



# MA CHADASH!

What's New! The newsletter of Temple Shalom Synagogue Center, Auburn, Maine

## מה חדש!

ק"ק היכל שלום

January 2024, Tevet/Shevat 5784



## Tu Bishvat

Friday evening, January 26th, 7:00 PM

Please join us as we celebrate

**TU BISHVAT,**

The Festival of the Trees.

Sip and mix wines and  
partake of the seven holy species from the land of Israel,  
as we explore the secrets of the ancient Kabbalists

## FROM THE RABBI



The Kaddish is prominently featured in our weekly prayer services. Singing its concluding verse, *Oseh Shalom*, is always a highlight. *Oseh Shalom* is a call to the Maker of Peace in the Heavens to work peace on Earth as well—peace for us, peace for all Israel, and, in a recent addition to our liturgy, peace for all of Earth’s inhabitants (*kol yoshvei tevel*).

Judaism asks us (and has always asked us) to be both *tribal* and *universal*—to, of course, care deeply for other Jews. But at the same time care, perhaps just as deeply, for all human life.

How do we balance *tribalism* and *universalism* during a time of war? When privileging the members of our own tribe can be in direct conflict with our concern for other—non-Jewish—humans. When we are constantly being asked to publicly declare who we stand with—whose fate concerns us most. Is the survival of Israel paramount? Is our horror at the loss of innocent lives paramount? Which innocent lives? Are all innocent lives equal? And what even constitutes an “innocent” life?

Not surprisingly, where we end up is extremely personal—each of us drawing different lines in the sand—lines that, at least in my case, seem to shift every day, sometimes every second.

Amidst all the horror that Israelis and Palestinians have suffered and continue to suffer—horrors that have twisted all of our *kishkes* (intestines) into knots—horrors that have us worried not only for lives in the Middle East, but our own lives at home in America, we suffer an additional horror—the horror of division. Division that delegitimizes and even spews hate towards those who hold opposing views. Too commonly, those who favor *tribalism* brand *universalists* with the awful appellation, “self-hating Jews.” Equally corrosively, those who favor *universality* too easily accuse *tribalists* of the horrible sin of racism.

Recently the New York Times ran a story about how differing opinions about Israel/Palestine are tearing Jewish families apart—unsurprisingly, mostly along generational lines. In one unhappy case, parents (secular/liberal) who had retired to Tel Aviv had a disappointing visit from their daughter, a Berkeley graduate student, over vacation. Their tense arguments—about politics!—began before she arrived, and continued throughout her visit.

*Marc Kornblatt prepared uneasily last month for his daughter, Louisa, to arrive for 10 days with the family. Her homecomings once brought the comfort of movie nights and card games, but this year was different. He and his wife discussed: How would they greet their child? Would they acknowledge the emotional distance, the slights that had piled up from afar?*

*The political divide between two generations within the family has grown into a painful chasm during the war between Israel and Hamas. Until late November, it was addressed mostly in tense exchanges on WhatsApp. “Really sad that you seem out of touch with where our heads are at,” Mr. Kornblatt had messaged his daughter after she told her parents about a friend speaking out in support of people in Gaza.*

*In the final days of her visit, Louisa Kornblatt felt tension in her parents’ home. She walked into the apartment after volunteering to help Palestinian families harvest olives in the West Bank. She gave her father a hug and noticed that he didn’t hug her back.*

If we are going to survive as a (mostly) intact community, it is vital that we appreciate that all of us—all Jews—carry within us both a fierce tribal love for our fellow Jews and deep concern for all humans. What differentiates us is a matter of degree—of balance. I might lean towards *tribalism* and you might lean towards *universality*, or vice versa, but we must always remember that in our core beliefs—in the depths of our hearts—we all want the same things. That it’s okay and right for a Jew to most deeply feel the pain of Jewish suffering—to prioritize the survival of the only Jewish homeland on the planet. Calling this “racist” is just wrong and diminishes actual racism. Conversely, focusing on the loss of innocent Palestinian lives—being horrified that fellow Jews are responsible for so much Palestinian suffering—is at the very core of what it means to live and breathe Jewishly. To call this “self-hating” is the height of absurdity.

(From the Rabbi Continued)

While we carry the immense, unbearable pain and horror of recent and unfolding events, can we open our hearts and minds to all our fellow community members with understanding and compassion? Can we accept that those with whom we may vehemently disagree are nonetheless coming from a good—even holy—authentically Jewish place? I truly hope so. The survival of our community—and all Jewish community—depends on it.

Rabbi Sruli

P.S. On Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 6:30 p.m., Rabbi Sruli will contribute a prayer at the Inaugural for Mayor Carl Sheline of Lewiston.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT



As the secular New Year approached, I kept telling myself, “Next year has got to be better!” It’s been a stressful year for many of us. The top of my list is losing my dear husband, Neal. Then comes the atrocities by Hamas on October 7th sparking the war in Gaza. Not just the fighting and all the casualties, but also the PR war that Israel seems to be losing and the hateful anti-semitism that has ballooned on college campuses and worldwide. Needing armed guards to keep us safe at Temple leaves me distraught. And of course there’s new variants of Covid floating around, plus another virus, RSV, to threaten us older folks. Climate change has brought some severe weather to our region. And I’m not going to go into the political scene with all its indictments and trials, etc.

Oy vey! Thankfully I am basically an optimistic person, and there were many good things that brightened my year. I turned 70, and Jocelyn and my dear friends threw me my first ever surprise party. I was flabbergasted. And watching my friends in their 80’s and 90’s keeps me so inspired. Also, Jocelyn and family bought their first house, in Natick, MA on Lake Cochichuate. Of course I bought them a good mailbox for their housewarming gift! (For those who don’t know, I retired from the Post Office.) And now I can drive down to visit them whenever I want. I also was able to fly to Atlanta to visit my nephews, Adam and Mustafa. My brother joined me there from Florida and Mus’ mother was also visiting from India. We had a wonderful week including an immersive Monet exhibit.

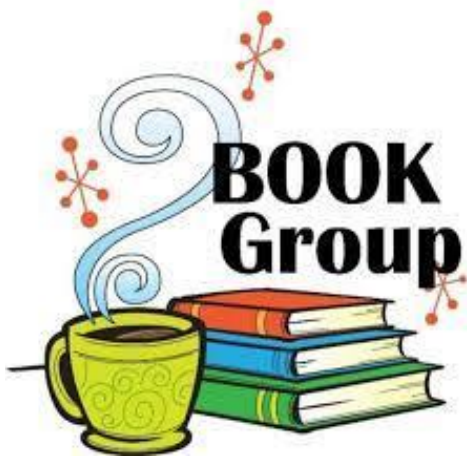
On the whole, I have a full life. I’m surrounded by great friends and a supportive Temple community. I get to be President of my favorite Temple. I meet my friend Fran every month in Portsmouth for lunch and shopping. I’ve seen many plays this year, including ushering at Portland Stage. I belong to 3 book groups, so I’ve read a great deal of interesting books. I’m the Bubbe to 3 boys. And I’m finally having my kitchen remodeled, top to bottom. I’ll post before and after pictures when it’s done.

So being a ‘cup half full’ type, my famous (infamous?) selective memory will come in quite handy this year!

I wish each of us good health, good times and good memories in the year to come.

Lesli Weiner, President

# !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!BOOK GROUP NEWS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



We had a nice big group for the December meeting. Attending was Margaret Meyer, Bertha Bodenheimer, Marsha Auster, Lindsey Walker, Mitch Ross, Judy Abromson and me, Lesli Weiner. Naomi Ragen is an internationally bestselling author, but I think *The Devil in Jerusalem* is the first she has based on true events. We found the story to be horrific, but mesmerizing. Ragen's skillful writing brought us into the worst side of religious fanaticism. This is a book you'll want to read all the way to the end.

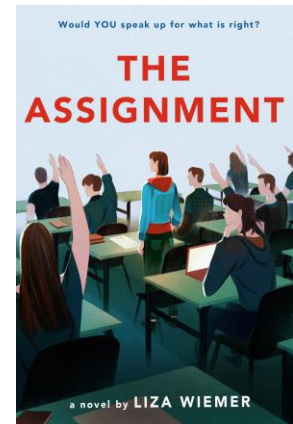
moment in history through a modern lens showcasing the power of student activism." Following is what Amazon has to say about *The Assignment* by Liza Wiemer:

"Inspired by a real-life incident, this riveting novel explores discrimination and antisemitism and reveals their dangerous impact.

Would you defend the indefensible?

That's what seniors Logan March and Cade Crawford are asked to do when a favorite teacher instructs a group of students to argue for the Final Solution - the Nazi plan for the genocide of the Jewish people. Logan and Cade decide they must take a stand, and soon their actions draw the attention of the student body, the administration, and the community at large. But not everyone feels as Logan and Cade do - after all, isn't a school debate just a school debate? It's not long before the situation explodes, and acrimony and anger result.

Based on true events, *The Assignment* asks: What does it take for tolerance, justice, and love to prevail?"



## SPEEDY RECOVERY

We pray for refuah sh'leimah – the full and speedy recovery of **Valci Braga, Rachel Corvi, Lee Jay Feldman, Andrea Finn, Sara Graf, Robert Galumbeck, Isaak Gekhtin, Detlef Gerlach, Ariella Green, Sharon Hemond, Alison Jaeger, Cylus Johnson, Suzan Katzir, Michael Kendall, Linda Koskela, Henry Lefkowitz, Michelle Lemieux, Lee Leveille, Carolyn Marshal, Bruce Meyer, Alice Richman, Sandy Traister, William White**, and all others who are not well at this time. *We like to hear good news! Whenever you request that a name be put on this list, please let Temple Shalom know when it can be removed.*





## **Bates College English Professor Sanford Freedman talks about his 1976 experience as a hostage in Entebbe**

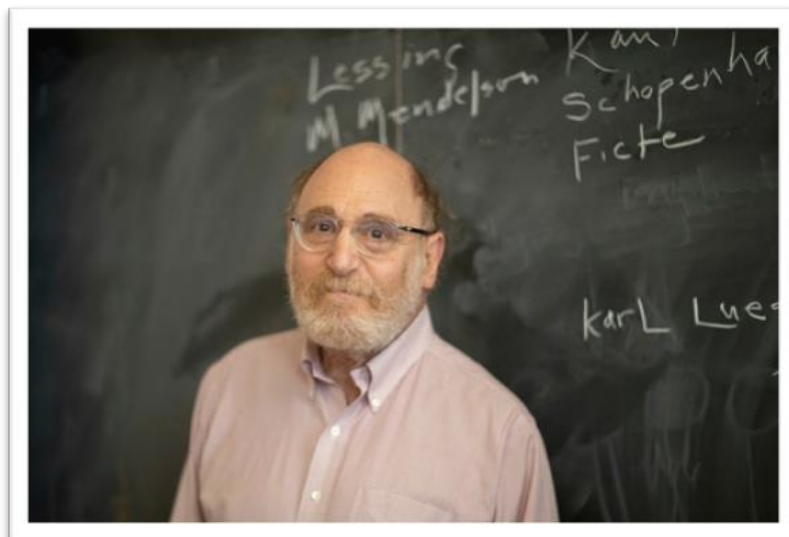
Please join us at the conclusion of Shabbat services on Saturday, Jan. 13, when at 11:15 a.m., Associate Professor of English Sanford Freedman will discuss his historic experience during the summer of 1976 as one of 258 hostages on board an Air France plane that pro-Palestinian hijackers seized and landed at Entebbe Airport near Kampala in Uganda.

At the time, Freedman was a graduate student and teaching fellow at Harvard University, traveling from Israel to France with his wife and seven-year-old stepson. Several days after landing at the Ugandan airport, the hijackers released the non-Jewish passengers and demanded the release of Palestinians imprisoned in Israel and elsewhere in exchange for the remaining hostages. Soon thereafter, the Israeli Defense Forces launched its mission to free the captives.

It's a powerful story that Freedman will reflect upon in the context of his own life.

Following his talk, Freedman will engage in a Q&A with the audience. A catered luncheon will follow in the social hall.

Donations for the lunch are \$10. Those planning to attend should RSVP by emailing the synagogue at [Temple6359@aol.com](mailto:Temple6359@aol.com) no later than Monday, Jan. 8.



Ma Chadash/What's New is published monthly by Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center. Temple Shalom is an independent congregation and a member of the Lewiston-Auburn Jewish Federation.

The mission of Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center is to foster a strong Jewish identity and an active Jewish Community.

Rabbi Sruli Dresdner

Office Manager Julie Waite

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	Paula Marcus-Platz

#### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO

Robert & Susan Scott	Jan. 3
Jonathan & Jennipher Greven	19
Ellen & Aaron Burke	21
Robert & Jackie Laskoff	29



**Rabbi Sruli is always happy to speak with and meet with members or our Temple. Please call or text his cell phone at 914-980-9509 if you would like to speak with him or to arrange a time for a meeting. You can also call or leave a message at the Temple office and Rabbi Sruli will get back to you.**

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

Sarah Olstein	Jan. 1
Henry Meyer	3
Darren McGinley	6
Becca Platz	9
Cynthia Hart	10
Jennifer Ann Cohen	10
Elyse Bodenheimer	14
Rachel Fakhery	16
Adrienne Rau	17
Jennifer Greven	18
Gillian Schair	20
Bertha Bodenheimer	23
Kristine Rausch	23
Behzad Fakhery	25
Sandra Traister	25
Graham Mitchell	26
Jackie Laskoff	29



## Yahrzeiten

Michael Shain	Jan. 1
Walter Jaeger	2
Sylvia Kutzen	2
Ruth S. Williams	3
Jayne Wilner	4
Doreen Plavin	5
Elsie Goodman	5
Ida Finks	11
Augusta Olstein	11
Ellen S. Bodenheimer	12
Celia Supovitz	14
Bernard Marcus	15
Lois Barr	16
Reevan I. Levine	16
Maynard Schwartz	17
Ernest B. Williams	17
Harry Supovitz	18
Martin Miller	19
John A. Platz	20
Marie Rau Stern	21
Jennie Krasner	22
Maxwell Passerman	22
Arthur Fishman	23
Shirley Asher	27
Anne Leavitt	28
Hyman Auster	30



# ISRAEL EMERGENCY FUND

The Israel Emergency Fund that was briefly announced in the November issue of Temple Shalom's Ma Chadash raised \$3450 in a matter of days. Within a very short period of time a fund raising raffle was announced at the Temple's Chanukah party which added over \$100, and at this writing more funds are expected.

The Federation in New York published a 45-page listing of names and descriptions of the dozens of organizations in Israel that are being supported by these dollars. The sum of nearly \$765 MILLION DOLLARS was allocated in early December! While our contribution to that large sum was minor, we joined many communities whose funding helped reach that figure.

While many of the organizations that received financial support are well known to many of us, such as the Israeli ambulance service, Magen David Adom, there are dozens of lesser-known, but vital, services that receive funding. Do the titles "Israel Trauma Evaluation", or "Association for Well Being of Israeli Soldiers", or at least six rehab hospitals in the Negev, sound familiar? They all benefit from our contributions!

We continue to ask for Israel Emergency Funds. As our contributions continue to arrive at the Temple office the dollars will be forwarded for distribution in Israel.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

**Please let us know if you hear news of births and deaths of members or former members of our Jewish Community, so that we may share with others. Email to Julie at [temple6359@aol.com](mailto:temple6359@aol.com).**



Please welcome Asher Thomas Platz to the world! Born on Sunday, November 19th to Adam Platz & Rebecca Thomas, weighing 7lbs 4oz. She is healthy, happy and excited to be an Auburn resident. We hope to see you at Temple Shalom soon.



# **CONTRIBUTIONS**

## **GENERAL FUND**

Tom & Paula Marcus-Platz

To welcome baby girl Asher to  
parents Adam & Rebecca

In memory of Jimmy & Manny Plavin

Shelley Rau

In memory of Leroy Bieringer

Sylvia Whiting

In appreciation

Bertha Bodenheimer

In memory of Keyla Fuchs

To Ken & Nancy Levinsky in memory of  
Elizabeth Levinsky

To Tom & Paula Marcus-Platz in honor  
of the birth of granddaughter Asher

To Marilyn Isaacson in memory of her  
daughter

Cathy & Stan Tetenman

In memory of Keyla Fuchs

To Ken & Nancy Levinsky in memory of  
Elizabeth Levinsky

Debbie & Andy Cohen

In memory of Dorothy Fishman

Donnie Isaacson

In memory of Shirley Isaacson

In memory of Jack Simon

Steve Passerman

In memory of Helene Perry

In memory of those family members who  
have passed

Babs & Mike Shapiro

In memory of Elsie Goodman

## **CEMETERY FUND**

Elaine Katz

In memory of her parents, Harriet &  
Sidney Katz

## **MITZVAH FUND**

Tom & Paula Marcus-Platz

To welcome baby girl Asher to  
parents Adam & Rebecca

## **RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND**

Nancy & Joan Levenson

In memory of Patti Levenson

Steve Passerman

In memory of those family members who  
have passed

Nancy & Ken Levinsky

In memory of Morris Silverman

Jeff Stern

In memory of Frances Stern

**RANDALL SILVER LIBRARY FUND**

Robert Scott

In memory of Herbert Scott

**SHIRLEY GOODMAN MEMORIAL FUND**

Joel Goodman

In memory of Elsie Goodman

**ABROMSON FUND**

**BELL MEMORIAL CHAPEL FUND**

**BODENHEIMER PASSOVER FUND**

**COHEN/LEVOY CARDEN FUND**

**ENDOWMENT FUND**

**FAMILY HEBREW SCHOOL**

**KITCHEN FUND**

**LIBRARY FUND**

**MARCUS MEMORIAL GARDEN FUND**

**MINYANAIRES FUND**

**NUSSINOW EDUCATION ENRICHMENT  
FUND**

**PULPIT/PRAYER BOOK FUND**

**SHAPIRO MEMORIAL FUND**



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