 states and five countries.

I love creating spaces for people to connect, celebrate and grow together. I'm passionate about building strong, vibrant communities, and I can't wait to bring that same energy and experience to the Federation.

I look forward to meeting many of you and working together to create meaningful, inclusive and memorable events for our community. 🌍



Amy Hallock

# David Garonzik joins Federation as new Jewish Film Festival coordinator

By Debbie Sanford, Executive Director

**W**e are delighted to announce that David Garonzik has joined Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties as our new Jewish Film Festival coordinator, taking the lead in organizing our big celebration for the Federation's 30th anniversary in 2026!

Garonzik — who many know as co-founder and CEO of Naples Cinematheque — brings over 30 years of film experience to our community festival. Raised in Queens, New York, and trained in film studies at UCSB and UCLA, Garonzik has worked at major film screening venues across Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, D.C. He operated programs for Miramax (including a screening room for Quentin Tarantino) and spent over a decade managing screening and Digital Intermediate facilities for Dick Clark Productions.

At Naples Cinematheque, Garonzik has been curating alternative cinema experiences with a passion and rigor that has earned widespread admiration for his ability to treat vintage and restored films with the reverence they deserve.

With his deep knowledge of programming, logistics and audience

engagement, Garonzik is perfectly suited to shepherd our Jewish Film Festival into its most ambitious year yet. Under his direction, the 2026 festival will honor three decades of community storytelling, education and Jewish cinematic excellence. Expect a rich lineup of feature films, documentaries, panel discussions with filmmakers, family programming and more surprises still to come.


Garonzik is known not only for his expertise but for his warm, collaborative approach — a true festival professional who thrives in community-driven settings. We couldn't be more excited to have him on board.

The Federation thanks Garonzik for stepping into this important role as we gear up for our milestone celebration. We look forward to celebrating, learning and connecting with him and through film in 2026.


Stay tuned for announcements about screening selections, dates, venues and special events.

Interested in becoming a 2026 Film Festival sponsor? For special opportunities for the coming season, reach out to me at [DebbieSanford@jfdlcc.org](mailto:DebbieSanford@jfdlcc.org).

Let's make this anniversary one to remember! 🌍



**TOGETHER  
we can make a  
Difference**



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**The Federation expresses special gratitude to our Indigent Fund Pacesetters for the example they set for the rest of us.**

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12:00 P.M. ~ 1:30 P.M.

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<b>Sat. Sept 13</b>	8:00 PM Havdalah & Dessert Reception 9:00 PM Selichot Service
<b>Mon. Sept 22</b>	7:30 PM Erev Rosh Hashanah Service
<b>Tues. Sept 23</b>	10:00 AM Morning Service & Junior Congregation 12:30 PM Tashlich & Lunch Reception
<b>Wed. Sept 24</b>	10:00 AM 2nd Day Service
<b>Fri. Sept 26</b>	10:00 AM Cemetery Memorial Service at TBE Garden of Memories <i>Lee County's only Temple-owned Jewish cemetery</i>
<b>Wed. Oct 1</b>	7:30 PM Kol Nidre Service
<b>Thurs. Oct 2</b>	10:00 AM Morning Service & Junior Congregation 3:00 PM Exploring Book of Jonah <i>Online</i> 5:00 PM Yizkor 6:00 PM Neilah & Break the Fast Reception
<b>Thurs. Oct 9</b>	12:00 PM Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Luna in the Sukkah
<b>Sun. Oct 12</b>	5:30 PM Simchat Torah Dinner 6:30 PM Celebration/Service
<b>Tues. Oct 14</b>	6:30 PM Yizkor Service <i>Online</i>

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# HIGH HOLY DAYS 5786



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## Thank you, Jim Lewin!

By Debbie Sanford, Executive Director

After many years of dedication, drive and big accounts in advertising sales, Jim Lewin is heading into retirement — and we couldn't let him go without a proper thank you.

He has been a key part of our advertising team for many, many

years, building strong relationships with clients, helping businesses and *L'CHAYIM* grow, and always going the extra mile to make sure every campaign was a success. His deep knowledge of the market, friendly approach and genuine care for his clients made him a standout in every sense.

Whether he was selling a single ad or crafting a full-page spread, he brought heart and a sharp sense of what works. He's been more than just a sales executive — he's been a trusted member of our team, a valued community member and Federation supporter, and a familiar face to so many in our community.

We thank him for the years of hard work and the lasting impact he's made. We wish him nothing but rest, joy and good times in his retirement. He's earned every bit of it!

We wish him all the best and encourage him not to be a stranger! 🌍

## Jews By Choice

*The last Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. via Zoom*

By Dawn Wineinger, Temple Beth El member and volunteer

Jews By Choice meets via Zoom on the last Thursday each month from 8 to 9 p.m. in a relaxed and comfortable format. Discuss the delights and challenges of converting and reconnecting.

Recent converts, those exploring conversion, and Jews seeking to reconnect with their roots are encouraged to attend.

If you are considering the process of converting to Judaism, if you are

in the conversion process, if you are rediscovering Judaism, if you have questions and/or need to talk with like-minded individuals in a friendly, non-judgmental atmosphere, we invite you to attend Jews By Choice.

For more information contact Dawn Wineinger at [d.wineinger@yahoo.com](mailto:d.wineinger@yahoo.com). 🌍

# L'Shana Tovah!



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*May the New Year bring peace for Israel  
and good health for all of us*



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OUR FEDERATION AND HELP MAKE L'CHAYIM POSSIBLE.**

# Nar-Anon support meetings

By Joann Goldman

**N**ar-Anon Family Groups, a 12-step fellowship that offers a recovery program for those affected by someone's addiction, will be meeting in the community room at Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties.

The disease of addiction can affect family members and friends of addicts physically, emotionally and spiritually.

In the group meetings, these family members and friends share their experiences, strengths and hopes to help each other and themselves.

Addiction is a family disease. It affects the relationships of those close to the addict: parents, spouses, siblings, children, longtime friends and employers. If someone's addiction is affecting you, first you must help yourself.

Just come to a meeting. You will hear others who are going through similar problems and talk about how they cope and find recovery.

Nar-Anon is based on a set of spiritual principles and has no affiliation with any particular religion. There are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a problem of addiction in a relative or friend.

This group has been a part of the Lee County community for over 18 years. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. every Thursday at Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties (9701 Commerce Center Court, Fort Myers).

For more information, please contact me at [jogo118@gmail.com](mailto:jogo118@gmail.com) or 239-470-4827. ☎

# Upcoming events with JHSSWF

By Marina Berkovich, JHSSWF President

**"A**ntisemitism: From Babi Yar to Our Backyards" is an educational commemorative program marking the 84th anniversary of the Babi Yar massacre, examining the lasting effects of war-crimes against Jews.

This joint event by the Jewish Historical Society of Southwest Florida (JHSSWF) and the Jewish-Russian Cultural Alliance (JRCA) is free to attend and will be held on Monday, Sept. 29, 3-4 p.m. at the Nina Iser

Jewish Cultural Center.

Register here: <https://www.jewishnaples.org/babiyar25>.

## Fourth Annual Local Jewish History Film Festival schedule:

Day 1, Oct. 21, "Helen Weinfeld: Naples' First Jewish Historian" – The Weinfelds moved to Naples in the late 1960s when segregation still existed.

Day 2, Oct. 28, "The Labodas of Fort Myers" – The Labodas moved to

Fort Myers in 1965 and co-start Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties and Hadassah Chapter.

Day 3, Nov. 4, "Chief Plager" – Sanibel Island's Police Chief, Richard Plager, retired from the Miami-Dade police department and Sanibel police department and became a volunteer policeman in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Day 3, Nov. 4, "The Greensteins of Marco Island" – Lenore tells Howard's story: the first Marco Island rabbi who started the Center for Judaic, Holocaust

and Genocide Studies at FGCU, and Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

Day 4, Nov. 12, "Elena Rosner, When Destiny Calls" – Becoming JFGN: Growing Community David Willens recalls how a Holocaust survivor achieved the granting of a plot to start a Jewish temple.

Day 5, Nov. 18, New film premier – Stay tuned for additional details. ☎



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# At the Museum

By Erin Blankenship, Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center President & CEO

All of us at the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center are readying for what is sure to be a busy and exciting school year and programming season.

We want to express our gratitude to our local community members who have visited over the summer, as well as those who have come from other parts of Florida and across the U.S. We were especially grateful to be visited by Florida State Representative Yvette Benarroch and her Legislative and District Aides.

Rep. Benarroch toured the Museum and our education facilities with Board members Felicia Anchor, Michael Feldman, Paula Filler, Chairman Emeritus Stuart Price and me. During the tour, Board member Felicia Anchor generously

shared her family's experiences living in a displaced persons camp. As an Air Force veteran, Rep. Benarroch was also interested in the Nordhausen flag display.

## 2025-26 school year programs

We are excited for the 2025-26 school year! Many might not be aware, but school-aged children are our largest visitor group! Our Holocaust Education programs are offered to middle and high schools throughout an eight-county area, and our education department has a busy year ahead!

Bookings for our in-class programs, Museum field trips, and PopUp Museum exhibits are currently scheduled through



■ Erin Blankenship

spring 2026. Many thanks to the Suncoast Credit Union Foundation for their generous grant that covers the Museum field trip transportation costs, allowing more schools to visit. Not only that, but the Museum is also able to offer free admission to field trips because of the support it receives from our sponsors and community members, like you.

If you are a teacher or know of a teacher who may be interested in booking a field trip, book now! Reservations are filling up!

Due to increased demand, we've created an additional PopUp Museum display for schools and community organizations. Both have been updated with new panels and more artifacts.

## The Luncheon

The Luncheon, the Museum's December benefit event, will feature a special program with photographer Gillian Laub, creator of the "Live2Tell" photographic project of Holocaust survivor portraits. Some of her photos were uniquely displayed in New York City on building facades and the Brooklyn Bridge, a story which was featured on the CBS Sunday Morning show.

The Luncheon will be held Wednesday, Dec. 3, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Vineyards Country Club. Tickets are \$200 and sponsorships are available. Please contact [donor@hmcec.org](mailto:donor@hmcec.org) for more information.

## Save the dates

Please save the dates for upcoming fall 2025 programs.



Board member Felicia Anchor describing her family's experiences living in a displaced persons camp after WWII to Rep. Benarroch and Erin Blankenship



Rep. Benarroch, Museum Board members and staff with the WWII Nordhausen Flag display



## 8th Annual Steve Brazina Memorial Film Series



**Free for All - The Public Library**  
Thursday October 23, 2025  
2:00pm at the Museum



**Change, Not Charity - The Americans with Disabilities Act**  
Thursday, October 30, 2025  
2:00pm at the Museum



**Facing Fear**  
Thursday, November 6, 2025  
2:00pm at the Museum

Please visit [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) for more information.

2025 "Movies That Matter" Series Partners: GenShoah SWFL, Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center, Interfaith Alliance of SWFL, Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Naples, Jewish Federation of Greater Naples, Naples United Church of Christ, Temple Shalom, WGPU Public Media

**Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center**

975 Imperial Golf Course Blvd., Naples, FL 34110  
239-263-9200 [hmcec.org](http://hmcec.org) [info@hmcec.org](mailto:info@hmcec.org)



Boxcar exhibit

The Jack and F.E. Nortman Boxcar Educational Project Exhibit has begun its 2025-26 school year travels. It is fully booked through May 2026 and will be on display at a variety of schools and libraries across Southwest Florida.

Our Holocaust Education Course catalog was recently updated with the full array of resources we offer to educators and students. Active Southwest Florida middle and high school teachers interested in getting a copy should e-mail Education Department Manager Katie Butte at [katie@hmcec.org](mailto:katie@hmcec.org).

## Community Engagement programs and facility rental

Do you know about our new Community Engagement programs? We provide Museum speakers, survivor and 2G presentations, and PopUp Museum exhibits. These programs are offered at no charge as part of our education outreach. Our Herbert H. Schiff classroom is available to community groups for event and meeting rentals. For more information, please contact Community Engagement Manager Julie Cohen at [Julie@hmcec.org](mailto:Julie@hmcec.org).

In October, "Movies That Matter: The Steve Brazina Memorial Film Series" returns for its eighth year. This year, the programs take place at the Museum on Oct. 23, Oct. 30, and Nov. 6. To find out more about the film series, check out the special article in this issue of L'CHAYIM highlighting our offerings.

"Painting the Irena Sendler Story" with original artwork created by Artist/Illustrator Bill Farnsworth is on display from Sept. 9 through Dec. 15 in the Estelle and Stuart Price Gallery.

Monday, Nov. 3 – A Member Reception with Artist/Illustrator Bill Farnsworth, in connection with the current special exhibition of his works

Sunday, Nov. 9 – Annual Community Kristallnacht Remembrance

Wednesday, Dec. 3 – The Luncheon winter fundraising event featuring guest speaker and photographer Gillian Laub

Looking ahead, please save the date for our annual spring fundraising event, Triumph 2026, on March 4, 2026!

I look forward to seeing you at the Museum and our fall 2025 programs and events! 🌟



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# “Movies that Matter” films series returns

By Erin Blankenship, Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center President & CEO

Make plans to attend the annual “Movies That Matter: The Steve Brazina Memorial Film Series” at the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center this fall. “Movies that Matter” was suggested by GenShoah SWFL and is now in its eighth year!

Each important film will feature a talkback and discussion. Each year, films shown as part of “Movies that Matter” are carefully chosen by committee members who are dedicated to shedding light on important human rights issues and creating opportunities for dialogue. Many thanks to WGPU for partnering with us to show these films.

On Oct. 23, we will show “Free For All: The Public Library.” The film tells the story of the pioneers behind the “Free Library Movement” and takes a look at those working in today’s libraries while facing closures and book bans.

See “Change, Not Charity: The Americans

with Disabilities Act” on Oct. 30. The film recalls the long fight for accessibility and equality that brought about the Americans with Disabilities Act. Featuring interviews with key participants, “Change, Not Charity” tells the stories of individuals who spoke out for change in one of our nation’s civil rights movements.

We are featuring Academy Award® nominated “Facing Fear” on Nov. 6. This short documentary recounts the story of Matthew Boger, a gay 13-year-old who was viciously beaten by a group of Neo-Nazis, and years later his chance meeting with former skinhead Tim Zaal. It wasn’t long after meeting that the two men realized Zaal was one of Boger’s attackers.

Each film will feature a discussion with expert panelists and will offer an opportunity for audience conversation. Light refreshments will be served.

There is no cost to attend, but sponsorships starting at \$75 are available, and donations are always

appreciated. Visit [www.HMCEC.org](http://www.HMCEC.org) for more information, to become a sponsor, or to reserve your seat.

“Movies That Matter: The Steve Brazina Memorial Film Series” is held in partnership with GenShoah of SWFL,

Temple Shalom, Jewish Federation of Greater Naples, Federation’s Jewish Community Relations Council, Interfaith Alliance of Southwest Florida, and Naples United Church of Christ. ☺



## A Jewish 12-step recovery group

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Courtesy of Temple Beth El

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We meet Saturdays at 11 a.m. via Zoom, and we use a guidebook authored

by a rabbi and M.D. The guidebook is, “Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery” by Rabbi Kerry Olitzky and Stuart Copans, M.D., second edition.

All who might benefit from this group are welcome. Zoom details are available by calling the Temple Beth El office at 239-433-0018. ☺



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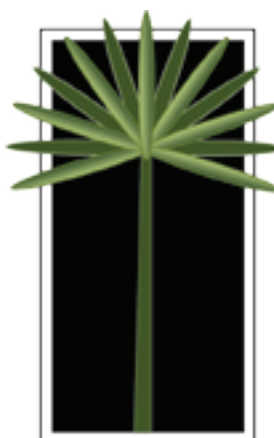
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# HIGH HOLIDAYS

## 5786 / 2025



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## Selihot

- Sat, Sep 13, 8:00 pm. Musical Havdalah, Selihot, Dessert Reception
- Sat, Sep 20, 8:00 pm. Israeli Selihot

## Rosh Hashanah

- Mon, Sep 22, 6:30 pm Evening Service
- Tue, Sep 23, 9:30 am Shaḥarit Service
- Tue, Sep 23, 6:00 pm Tashlich & Family Service
- Wed, Sep 24, 9:30 am Shaḥarit Service

## Yom Kippur

- Wed, Oct 1, 6:30 pm. Kol Nidrei
- Thu, Oct 2, 9:30 am Shaḥarit and Yizkor
- Thu, Oct 2, 5:00 pm Minḥa and Neila

## Children's Services

- Tue, Sep 23, 10:30 am - Rosh Hashanah
- Wed, Oct 1, 6:30 pm - Open Playroom
- Thu, Oct 2, 7:00 pm - Neila and Havdalah

*All are welcome! For more information and registration, visit our website [www.tjswfl.org](http://www.tjswfl.org) or call the office 239-433-0201.*

# GenShoah SWFL: programs and events preview

By Ida Margolis and Shelley Lieb

Starting with a “Movies That Matter” series in October and ending with the community Yom HaShoah program on April 12, 2026, GenShoah SWFL has a full season ahead.

The programs and events have been planned to fulfill the GenShoah SWFL mission:

- Promotion of Holocaust education and human rights
- Preservation of history and memories of the Holocaust
- Connection of descendants of Holocaust survivors with one another
- Support of the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center

Through movies, book discussions, social events, Holocaust education, remembrance programs, guest speakers and focused discussions, programs are designed to include all within our community and are held at various locations. Below are some programs for upcoming season:

“Movies That Matter: The Steve Brazina Memorial Film Series” – Three films; Thursday, Oct. 23, and Thursday, Nov. 30.

Additional dates to be determined. This in-person viewing at the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center includes an expert panel discussion.

GenShoah Readers & Learners book discussion of “Life in a Jar: The



Holocaust survivors Sarah Rockler, Rob Nissen, Yom HaShoah 2025



Vivian Mackey, Alan Zagier, Luba Rotzstain (2G Candle Lighters), Yom HaShoah 2025

Irena Sendler Project” by Jack Mayer on Wednesday, Nov. 19. This event is facilitated by 2G Estelle Kafer in coordination with the Irena Sendler illustrations exhibit at the Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center.

The Annual GenShoah Member Brunch Potluck Gathering on Sunday, Dec. 21 includes a book talk about “Hana's Suitcase: A True Story” by Karen Levine.

The Open House/New Member Reception for all GenShoah

members/survivors on Tuesday, Jan. 27 will feature a guest presentation of “They Were Children: Rescue as Resistance” by Emily Murray.

The Yom HaShoah Community Commemoration will take place on Sunday, April 12. A post-event reception is open to all.

GenShoah SWFL is open at no cost to all interested in its mission. To receive our newsletter and program announcements, contact us at [genshoahswfl@hmcec.org](mailto:genshoahswfl@hmcec.org).

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# Lost Synagogues of Eastern Europe

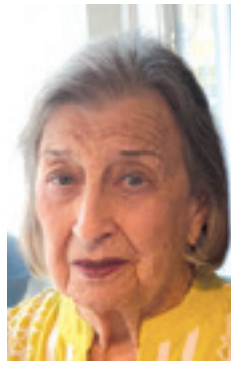
By Arlene Stolnitz

I have a custom of giving a gift of Judaica to Bar or Bat Mitzvah students. It might be a shofar, a kiddush cup, a hanukkiah, or an important book about Judaism. I planned to give two of these particularly special gifts to my niece and nephew, 13-year-old twins who were the children of a favored nephew who lives in Philadelphia. I was thinking of a shofar and a hanukkiah for them. I set out, as is my custom, to find a beautiful, meaningful hanukkiah for my gift.

Being a researcher at heart, I had been reading about the many synagogues in Poland, tragically lost during

be just perfect, I thought. I proceeded to explore a subject which was new to me.

I found the hanukkiah that spoke to me in the work of Maude Weisser, a ceramic artist from New York, now living and working in Rhode Island. The special hanukkiah she had made was created in "loving memory of the many diverse Jewish communities which existed in Europe prior to World War II." Her model was carved in clay, molded in silicone, cast in hydrostone, and then hand painted. I was happy to



■ Arlene Stolnitz

decorated with elaborate wall paintings. Their exquisite artwork often depicted the everyday lives of shtetl dwellers, imagined visions of Jerusalem and Torah teachings. Much like today, these synagogues fulfilled both the religious and social roles of the Jewish communities they served.

More than 800 synagogues existed in Europe before World Wars I and II. In Poland virtually none are left. In Lithuania, the few remaining are in great disrepair. Even before

Online, I viewed the reconstruction of a full-scale replica of the Vopla Synagogue in Bilgoraj, located in Poland. Known as the most beautiful synagogue of its time, the video showed an artisan explaining the reconstruction of the structure and artwork of that now lost treasure.

I must note that on the campus of the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, are replicas of those wooden synagogues. They are not as intricate as some of the ones I have read about, but they are examples of the houses of worship our forefathers prayed in.

"Lost Treasures: The Wooden Synagogues of Eastern Europe" by Bill Faran is a wonderful resource for anyone interested in learning more about the shuls of our ancestors.

How lucky I am to have learned of these lost treasures, thanks to my curiosity about bygone times! The research opened up a world I knew nothing about, and in the process, I was able to find a beautiful hanukkiah!

Arlene Stolnitz, the "Jewish Music" contributor to Federation papers for the past eight years, has started a new series focusing on Judaic Folk Art. It will appear in Federation newspapers on an irregular basis. Stolnitz, a native of Rochester, New York, is a retired educator and lives in Venice, Florida. 🌍



the Holocaust. I was fascinated and moved by all I had read! Shouldn't I, the great-aunt of these special youngsters, be the one in the family to tell them, through example, the uniqueness and beauty of our religion? How, despite all the tragedy, have we survived throughout the ages?

I concentrated on learning about those old synagogues and discovered I could purchase a hanukkiah built in the form of a replica of those old synagogues, now lost forever. That would

have found the perfect gift for one of the twins!

I was fascinated in learning about the wooden synagogues of Poland and Lithuania built between 1600 and 1800, during a time known as "The Golden Age of Polish Jewry." It was a time of peace and prosperity for Jews living in modern-day Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and Poland.

Considered historically important, these wooden synagogues were fashioned in the Baroque style and were

World War II, many of these wooden synagogues already were the victims of damage and old age, but the Nazis attempt to wipe out Eastern European Jewry completed the destruction of these great treasures of Jewish culture.

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# Celebrating birthdays: The world's and yours

*Aging Jewishly — What our traditions teach us about growing old.*

By Rabbi Barbara Aiello

Even with her hearing aids in the drawer, the doorbell chimes were loud enough for Rena to hear them. “As I live and breathe,” was all Rena could say when she saw her two teenage grandsons waving birthday flags and counting down, “Seven, six, five, four, three, two, one! Only one more week and it’ll be your birthday, Grandma. We’re here to start a week of celebrations!”

Rena hoped her grandsons didn’t see her forced smile. She didn’t want to spoil their fun so she went along with their enthusiasm while inside she felt like she always felt — birthdays are for kids. Birthdays are reminders of how old we’ve gotten and how little time we have left.

Why talk about birthdays? With Erev Rosh HaShanah around the corner, we Jews will be celebrating a birthday — the birthday of the world. So, there’s no better time than right before Yontif to consider our own birthdays and how we feel about marking our own new year.

Sept. 22 is Erev Rosh HaShanah, and it is traditionally considered the world’s birthday party. Among Sephardic Jews, the evening before the first day of Rosh HaShanah features a Rosh HaShanah Seder, complete with prayers, blessings,



■ Rabbi Barbara Aiello

symbolic foods and its own special user’s manual, the Rosh HaShanah Haggadah. In it, we read about the creation story as found in *B’resheet* (Genesis) with a focus on the sixth day when human beings were created. Humanity began and humanity continues with each person created with her/his own special birthday.

Back to Rena who clearly wants no part of birthday celebrations. Sadly, she is not alone. Anecdotal studies indicate that about half of men and women who consider themselves elderly eschew the cake, the

**Birthdays are our personal new year, the day when our body and our spirit are in perfect alignment.**

candles and all the traditional hoopla associated with a birthday celebration. Their attitude? “Don’t make a fuss. It’s just another day.”

This is not the case for author Tamar Hurwitz-Fleming whose recent book addresses the topic. Titled, “How to



Have a Happy Birthday: Create Meaning, Fulfillment and Joy on Your Special Day,” the author explains why celebrating your birthday is a healthy thing to do. As a guest on a recent podcast, (“Release,” April 2025) Hurwitz-Fleming traces the history of birthday celebrations that began in Egypt and centuries later arrived in Germany as a “kinder” celebration complete with a small cake adorned with one candle.

Tamar Hurwitz-Fleming knows what she’s talking about. Her own Jewish journey is steeped in tradition, having discovered her Jewish roots and became a Spanish citizen thanks to a law that welcomed the return of Sephardic Jews whose ancestors were expelled during the Spanish Inquisition.

But just as tradition plays a part in the Jewish New Year birthday celebration, creating personal birthday traditions, especially as we age, demonstrates that we are living in the present. Hurwitz-Fleming suggests that regardless of past birthday trauma or disappointments, it is important to become “birthday positive.” That means finding new ways to “dodge the birthday blues” and discover the magic in your special day.

Just as Rosh HaShanah is a spiritual day to celebrate the birthday of the world and the beginning of a new Jewish year, imbedded in our own birthdays is a similar spiritual component. Birthdays are our personal new year, the day when our body and our spirit are in perfect alignment. Or as Chabad.org puts it, “Your birthday commemorates the day on which G-d said to you: “You, as an individual, are unique and irreplaceable. No person alive, no person who has ever lived, and no person who shall ever live, can fulfill the specific role in My creation I have entrusted to you ...”

So, make the most of the most spiritual day of your year. As the shofar sounds to celebrate the birthday of the world, promise yourself to make your own birthday a spiritually uplifting celebration filled with gratitude and joy. Shana Tovah and happy birthday to you!

Rabbi Barbara Aiello is Italy’s first woman rabbi. For 10 years she served the Aviva Campus for Senior Life in Sarasota, Florida, as resident rabbi. Currently as Aviva’s Rabbi Emerita she shares her experiences on *Aging Jewishly*. Contact her at [Rabbi@RabbiBarbara.com](mailto:Rabbi@RabbiBarbara.com) if you’d like to know your Hebrew birthday! 🌍

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Jewish Family Services

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a fund of the Jewish Federation and Jewish Family Services, provides for emergency nutritional needs through our Food Pantry, gift card distribution, and crisis grants to prevent utility cut-offs, evictions, loss of transportation and other essential services without which none of us can live.

Inspired by the recognition that these needs must be addressed in our community, and as a tribute to Marcia Cohen, a long-time resident of Sanibel and social activist. Her husband Jack established the **MARCIA CAN HELP** fund in 2017.



Help us meet these pressing needs by contributing to the **MARCIA CAN HELP** fund.

For further information please contact Debbie Sanford at (239) 481-4449 ext. 6 or [debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org](mailto:debbiesanford@jfedlcc.org)

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Evening service Monday, Sept. 22.....7:30 pm  
Morning service Tuesday, Sept 23.....10:00 am

**Yom Kippur**

Kol Nidre service Wednesday, Oct. 1.....7:30 pm  
Morning service Thursday, Oct. 2 .....10:00 am  
Mincha.....3:30 pm  
Yizkor Memorial.....approx. 4:30 pm  
Concluding service..... 5:00 pm  
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# Five new movies – and probably all are good

*Stars of David*

By Nate Bloom, Stars of David Contributing Columnist

**E**ditor's Note: Persons in bold are deemed by Nate Bloom to be Jewish for the purpose of this column. Persons identified as Jewish have at least one Jewish parent and were not raised in, or identify with, a faith other than Judaism. Converts to Judaism, of course, are also identified as Jewish.

## “Bau: Artist at War”

More than six months ago, reliable sources said that “Bau: Artist at War,” would open in movie theaters on Jan. 24, 2025. I guess it got a very limited release, because now the “big release” is set for Sept. 26. I wrote about this film last January. It's an important film, so I will repeat most of what I wrote:

I could use several columns to explain who **Joseph Bau** was and convey his amazing life. “Google” his name and you'll find many articles that provide full biographies.

Bau (Emile Hirsch) was a Polish Jew who was imprisoned in the Plaskow concentration camp near Krakow, Poland. This is the concentration camp depicted in “Schindler's List,” and Oskar Schindler is a character in “Bau.” Schindler saved the lives of Bau and **Rebecca**, a woman whom Bau met and married in the concentration camp. Bau used his artistic talents to stay alive and to create phony

identity documents that allowed many Jews to escape the camp and survive — all this is in the film — it also shows Bau and his wife moving to Israel in 1950 and his return to Europe to testify against the Nazi officer who tortured and killed his father.

Hirsch's paternal grandfather was Jewish. The rest of his “grands” weren't Jewish. Rebecca is played by **Inbar Lavi**, 38, a well-known Israeli actress. She was a main cast member in five American TV series: “Underemployed,” “Gang Related,” “Prison Break,” “Imposters,” and “Lucifer.”

## “Caught Stealing”

This crime thriller film opened on Aug. 29. The central character, Hank Thompson (Austin Butler), a former pro baseball player, gets himself immersed in the New York City criminal underworld. The film is set in the '90s. The film was directed by **Darren Arnofsky**, 56. He's made 10 feature films since 1998. All are interesting, but some haven't made a profit. Four big box office hits he directed are “Black Swan,” “The Wrestler,” “Noah,” and “The Whale.”

**Liev Schreiber**, 57, and **Zoe Kravitz**, 36, have star roles. **Carol Kane**, 73, has a supporting role. Schreiber's mother was Jewish, and he very strongly identifies as Jewish. I

have related Kravitz's unusual background in depth. Here it is in short: her paternal grandfather and her maternal grandmother were Jewish, and Zoe identifies as an African-American and as a “secular” Jew.

## “The Roses”

This black satirical comedy opened in theaters on Aug. 29. It is a remake of the big hit 1989 film of the same name. The 1989 film and the 2025 film are based on a 1981 novel of the same name written by **Warren Adler**, (1927-2019).

In short, an affluent couple, Oliver Rose (Benedict Cumberbatch, 2025 film), and Barbara Rose (Olivia Colman, '25 film), have a long-term marriage that breaks down completely. They “go to war.” The war is not just in a law court. It's also in their home. The biggest supporting role is Barry, a nasty friend of Oliver who gives him advice. He's played by **Andy Samberg**, 46.

## “The Threesome”

Here's the “official” capsule plot of this romantic “dramedy.” A young man's perennial crush leads him into an unexpected threesome; he thinks it's his ultimate fantasy come true. When the fantasy ends, all three are left with sobering real-world consequences — to take responsibility for their actions.

The “three” are played by **Jonah Hauer-King**, 30, **Zoey Deutch**, 30, and **Ruby Cruz**. Hauer-King is a handsome fellow whose biggest hit, to date, is “A Dog's Way Home.” His British father isn't Jewish. His American mother is Jewish, and he was raised Jewish. Deutch has worked steadily since 2014 but hasn't starred in a big hit. Her father is Jewish and her mother isn't. She was raised Jewish. (Opens in theaters on Sept. 5.)

## “Spinal Tap II: The End Continues”

This is a sequel to “This Is Spinal Tap” (1984), a hilarious “mockumentary.” It opens on Sept. 12. Spinal Tap is the name of a British hard-rock band that isn't very good. But, somehow, they attract some concert goers. **Rob Reiner**, now 78, co-wrote the 1984 film, directed the film, and acted in the film as a reporter following the band.

The band members, and Reiner, co-wrote both films. The band members are **Harry Shearer**, 81, **Christopher Guest**, 76, and Michael McKean. Guest's British father converted to Judaism when he married Guest's Jewish American mother.

**Fran Drescher**, 67, has a big supporting role and Paul McCartney has a cameo role. 🎵



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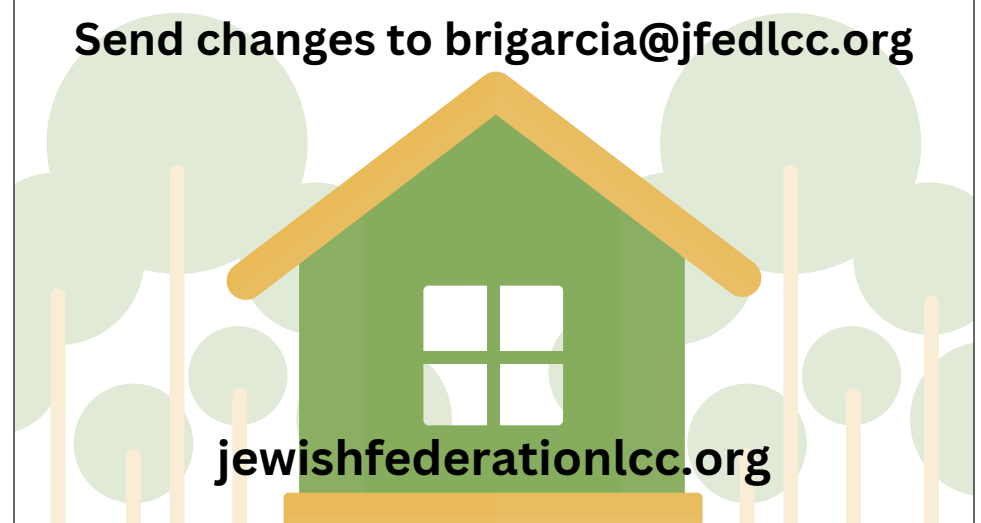


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# G'Day – It's Australian wine time!

By Jerry Greenfield, the Wine Whisperer

We're at lunch in McLaren Vale, sitting across from Sparky and Sarah Marquis, with several glasses of their legendary Carnival of Love Shiraz in front of us. As I sip through the vintages, I'm blown away for several reasons. First, their wines are consistently ranked in the world's Top 100, and as a couple, they're practically legends, national treasures or something. Second, the wine is arguably one of the purest expressions of what Australian winemaking is all about.

Americans like the Aussie approach so much that the country will soon be the second largest importer of wine to the U.S. For a country that spent much of its winegrowing history making sweet wines, that's quite an achievement.

In this category, it's the big fruity reds that capture our attention and interest most vividly. In fact, the big Shirazes and blends can be so powerful they need to age for eons before you'd dare open the



■ Jerry Greenfield

bottle. (I attended a vertical tasting of Penfold's Grange a few years ago, and we drank the 1971. It could have used another 10 years in the cellar).

Unlike other countries, most Aussie wines — even the greatest ones — are blended from fruit that's sourced from very extensive areas. The designated winegrowing regions are enormous, and the grapes that wind up in the bottle may come from hundreds of miles in every direction. It would be like Napa winemakers blending in grapes from as far away as Washington State.

Another thing that makes Australian wines so much fun is that they like to put puckish and whimsical names on their bottles. The Monkey Spider. The Dead Arm. The Stump Jump. Woop Woop.

My recommendations, in no particular order, are:

- D'Arenberg The Dead Arm
- Mollydooker Carnival of Love
- Mollydooker Enchanted Path
- Anything by Rosemount Penfold's Bin 707



### Side note

Considering their winemaking success, the Australians have no native grapes. Everything grown in the country originated at one time or another from cuttings brought from Europe and South Africa in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Until next time, g'day, mate! (They really do say that.)

*Jerry Greenfield is The Wine Whisperer. He is former Wine Director of the Southwest Florida Wine & Food Festival. His new book, "Secrets of the Wine Whisperer," is now available through his website or on Amazon. Read his other writings at [www.winewhisperer.com](http://www.winewhisperer.com)*

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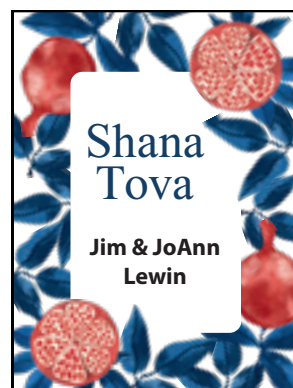
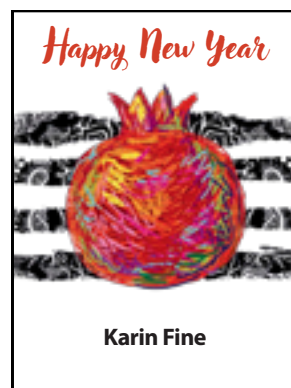
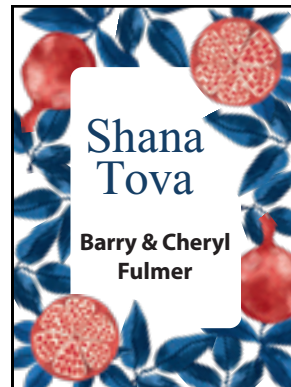
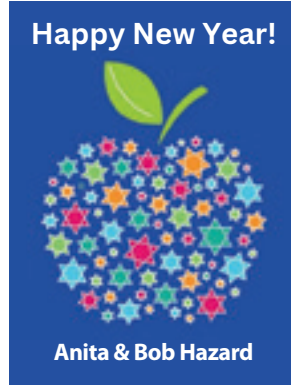
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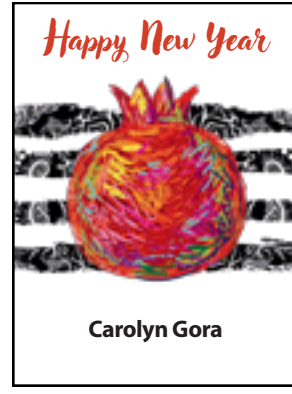
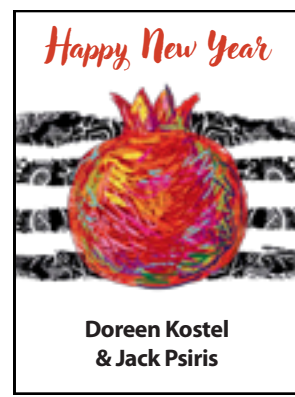
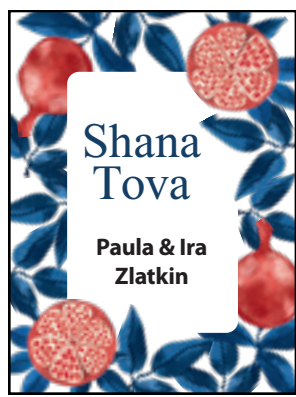
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# New Year's Greetings



# from Your Community



## Carrying on the legacy of Rabbi Sacks

New York, NY (July 21, 2025)

The Rabbi Sacks Legacy is proud to announce the appointment of Jonathan Cannon as its new chief executive officer. He will assume the role in mid-August.

Cannon's appointment marks a significant milestone in expanding the reach of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks' teachings. It comes as The Rabbi Sacks Legacy prepares to commemorate the fifth *yahrzeit* of Rabbi Sacks with a year of major educational initiatives, including the launch of the new Koren Sacks Humash and the annual Global Day of Learning.

As CEO, Cannon will lead efforts to bring Rabbi Sacks' moral voice, timeless wisdom, and educational vision to communities, institutions, and individuals across North America, throughout the Jewish world, and beyond.

Cannon is an accomplished educational leader and mentor with over 35 years of experience in Jewish day schools, including 23 years as a Head of School — most recently at the Ramaz School in New York City. He brings a rare

blend of visionary leadership, deep Jewish values, and a lifelong dedication to the transformative power of education. As a sought-after consultant, he has worked with over 60 schools to guide innovation and support leadership transitions. Cannon lives in Potomac, Maryland, with his wife, Gilly, and their family.

With this appointment, Joanna Benarroch, who joined the Office of the Chief Rabbi in 1997 and worked alongside Rabbi Sacks for 24 years, will assume the newly created role of president of The Rabbi Sacks Legacy. She and Cannon will partner in leading global efforts to perpetuate Rabbi Sacks' teachings and vision.

Benarroch commented, "I'm thrilled to welcome Jonathan Cannon to the professional team and look forward to working alongside him as we continue to advance and expand the impact of Rabbi Sacks' enduring legacy."

Cannon is completing his seventh year as head of the internationally renowned Ramaz School. Under his leadership, Ramaz embraced 21st-century, skills-based



Jonathan Cannon

education and prioritized student-centered learning across both *Limmudei Kodesh* and general studies. He has been recognized for introducing bold initiatives, including an unprecedented post-COVID-19 mission of 500 high school students to Israel.

In addition to his work with schools across four continents, Cannon has been a thought leader on integrating technology into educational and communal settings. He has also led professional development at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Andrew Klaber, chair of the North America-based Rabbi Sacks Legacy Corporation, said, "Jonathan Cannon is a highly respected figure who brings deep educational leadership experience, a strong connection to Rabbi Sacks' teachings, and a proven ability to build trusted relationships within and beyond the Jewish community. This is a transformational moment for our global impact."

On accepting the role, Cannon said, "Rabbi Sacks has long been a guiding voice in my life. It's a true honor to help carry his legacy forward in this role. His religious and ethical guidance is needed now more than ever, and I'm excited to work with the outstanding professional team and lay leaders, as well as educators, communities, and institutions, to bring his teachings to an even wider audience and into the heart of Jewish life."

Lady Elaine Sacks added, "Education was at the very core of my dear husband's mission. He believed in the power of ideas to inspire and shape the future. As a longstanding friend with a deep commitment to education, I believe Jonathan Cannon's appointment is one he would have especially welcomed." 🕊️

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# Naples philanthropists to join thousands at Global Conference for Israel

Naples, Florida., July 10, 2025

A delegation from Naples will join over 2,500 passionate supporters of the land and people of Israel on Oct. 23–26 at The Diplomat Hotel in Hollywood, Florida, for Jewish National Fund-USA's Global Conference for Israel — one of the world's premier gatherings for philanthropy, advocacy, and Zionist engagement. Together, attendees will Unite for Israel's future through meaningful connection, bold ideas, and an unwavering commitment to building what comes next.

The multi-day event showcasing the pride and beauty of Zionism will unite philanthropists, congressional leaders, activists, Israelis whose lives have been transformed by decades of support from Jewish National Fund-USA, and individuals who are passionate about celebrating a strong and prosperous future for the Jewish Homeland.

Leading speakers from Israel will also share first-hand accounts about the realities on the ground two years after the devastating terrorist attacks of Oct. 7, 2023, and provide updates about rebuilding initiatives underway in Israel's North and South.

“Through every challenge, we have overcome, fueled by an unshakable spirit and an unbreakable bond with our ancient homeland,” said Co-President of Jewish National Fund-USA's Naples Board of Directors David Braverman. “Now, more than ever, Israel needs us, and we need Israel. Our Global Conference for Israel is more than just a gathering — it's a call to action, a celebration of resilience, and a reaffirmation of our eternal connection to our land and people of Israel. Together, we will celebrate Israel's future by uplifting stories of strength, solidarity, and shared destiny.”

From dozens of intimate breakout discussions to large-scale plenaries featuring keynote addresses by esteemed speakers from across the globe, the conference will offer attendees the opportunity to engage meaningfully with those who have helped shape Israel's past, present, and future.

Conference headliners (in formation) include:



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- Journalist and New York Times bestselling Author Douglas Murray
- United States Congressman (NY-15) Rep. Ritchie Torres
- International Broadcaster & Advocate Erin Molan
- Israeli Diplomat Ambassador Ido Aharoni Aronoff
- Former NBA All-Star Eddy Curry
- Kansas City Chiefs' Hall of Famer Nick Lowery
- Nova Music Festival survivor Ofri Reiner
- Comedians Mario Adrion and Joel Chasnoff

The conference will include over 100 sessions tailored for the diverse array of attendees, including college students, faculty members, young professionals, older adults, rabbinical attendees, major philanthropists, those beyond the Jewish faith, and more.

Additionally, a variety of unique experiences will be featured throughout the conference, including an Israel Expo with complimentary swag and Israeli goods for sale, an evening of comedy, a movie night, a catered Shabbat dinner, a young professionals after party, a “Chopped”-style cooking competition, and an exclusive musical performance by Israel's beloved Special in Uniform Band.

“This conference is about building partnerships, reaffirming commitments, and leaving with a deeper sense of purpose — and pride — for what we can achieve together,” said Co-President of Jewish National Fund-USA's Naples Board of Directors Norman Isaacs. “The Global Conference for Israel is a beacon of light, drawing dreamers, defenders, and doers who believe that the story of the Jewish People is still unfolding, and that by coming together, we Unite for Israel's future with vision and purpose.”

For more information, including a full list of speakers, conference chairs, and programming information, or to register for the Global Conference for Israel, visit [jnf.org/global](http://jnf.org/global).

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# Weighty matters

By **Brian Simon**

If you've seen me lately, you may have noticed I've put on a few pounds. And by a "few pounds" I mean, "more than a few pounds." My daughter is pursuing a master's degree in dietetics. It seems I'm pursuing my master's degree in diabetics.



■ **Brian Simon**

I've developed a lot of questions that I would like her to research. For example:

If you forget what you eat, do those calories still count?

**Why do they call them "fitting rooms" when the size I'm supposed to wear doesn't fit?**

If someone shares their food with you do those calories count? I say no.

How much good fat do I have to eat to make up for the bad fat I just ingested?

If I watch other people exercise, do I get credit for that workout?

Can someone volunteer to take the calories from me?

If I look at a picture of a vegetable while eating ice cream, is there any transfer of nutrients?

If muscle weighs three times more than fat, how do I keep gaining weight without gaining muscle?

If I have carrots, celery and ranch dressing with my buffalo wings, can I call that a salad?

How many calories are saved if I use the word "just" before my order, as in, "I'll just have the hamburger and fries?"

It takes an hour of intense exercise to burn 600 calories but only 10 minutes of mindless snacking to consume that much. Can we reverse that?

There's a fitness competition called Hyrox, which stands for Hybrid Rockstar. There's a cookie called Hydrox, which stands for "Oreo knockoff." Could we start a competition for eating those?

Why do they call them "fitting rooms" when the size I'm supposed to wear doesn't fit?

Is it okay to eat French fries if I refer to them as "emotional support vegetables?"

Is skipping desert the same as burning 1,000 calories?

I read that you're supposed to weigh yourself three times during the week to get an accurate reading of weight. Can I just weigh myself one time and divide by three?

So many questions! There are stages of gaining weight too.

The first stage is when you notice your clothes don't quite fit the way they used to.

Stage two is when certain pants don't fit, period. The second stage may also include finding small tears in the corners of the pockets of your pants.

The third stage is breaking into the corner of your closet where you stuck those larger pants that you grew into the last time you gained weight. But then you lost the weight and swore you

would never wear them again, but you also didn't trust yourself, so you didn't throw them away.

Stage four is when your shirts don't fit. You know you've gained a lot of weight when your shirts don't fit. I know people who still wear shirts from high school, yet this T-shirt I got a year ago is feeling tight in the chest.

Stage five is finally deciding to do something about it. Or not. But I might have to get some new shirts. ☺

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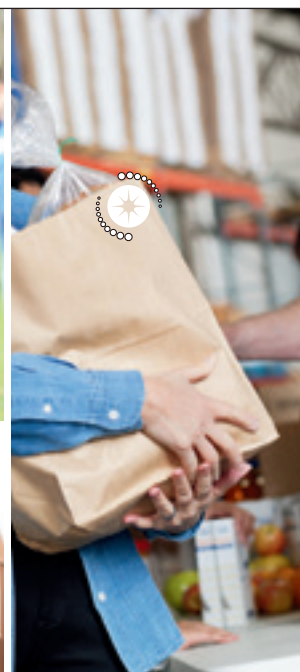
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## JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA (239) 566-1771

# The first Floridian Rosh Hashanah

By Marina Berkovich, JHSSWF President

We all know the story of the first pilgrim Thanksgiving, but as Rosh Hashanah approaches, I wonder how the very first Rosh Hashanah in Florida was celebrated, by whom and where.

My gut tells me it was in St. Augustine, one of the very first places in Florida to offer settlement to Jews.

Sept. 8, 1565, is the day of St. Augustine's founding, originally known as San Augustin. Just 11 days earlier, on the feast day of St. Augustine, Spanish Admiral Pedro Menendez de Aviles, who later became Florida's first governor, sighted land. His ships brought troops, supplies and, of course, settlers. There is some evidence that Crypto-Jews, also known as Marranos or Conversos, came to St. Augustine during that first wave in 1565.

So, I suppose, the first Floridian Rosh Hashana took place some 56 years before the first American Thanksgiving. That year, Rosh Hashanah started on Sept. 6 of the Gregorian calendar and corresponded to the Hebrew date of Tishrei 1, 5326.

As Conversos, they could only celebrate in secret, and the fact that the day



Marina Berkovich

of land sighting, and subsequent landing, coincided with a Christian holiday was very handy, as it allowed them the cover they needed to protect their tradition, customs and religion.

On their table was possibly a mix of foods brought over from Spain, such as garbanzo beans, garlic, hard sea biscuits, red wine, wheat,

figs, peaches, almonds, watermelon, olive oil, meat from cattle and, undoubtedly, pork. They were Marranos, after all. This was supplemented by a locally available plentitude of deer, fish and nuts.

If there were any Indians at those tables, they would have been of the Timucua group of indigenous people, who lived in northeastern and north-central Florida. They would have shared corn, squash, pumpkins and melons. Also, wild berries, including grapes and persimmon, which could have been gathered by anyone. That was 460 years ago, during the height of the Spanish Inquisition.

After being the capital under Spanish rule, St. Augustine became the capital of British East Florida in 1763, and then, following the Treaty of Versailles

of 1783, served as the capital of Florida during the second Spanish period.

From 1763 to 1783, Jews seeking refuge from the Spanish Inquisition openly found safety in Pensacola, which saw the first documented Jewish settlers in 1763. They were Alexander Solomons, Joseph de Palacios and Samuel Israel.

After Spain ceded Florida territory to the U.S. in 1819, St. Augustine and Pensacola alternated as capitals, before Tallahassee got that role in 1824. In Florida territory, all settlements were to the north, and as they slowly moved southward, settlers carried their holidays and celebrations with them, contributing to the origins of our state's diversity.

Regrettably, everywhere Jews live, it is during High Holidays they witness sparks and flashes of discrimination and holocausts of all proportions. The ex-Soviet Jews, very much like the Conversos before them, know what it is like to hide their Jewishness and why.

With the terrifying escalation of global antisemitism and the seemingly mind-boggling reaction of the worldwide leaderships in response to this hatred, one might recognize the eerie parallels to the events of the preceding century, regardless of the degree of knowledge of history.

Our organization partnered up with Jewish-Russian Cultural Alliance (JRCA) to bring you "Antisemitism: From Babi Yar to Our Backyards" on the 84th anniversary of the hitherto unprecedented massacre of Jews — the massacre that literally untied the hands of worldwide leadership and mass media of that era to accept the extermination of Jews as a necessary wartime loss that does not require any special attention, outrage, coverage or condemnation.

This presentation will be held Monday, Sept. 29, from 3 to 4 p.m., in person at the Nina Iser Jewish Cultural Center and via Zoom. (See link below.)


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**CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**  
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# A special program, a milestone birthday and more

By Cheryl Fulmer, Ellen Feingold and Marcia Rudin

The month of September ushers in the Jewish High Holy Days, also called The Days of Awe. This year Rosh Hashanah (literally, Head of the Year) begins on sundown Monday, Sept. 22, and ends at sundown on Wednesday, Sept. 24. During this holiday, we welcome the Jewish New Year 5786 in the Hebrew calendar.

Yom Kippur starts at sundown on Wednesday, Oct. 1, and ends at nightfall on Thursday, Oct. 2. The service on Wednesday evening is called Kol Nidre, which is Aramaic for “all vows.” At that service, we petition God to release us from vows we made to God during the past year that were not fulfilled.

As the High Holy Days approach, Chavurat Shalom member Dr. David Berger will sound the shofar at our Friday evening Shabbat Services during the Hebrew month of Elul beginning on Aug. 29. Our annual memorial service will be on Sunday, Sept. 28 at 10 a.m. to be led by President Cheryl Fulmer.

The members of Chavurat Shalom wish everyone a healthy and peaceful New Year. May we see an end to war, and may we have our hostages returned home at last.

### A special program

Guest speaker Rabbi Danny Schiff, a Gefsky community scholar with Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, will present a program, “Teshuvah Today: Its Meaning for Israeli and American Jews” on Tuesday, Sept. 30, at 7:30 p.m.

Born in Sydney, Australia, Rabbi Dr. Schiff grew up in Melbourne. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree from the University of Melbourne. Rabbi Dr. Schiff received ordination as well as his master’s and doctoral degrees in Hebrew letters from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He divides his time between the U.S. and Israel.

### A special birthday

On Aug. 18, Chavurat Shalom member Shirley Boscov celebrated her 100th birthday. We look forward to hearing her recite prayers during our Shabbat services for many more years. *Mazel Tov!*

### Contributions

Chavurat Shalom’s Tzedakah Committee solicits contributions from members to be aggregated and donated to selected 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

In June, the committee donated to Soroka Hospital of Beersheva (to help with emergency repairs from

Iranian bomb damage), Friends of Lone Soldiers Center, Inc., Friends of Yashar L’Chayel (Straight to the Soldier), American Friends of Leket Israel, and Hillel International Foundation for Jewish Campus Life (to fight antisemitism on college campuses).

In the past, the committee has also contributed funds to: Jewish Federation of Los Angeles (to aid victims of the wildfires); Friends of the IDF; M’ever La Yam (Across the Sea); Israel Children’s Fund; Friends of ERAN; American Friends of Rambam Hospital; American Friends of Saroka Medical Center; American Friends of Leket Israel; Sar-El, AID Coalition; Brothers and Sisters for Israel; American Friends of Magen David Adom; FISH (Sanibel); Gladiolus Food Pantry; Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties; St. Matthew’s House; Harry Chapin Food Bank; Planned Parenthood of Southwest Florida; Association of Rape Crisis Centers (Israel); The Shelter for Abused Women and Children; Cycle Forward; Quality of Life Center; and the JOINT Distribution Committee (funds specifically designated for Ukraine).

We thank Tzedakah Committee Chair Dr. Ellen Feingold and her committee members for their thoughtful choices always trying to make a difference in lives in Israel and in the U.S.

### Upcoming services and events

Chavurat Shalom holds weekly Friday evening Shabbat services every Shabbat throughout the year. All other activities take place on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. All times are Eastern Standard Time.

On the first Tuesday of the month, Marcia Rudin hosts an informal “Schmooze” session.

On the second Tuesday, Dr. Ellen Feingold leads our “Torah Talk” discussion of the current Torah portion.

The third Tuesday is Len Minsky Current Events coordinated by Dr. Don Bachman with other participants.

On the fourth Tuesday, we enjoy talks and discussions by Chavurat Shalom members and outside speakers. These sessions are planned and coordinated by Irene Skolnick, Barry Fulmer and Renee Minsky.

All Chavurat Shalom activities are held via Zoom, with in-person gatherings planned occasionally. All are welcome to attend our activities.

Check our website [chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org](http://chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org) or email [chavuratshalom@gmail.com](mailto:chavuratshalom@gmail.com) to get further information and to obtain the schedules. 🌐

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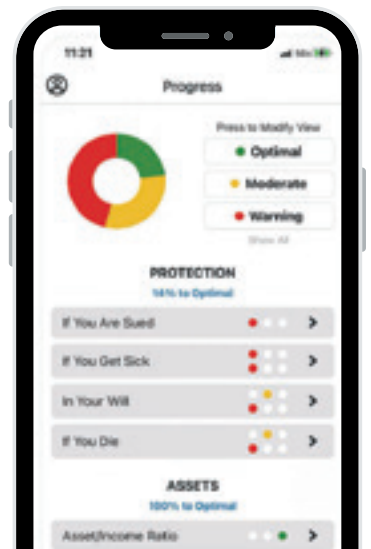
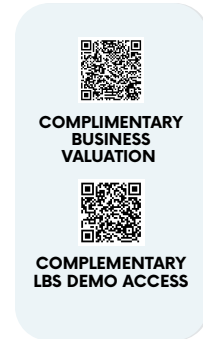


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**GENERATIONS OF THE SHOAH SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**  
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**“Don't Let Them Forget”**

By **Ida Margolis and Shelley Lieb**

*This article is based on an interview with GenShoah SWFL member, Jack Abel.*

**"D**on't let them forget" is something many Holocaust survivors have said. Second generations (2Gs) have likely heard this frequently, not only in films but from their survivor parent(s). It is understandable why it's so important to survivors that people remember the Holocaust.

It was especially important to the mother of GenShoah member Jack Abel. It became a call to action for him, and he was fulfilling this call for his mother during a recent, special trip to Yad Vashem in Israel.

Abel and his wife, Hedy, are both 2Gs. Both of Abel's parents are survivors. His mother was in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. His father was in a Siberian labor camp. They met on a boat running the blockade to Palestine. The boat was intercepted by the British and sidelined to Cypress. They eventually made it to Palestine. Abel carries the pain of his parents' suffering.

Abel was born in Israel in 1948, three months after it became the state of Israel. In 1959, they left Israel and immigrated to the U.S. Abel was 10-years-old, but he still speaks fluent Hebrew and visits Israel often. He remembers his mother with an overwhelming admiration for her openness to others and willingness



Ida Margolis and Shelley Lieb to talk about her experiences. He remembers his father as the opposite — angry. But they both stressed the need to "make sure people don't forget."

Abel's response to his parents' call to remember has been to visit Jewish sites and Holocaust museums where he lives and travels, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., Yad Vashem in Israel, and other sites such as museums in Athens, Greece; New York City; and Naples, Florida. He makes donations and has dedicated plaques to his parents.

Though Abel has been living in the U.S. for 66 years, he maintains close ties with Israel through family and friends. He visits every year and especially likes to hike while he's there. He is very interested in Jewish history and considers

himself a Zionist. He is proud of his children and grandchildren and their commitment to Judaism. All of them have attended Jewish day schools.

Two years ago, he attended the opening program of the Yom HaShoah commemoration in Israel by invitation. Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) opens with a nationwide broadcast on the evening before (erev Yom Hashoah) which includes many dignitaries and politicians. This year, he was asked to be the one to light the memorial flame at the Hall of Remembrance at Yad VaShem in Jerusalem.

He's not sure why he got this unexpected honor. This hall is:

An imposing, tent-like basalt structure that allows visitors to pay their respects to the memories of the martyred dead. On the floor are the names



Jack Abel lighting the memorial candle, Yad Vashem 2025

Abel's message to others who visit Israel is that experiencing Yad Vashem is a **must**. It explains the reason for Israel's existence. In light of the contemporary events of Oct. 7, 2023, and Iran, he reminds us that Israel is a



Resource and Partnership Development Division Director Haim Gerner, Chair of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation and Former Chair of the Yad Vashem Association in France Pierre-Fracois Veil, Chairman of Yad Vashem Dani Dayan, and Jack Abel

of 22 Nazi murder sites — extermination and concentration camps, transit camps and killing sites — chosen from the hundreds of murder sites that existed throughout Europe. A memorial flame burns continuously, next to a crypt containing ashes of victims brought from the extermination camps. ([yadvashem.org/visiting/map-of-yad-vashem](http://yadvashem.org/visiting/map-of-yad-vashem))

Abel describes his surprising reaction to lighting the flame in this hall as very emotional and tearful. "I felt my mother was there. It was me, the flame and my mother in a somber, dramatic setting."

"one-bomb state." That's all it would take to destroy it. That makes Iran an existential threat.

This 24-hour experience has had a profound impact on Abel, and it is fortunate that he is willing to share with others. All 2Gs should keep in mind the importance of insuring that people remember.

Eli Wiesel said, "To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive: to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time."

As Abel's mother said, "Don't let them forget." 🕯️



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## BBYO Naples/Fort Myers

# Updates from Naples and Fort Myers BBYO

By Naomi Shif, Regional Director, BBYO North Florida Region

As the High Holidays approach, BBYO North Florida extends heartfelt wishes for a meaningful and joyful season to the Lee & Charlotte Counties Jewish community. This sacred time of reflection, renewal, and togetherness reminds us of the strength we find in our traditions and the connections that unite us across generations and communities.

### Upcoming events

More details on all upcoming events will be available soon. Please keep an eye

out for email invites, text messages, and Instagram posts regarding all upcoming Naples and Fort Myers BBYO events.

### What is BBYO?

BBYO is a leading Jewish teen movement that brings together young people from around the world to connect with their heritage, develop leadership skills, and build lifelong friendships. With chapters across North America and in more than 60 countries, BBYO provides teens in grades 8-12 with a welcoming space to explore their Jewish identity,

give back through service, and grow as leaders — all while having fun through meaningful programming, events, and travel opportunities. Rooted in nearly a century of tradition, BBYO empowers the next generation to shape a stronger, more vibrant Jewish future.

### Supporting our teenage Jewish community

Engaging teens after their B'nai Mitzvah is essential to fostering lifelong connections to Jewish life. BBYO empowers teens to take an active role in shaping their own Jewish experiences, building vibrant peer-led communities that strengthen and enrich the broader Jewish future.

The BBYO chapter of Naples has entered its 13th year of partnership with Jewish Federation of Greater Naples, Temple Shalom, Chabad of Naples, and Beth Tikvah. Each organization provides financial support, volunteers, and community involvement opportunities for BBYO teens. We thank all our BBYO alumni, friends, and other



supporters for making this a safe and positive environment for the teens of BBYO Naples and Fort Myers.

If you know of a local teen who might like to join BBYO Naples or Fort Myers, or know of someone who may want to be a volunteer advisor to our chapters, please email me, the North Florida Region Director, at [nfr@bbyo.org](mailto:nfr@bbyo.org). You can also follow us on Instagram at [Mishpacha\\_BBG](#) and [Negevaza](#).

Scholarships to attend BBYO conventions and summer programs are available through both the Jewish Federation of Greater Naples and the Temple Shalom Men's Club. Please contact Naomi Shif for more information on scholarships at [nfr@bbyo.org](mailto:nfr@bbyo.org). For all other questions, please contact Marc Saperstein at 239-273-7936 or Bobbie Katz at 239-353-5963. 🌍

## TEMPLE JUDEA RELIGIOUS SCHOOL Fort Myers Tehila Cherubino, Director of Education

I am thrilled to welcome our families, both returning and new, into a new school year filled with promise, learning and joy.

As the newly appointed director of education at Temple Judea, I am honored to step into this role with a deep passion for Jewish learning and community. I bring many years of experience teaching in both Jewish day schools and Hebrew school settings, and I look forward to applying that knowledge to build a program that is inspiring, inclusive and rooted in tradition. My goal is to cultivate an environment where children are not only engaged intellectually but also feel spiritually connected and emotionally supported.

### The 2025–26 school year

Each year brings the opportunity to strengthen our children's Jewish identity, deepen their connection to Jewish tradition and build lasting relationships within our community.

The 2025–26 school year comes with fresh energy and a deepened commitment to nurturing every student's growth — academically, spiritually and socially. At the heart of our program is the belief

that Jewish education flourishes in a community where curiosity is encouraged, traditions are celebrated, and every child feels seen and valued.

This year, we are especially proud to expand our offerings to include a Pre-K class, welcoming our youngest learners into a joyful environment filled with song, stories and hands-on exploration.

Our classrooms are being prepared to spark imagination, foster connection and inspire critical thinking. With a curriculum that weaves together Hebrew language, Jewish holidays and culture, Torah stories, music and creative arts, our students embark on a dynamic and engaging journey of discovery.

Community is the foundation of everything we do. Whether through joyful Shabbat celebrations, meaningful holiday events or collaborative family learning programs, we look forward to creating lasting memories together.

I am excited for the year ahead and deeply grateful to the families who entrust us with their children's education. May this school year be filled with learning, laughter and meaningful Jewish growth for all. *Shanah Tovah!* 🌍

## Chabad FGCU Estero Rabbi Mendel Gordon

# New Jewish library at Chabad FGCU

By Rabbi Mendel Gordon

As we gear up for another amazing year for Jewish life at FGCU, I want to share a special new intuitive that has been finalized over the summer. A very special new addition has recently been added at FGCU, strengthening the Jewish presence on campus. Thanks to a grant from Keren Haslshim, we were able to add a new Torah library on campus. The library is in our Chabad lounge on the third floor of the FGCU library.

The Jewish lounge is a popular spot for students to study and spend time together on campus. We also host many weekly Torah classes there.

The new library will give students the opportunity to increase their own Jewish learning as they grow in their academic journey in college.

"Wow this is amazing," shared Alon when seeing the New Torah library for the first time.

Thanks to the FGCU library, all books are now cataloged and can be borrowed through the regular library system by both students and other community members.

We are excited about the new opportunity this addition brings for a big growth in Jewish learning for the future. To see the current catalog of the library check out <https://tinyurl.com/fgcutorah>. Or come check it out when you visit the campus. The Chabad lounge is in the library, room 332.

The library is dedicated in honor of the Rebbe Rabbi Schneerson, the leader



Alma, Aya and Udi enjoying the new Torah books

of modern world Jewry and the inspiration of Chabad. One of his many campaigns to inspire Jews worldwide was to ensure that there should be Torah books readily available in both private homes and public spaces to make Jewish learning more accessible to everyone.

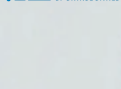
If you would like to sponsor a book to the library, please reach out to me at [rabbim@chabadfgcu.com](mailto:rabbim@chabadfgcu.com).

Chabad will host services for high holidays, both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, for students. Please reach out for more information.

Chabad services Jewish students of all levels of observance at FGCU, FSW and other college age students in the area. If you know any Jewish students at FGCU or other nearby colleges, please reach out to connect them with the local Jewish student community.

For more information or to help make that connection, reach out to me, Rabbi Mendel, at [Rabbi@chabadfgcu.com](mailto:Rabbi@chabadfgcu.com) or call 239-355-8481. 🌍

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# Rosh HaShanah

*Not for our sake but for His*

By Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz

All Jews understand the difference between Rosh HaShanah and the secular new year. Rosh HaShanah is not a time to party and let loose. True, it is associated with celebrations as the Bible states: "Go eat succulent foods and drink sweet beverages and send portions to those who have nothing prepared ... Do not be sad, for the joy of G-d is your strength." But the very same passage mentions the reason for rejoicing: "The day is sacred to our G-d."

More particularly, Rosh HaShanah is the Day of Judgment, when G-d "opens the book of memories ... and all the inhabitants of the world pass before Him like sheep ... And He writes out their decree."

Knowing the awesomeness of His judgment, many are concerned with their own future: "What will my coming year be like?" Some are concerned with their material future: "How much will they make in the coming year? What will their health be? Will they marry and have children?" Others focus on spiritual desires: "Will they be able to gain wisdom? Will they be inspired with the love and fear of G-d? Will they be able to meet the standards of piety and righteousness expected of them?"

All of these desires can be expressed on many planes, with various different levels



■ Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz

of motivation. When, however, they are reduced to their lowest common denominator, the question prompting all others is: "Will G-d give me what I want in the coming year?"

On Rosh HaShanah, however, what we really should be thinking about is not what we want, but what He wants.

There is a classic chassidic adage: "On Rosh HaShanah, in some *shuls*, it is when the *chazan* comes to the words:

'Repentance, prayer, and charity nullify the evil decree,' that the emotions reach their peak. But in chassidic *shuls*, it is the words 'Reveal the glory of Your sovereignty upon us' that arouse the congregation most powerfully."

G-d did not have to create this world. On one hand, the fact that there is no reason compelling the creation introduces a dimension of utter randomness. There is no need for Him to conform to an existing plan. He can do anything He wants.

Conversely, the very same logic necessitates that everything which He did create was created for a specific desire and purpose. On Rosh HaShanah, when we relive the dynamic of creation, we should hone in on that purpose and make it the focus of our conduct.

What is His purpose in creation? As *Rashi* states at the very beginning of his commentary to the Torah, all of existence

**... what we really should be thinking about is not what we want, but what He wants.**

was created "for the sake of the Torah and the Jewish people." Simply put, that means that G-d created the world so that a Jew could study the Torah and observe the *mitzvos*, not for our sake but for His.

Translating that into practical directives, this means when I see a person

in need, I should help him, not because I feel sorry for him, but because G-d commanded us to go out of our way to help another person. When I do a *mitzvah*, I should be thinking not of the reward G-d will give me for fulfilling His will, but of the fact that I am fulfilling His will. When I am studying the Torah, I should be doing so not because it is intellectually edifying or interesting, but because it is His wisdom, and He asked us to explore it.

*Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz serves at Chabad Lubavitch of Southwest Florida.*

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Dear Friend,

Rosh Hashanah arrives at a pivotal moment for the Jewish people. The past year has tested us in extraordinary ways. Antisemitism has risen to historic levels. Israel continues its journey of recovery and rebuilding after October 7th. And many in our community seek deeper, more meaningful engagement in Jewish life. These challenges call us to respond not as individuals, but as a community with a shared purpose and vision for the future-As One.

#### As One, We Inspire Jewish Connection

The round challah on our tables symbolizes the unbroken circle of Jewish tradition connecting each generation. Your generosity answers this critical moment when it matters most. Ensuring that every member of the Jewish community feels a sense of belonging is a core Jewish value. Make a gift today to help us sustain our enduring traditions and values.

#### As One, We Stand United Against Hate

The shofar's piercing call demands renewed vigilance and decisive action. As antisemitism threatens Jewish communities worldwide, we ensure Jewish life flourishes without fear. Your support is essential to our community's safety while establishing Jewish Federations as a leading voice in protecting Jewish life across North America. Through the LiveSecure initiative, we've dramatically expanded security infrastructure in our community. In 5786, we must continue the sacred work of protecting our community as threats evolve in our own neighborhoods and beyond. Make a gift today to answer the shofar's urgent call to protect our community.

#### As One, We Rebuild Israel

Dipping apples in honey reminds us that bitterness can transform into sweetness, and we carry this powerful hope for Israel into the New Year. Your support helps Israel turn trauma into healing, devastation into renewal, and pain into possibility. We ensure Israel's long-term recovery and resilience through strategic partnerships with the Jewish Agency for Israel and JDC, as well as our vast network of over 500 organizations.

Your contribution will be strategically deployed across all three of these critical areas: creating stronger Jewish communities, enhancing security, and rebuilding Israel-As One.

L'Shanah Tovah,

Debbie Sanford  
Executive Director



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# When is the best time to come to the synagogue?

*Is there an appropriate time to go to shul?*

By Rabbi David Arias

As a rabbi, I believe it's always a good time to go to the synagogue. I say this because even for people who are not shul-goers, the synagogue should be a welcoming place for them, especially when they go just once a year, like for Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah.

The High Holidays season is like the prime time for congregations. All year long, we work hard to bring more people in — like a company dropping its prices — we offer “free membership,” shorter services, more engaging activities, charismatic leaders, fancy sanctuaries, and a delicious kiddush after the prayer.

Paradoxically, the day when synagogues have the highest attendance of the year is also a day when we can't offer any of the things I mentioned above — Yom Kippur.

The day of atonement is a solemn day. We don't eat; we don't drink. Services



■ Rabbi David Arias

(and sermons, *Hashem* forbid!) are longer. There are no fancy activities; the place is packed and crowded. There is nothing fun, nothing attractive. And yet, people fill the synagogues like no other day of the year!

There are many reasons this happens, and we can't blame anyone. We don't judge people, even though most of us find it easier to go to shul once a year instead of three times a week or three times a day. However, if we can be so meaningful and inspiring on a “boring” day like Yom Kippur, just imagine how much more powerful we can be during the rest of the year, when we actually do all the other things!

It's always a good time to visit the synagogue, yes! And you'll enjoy much more if you come on any day besides Yom Kippur. Spirituality isn't built just once a year but every day. Strengthening our *Neshama* is very hard if we don't tend to it more

**Spirituality isn't built just once a year but every day.**

often. Just like working out or training, if you don't do it regularly, every session will hurt, be difficult, even if you enjoy it; and eventually, you'll think, “Yeah, I should do this more often.”

And even when you don't come to the synagogue, Judaism is not about sanctifying places, but about making

our time sacred. We do that when we share significant moments of the year with friends and relatives.

The time is now! When is the best time to come to shul? Right now!

Rabbi David Arias serves at Temple Judea in Fort Myers. ☺

## “For I desire kindness, not sacrifice.”

By Rabbi Nicole Luna

These words from the prophet Hosea (6:6) echo through centuries of Jewish life and faith. They are taken up by the Talmudic rabbis in a powerful exchange:

After the destruction of the Temple, Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai and his student Rabbi Yehoshua walked through the ruins of Jerusalem. Rabbi Yehoshua mourned the loss of the place where Israel once repaired their relationship with God through sacrifices. But his teacher responded, “Do not let this trouble you — we have another form of atonement: acts of kindness.” That's why it is said, ‘For I desire kindness, and not sacrifice’ and it says, ‘I declare: the world will be built on kindness’ (Psalm 89:3)

As we approach the High Holy Days, we enter a season of prayer and reflection. I hope to see you in the TBE sanctuary as we lift our voices together, reflect on our deeds, and reach out to God as a community. Throughout this period, we also privately commune with God, perhaps seeking guidance or admitting our faults.

Yet, as powerful as prayer is, our tradition demands action outside of the sanctuary walls. God desires kindness — compassion lived out in action — more than ritual, more than prayer. God prefers compassionate acts to fervent prayer or hours of study, and certainly to professional success or financial gain.



■ Rabbi Nicole Luna

As Psalm 89 teaches, “The world is built on kindness.”

Now, does this mean you shouldn't come on Kol Nidre? Not at all.

Our High Holy Day services are the spiritual fuel we need to power our actions. By coming together in community, we gain spiritual strength from each other. We are motivated by and held accountable to each

other. Worship is meaningful because it deepens our capacity to care. We strive to become curious about others' experiences, sensitive to their distress, and caring enough to then help those in need.

**God desires kindness — compassion lived out in action — more than ritual, more than prayer.**

So this year, let's do both. Let's come together for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. And then, let's leave the sanctuary with a renewed commitment to notice others' pain, care about their struggles, and respond with love.

In that spirit, may our prayers be accepted. And together, may we help build a better world.

Rabbi Nicole Luna serves at Temple Beth El in Fort Myers. ☺

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For questions, please contact Cantor Butensky  
[SWFLAZI@gmail.com](mailto:SWFLAZI@gmail.com) or call (347) 205-5413.

Discover more about Cantor Azi Schwartz online through his awesome videos, photos, and social media.



**Jewish Federation**  
of Lee & Charlotte Counties



**TEMPLE**  
BETH SHALOM

# A call for renewal

By Rabbi Bruce Diamond

**M**e yimalel is a well-known Hanukah song with the chorus

מי ימלל גבורות ישראל, אותו מי ימנה?  
הו בךל דור יקום הגבור גואל העם.

The literal translation is, “Who can express Israel’s heroic actions, who can count them? Indeed in every generation a hero will arise, redeemer of the nation.”

You might be surprised, even stunned, to learn that this song takes the words from Psalm 106:2

מי ימלל גבורות יהוה Who can express the glorious acts of *adonai!* and replaces God with the nation Israel, also making its redeemer in every generation a national hero rather than the Almighty.

Idolizing the nation and its leaders is idolatry, the primal sin. Substituting them for God is the rankest of blasphemies. It goes to the very heart of our present spiritual crises as American Jews.

European nationalism spawned the most ruinous wars in human history,



■ Rabbi Bruce Diamond

including the Holocaust. After paying this terrible price, Europe’s countries renounced nationalism in favor of regional cooperation — first by creating the Common Market and eventually the 27-state European Union with open borders, free trade, a common currency and passport.

It also gave birth to both Jewish and Arab nationalism. Herzl and T.E. Lawrence had the same goals

— to create political nations out of loosely defined “peoples.”

Today, 20th Century Europe’s two nationalist bastard offsprings, Jewish and Arab nationalism, are still at each other’s throats and remain implacable enemies, even though its progenitors had the wisdom to jettison this most toxic of all ideologies.

So be it. The residents of what is now called the Middle East have to figure this out for themselves or continue along their grotesque path wasting themselves from one generation to the next, *ldor vador*.

In the final analysis, people do what they want to do and don’t do what they don’t want to do. Not much we can do about it.

## More than 70% of American Jews under the age of 30 do not identify with or support the State of Israel ...

But what we American Jews can do is assess and then reassess our values and priorities before we fade away. We aging boomers and our middle aged “kids” made support of Israel the mortar that held us together as American Jewish communities, fueling our rush towards secularization and away from our historic religious faith and practice in all its hues and varieties.

We tried and failed to impart this reinvented Jewish nationalistic legacy to our grandchildren and their children and failed. More than 70% of American Jews under the age of 30 do not identify

with or support the State of Israel, with many disapproving of Israel’s actions and policies. Well-intended programs like Birthright’s free trips to Israel could hardly put a dent in this generational sea change.

And so, they are left with nothing. Better said, we left them with nothing. Not surprisingly, more than half of American Jews under 30 report themselves with “no religious affiliations” while “American Jews in U.S. are far less religious than Christians and Americans overall” (pewresearch.org).

Is it too late to put God back in our lives, revive our religious orientations and even at this late stage, inspire those who have walked away? I don’t know, but “where there is life, there is hope.”

Real change is very hard, but if there is any chance of it, it must begin with honest self-assessment, remorse, open public confession and consistent disciplined changed behaviors.

What better time than these approaching Days of Awe to get started.

I wish you success.

Rabbi Bruce Diamond serves at Community Free Synagogue in Fort Myers. 🇺🇸

# Rosh Hashanah

*A celebration of renewal amid today’s challenges*

By Cantor Barry Butensky

**A**s summer wanes, the Jewish community worldwide prepares for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, set to begin at sundown on Sept. 22. This two-day festival, marking the start of the High Holy Days, is more than a new year’s celebration — it’s a profound call to reflection, renewal and responsibility.

Rooted in ancient tradition, Rosh Hashanah carries rich symbolism that resonates deeply in today’s turbulent world, where division, uncertainty and hope intersect. At its core, Rosh Hashanah commemorates the creation of the world, inviting us to see ourselves as partners in its ongoing story.

The holiday’s name, meaning “head of the year” in Hebrew, signals a fresh beginning. Families gather for festive meals, dipping apples in honey to pray for a sweet year and sharing round challah to symbolize the cyclical nature of life. These rituals ground us in hope, reminding us that even in tough times, sweetness and continuity are possible.

The shofar, a ram’s horn blown in synagogues, pierces the air with its haunting



■ Cantor Barry Butensky

sound — a wake-up call to awaken our conscience, confront our shortcomings and recommit to living with purpose.

Symbolically, Rosh Hashanah is about accountability. Tradition holds that God opens three books: one for the righteous, one for the wicked and one for those in between. This imagery underscores personal responsibility — no one is above scrutiny,

yet everyone has a chance to change.

The ten days following Rosh Hashanah, known as the Days of Awe, lead to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, where introspection deepens. This period urges us to repair relationships, seek forgiveness and align our actions with our values.

It’s a universal message: reflection and growth are within everyone’s reach, regardless of faith.

In 2025, Rosh Hashanah arrives amid a world grappling with challenges. Globally, tensions flare, conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East persist, with cease-fire talks stalled and humanitarian crises

growing. Economic strains, from inflation to supply chain disruptions, weigh heavily on families. Climate concerns loom large, with extreme weather events underscoring the urgency of environmental stewardship.

Yet, glimmers of hope emerge. Breakthroughs in renewable energy and grassroots movements for peace show humanity’s capacity to innovate and unite. Locally, communities face their own trials. In many cities, rising costs make it harder to gather for holiday meals, yet synagogues and organizations are stepping up, offering communal celebrations to ensure no one is left out. In New York, for instance, groups like Chabad are hosting free Rosh Hashanah services and meals, fostering inclusion.

Meanwhile, social justice initiatives tied to the holiday are gaining traction. Some congregations are pairing traditional prayers with action, like food drives or advocacy for refugees, reflecting the holiday’s call to repair the world, or *tikkun olam*.

The symbolism of Rosh Hashanah speaks directly to these realities. The shofar’s blast mirrors the urgency of today’s crises, urging us to act with clarity and compassion. The round challah reminds us that life’s cycles include both joy and struggle, but continuity endures. Apples and honey, simple yet profound, encourage us to find sweetness even in

bitter times — whether through community support, small acts of kindness or hope for a better future.

This Rosh Hashanah, the world’s challenges amplify its message. The holiday asks us to look inward, not in isolation, but as part of a larger tapestry. It challenges us to ask: How have I contributed to division or healing? What small step can I take to make a difference?

In a time of polarization, the act of seeking forgiveness — whether personal or collective — feels radical. In a time of scarcity, sharing a meal or a kind word becomes a powerful gesture.

As Jews and non-Jews alike gather to mark Rosh Hashanah, the holiday offers a universal truth: renewal is possible, but it starts with us. It’s not about grand gestures but about honest reflection and intentional action.

Whether you’re in a synagogue hearing the shofar, at home sharing apples and honey, or simply pausing to reflect, Rosh Hashanah invites you to write your own story in the Book of Life — one of purpose, connection and hope for a sweeter year.

*Shana tovah u’metukah.* (Have a good and sweet year.)

Cantor Barry Butensky serves at Temple Beth Shalom in Cape Coral. 🇺🇸

# Admitting our mistakes: The first step toward Teshuvah

By Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer

The “birthday of the world” that is Rosh HaShanah calls us to look at the verses from *Sefer Bereisheet* (Genesis) that describe creation and the saga of the first humans, Adam and Eve.

The story is well-known.

"After eating, Adam and Eve hid themselves from God among the trees of the Garden. God called to Adam and said: 'Where are you?'"

"I heard Your voice in the Garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

God asked: "Who told you that you are naked? Did you eat from the tree which I commanded you not to eat?"

Adam replied: "The woman that you gave to be with me, she gave me to eat from the tree."

So God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Everyone is passing the buck. Adam hides from God's call and blames



■ Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer

everything on Eve. Eve passes responsibility off to the snake. That was their sin. They refused to admit their error.

Why is it that so many people have trouble admitting when they're wrong? One possible reason is that without a widely accepted standard of right and wrong, there may be no compelling reason to admit wrongdoing.

We are currently living in a topsy-turvy world in regard to standards of right or wrong. We see it in the political life of our nation and our world, models of behavior that obliterate what were long accepted as standards of moral clarity.

We read and hear lies every day. In this brave new world of AI generated images and stories it becomes more difficult daily to discern truth. The lies from the mouths of politicians and pundits, the enemies of Israel, and even a few “friends,” flow forth in a never-ending stream. The images and falsehoods are repeated on social media and in everyday conversation.

Ironically, the term for the widespread dissemination of information on social media is referred to as “going viral.” A virus often causes sickness.

When no one knows what the truth is anymore, it is easier to subvert democracy and pander to special interests. Even when caught in a lie, it is almost unheard of for the perpetrator to admit their falsehood. To do so undermines credibility and creates cognitive dissonance, so people double down on falsehood rather than admit error. The more one repeats the lie, the more easily he will eventually come to rationalize it as proper.

The Torah portion the week before Rosh Hashanah, Ki Tavo, provides an important tool for admitting our mistakes:

"When you have finished taking all the tithes of your grain ... make the following declaration before God: 'I have removed all the sacred portions ... I have given the appropriate portions to the

Levite, the orphan and the widow ...'" (Deut. 26:12-13).

The Torah is telling us that to properly evaluate our spiritual status, the key ingredient is to speak it out loud. "Make the following confession before God" (i.e., articulate verbally where we have succeeded, where we have failed, and resolve to do better). The

problem is when we're not willing to admit the truth to ourselves. As the prophet Jeremiah teaches, "God will judge us when we say, 'I didn't sin.'"

Rosh Hashana is thus the most opportune day to repair our mistake and call upon

others to do the same. May these holidays be a time of spiritual growth for us all.

*L'shanah Tovah Tikateivu* — May you be inscribed for a good year.

*Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer serves Bat Yam Temple of the Islands.* 🕊️

**Why is it that so many people have trouble admitting when they're wrong?**



## Jewish Federation Receives \$10,000 Grant in Recognition of Outstanding Community Service



In a heartwarming testament to the power of community, the Jewish Federation has been awarded a \$10,000 grant in recognition of its ongoing efforts to support local families and seniors.

Since Hurricane Ian, Jewish Family Services (JFS) — the social services arm of the Federation — has stepped up in extraordinary ways. From providing emergency aid and food assistance to offering emotional support and case management, JFS has become a crucial lifeline for many across our region, regardless of background or faith.

Recognizing these impactful efforts, Lee County Sheriff Carmine Marceno awarded the Federation with the grant as part of a broader initiative to honor organizations making a meaningful difference in the community. In a special presentation, Commander Alan Canfield delivered the check on behalf of the Sheriff's Office.

As pictured, Executive Director Debbie Sanford accepted the grant with deep gratitude, stating:

"This generous support underscores the importance of the work we do every day. We're proud to serve this community and humbled by the recognition from Sheriff Marceno and his team."

The \$10,000 grant will help the Federation continue to meet the growing needs of vulnerable populations, including seniors facing isolation & loneliness, families navigating hardship, and individuals still recovering from the lasting effects of natural disasters in SouthWest Florida.

This recognition is not only a celebration of past efforts — it is a reminder of the Federation's enduring mission: to care for those in need and to build a stronger, more resilient community for all.

Stay connected all month long at [www.JewishFederationLCC.org](http://www.JewishFederationLCC.org)

Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties






# Interfaith

## SOLIDARITY GATHERING

### *Standing Together*

## Support • Unity • Peace

In these times of rising antisemitism, silence is not an option. Join us for a powerful afternoon of unity and support as people of all faiths and backgrounds come together to stand in solidarity with the Jewish community.

-  **Interfaith Prayers & Reflections**  
Voices from Jewish, Christian, and other faith communities.
-  **Words from Community Leaders**  
Messages of unity, courage, and resilience.
-  **Stories of Strength**  
Personal testimonies from members of the Jewish community.
-  **Remembering October 7th**  
Remembering October 7<sup>th</sup>, the hostages and fallen soldiers.
-  **Community Connection Time**  
Meet neighbors, share conversations, and build bridges across faiths.



*Guest Speaker*

Deputy Consulate General Ayellet Black,  
Local Clergy & elected officials.



Deputy Consulate General Ayellet Black



Sunday  
September 28, 2025  
3:00-5:00 PM

Riverside Community Center  
3061 E Riverside Drive | Fort Myers, FL



Bat Yam  
Temple of the Islands



Co-sponsored with Regional Pastors of SWFL



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**(239) 433-7708 • www.Chabadswf.org**

At the Kosel on Tish B'Av, Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz met with and conveyed appreciation to Knesset Member and Minister of National Security Itamar Ben Gvir and U.S. Ambassador to Israel Michael Huckabee for their steadfast support of Eretz Yisroel's security.

The encounter with Minister Ben Gvir took place near Shaar HaKutanah, by the entrance to Har HaBayis, where many joined together for heartfelt *tefillos* and the reading of Megillas Eichah. The somber setting of the Kosel on Tisha B'Av, reflecting the pain of Churban, was uplifted with unity and hope for geulah. The U.S. ambassador's visit for Mincha served as an expression of solidarity.



Rabbi Shalom and Devorah Katz

Mincha was followed by heartfelt singing, as the crowd poured out their *tefillos* for the return of the hostages, lasting peace in Eretz Yisroel, and the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash with the coming of Moshiach.

For more information, visit Chabad swf.org/Israelfund.

**Welcome**

Chabad Lubavitch of Southwest Florida is delighted to announce the arrival of Rabbi Shalom and Devorah Katz, who have recently joined our team of dedicated *shluchim*. Their arrival marks a significant milestone in the continued growth of our vibrant and diverse Jewish community.

Originally from Jerusalem, they bring with them a deep passion for Jewish life, a love for every Jew and a shared commitment to the rebbe's mission of spreading Torah, *mitzvot* and the light of Yiddishkeit to every corner of the world. Together, they have already demonstrated exceptional leadership, warmth and enthusiasm in the communities they've served — and now, they're bringing that same energy to Southwest Florida.

Please join us in giving them a heartfelt **ברוכים הבאים** (welcome). We look forward to watching their journey unfold and to celebrating many milestones together in the years ahead.



Rabbi Katz may be reached at 813-424-8365, and Rebetzin Katz may be reached at 813-525-1318.

**Schedule of services, September and October 5786 (2025):**

Please feel free to join Chabad Lubavitch of Southwest Florida (5620 Winkler Rd., Fort Myers, FL 33919).

Friday evening services – Welcoming the Shabbat – September, 7 p.m.; October, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday morning services – Kabbalah class, 9 a.m.; Schacharit (Hodu), 10 a.m.; Kiddush, noon.

**High Holiday schedule:**

Sunday, Sept. 14 – Selichot services, 1:15 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 22 – Rosh Hashana evening services, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 23 – Rosh Hashana day one Kabbalah/Educational service, 9 a.m.; Services, 10 a.m.; Shofar blowing, 11:30 a.m.; Children's program, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; Evening services, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 24 – Rosh Hashana day two Kabbalah/Educational service,

9 a.m.; Services, 10 a.m.; Shofar blowing, 11:30 a.m.; Children's program, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; Evening services, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 1 – Kol Nidre/Yom Kippur services, 6:30 p.m.; Children's program, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 2 – Regular services, 9 a.m.; Yizkor, 10:45 a.m.; Children's program, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; Concluding Yom Kippur services, 5:30 p.m.; Break-the-fast meal, 7:47 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 6 – Sukkot service, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 7 – Sukkot day one Kabbalah, 9 a.m.; Services, 10 a.m.; Children's program, 10 a.m.-noon; Evening service, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 8 – Sukkot day two Kabbalah, 9 a.m.; Services, 10 a.m.; Children's program, 10 a.m.-noon; Evening service, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 13 – Shmini Atzeret services, 6:30 p.m.; Rabbi's birthday party

Tuesday, Oct. 14 – Sukkot/Shmini Atzeret Kabbalah, 9 a.m.; Services, 10 a.m.; Yizkor, 11 a.m.; Children's Program, 10 a.m.-noon; Services, 6:30 p.m., followed by a Grand Simchat Torah Party

Wednesday, Oct. 15 – Sukkot/Simchat Torah Kabbalah, 9 a.m.; Services, 10 a.m.; Children's Program, 10 a.m.-noon; Services, 6:30 p.m.

*Shana Tova.* May you all be written in the Book of Life and have a year infused with blessings for prosperity, health and all that your heart desires.

For information and to join, please call 239-433-7708, go to [www.Chabadswf.org](http://www.Chabadswf.org) or email [Chabad@Chabadswf.org](mailto:Chabad@Chabadswf.org).

**TEMPLE BETH SHALOM**

**Cape Coral**

**(239) 772-4555 • www.templebethshalomcc.org**

It is hard to believe that it's almost time for the High Holidays again. Every year, time seems to go by faster and faster. It is amazing that this will be our fourth High Holiday season with Cantor Butensky, and every year keeps getting better.

The big news is that since 2022, Cantor Butensky has been with us as a part-time cantor. As of this June, with the generous help of two of our members and the support of our congregation, we were able to convert his status to full-time. Having him as our full-time spiritual leader will enable us to offer more educational opportunities both for adults and children, and many more special events.

One of the first special events the cantor is planning is a concert at Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre on Feb. 2, 2026, with Cantor Azi Schwartz from Park Avenue Synagogue in New York. If you haven't heard him sing, check YouTube and type his name. You'll be amazed by his performance of "Oseh Shalom" for Pope Francis, "Ein Keloheinu" to the melody of the Banana Boat Song, or "Hallelujah" in a tribute to Leonard Cohen. After listening to his beautiful voice, don't wait to buy your tickets from Broadway Palm. Three

weeks after tickets went on sale in July, 60% had already been sold.

But, you don't have to wait until February to hear our cantor sing. We welcome you to join us at Temple Beth Shalom for services on any Friday night or Saturday morning. However, before you come, please check our website, [www.templebethshalomcc.org](http://www.templebethshalomcc.org), or call 239-772-4555 to view the weekly service schedule.

Come meet us on Aug. 17 at our Open House. Talk to our cantor, meet our religious school teachers, tour our remodeled synagogue and, most of all, get to know our members. We take our religion seriously, but we also believe in having fun. Our services are never boring. We say that we practice "Joyous Judaism."

We will start the holidays with a pot luck dinner on Saturday, Sept. 13, at 6 p.m. Havdalah and Selichot services will follow dinner at 7:30 p.m. If you would like to join us and sample our members' wonderful cooking, please visit the following link to sign up: <https://www.cognitofirms.com/TempleBethShalom2/SelichotDinner>.

Finally, our Kol Nidre service will be enhanced by Diane Coffman on the cello. It will be a beautiful start to an already

inspirational service. The rest of the High Holiday services are listed below.

**Rosh Hashanah Services**

Monday, Sept. 22, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 23, 10 a.m.

**Yom Kippur Services**

Kol Nidre, Wednesday, Oct. 1, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 2, 10 a.m.; Youth service, 10 a.m.; Mincha, 3:30 p.m.; Yizkor

Memorial, approximately 4:30 p.m.; Concluding service, 5 p.m.; Break-the-fast, approximately 6:30 p.m.

For tickets and more information, please call us at 239-772-4555 and leave a message or email us at [office@templebethshalomcc.org](mailto:office@templebethshalomcc.org).

We wish you and your family a Shana Tova — a happy, healthy and peaceful new year. 🌟

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## TEMPLE BETH EL Fort Myers

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Our Temple office will be closed on Sept. 1. Happy Labor Day!

On both Fridays, Sept. 5 and 12, the Friday night Oneg is sponsored by our Men's Club President, Doug Kasten, in memory of his brothers, Harold and Marc, respectively. All are welcome.

On Sept. 12, renowned Cantor Marshall Portnoy joins our Religious School for Shabbat services. Come see our children!

The very next evening, Sept. 13, we prepare for High Holidays with Havdalah and dessert reception at 8 p.m. followed by our very special Selichot service. It is our tradition to perform the ritual changing of the Torah covers to white, and if you have never attended this service, it is one not to be missed. Please send your RSVP to [info@templebethel.com](mailto:info@templebethel.com) or call the office at 239-433-0018.

Our Sisterhood resumes its Ladies Who Lunch on Sept. 17, noon, at P.F. Chang's. Join us for food, fun and fellowship. Sisterhood and Temple membership is not required. Please make your reservation and enjoy!

September's Book Club selection is, "We Need to Talk About Antisemitism" by Rabbi Diana Fersko. Sam Frazer will lead the review of this book on Sept. 3 at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. The rabbi's book provides the tools needed to understand the state of antisemitism today. October's Book Club selection is, "What to Do About the Solomons" by Bethany Ball, and will be held on Oct. 8 at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. Note the date change.

Our High Holiday schedule can be found in this issue of *L'CHAYIM*.

### Upcoming events

We welcome Cantor Marshall Portnoy to our Bima on Monday, Sept. 22, for Erev Rosh Hashanah services.

The first day of Rosh Hashanah, Sept. 23, includes our traditional Tashlich service at 12:30 p.m. following the morning service at 10 a.m. Do not miss the sound of the shofar. Join us as we stand beside the peaceful pond in the Temple's backyard and toss our sins away.

The Tashlich luncheon is sponsored by our Sisterhood. RSVP is required

so we are sure to have enough food for all attending.

Our annual High Holiday Memorial Service begins at 10 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 26 at 3200 Michigan Avenue. Located within the City of Fort Myers Cemetery, The Garden of Memories is the first Jewish cemetery and only Temple-owned cemetery in Lee County.

### Save the date

Are you feeling nostalgic for the music of the fabulous fifties? On Feb. 14, 2026, bring your sweetheart to our Sock Hop in the Dubin Center. There will be music, food, nostalgia everywhere, and a special guest live performance. More details to follow, so save the date for what's sure to be a blast!

### Recurring programs

Our recurring Temple Beth El programs continue include:

- Drop off nonperishables and personal health items in the Temple lobby shopping cart whenever the building is open.
- Saturday morning Torah study is available via Zoom at 9 a.m.
- Tot Shabbat, a kid-friendly service, will be held Sept. 5 and Oct. 3 at 6 p.m. Come for the pizza and a service your tots will enjoy! Call 239-433-0018 to RSVP.
- History & Heritage of Our People

is the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. via Zoom.


• Shabbat services are open to all on Fridays at 7:30 p.m. We are live in the Sanctuary, via Zoom, and streaming on Facebook.

• 12-Step Recovery Group: Experience the 12-Steps from a Jewish perspective, seeking a path to recovery through Judaic spiritual principals, every Saturday at 11 a.m. via Zoom. We use the book, "Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery" by Rabbi Olitzky and Stuart Copans, M.D., second edition.

• Are you a recent convert, exploring conversion or seeking to reconnect with Jewish roots? "Jews by Choice" is a relatively new group that meets online the last Thursday of every month from 8 to 9 p.m. Discuss the delights and challenges of converting and reconnecting in a confidential and safe setting. Zoom details are on our calendar.

There are more programs: Current Events, Coffee & Chat, Theology & Life, Francophone & Hispanophone Groups, the Today & Tomorrow Giving Committee, Caring and Visitations, and more.

Follow us on Facebook @TempleBethElFortMyers and on Instagram @templebethelformyers. Questions? Call 239-433-0018.

Temple Beth El ... **where everyone matters.** 

## COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE Fort Myers

(239) 247-4556 • [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com)

Days of Awe worship is held in the Unity Sanctuary (11120 Ranchette Road). Evening services begin at 7 p.m. and mornings at 10 a.m.

The second day of Rosh Hashanah will be celebrated by sounding the shofar and performing *tashlikh* lakeside by the rabbi's home (7210 Falcon Crest Court, Forest Country Club) on Wednesday, Sept. 24, at 4:30 p.m., followed by the annual open house.

*Yizkor* will be recited during Yom Kippur morning worship on Thursday, Oct. 2. Names of those who died since last Yom Kippur will be read from the

pulpit. That list of names will be available for additions in the sanctuary lobby.

The rabbi will offer a class on God via Zoom from 1:30 to 3 p.m. on Yom Kippur. Zoom login information is on the synagogue's website, [www.fortmyerssynagogue.com](http://www.fortmyerssynagogue.com). God will be present.

Yom Kippur *minhah-ma'ariv-ne'ilah* begins at 4:30 p.m. with a complimentary light break-the-fast served in our chapel building afterwards.

Community Free Synagogue does not use tickets or sell membership. All events are open to all and free. We do not solicit funds.

If you are able, please come Monday, Sept. 22 at 2 p.m. to help us set up for Rosh Hashanah worship that evening.


On Sept. 5, the last summer season First Friday Sabbath evening dinner at the rabbi's home will start at 6 p.m., followed by *qabbalat shabbat* at 7 p.m. These well-attended meals are *milkhig* pot luck. No meat or poultry please. Fish is OK. The rabbi prepares the *halla* and a main course. Kugels, veggies, pastas, salad, fruit, desserts or wine are welcome.

Each week Sabbath eve worship at 7 p.m. is presented via Zoom from the rabbi's home. Sabbath morning Torah Study via Zoom begins every week at 9:30 a.m. Since its start in August 1997, Torah Study with the rabbi has become the longest running continuous Jewish Adult Education program in Southwest Florida.

Community Free Synagogue's weekly 6 p.m. Sabbath Eve dinners at the synagogue resume on Friday, Oct. 3. The meal is pot luck, but no dairy please! Worship, followed by a social hour, begins at 7 p.m. and will also be available via Zoom.

Please email [synfree@comcast.net](mailto:synfree@comcast.net) to be added to our email list and remain current with CFS events.

CFS's purpose is "Torah, Worship and Benevolence" (*Pirqey Avot* 1:2). While the "flavor" veers towards the traditional and God-centered, CFS is a place of prayer, study and mutual support for all who come our way, be it for a day or a lifetime.

"Everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters ... come, without money and without price." (Isaiah 55:1) 

## TEMPLE SHALOM Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands

(941) 625-2116 • [www.templeshalomfl.com](http://www.templeshalomfl.com)

Temple Shalom, Charlotte County's home for Reform Judaism, is a busy place, full of prayer, reflection and participation.

*L'shanah Tovah Tikateivu V'reichateimu!* We wish you a year filled with peace, joy and good health! May we greet 5786 with the release of all of our hostages and a fully implemented end to war and hatred in Israel and throughout the world.

### Looking back

Temple Shalom has had a fun-filled summer with many people attending our Friday evening Shabbat Services, our Sunday Sundaes, and our Dog Days

of Summer hot dog picnic. We are busy planning for the new year with Shabbat evening services, High Holy Day services, and arts and crafts programs for children of all ages. We have great plans for decorating our Sukkah, a challah bake hosted by Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties, a community Chanukah party, and our Sock Hop with a cruise theme. Did I also mention our cruise to the Caribbean?

### High Holy Days

The High Holy Days are a time for reflection, as we seek forgiveness from God and others. We are shaped by the Torah, inviting individuals to reconnect

with ourselves, our community and the Divine. Please consider spending the High Holy Days with us. Rabbi Marc Klein will officiate during our High Holy Days services, accompanied by our masterful music by our cantorial soloist Dr. David Katz, and musicians Glenn Stern and Dr. Alan Solomon. All are welcome. Temple Shalom is thought of as "home."

### Upcoming services and events

Please join Rabbi Marc Kline and the Temple Shalom congregation for any or all of these services and events:

Erev Rosh Hashanah – Monday, Sept. 22, at 7:30 p.m.

Rosh Hashanah – Tuesday, Sept. 23, at 10 a.m.; Luncheon to follow; Reservations necessary. \$36 per person.

Tashlich – Tuesday, Sept. 23, 3 p.m. at Laishley Park, Punta Gorda

Kol Nidre – Wednesday, Oct. 1, at 7:30 p.m.

Yom Kippur morning – Thursday, Oct. 2, at 10 a.m.

Yom Kippur afternoon – Thursday, Oct. 2, at 3:15 p.m.

Yom Kippur concluding and Yizkor – Thursday, Oct. 2, at 4:30 p.m.; Break-the-Fast after services conclude; Reservations necessary. \$25 per person.

Sukkot – Arts and crafts for children of all ages – Sunday, Oct. 5, at 2 p.m.

Sukkot – Decorate Sukkah, short service and pizza – Sunday, Oct. 5, at 3 p.m.

Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah – Friday, Oct. 10, at 7:30 p.m.

All of our services are free of charge including our High Holy Day services. Donations are appreciated. Come, sing, pray and make new friends.

Temple Shalom is located at 23190 Utica Avenue, Port Charlotte, FL 33980. Learn about us at [www.templeshalomfl.com](http://www.templeshalomfl.com). Get in touch with us at [shalompc06@gmail.com](mailto:shalompc06@gmail.com) or 941-625-2116. 

**BAT YAM TEMPLE OF THE ISLANDS REFORM**

Friday evening services at 7pm at the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ, 2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel Spiritual Leader and Cantor: Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer  
 President: Janice Block Chaddock  
 Vice Presidents: Sandra Teger, Annette Pacyga  
 Email: batyamsanibel@gmail.com  
 Website: batyam.org  
 Services: October through April  
 For more information on our service times and programs, please write to batyamsanibel@gmail.com or PO Box 84, Sanibel, FL 33957

**CHABAD OF BONITA SPRINGS/ESTERO ORTHODOX**

24611 S. Tamiami Trail  
 Bonita Springs, FL 34135-7024  
 Rabbi Mendy Greenberg  
 Phone: 239-949-6900  
 Web site: JewishBonita.com  
 Services: Saturday at 10:00 a.m. followed by a Kiddush

**CHABAD JEWISH CENTER OF CAPE CORAL ORTHODOX**

1716 Cape Coral Pkwy. W.  
 Cape Coral, FL 33914  
 Rabbi Yossi Labkowski  
 Phone: 239-963-4770  
 E-mail: info@chabadcape.com  
 Web site: chabadcape.com  
 Sunday - Friday 8:00 A.M Shacharit  
 Friday Evening 5:30 P.M.  
 Saturday Kabbalah Class 9:00 A.M.  
 Shabbat Services 9:30 A.M.  
 Kiddush Luncheon 12:00 P.M.  
 Hebrew School of the Arts Sunday 10:00 A.M - 12:30 P.M.  
 JLI Classes Monday 7:00 P.M.  
 Torah Study Tuesday 7:30 P.M.  
 Women's Weekly Class Wednesday 11:30 A.M.

**CHABAD OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY ORTHODOX**

424 W Henry St  
 Punta Gorda, FL 33950  
 Rabbi Simon Jacobson  
 Phone: 941-833-3381  
 E-mail: chabadpg@yahoo.com  
 Web site: chabadofcharlottecounty.com  
 Services: Saturday at 10:00 a.m. followed by a kiddush  
 Torah study: Wednesday at 8:00 p.m.

**CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ORTHODOX**

5620 Winkler Road  
 Fort Myers, FL 33919  
 Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz  
 Phone: 239-433-7708 • Fax: 481-9109  
 E-mail: rabbi@chabadswf.org  
 Web site: chabadswf.org  
 Services: Friday 5:15 p.m.;  
 Saturday Kabbalah class 9:00 a.m.; Shacharit 10:00 a.m.;  
 Kiddush at noon  
 Minyan: Monday & Thursday 7:00 a.m.

**SYNAGOGUES & JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS IN LEE & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES**



www.JewishFederationLCC.org

**COMMUNITY FREE SYNAGOGUE CONTEMPORARY TRADITIONAL**

The Unity Campus 11120 Ranchette Road  
 Fort Myers, FL 33966  
 Phone: 239-247-4556  
 E-mail: synfree@comcast.net  
 Web site: fortmyerssynagogue.com  
 Sabbath Eve Dinner every Friday at 6:30 followed by worship at 7:30 PM  
 Torah Study on Zoom every Sabbath morning from 9:30-11:00  
 Meeting Room ID 527 117 7864 passcode 435419  
 Rabbi Bruce Diamond, D.D. cantoral soloist  
 Traci Pavel

**CHAVURAT SHALOM OF SWFL CHAVURA**

PO Box 722  
 Sanibel, FL 33957  
 Chavuratshalom@gmail.com  
 Web site: chavuratshalomofsouthwestflorida.org  
 Cheryl Fulmer, President  
 Shabbat services - 7:30 p.m. every Friday  
 Schmooze - 7:30 p.m. 1st Tuesday  
 Torah Talk - 7:30 p.m. 2nd Tuesday  
 Current events - 7:30 p.m. 3rd Tuesday  
 Speakers - 7:30 p.m. 4th Tuesday

**TEMPLE BETH EL REFORM**

16225 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33908  
 Rabbi Nicole Luna  
 E-mail: rabbiluna@templebethel.com  
 Learning Tree Preschool Director: Ronni Vega  
 Ronnilearningtree@gmail.com  
 President: Michael Altman  
 Email: President@templebethel.com  
 Phone: 239-433-0018  
 Office Manager: Karen Kagan  
 Email: manager@templebethel.com  
 Web site: templebethel.com  
 Shabbat services: 7:30 p.m. Friday  
 Torah study 9:00 a.m. Saturday  
 Religious School: 9:30 a.m.- Noon Sunday  
 Mazel Tots (0-5 yrs. old). Sunday 11:00 a.m.  
 Religious school coordinator: Allison Fego  
 Religiousschool@templebethel.com  
 Judaica Gift Gallery  
 Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

**TEMPLE BETH SHALOM REFORM**

702 S.E. 24th Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33990  
 President: Helene Glocer  
 Phone: 239-772-4555  
 Spiritual leader: Cantor Barry Butensky  
 Email: templebethshalomcommunications@gmail.com  
 Web site: templebethshalomcc.org  
 Services: 7:30 p.m. Friday  
 Saturday morning Torah Service/Torah study twice monthly at 10:00 am  
 Enrichment night every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.  
 Shabbat 10:30 a.m.

**TEMPLE JUDEA CONSERVATIVE**

14486 A&W Bulb Road  
 Fort Myers, FL 33908  
 Rabbi David Arias  
 E-mail: rabbi@tjswfl.org  
 President: Jan Klein  
 Religious School Coordinator: Linat Bahar  
 E-mail: linatbahar@gmail.com  
 Preschool Director: Suki Kelly  
 templejudeapreschool@gmail.com  
 Phone: 239-433-0201 • Fax: 239-433-3371  
 E-mail: tjswfl@gmail.com  
 Web site: tjswfl.org  
 Services: 6:15 p.m. Friday and 9:30 a.m. Saturday Minyan: 9:00 a.m. Monday  
 Religious School: Sun. 9:30 a.m. - noon; Wed. 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.  
 Early childhood education: Preschool, M-F, ages 18 months-5 years;  
 "Mommy & Me," 12 months-2 years  
 Affiliated: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

**TEMPLE SHALOM CHARLOTTE HARBOR AND THE GULF ISLANDS REFORM**

23190 Utica Ave., P.O. Box 494675  
 Port Charlotte, FL 33949-4675  
 President: Judith Migdol  
 Phone: 941-625-2116  
 E-mail: Shalompc06@gmail.com  
 Web site: templeshalomfl  
 Organizations: Sisterhood; Brotherhood  
 Affiliated: Union for Reform Judaism

**SHALOM LIFE CENTER TRANS DENOMINATIONAL**

Rabbi Lawrence Dermer  
 Phone: 239-218-3433  
 Email: info@shalomlifecenter.org  
 Web site: shalomlifecenter.org

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

- AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee): Jacki Waksman - 954-653-9053
- AJC (American Jewish Committee): Brian Lipton - 941-365-4955
- Anti-Defamation League: 561-988-2900
- B'Nai B'rith International: 941-302-4500
- Chabad Jewish Student Life at FGCU Rabbi Mendel Gordon - 347-452-0489 mendelgordon@gmail.com
- Chevra Kadisha: Taryn Sasser
- Generations of the Shoah SWFL: 263-9200
- Hadassah - Collier/Lee Chapter: Joyce Toub - 518-330-1559
- Hazak 55+ Chapter: Joyce Rosinger - 239-437-1566
- Israel Bonds: Regional Headquarters: 800-622-8017
- Jewish Community Services: 239-481-4449
- Jewish National Fund: Joshua Mellits, Director, Western Florida 941-462-1330 ext. 865  
 Memorial Tree Planting in Israel 1-800-542-8733
- Jewish War Veterans: Post 400: Commander Harvey Charter - 239-246-3151
- Mikvah Bashka of Southwest Florida: Nechamie Minkowicz - 239-822-2784

Jewish Federation of Lee & Charlotte Counties






# Interfaith

## SOLIDARITY GATHERING

### *Standing Together*

## Support • Unity • Peace

In these times of rising antisemitism, silence is not an option. Join us for a powerful afternoon of unity and support as people of all faiths and backgrounds come together to stand in solidarity with the Jewish community.

-  **Interfaith Prayers & Reflections**  
Voices from Jewish, Christian, and other faith communities.
-  **Words from Community Leaders**  
Messages of unity, courage, and resilience.
-  **Stories of Strength**  
Personal testimonies from members of the Jewish community.
-  **Remembering October 7th**  
Remembering October 7<sup>th</sup>, the hostages and fallen soldiers.
-  **Community Connection Time**  
Meet neighbors, share conversations, and build bridges across faiths.



*Guest Speaker*

Deputy Consulate General Ayellet Black,  
Local Clergy & elected officials.



Deputy Consulate General Ayellet Black



Sunday  
September 28, 2025  
3:00-5:00 PM

Riverside Community Center  
3061 E Riverside Drive | Fort Myers, FL

**ONSITE SECURITY**

To Register

[jewishfederationlcc.org/calendar](http://jewishfederationlcc.org/calendar)



Bat Yam  
Temple of the Islands



Co-sponsored with Regional Pastors of SWFL

