



THE GREATER DES MOINES

JEWISH PRESS

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חג פסח

שמה

Happy Passover!

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*In memory of past Editor,
Mark S. Finkelstein (z"l)*

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Community Report

Beit Sefer Shalom

- All BSS students studied virtually from November 18-January 10. Thank you to all our teachers and students for their flexibility and creativity
- BSS enjoyed celebrating Chanukkah remotely with a special concert from Shirlala. Families from around Iowa were able to join us online for this special celebration
- Students enjoyed winter vacation from Dec 20-Jan 6
- Our Student to Student (STS) team has reached over 80 students this year, with an additional 75 projected. STS has established working relationships with two new high schools including Dowling and Pella Christian

Gan Shalom

- Students presented their winter sing program virtually this year
- A huge thank you to our volunteers who helped make Chanukah extra special at Gan Shalom with fresh latkes for our Chanukah celebration
- Students are studying the "Breathe, Think, Do" strategy as they learn to cope with life's challenges
- Gan Shalom Camp is scheduled at Caspe from June 7-August 20. Registration is open online!

Engman Camp Shalom

- Registration for Summer 2021 is now open online
- ECS is seeking motivated individuals to join our staff for this summer. Counselor applications can be found online
- This year, we hope to implement archery into our activities, as well as offer different tracks during certain weeks that would have either a sports focus or an arts and crafts focus
- In addition to possible transportation, we are evaluating the possibility of offering swim lessons and local, outdoor field trips

Jewish Family Services and Outreach

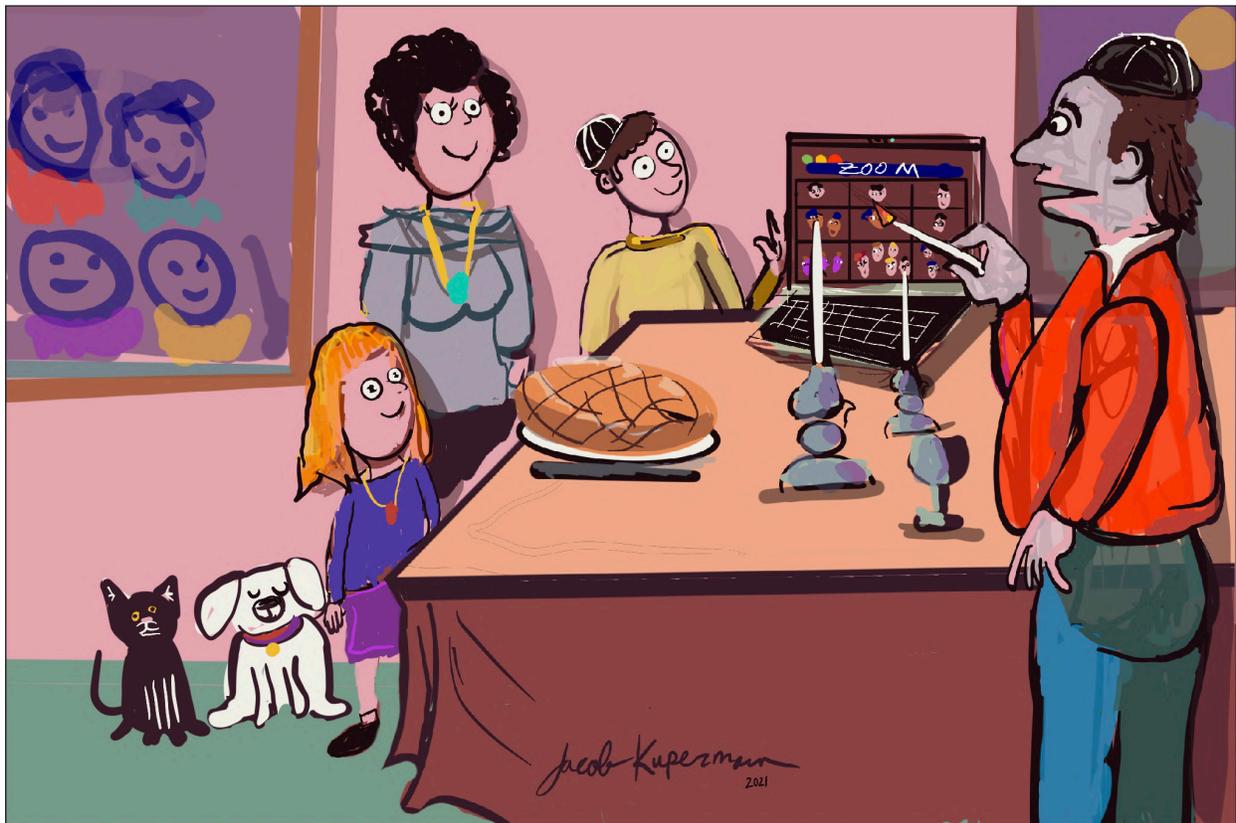
- Senior activities are suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- We continue to reach out regularly to our community and especially our seniors via phone
- Meals are delivered each week; please connect with Jody Ingersoll if you are aware of someone who would benefit from a meal delivery.
- If you need assistance or are aware of someone who does, please contact Jody Ingersoll, Jewish Family Services, at 515-987-0899 ext. 210

Iowa Jewish Historical Society

- IJHS is continuing its My Favorite Artifact series with an article by IJHS board member Jerome Thompson
- The national program to collect and preserve the stories of what it means to be Jewish in the era of COVID-19 will continue through February 2022. IJHS will continue to collect the personal stories of Jewish Iowans
- IJHS is also collecting photos, videos, and other artifacts related to personal and community life during the past 12 months. Please email ijhs@jewishdesmoines.org if you have items you wish to donate
- Become a member of the IJHS at ijhs.online. Help preserve Iowa's Jewish history for this and future generations!

Jewish Community Relations Council

- Check out virtual opportunities through P2G at <https://www.westerngalilee.org/il/>
- Members of the community continue to take part in P2G's young adult leadership program, HORIZON



same light, new traditions

Illustration by Jacob Kuperman

Web Store – www.jcb.bigcartel.com | Follow Along – [@kuperman.draws](https://twitter.com/kuperman.draws)

THE JANICE ZUCKERT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Available to eligible Jewish families in the
Greater Des Moines Area for:

Gan Shaom
we grew children

Beit Sefer Shaom
The Jewish Federation Community School

For more information, guidelines and
to apply, please contact
Jody Ingersoll at
jody@jewishdesmoines.org



MARGO AND DON BLUMENTHAL JEWISH STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Application Deadline is Friday, April 30, 2021

The Margo and Don Blumenthal Jewish Student
Scholarships are for Jewish students who will
attend or are attending post-secondary schools
within the state of Iowa.

Applications will be accepted from Jewish students
who have attended a high school in Central Iowa or
whose grandparents are or were recognized
members of the Des Moines area Jewish community.

Scholarships will be awarded based on estimated
financial need along with academic achievement.

If you are interested in applying, please contact
Jody Ingersoll at jody@jewishdesmoines.org

Preserving Our History To Serve Our Community



Bob Goldberg
Executive Director

Shalom Friends,

I have shared this story many times now with our team, our leadership, and many in the community, but I want others to hear it as well.

One day, I received a voicemail on my office phone. It was only 12 seconds long and there was a man on the other end of the phone saying, “hello, hello” and then hanging up. I saw the name on the Caller ID was Melvin Marks and the phone number had a 312 area code.

I asked if anyone knew a Melvin Marks and no one did, so I looked up the 312 area code and saw it was a Chicago number. I called the number and left a voicemail.

Melvin called me back and shared that he was writing a book about his childhood in Des Moines and was looking for information on two boys that he remembered. Melvin explained that he couldn't proceed with his book because these boys were the main characters, and he didn't know what had happened to them other than, in his words, they were “sheep sent off to slaughter in the war.”

The first boy Melvin inquired about was Sidney Pruce. Melvin only knew that he had died in the war in 1944. He remembered only the last name of the other boy he was searching for, “Peskin,” and that this boy also died in the war in 1944. Any information we could find and share

would be appreciated, he said.

I told Melvin that I would reach out to our team at the Iowa Jewish Historical Society and we would see what we could find. After our call, I emailed Sandi Yoder, IJHS Director, and Sarah Carlson, IJHS Curator, and told them about my conversation with Melvin and the information he was looking for. By late that afternoon, I had an email from Sarah with information on both boys, including details of their military service and the honors they had received.

I called Melvin to share the information and told him I would forward the email to him so he would have a written record. He asked me to read it all to him. As I sat at my kitchen table, I began reading the information that Sarah had compiled to Melvin.

“We do have quite a bit about Sidney Pruce. In 1968 the library at the former Beth El Jacob synagogue was named for him/dedicated to him. I have clip of a newspaper article about an event held there in 1980 that has a lot of info about him. There was a display about him in the library and when the synagogue was sold a few years ago we acquired a lot of what was in the display for the collection. I'll attach the article and the pics of the veteran's cases from our gallery with his military medals [and] a picture of him playing the violin. I think we took pics of the old library display as it was at the synagogue before it was sold—I'll try to find it so you can see what it looked like.

The other man is probably Alvin Peshkin. He's in our veteran's database as a Private 1st class in the Marines who was killed at Iwo Jima in February 1945 and was awarded the Bronze Star posthumously. We have a copy of part of his memorial service program on display. I'll attach that image also.”

As I finished reading everything that Sarah had shared, there was a pause and then Melvin started to talk. I could hear a trembling in his

voice, clearly emotional.

He said, “Now I can write my book, because you have brought these boys to life. I didn't know what had happened to them. I thought that they were sheep sent off for slaughter, but they were real heroes.”

I have had several calls with Melvin since. They all involve his expressions of deep gratitude for the information that we were able to provide. He was so appreciative that he sent a donation.

I love this story because it demonstrates that we never know how or when or who will be impacted by our efforts as a Jewish Federation--but our work carries great meaning and significance for those who need it and want it.

Melvin is 96 years old today and lives in Santa Barbara. He, too, is a WWII hero. Because our community had the foresight to preserve our history and invest in making it accessible, we were able to answer questions that had lingered with Melvin for 75 years. And, even after 75 years, learning the fate of his childhood mates brought forth deep emotion and pride for Melvin, as he learned that Sidney and Alvin, boys from his youth in Des Moines, had made the ultimate sacrifice and died American heroes.

I am so proud of the work that this community has done and continues to do to preserve our history. I am equally proud of this community's commitment to continuing to invest in the present and in the future, because that will be the next chapters written of our sacred history.

I'd love to hear from you. Please reach out to me at bob@jewishdesmoines.org or on my cell at 402.598.8677.

Until next time,
L'Shalom,
Bob

Good News Continues Throughout Our Community



Michael Wolnerman
President

Hello Community! I hope this finds all of you doing well and as good as can be expected—even better than expected.

Who could have guessed that we would have endured this much over the years of 5780 and 5781? I cannot imagine where we will be and what will be going on during Passover 5781. Many of you know that this letter is typically written several weeks in advance of distribution, and this one is no different. It's snowing and actually very pretty outside right now in Des Moines, and Billy Joel's song, "We Didn't Start the Fire" is running through my head. I'm wondering if someone has created a similar tune with lyrics for what we've gone through since last Pesach.

I have had plenty of time for personal reflection this past year, and, as I know you've heard from me before, I keep coming back to my motto that "if you think good, it will be good." While I try not to say that in every single letter I've written in my role as President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines, I feel so strongly that this is key, and so much good has happened at the Federation in spite of everything going on. Below are some good things that highlight, and which I believe clearly demonstrate, that the Federation is on the right path.

First and foremost, as you have all hopefully heard, Bob and Kim Goldberg moved to Des Moines

in December and Bob is off and running as our Executive Director. To say that Bob is "drinking from a fire hose" is an understatement! He is tackling a rigorous and very extensive "to do" list, which includes meeting as many community members as possible. Please be sure to accept his invitation to visit whenever the time arises. His calm demeanor, experience, talent and enthusiasm are a breath of fresh air.

In addition to our excitement about getting Bob to Des Moines and off and running, I am very proud to report that in spite of the pandemic and all the other challenges we faced this year, our annual All-in-One campaign exceeded its goal, raising more than \$500,000! Thank you to everyone who stepped up and gave more! Thank you to all the new donors to the AiO campaign this year! It was a goal of mine as President to increase new donations last year and again this year and I am so pleased to say it was accomplished. We couldn't have done this without each and every one of you, and are so appreciative of your generosity!

In addition to these two outstanding "good news" items, the "good" doesn't stop there:

- Jewish Family Services continued to serve our older community members, providing those in need with deliveries, messages of care and encouragement and phone calls. Although social distancing, has been and continues to be a challenge, JFS met and absolutely exceeded expectations.

- Gan Shalom and Beit Sefer continued to hold classes—some virtual, some face to face. Our schools will continue to navigate the pandemic challenges to provide a Jewish education to our kids, while always doing everything we can to keep our kids, and those around them, safe and healthy.

- Our amazing Federation staff continue to step up! These "unicorns," as I like to call them, have truly been an inspiration. When

we see television programs showing front line workers like doctors, nurses, pharmacists, teachers, etc., we also think of our staff. They have all been amazing during these unprecedented times.

- The Iowa Jewish Historical Society hasn't missed a beat. I can only imagine the kind of attendance at IJHS events if it weren't for the pandemic. I have participated with the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute since 1996/97, and GDMLI makes it an annual event to have an all-day session at Caspe Terrace which includes a tour of the Museum. Those days will come again.

- We are having more conversations about re-launching our Lions of Judah and Pomegranates. These are powerful, nationally recognized Women's Philanthropy societies across our Federation movement. The Jewish Federations of North America assists with the program, and it is only one of the many ways JFNA help us make our Federation better, so stay tuned for more on that front.

Because this edition of the Jewish Press is near Passover 5781, I thought about a question a co-worker asked me. "Why is it called Passover?" I told him what I tell everyone, that there were plagues and one was the death of the first born. This is significant. The Israelites marked their doors with the blood of lambs so the angel of death would pass over their household. Thus, we have Passover. Although it may feel a bit like we are wandering these days, we are not in the desert, and more good things are coming.

From my family to yours, have a wonderful, happy, healthy Passover. As always, reach out to me if you have questions about anything related to our Federation.

Best wishes,
Michael Wolnerman, 515-778-3867

Celebrate the Joy of Yiddish Music with *Mazel*

Abe is the leader of the Java Jews Klezmer Band, the musical curator of Jazz at Caspe Terrace and the host of a weekly jazz radio show.

Abe Goldstien
Guest Columnist

There's a wonderful Yiddish tune called "Zingen A Lid Is A Mekhaye" ("To Sing a Song Is a Joy"). That could easily be the subtitle for *Mazel*, a new recording from singer Janis Siegel, Cantor Daniel Kramer and pianist John DiMartino. The three, along with a combination of some of New York City's finest jazz musicians, bring joy to classic Yiddish tunes that I first heard as a child during the Jewish Hour on WHAM-Radio in my hometown of Rochester, NY. I always found it ironic that my introduction to Yiddish music was on a radio station that included the word "HAM"!

The joy begins with a "kvetch" from Janis Siegel as she slips into a swinging version of "Zug Es Mir Noch Amool" ("Say It To Me Again"), a tune made famous (or as famous as any Yiddish tune can get) by the Barry Sisters. The joy continues through the 12 tunes on *Mazel*, including Yiddish classics like "Belz, Mein Shtete, Belz," ("Belz, My Home Town, Belz"), "Bei Mir Bistu Sheyn" ("By Me You Are Pretty") and "Oyfn Pripetchik" ("On The Hearth").

The jazz vocalese of Seigel, a founding member of Manhattan

Transfer, the richness of Kramer's cantorial voice and the jazz sensibility of DiMartino, who appeared at Caspe Terrace with vocalist Jay Clayton, define the basic element of Yiddish music — the juxtaposition of happiness and sadness. You can hear it in the lyrics of tunes like "Glick Du Bist Gekommen Tzu Shpait" ("Happiness, You Came a Little

Dich Tzuful Lieb" ("I Have Much Love To Give") to a Latin-tinged version of "My Yiddishe Momme" (a tune written by Jack Yellin, my mother's second cousin), *Mazel* is a wonderfully ion crafted celebration of the golden age of Yiddish music in America. Whether you remember these tunes from your youth or not, the music will move you — your body, your mind and your soul.

For Siegel, making this CD was an opportunity to discover some of the iconic songs of the Yiddish tradition. For Kramer, it was a way to connect with the emotive lilt of the Yiddish his grandparents spoke. For DiMartino, it was a chance to explore his fascination with Yiddish songs that began when he first heard blues singer Alberta Hunter's version of "Ich Hob Dich Tzuful Lieb." Whatever their reasons for

coming together to create *Mazel*, the outcome is pure "mekhaye" for listeners.

By the way, I have already extended an invitation to these musicians to share this joyful music with the community at a Jazz at Caspe Terrace event in 2021 or 2022.



Cover art for *Mazel's* newest album.

Too Late"). You can hear it in the plaintive cry of Sara Caswell's violin introduction to "Rozhinkes Mit Mandlen" ("Raisins And Almonds"). You can hear it in the trills and thrills of Aaron Heicht's clarinet on "Mazl."

From the Russian-Jewish folk song "Tumbalalaika" to the swing-inspired version of "Mahzel Means Good Luck," and from the Afro-bolero take on "Ich Hob

Adelman Shares the Importance of Her Trip to Israel



Liz Adelman
Guest Columnist

I visited Israel for the first time three years ago with my husband, David. We had the honor of traveling with Governor Reynolds and a delegation of bipartisan Iowa business leaders to further strengthen the US Israel relationship and find trade opportunities between Iowa and Israel. While in Israel, we had the unique privilege meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, various leaders in technology and agriculture, as well as visit many of the historical and holy sites throughout the country including Yad Vashem—The World Holocaust Remembrance Center.

The trip changed my life. I am Catholic, and my husband is Jewish. We are an inter-faith family raising three beautiful Jewish children. My time spent in Israel helped me to foster a greater understanding of the Jewish roots and rich history of my Catholic faith. This experience solidified why I believe it is vital for my family and the importance to the State of Israel that my children are raised Jewish and understand their heritage.

I was particularly moved while touring Yad Vashem. Established in 1953 by an act of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), Yad

Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, is entrusted with the task of commemorating, documenting, researching and educating about the Holocaust; remembering the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators, the destroyed Jewish communities, and the ghetto and resistance fighters. Yad Vashem also pays tribute to and honors the Righteous Among the Nations, those who risked their lives to rescue Jews during the Holocaust.

It was at Yad Vashem that I truly understood the decision I made to have our children raised Jewish and not Catholic. I had been put on this earth to ensure that my boys would live each day with the Jewish principle of Tikkun Olam which means “world repair.” Tikkun Olam has become synonymous with the notion of social action and the pursuit of social justice. I was raised by social justice Catholics so the notion of Tikkun Olam resonated with me the first time my husband explained why being Jewish is so important to him. After leaving Yad Vashem I made a promise to all those mothers that were murdered during the Holocaust that I would raise my boys living out each day to do their part in repairing our world.

As cited by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), FBI and Homeland Security, the U.S. Jewish community has experienced near-historic levels of anti-Semitism in 2018, including a doubling of anti-Semitic assaults and the single deadliest attack against the Jewish community in American history with a mass shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue; recording a total of 1,879 attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions across the country in 2018, the third-highest year on record since ADL started

tracking such data in the 1970s.

In addition to the obvious white supremacist activity that was present during the deadly attack by insurrectionists at our US Capitol on January 6, 2021, there are now upticks in propaganda on college campuses and in communities, and hateful robocalls aimed at voters. ADL tracks and analyzes cyberhate and develops new tools to fight it. A report released in May 2018 analyzing anti-Semitic speech on Twitter provided the first-ever snapshot of the trends and themes of anti-Semitism on the social media platform. Among the findings: at least 4.2 million anti-Semitic tweets were shared or re-shared on Twitter over a 12-month period.

When these horrific events occur in Iowa, the US or around the world, my mind races back to when I was in Israel and the need to speak out and speak up. As the late John Lewis taught us “when you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something.”

Israel taught me so much and opened my eyes showing me that now more than ever it is critical for stand up for the 73-year-old small democratic state in the Middle East and the Jewish people around the world.



Mitzrayim מצרים

By Dr. David Friedgood

Mitzrayim, a multifaceted word, occurs over 700 times in our Bible. But, what exactly is Mitzrayim? Is it a place, a condition of our being, or perhaps an abstraction of ever changing definition? Mitzrayim is a Semitic word usually translated as Egypt, specifically referring to the land along the Northern Nile River in Africa. It includes both Upper and Lower Egypt, hence the plural suffix 'yim'. Mitzrayim is not specifically identified with the Egyptian people in the Bible. We are told that Pharaoh, the titular monarch of Egypt, was an evil man but this was not applicable to the population of Egypt. In a sense the local population of Mitzrayim were also victims of a demonic leader. Biblical commentary over the years notes that our Torah is not particularly critical of the Egyptian populous and often portrays the people in a favorable light. The holiday of Passover is coming. As we gather at the Seder table we discuss our ancestor's time in and the Exodus from Mitzrayim, just as our ancestors have done every spring, over the millennia. What is it that we modern Jews, living in the 21st Century have in common with our forbearers in the 13th Century BCE, 3400 years ago? Why keep recalling ancient history?

The word Mitzrayim is related to the Egyptian word 'matzor' meaning mound or fortress, or the land about

the Nile River. Mitzrayim is likely derived from the Hebrew verb 'mtzr' [מצר] meaning narrow, tied up, confined. Mtzr implies hardship, distress, and depression from being confined to a narrow space.

Joseph brought his brothers and father Jacob to Mitzrayim to save them from starvation and death in the land of Canaan, which was going through a murderous famine at the time. The current Pharaoh, who had promoted Joseph to his chief minister, welcomed Jacob and the rest of Joseph's family: "Pharaoh said to Joseph, "as regards to your father and your brothers who have come to you, the land of Mitzrayim is open before you: Settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land..." (Genesis 47:5-6) The family settled in the province of Goshen and thrived. Jacob, Joseph, and his brothers died in Egypt. And: "A new King arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph." (Exodus 1:8) Pharaoh (possibly Ramses II in the 11th Century BCE) likely new of Joseph and his contribution to the welfare of Egypt but he did not care. This new Pharaoh was only concerned with maintaining his might and power which involved controlling his subjects. He found the small group of Israelites in the enclave of Goshen threatening. They got in his way. These Jews stood out and did not conform with Pharaoh's view of the way

things should be in the lands he controlled. The Children of Israel (Jacob), once a proud and independent people, were persecuted and subjected to forced labor as they entered a darkened narrow place of confinement. Their souls constrained, their futures and dreams limited. Their families, spouses and children, became the property of their master. They turned into a people living from day to day with no hope to escape their persecution. The slave is beholden to their overlord 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They have no time off and no vacations. This slave is deprived of rest and religious observance. Slaves have no hope of improving their lives. Hence Mitzrayim was created and thus evolved into a narrow place of persecution and slavery.

Pharaoh ruthlessly imposed labors of increasing hardship on the people he enslaved. The Israelites were assigned to the fabrication of bricks (perhaps for pyramids and other public purposes). Over time they were deprived of the basic materials needed to make the bricks, particularly straw, but their work quotas were not changed. Despite the hardships they continued to be fertile and their numbers increased, prompting Pharaoh to order the murder of every newborn male Israelite. The midwives were instructed to throw them into the Nile River at birth, an order that they resisted. Human life was

a commodity to be used by the slave master at his will. A man named Moses managed to escape from this confinement. For a time he was brought up by Pharaoh's daughter but eventually was forced into the desert where he was able to reconnect with his God, the God of his ancestors. With the backing of his LORD, Moses and his brother Aaron returned to Mitzrayim and stood before Pharaoh with the words of the most Holy: "Let my people go". These words enlightened the Children of Israel and have also inspired generations of oppressed people over the centuries. Moses taught that human life was of intrinsic value and had value in this world. Slavery is not normal. People are entitled to their hopes and dreams. Every human being deserves at least one day of rest and reflection during the work week (Sabbath). Workers should be adequately compensated for their labor and be free to change jobs as they see fit. The widow and the orphan along with those in difficult circumstances are entitled to support by the people who are able to help them. Charity is not optional

but an obligation of society. Moses taught that history is not 'circular', meaning that human kind can change their circumstances. Your past does not necessarily dictate your future. Through education and labor descendants of slaves can become leaders if given the chance. A man of color can thrive and succeed as President. Change is always possible, though it may be difficult to obtain. Moses also taught that all human kind is unified. We are all descendants of the first human beings created by the one God. At the time of the Exodus from Mitzrayim 'a great multitude' of non-Israelites left the confines of Egypt and followed Moses and his God to a new place, a land of 'milk and honey' where they and their families could thrive and develop their potential during their sojourn in this world. Jew and non-Jew were treated as equals as long as they followed the basic rules of human society as outlined in the Torah written by Moses under the direction of his Creator. The Christian historian Thomas Cahill outlined this profound change in the history of human

kind in his book "The Gift of the Jews". From the experience of the Exodus from Mitzrayim we know that human life is of infinite value to be respected in all circumstances. Slavery is not normative and we are all entitled to a day of rest, individual beliefs and dreams, and able to conduct our lives according to our individual needs and wants. Nevertheless we do need to follow the basic rules of civilized society or risk losing our privileges.

As Passover is coming, we should all be reminded of our past and see ourselves as slaves in Mitzrayim. Each of us confined to a dark restrictive existence. As we recall this ancient story, and go through the rituals outlined in the Haggadah (Seder program) we are able to throw off the shackles of slavery and emerge at the end of our Seder a free people. We see the expanse of our world in front of us as we work on improving our lives, those of our families, our community, and the whole world. Next Year in Jerusalem. Hag Sameach.

*"Here was a lowly person who called,
and the LORD listened,
and delivered him from all his troubles [צורתו]
(from Mitzrayim)."
(Psalms 34:7)*

Our Library Has Lots to Offer

Missy Wolnerman
BSS Board Member

I was sitting in the school wing library last week during Sunday School, when the most wonderful thing happened. A kindergartner came in with her teacher, and a friend and said, "I know right where it is!" Then she walked over the shelf, dug into a plastic bin and pulled out the book she had been telling her teacher she wanted. They all skipped out of the room.

Now, that sounds like a very humdrum story, but it was a long time in the making. When the library was first opened, books came in boxes from the previous school wing at Tifereth and were put on shelves in some order. Adult books were mingled with picture books. Teachers' Curricula and prayer books sat on the same shelf. Cookbooks, Holocaust autobiographies, and large format books on Israel clumped together. And it stayed that way. And other than Gan Shalom students, the library went mostly unused.

In the fall of 2019, as an at-large Beit Sefer board member, I asked Sophie where we needed help and the library was offered up. So here we are, with so much done and so much left to do. With the help from the madrachim and a few student volunteers, we have seriously culled the collection. Picture books as old as 1964 have been turned into arts and crafts opportunities. Extra copies of delightful books have been offered to homes wishing to create personal libraries. Adult themed content is making its way to the Staroselsky Lounge. And the library is now a place where a kid can skip in the door, find a book on just about any Jewish theme you can think of.

We are looking into providing more than storage for books. Anna has set up PJ Library activity baskets. These are available for families to check out and explore a craft, a story, and a game on a theme. We can assist you finding books now. Does your child want to learn more about having a Bar or Bat Mitzvah? There is a book

for that. Do you want to find some stories about immigration experiences? We have them. Do you need to tackle difficult topics, like a death in a family? We can help find appropriate content to help address these. Young adults will also find books of interest.

And there is more underway. Our plans are to make this a destination for our kids. We are looking to purchase some comfortable seating and work tables. We need better, more permanent signage. A mural and repainting of the room are on our list. The library work will also continue to the Staroselsky Lounge. We are concurrently reviewing the collection there, and organizing it by topic. If you have any interest in participating with your time, talents, or small donations, all are welcome. Please feel free to drop by any Sunday when School is in session to help. Our goal is that every person, no matter the age, finds the perfect book and a place to enjoy it.



Books are categorized by holiday, value, Hebrew and more. The containers are easy to grab, so even our littlest friends can find a book to enjoy.

BSS Spotlight: Morah Dori's Pre-K & Kindergarten

Dori Hauser
Lead Teacher

This year has created many new challenges when it comes to teaching—students wearing masks, zoom classes and different mitigation strategies that have turned traditional school teaching on its head.

However, the Preschool and Kindergarten students in Morah Dori's class have been resilient.

Each week, ten students from different schools in the Des Moines area come together to create friendships, gain knowledge about the Hebrew alphabet and experience Jewish holiday celebrations. The students create Hebrew letters using Play-doh, use hands on materials to learn about holiday symbols and enjoy music class with Moreh Benjamin.

This Sunday school class has celebrated Havdalah each week together. They sing the blessings

and smell the spices. The students love taking turns holding the candle, cup and spice jar. This practice helps students come together and start the day with "shavah tov," a good week.

One of the main objectives we try to achieve in our class is a sense of "mishpacha," family, among our youngest learners. I want the students to leave the class having created friendships that will carry on with them throughout their Hebrew school career. It is exciting to see the students' eyes light up when they have found a friend that also celebrates Shabbat and Chanukah like they do.

We end each day with playtime in the classroom. It is great to see the students all play together and strengthen these Jewish friendships. Many of these students ask their grown ups to have play dates with one another.



Students in Morah Dori's class enjoy beginning and ending their day playing with one another. This time is important for them to create lasting friendships.



Although we couldn't throw our usual Purim party this year, virtual and in person students a morning of costumes and games on February 21.



Moreh Peter's 6th Grade class has been working with Moreh Benjamin in learning prayers for their Bar/Bat Mitzvot. Each Sunday, the class practices their Hebrew in preparation for their big day.

There are Always Reasons to Celebrate at Gan Shalom

Juli Margolin & Raizel Small
Interim Co-Directors

There is always a reason to celebrate at Gan Shalom! In December, we were thrilled to enjoy the light of chanukiyot in every class. The children spun lots of dreidels, learned the Hebrew letters on the dreidel, and the older classes wrote those letters too. We, of course, enjoyed special Chanukah foods. The children ate jelly donuts, and we were also fortunate to have volunteers Diane Pratt and Jessie Untrauer fry delicious latkes for us.

Despite our cold Iowa winter, we celebrated Tu B'Shevat, the birthday of the trees. We expressed our gratitude for all of the wonderful things that trees do for the world around us. Morah Anna led a mock seder in Judaics. The children mixed light and dark juices that symbolize the changing seasons as well as tasting a variety of nuts and fruits. We also had many dance parties with our school-wide favorite Tu B'Shevat song, "If I Were a Tree," by Jason Mesches.

In January, we resumed

our weekly yoga classes with Jennifer Wagner from Collective Wellness. The children transform in to lions, butterflies, airplanes, and more. Even though class is held virtually, everyone remains actively engaged as Jennifer demonstrates and personalizes her instructions. The children and teachers alike look forward to this calm, peaceful class.

Our 100th Day of School was February 3. All of the classes counted to 100 in various ways. Some children brought in collections of 100 items, the older classes learned to count by 10s, and we topped it off with an ice cream treat.

The children especially enjoyed celebrating Purim! We dressed up in costumes, ate hamentashen, and learned about Queen Esther's bravery. With the musical talent of Benjamin Brodkey, we recorded a video of Purim and Shabbat songs to share with our families. In February, we also welcomed our new Judaics instructor, Robin Karney, who added lessons on Jewish values to our curriculum.

There has been no shortage

of snow at Caspe Terrace. The kids have had lots of practice getting all of their winter gear on independently. We've gone sledding down the big hill in our back yard, climbed snowy mountains left by the plows, and followed animal tracks through the snow.

As much fun as we've had hiking through the snow, we are eagerly awaiting warmer temperatures when we can return to holding more class time outdoors. The staff is also busy preparing for summer camp. Registration is currently open for the summer. There are limited spots available, so don't delay.

We appreciate all that our families and staff have done to keep our school community safe and healthy. The teachers continue to work hard to maintain the same kind of caring, nurturing environment for our children in the midst of the challenges brought on by COVID. As we head towards the end of the school year, we look forward to continuing our celebrations with even more holidays and graduation.

10 Campers Per Group

Gan Shalom Camp Summer 2021
June 7- August 20

COVID-19 Safety Protocols Enforced

Registration is Now Open!

Learn more at ganshalompreschool.com



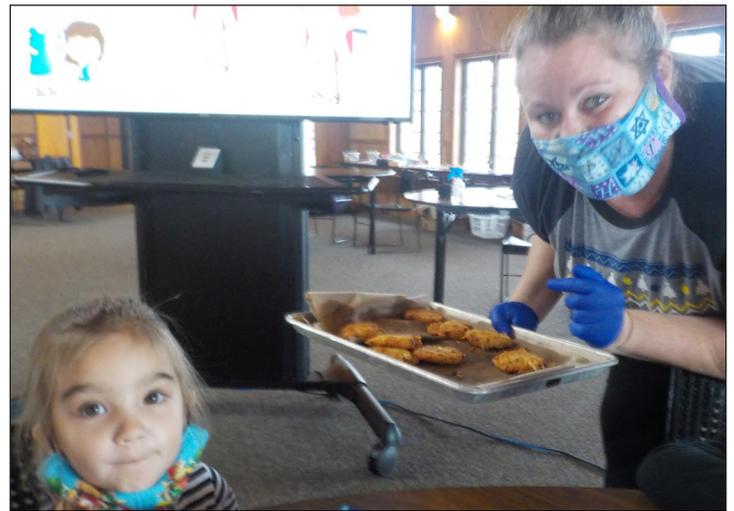
The best place to be on a snowy day is definitely Caspe Terrace. When it wasn't too cold to go outside, students bundled up to sled down the hill and play in the snow.



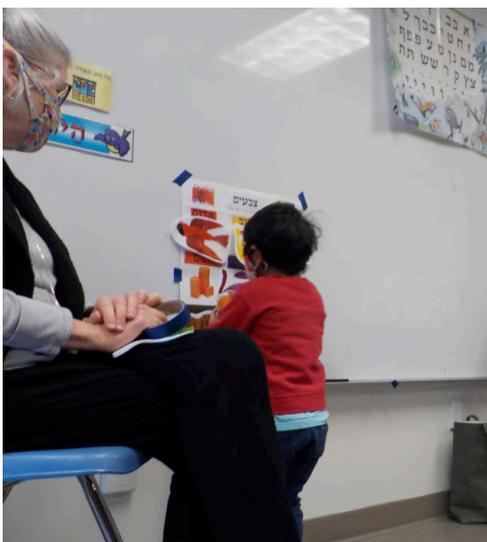
Miss Melanie, the Nature Lady, always brings friends for us to meet. During one of her visits, she brought a guinea pig names Oreo. Students were able to pet and hold it.



Weekly music classes with Moreh Benjamin are a favorite for Gan Shalom students. They get to dance and sing about Shabbat and the upcoming holidays.



Lots and lots of latkes! We had no shortage of delicious latkes during our Chanukkah celebration. Yum!



Welcome Morah Robin! Robin Karney began as the new Judaics instructor in February. She is working with students to match colors and begin learning about Jewish values. The students have already learned so much from her and we look forward to learning more!

Camp Forms Leaders and Lasting Friendships

Giovanna Zavell
ECS Director

I truly believe that some of my best memories and friendships were made at camp. Although I did not attend an overnight Jewish camp, I did attend camps through the Park District back in Skokie, IL. From nature camp to sports camp and almost everything in between, summer was one of my favorite times of the year because I was able to go to camp with people I didn't go to school with.

The special thing about summer camps—whether they be day or overnight—is that kids from all over come together to take part. As a camper, you're able to meet people from other schools, sometimes other states, and form friendships that last well beyond the summer.

When I was old enough, I became a Counselor in Training (CIT). I have to admit, these are the years I remember most. At my camp, CITs were with their groups every day except for Thursdays. On Thursdays, CITs from all Park District Camps got together and went on field trips, had leadership trainings, went to the pool and so on. For five years, I worked each summer with campers of all ages, counselors of all ages, all while growing my leadership skills and forming friendships along the way.

For my fellow CITs and I, being a CIT was one of the biggest accomplishments of our young years. The position was something every camper looked forward to. The CITs were looked up to—not only because we got to go to Six Flags twice a summer, but because we were the ones campers came to throughout the summer. Of course, counselors are a huge part of summer camp as well, and they too form bonds with the campers, but there was just something about having someone closer to your age to talk to and play with throughout the camp day.

This year, I hope to develop our CIT program even further to give our young leaders opportunities to help at camp and also learn together outside of the camp setting. I want our campers to feel the same excitement I did in my years leading up to CIT eligibility. I want Engman Camp Shalom CITs to feel the same excitement I did about being able to come to camp each day, knowing them being there is important—that they will learn leadership skills to take with them through life—and to form friendships during their time at camp.

Summer 2021 at Engman Camp Shalom feels like it is going to be a special one. And I hope to see many returning and new faces at Caspe come June.

Summer 2021 Schedule

- 1 June 7-11
The Great Outdoors
- 2 June 14-18
Mad Science
- 3 June 21-25
Music
- 4 June 28- July 2
Party in the USA
- 5 July 6-9
Camp Spirit
- 6 July 12-16
Around the World
- 7 July 19-23
Animal Planet
- 8 July 26-30
Superheroes
- 9 August 2-6
Under the Sea
- 10 August 9-13
Cooking Up a Storm
- 11 August 16-20
That's So Iowa

12 Campers Per Group

Engman Camp Shalom Summer 2021
June 7- August 20

COVID-19 Safety Protocols Enforced

ACCREDITED Engman Camp Shalom

Registration is Now Open!

Learn more at engmancampshalom.com

WE'RE HIRING FOR SUMMER 2021!

DO YOU LIKE SPENDING TIME WITH KIDS? DO YOU LIKE PLANNING FUN AND INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES? ARE YOU LOOKING FOR ONE OF THE BEST SUMMER JOBS AROUND? APPLY TO BE A CAMP COUNSELOR TODAY!

INTERESTED? CONTACT ANNA AT
ANNA@JEWISHDESMOINES.ORG OR 515.419.1269



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My Favorite Artifact: An Ongoing Mystery

Jerome Thompson joined the IJHS board in 2017 and is leading IJHS' strategic planning process. Jerome retired from the State Historical Society of Iowa in 2015 after a 33-year career in which he served in nearly every leadership position within the Society. Jerome was recognized by the Iowa Museum Association for his outstanding contributions to the museum field. He also serves on the Board of Trustees of the State Historical Society of Iowa.



Jerome Thompson
IJHS Board Member

In one of the cases focusing on veterans at the Iowa Jewish Historical Society Museum is a German pistol, specifically a P1908 Luger. It is clearly marked 1918, which was the year it was manufactured. It was definitely made during

World War I but this type of handgun was also issued during World War II.

I enjoy military history. After I retired from the State Historical Society of Iowa in 2015, I became a volunteer at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge in addition to serving on the IJHS board. At the Iowa Gold Star Museum, I work in the archives organizing and cataloging letters, diaries, scrapbooks and artifacts. Several years ago I transcribed my wife's grandfather's World War I diary. Grandpa Joe was always making a deal. While he was part of the occupation forces in Germany following the armistice, he somehow acquired two Lugers but traded or sold them to other soldiers in his unit. None came home.

I wanted to find out more about this Luger; accession number 2005.060.01. According to collections records, the pistol was donated by Arnold Caplan in 2005 or possibly before, but little else. The number is the year it was recorded.

So, who was Arnold Caplan?

A search through the Des Moines Register and Tribune archives located his obituary from 2009. Arnold was born in 1928 in Des Moines and after graduation from East High School in 1946, he joined the Navy. He served in the Pacific, aboard the U.S.S. Springfield. After his service he went to the University of Iowa and played football. He also taught in the Des Moines Public Schools for 35 years. Service in the Pacific after World War II is not a likely place to come home with a German Luger. Is it possible his father was a World War I veteran?

Arnold's obituary did not mention his parents' names, so I checked the 1940 census and found Arnold living with his family at 610 Lyon Street in Des

Moines. Arnold's father's name was Charles. A check of World War I Draft records showed that Charles registered for the draft as required. The draft record show his birthplace was Russia (the census indicates Lithuania) in 1888. But draft registrations don't guarantee service. Both of my grandfathers registered for the World War I draft, but they were not called up. One was a farmer and the other a rancher. In today's terms they were essential workers and were part of the wartime supply chain.

Charles requested an exemption because he had to support his wife and a child. A check of service records at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum yielded a Caplan, but not Charles. So he was not inducted into the service during World War I. So, how did Arnold obtain this German pistol? I guess we won't know for sure. If his children read this perhaps they can contact the IJHS with what they know. It remains an interesting artifact.

There are often mysteries in museum collections. This is why it is so important to get as much documentation from donors at the time a gift is made and to record it. In that way museums can provide more robust stories through their exhibits.



1914 German Luger
This German Luger belonged to a German soldier during World War I. (Donated by Arnold Caplan)

The German P1908 Luger, on display at the Iowa Jewish Historical Museum located at Caspe Terrace.

IJHS is Looking for Specific Materials to Add to Our Collections



The museum's collection of historical artifacts is the heart of the Iowa Jewish Historical Society. It documents the lives of Jewish Iowans from 1833—the year the first permanent Jewish settler arrived in Iowa—to the present day.

Almost all of the items in our collections have been donated to the museum by individuals and organizations. Our primary focus is objects, documents, and photographs that directly relate to Iowa's Jewish history. These collections are used to support research, exhibitions, publications, and educational programs. Artifacts are accepted into our collection in accordance with our collections policy, which is available on our website.

We need your help in expanding our collection. If you have photos, objects, etc. related to holidays like Passover and Purim that you are willing to donate, please email sarah@jewishdesmoines.org or fill out the form on our website.

Photos of items already part of IJHS collections:

Top: Purim grogger

Middle: Purim Carnival, Sioux City

Bottom: Woodesky-Sklar-Lippman family seder



Join Now! Give Yourself or a Friend the Gift of Helping Preserve Iowa's Jewish Heritage for This and Future Generations

The artifacts, photos, manuscripts and other treasures that the Iowa Jewish Historical Society collects and preserves are our history—the irreplaceable record of the accomplishments, contributions and personal stories of Jews in Iowa. Join now at www.ijhs.online or complete this membership form.

Name _____

Address _____

Please make your check payable to the IJHS and send it to 33158 Ute Ave., Waukee, IA 50263.

For more information: (515)987-0899 ext. 216 or ijhs@jewishdesmoines.org

Membership Levels

Membership Year: July 2020 through June 2021

Lifetime \$5,000 _____

Benefactor \$1,000 _____

Sponsor \$500 _____

Supporter \$180 _____

Institution \$100 _____

Patron \$100 _____

Individual or Gift Membership \$36 _____

In addition, I want to make a donation to the Iowa Jewish Historical Society \$ _____

Remembering: Linda Vander Hart

Giovanna Zavell
Editor in Chief

Linda was her family's loudest and proudest cheerleader—from cheering on her own children when they were younger to rooting on her grandchildren, Linda always showed up for her people. "Mom rarely, if ever, missed one of her children's football games, swim meets, softball games, wrestling meets, band concerts, or show choir concerts," says her son, Shane. "I remember playing football in 8th grade when it was pouring down rain, many parents didn't come out to watch because of the weather, but Mom was sitting in the stands with an umbrella in hand."

Shane recalls always being able to hear his mother's voice in addition to his coach's. As Linda's children grew up and had kids of their own, she was soon right back in the bleachers, on the sidelines and in the audience watching her grandchildren. She was known for saying her nine grandchildren were her hobby.



Linda and Daniel with their grandkids

Linda Vander Hart was born in Marshalltown, Iowa and grew up in Owasa. Her parents, Cecil and Lamoille Kinney, owned a grocery store there that Linda and her two brothers, Russ and Allan, used to help out in. Through mutual friends, Linda met her husband,

Daniel, and the two were married in 1971. The two celebrated 49 years of marriage the August before Linda's passing.

In 1972, Linda gave birth to twin boys, Shane and Scott. Luckily, Linda and Daniel knew they were having more than one child, which at the time, was a novelty. Almost four years later, their daughter Stephanie was born. Shane says him and his brother came to terms long ago that Stephanie was their mother's favorite.



From left to right: Scott, Shane, Daniel, Stephanie and Linda.

Daniel traveled for work, and while her children were young, Linda was a full time homemaker. When her children were older, Linda began her career in the nonprofit sector working in accounting and office management for over 30 years. She spent the first half of those years at the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines, starting in 1989 as a bookkeeper.

"I worked with Linda at the Jewish Federation for over 15 years," says Lyanna Lindgren, who was the Director of Education at the time. "I have fond memories of many of the programs and projects we completed together—especially with the building of The Caspe Terrace."

Linda's attention to detail and commitment to keeping everyone

on budget made her the perfect bookkeeper in the eyes of many staff at the Federation. "Linda was the perfect bookkeeper," says Elaine Steinger, Previous Executive Director "Her mission was to have the books balance exactly and that all agencies stayed on budget. She worked tirelessly to have all directors learn how to manage their money." To this day, her name still comes up in conversation at the Federation and the value she gave to the organization.

When she wasn't helping staff manage and protect the Federation or connecting with donors, she was sharing stories about her family.

"Linda's faith, husband, children, and grandchildren were the most important part of her life," says Lyanna. "She looked forward to their family get-togethers and being able to share in family activities."

In 2013, Linda began working with the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC). "She especially enjoyed serving DMARC's mission to assist central Iowans in overcoming food insecurity," says Shane.

Linda's kind heart, passion for helping others, and her fierce dedication to her family will not be forgotten.



Linda and Daniel Vander Hart.

Photos Courtesy of Shane Vander Hart



The Strengthening of the College Jewish Community



Saul Varshavsky
Drake First Year

Throughout high school, I was involved a lot in my Jewish community, whether it would be volunteering at a food pantry or doing exciting programs during the spring and summer. Additionally, I was incredibly grateful to be offered the opportunity to take Hebrew as a foreign language at my high school. Besides just actively

engaging in class, I also created intellectual games to help students become more proficient in Hebrew, organized Israeli cultural events through Hebrew National Honors Society, etc.

When I began my first semester at Drake University, it was very challenging to find a vibrant Jewish community and people passionate about Hebrew. Experiencing this sudden shift was quite sad for me. However, when I was extended the opportunity from Drake Hillel president, Meghan Kier, to help with community outreach, I gladly accepted the offer.

Having been on the leadership board for several weeks, I really enjoyed finding a sense of belonging in a tight-knit Jewish community, like what I have experienced during high school.

My sense of belonging was further strengthened when I participated in Israeli Cooking Club with the University of Iowa Hillel. Specifically, the Israeli Cooking Club was very successful; I had a great experience meeting other students who also value a strong Jewish community and find enjoyment in learning about Israeli culture. By sharing our experiences when cooking various Israeli dishes, other students and I got to easily meet and connect with each other in a friendly manner. From there, I think the best route is for Drake University and University of Iowa Hillels to continue getting together, as there will only be a stronger sense of Jewish community and students will find themselves finding more enjoyment in their college experience.

Iowa Hillel Invites Drake Students for Winter Cohort Programs



Benjamin Brodkey
Drake Third Year

While many Drake students had the opportunity to take a three-credit January term course last month, members of our Hillel community were invited to join students at the University of Iowa in their winter break cohorts. These groups met virtually once a week and students could choose to cook, watch and discuss Israeli films, or read Tiffany Haddish's book.

I joined the Israeli film cohort, which met weekly in January

to discuss the films *The Band's Visit*, *Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem*, and *Lemon Tree*. The first two films star actress Ronit Elkabetz (ז"ל), an Israeli actress and director in Israeli and French cinema.

The first film shows the story of an Egyptian police orchestra that was invited to play at the opening of an Arabic cultural center in Petah Tikvah, but the band accidentally ends up in a fictional desert town called Beit HaTikvah. The movie had quite a large French influence and won a number of awards. *Gett* also starred Elkabetz and was directed by the actress and her brother. This was the third in a trilogy of movies about a failed marriage between Elkabetz's character, Viviane Amsalem, and her husband. The couple is seen in rabbinic court over the course of five years as Viviane tries to receive a get, a divorce filed through

rabbinic court.

The third film, *Lemon Tree*, told of a Palestinian woman with a lemon tree farm on the West Bank-Israel border. On the other side of the border, the Israeli Defense Minister moves in and tries to uproot the trees. During our discussion of this film, our cohort welcomed German professor Dr. Elke Heckner to moderate.

As a Drake student, it was wonderful to connect with other Jewish students in Iowa! The experience was wonderful, and I was able to meet other great Jewish Iowans as we were all anticipating the beginning of the spring semester. I am looking forward to working with Iowa Hillel again in the future.



Find service information and more at ajciowa.org

Worship Services and Events

We will be continuing our Zoom schedule of worship services (an assortment of rabbi-led, lay-led, and family-oriented services) as well as other online events, including monthly adult education sessions. In addition, at 5:30 p.m. on most Friday evenings when there is not a Shabbat service scheduled, we will have a “Zoom Schmooze,” a time for casual conversation. A virtual Purim event is anticipated in late February. We warmly welcome anyone and everyone who would like to join us at one or more of our services or other events. Generally, a schedule is available a few weeks in advance on AJC’s website and calendar, and details also are emailed to those who have asked to be notified about AJC events. To receive these emails (with Zoom links), or if you have questions about AJC, please contact AJC at ajciowa@gmail.com.

Tu b’Shevat at the Ames Jewish Congregation

Despite the chill in the air and the snow covering the ground (and more on the way), over 20 people from the Ames Jewish Congregation, ranging in age from seven to their seventies, and from Iowa to Florida, gathered on Zoom to celebrate Tu B’Shevat on Sunday, January 24. Following a beautiful, illustrated script compiled by one of AJC’s members, those participating enjoyed a short Seder comprising different types of fruits and different combinations of wine/juice signifying the different seasons. John Pleasants, AJC’s cantorial soloist, led the group in song.



Tifereth Israel SYNAGOGUE

For upcoming services and events – including film and book discussions, classes and especially Passover – please visit tifereth.org and weekly emails.

Women’s League 100th Anniversary Gala is postponed

Russell Braman: Tifereth Israel Member and UnityPoint Jewish Chaplain

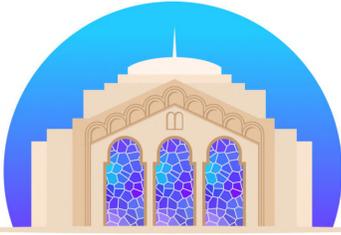


My name is Russell Braman, and I serve as a staff chaplain for UnityPoint Health-Des Moines, on the Iowa Methodist Medical Center campus. I studied Jewish Education at American Jewish University in Los Angeles, and did my residency in Houston, TX. I began to seriously explore becoming a chaplain after a visit with a friend of mine and her parents when her mother was in the hospital for a long stay. I have always been fascinated with people’s stories and their journeys.

One of my favorite parts of chaplaincy is helping people find how a hospitalization can affect

their overall life journey. I, along with my colleagues, am here to visit patients of all faiths to help people process new diagnoses, to help patients and families access the things that support them when in the hospital, and to be a listening ear in moments that can be challenging while inpatient in the hospital.

I’m excited to meet more members of the Jewish community in Des Moines, and to be able to sit with you in your stays in the hospital. I can be reached through the on-call chaplain on any of our campuses.



Temple B'nai Jeshurun

**TBJ Adult Education
Schedule for Spring 2021
All Classes Begin at 7 p.m. on
Zoom
Schedule is Subject to
Change**

Jewish History

- March 4—Origins of Reform Judaism
- March 11—The Jewish Life Cycle
- March 18—No Class
- March 25—Introduction to Passover

- April 1—Antisemitism and Philosemitism
- April 8—Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, (Program TBD)
- April 15—Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel Independence Day, (Program TBD)
- April 22—Zionism and the Founding of Israel
- April 29—Israel and the Pursuit of Peace

- May 13—Angels in the Jewish Tradition
- May 20—The Afterlife

Temple B'nai Jeshurun's Passover Seder will be held virtual this year. Details and links to come. Please check our website and make sure you are receiving our emails for more information.

Find service information and more at templebnaijeshurun.org

The Meaning of Maror

By Rabbi David Kaufman

In many Haggadot, when we reach the part when we eat maror, we are told to eat it with the sweet charoset together upon our matzah. Some will put a dab of maror on their matzah and then smother it with so much charoset that the bitterness is impossible to taste. The act of mixing maror and charoset is supposed to demonstrate the intermingling of bitterness and sweetness, part of the theme of Passover.

But of the two, it is the maror, the bitterness that is more important to experience at the Seder just as it was in ancient times when the only new taste, the only abnormal experience, that people would have as part of this holiday was the tasting of the bitter herbs. Think about that for a moment. The only special food for this holiday in ancient times was maror, not lamb, which while a luxury was not unique to the day, and not unleavened bread, which is what the people ate with every meat sacrifice and likely fairly regularly in their diet, as it is "poor people's bread."

Functionally, the primary duty of this holiday is to consume maror to significantly affect the taste of what otherwise would be a regular

flavor for us. Secondly, we are to consume matzah and not other forms of leaven for seven days during the Festival of Matzah. For some reason, our tradition has so focused on matzah that we have nearly abandoned maror.

This year as you sit around your Seder tables, try to give the maror the attention it deserves. When you get to the blessing for consuming maror, do not just mix it with charoset right from the start but taste it, with matzah if you would like, in its full bitterness. Tear up even before you put anything else in your mouth. That is the experience you are supposed to be having as part of the Seder.

One night a year, perhaps two if you attend two Seder meals, you are asked to taste real bitterness so that you might better appreciate savory and sweet and so that you might be thankful for those comforting things in your life.

We certainly love the wine, the charoset, the brisket and the matzah ball soup, but the most important thing of all to eat at the Seder meal is the little taste of bitterness in opposition to the rest of the wonderful things of which we should be thankful we have. That is really what Passover is about.



Called to the Torah: Mairlyn J Musser

Marilyn J Musser is delighted to announce that she will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 22, 2021, via Zoom. Details to follow.

As a Jew You Have a Right to a Jewish Burial

By Rabbi Yossi Jacobson

Let's talk about something no one likes to talk about: Death.

We need to talk about it because there is a crisis, and it's getting worse. Every year, tens of thousands of Jews are not receiving the traditional, honorable Jewish burial that they deserve.

Beautiful and caring people who didn't receive a Jewish burial simply because they didn't know any better. They had no idea of the meaning and the dignity of a Jewish burial, so they chose something else.

Unfortunately, many of them even chose to be cremated.

In the Torah we read how Jacob asked Joseph to ensure his burial in the Holy Land, and how Joseph honored his request. Following the Biblical statement, "For dust you are and to dust you shall return," Jewish people have always cherished the connectedness and respect inherent in a burial performed by fellow Jews in a Jewish cemetery.

Why is that?

There are many approaches to an appreciation of the unique beauty and dignity of Jewish burial, each one thought-provoking.

For one thing, many do not realize that according to Jewish tradition, cremation is cruel. The body continues to be sustained with a kind of life even after its final breath. As long as the body has not completely decayed, some of the soul remains attached to it. If so, anyone who instructs or agrees to the burning of his body is effectively agreeing to burn some of his soul—an act similar to burning a person alive.

It's also important to understand that death is not the end of a journey; it's only one more step. As the soul is temporarily shedding its bodily layer to continue on its spiritual journey, we are granted the opportunity and privilege to have a positive impact on that journey. Allowing the body to return peacefully to the earth from which it came is an important step in that journey.

Then there is the Biblical precept of kavod hamet—treating the body of the deceased with dignity. G d Himself treasures that body. It held a breath of G d and carried out a divine mission upon this earth. Jews believe in the resurrection of the dead, and how can anyone willfully destroy that which G d will one day use to restore life?

Some point to the still-fresh memory of the Holocaust, when millions of our people were stripped of their basic humanity, cruelly gassed, and reduced to ash and smoke in death camp crematoria. "How can a Jew willfully subject themselves to that experience," they ask, "replicating the worst crime in history?"

Yet, for some it is the unbroken connection to Jewish tradition that speaks to them, finding comfort in the knowledge that burial in a Jewish cemetery connects them with their ancestors, who have revered this mitzvah since the beginning of time.

Or it may be the testimony of those who have experienced the tragedy and irresolution of a loved one's cremation that gives others reason to pause and reconsider if this is what they want for their own family.

So, let's bring up this topic. Talk with your relatives, your friends, the importance of a Jewish Burial.

Together we can ensure that every soul receives the send-off from this world to the next in a way that it deserves.

To have a private discussion on this matter please contact Rabbi Yossi Jacobson at Jrcspark@msn.com, 515.339.9718

Wishing our dear community, a Kosher and Healthy Passover

Passover Services at JRC of Iowa

Saturday, March 27 | First Seder
Candle lighting time after 8:16 p.m.
Evening services 8 p.m.

Sunday, March 28 | First Day Passover & Second Seder
Morning Services 10 a.m.
Candle lighting time after 8:17 p.m.
Evening Services 8:15 p.m.

Monday, March 29 | Second Day Passover
Morning Services 10 a.m.

Friday, April 2
Light candles 7:23 p.m.
Evening Services 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 3
Morning Services 10 a.m.
Candle lighting time after 8:24 p.m.
Evening Services 8 p.m.

Sunday, April 4
Morning Services 10 a.m.

*The Minyan will be in the Shul with social distancing.
*Masks and hand sanitizer are available.



Maccabee's Kosher Deli

Passover Hours

Friday, March 26
10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Sunday & Monday, March 28-29
Closed

Tuesday, March 30
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Wednesday, March 31
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Thursday, April 1
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Friday, April 2
10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Sunday April 4,
CLOSED



In Memoriam

LINDA MAE VANDER HART
DR. MARSHALL LUBAN
DR. ALBERT JOSEPH MINTZER
AUDREY ROSENBERG
DONALD POCHTER
SIGURD ANDERSON
BRUCE GLAUBERG

*May Their Memories
Be For A Blessing*



Wishing You a Happy
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To find investing-life balance, work with a professional

You know what you want retirement to look like, and leaving a comfortable legacy for your loved ones is a priority. But free time feels a lot less free when you spend more time than you'd like managing your investments. Working with a professional portfolio manager can help you find the right balance between living life and investing for the future.

Call for a complimentary portfolio consultation.



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