



MA CHADASH! מה חדש!

What's New! The newsletter of Temple Shalom Synagogue Center, Auburn, Maine ק"ק היכל שלום

July 2025, Tammuz/Av 5785



**Eleventh Annual
MAINE-LY JEWISH STORYTELLING FESTIVAL
Thursday, July 17th, 7:00 P.M.**

**Temple Shalom Chapel
Homemade Treats
HOSTED BY REBBETZIN LISA**



**Kiddush Levana
Saturday, August 26th, 7:00 P.M.,
at Temple Shalom
Sponsored by Bonnie and Larry Faiman**

FROM THE RABBI



Another rough month. Horrific violent and deadly antisemitic attacks here in the United States, then an all-out war between Israel and Iran—which while hopefully eliminating (or at least drastically limiting) the Iranian nuclear and ballistic threat in the long term, is causing a lot of death, destruction and distress to Israeli society in the short term.

And adding exponentially to our apprehension and concern is the fact that we (Jews, Zionists, Israelis) no longer really know who is standing with us in our pain and who justifies or even celebrates our suffering.

And on top of all this is the fact that many of us are distrustful of the intentions of our governments—both here in the United States and in Israel.

For me, this has resulted in many more nights of disturbed sleep and distracted days—too much time spent checking and fretting over every little bit of news. And the growing realization that this may, God-forbid, become the “new normal”—that the relatively uncomplicated, safe times of the past half-century or so were not, as we hoped, a harbinger of a better Jewish future, but an outlier—that our collective future will look more like our collective past.

Recently, I have been thinking more and more about a passage from the Talmud known as “the Three Oaths.” Rabbi Yosi ben Chanina built an elaborate system of Three Oaths that he intuited God imposing on us as well as the nations of the world. The first two oblige us Jews not to attempt to gain political independence by settling as a group in the Land of Israel (with a forceful hand—*Rashi*) and to not attempt to rebel against the other nations. The Third Oath obligates the nations of the world not to excessively subjugate the Jews. (*Ketubot* 111a).

The “normal” that Rabbi Yosi ben Chanina considered to be “acceptable”—or at least the best-case scenario—involved a balance—Jews would tolerate exile and being second-class citizens in exchange for not being “excessively” persecuted.

I guess I need to explain why I am bringing this up. I of course don’t believe that the Three Oaths are “binding” (as most Charedim do) or even that the worldview that they reflect is particularly helpful—especially after the Holocaust. I (still) believe that Jews, like everyone else, are entitled to first-class status in America (and elsewhere around the world) and that the existence of the Jewish State of Israel is both a right and the best guarantor of Jewish safety and self-determination.

But I worry that our world is backsliding. That the Three Oaths, even if we don’t feel bound by them, are the foundation of the way others see Jews—the “normal” they are hoping to return us to. I worry that Israel is now having too much trouble finding the right balance between a necessary “forceful hand” and a needless, excessively forceful hand—that our forceful (occasionally reckless) upending of the delicate balance that Rabbi Yosi ben Chanina intuited may God-forbid once again result in “excessive” persecution.

I deeply hope and pray that these feelings of foreboding are wrong and that we Jews are in fact marching towards a truly great future—where we can proudly and safely (and morally and compassionately) exist in peace and prosperity both here in the diaspora and in Israel—that we no longer need to adopt the excessively cautious approach articulated by Rabbi Yosi ben Chanina. Yet, I seem to be unable to dismiss Rabbi Yosi ben Chanina’s paradigm entirely: that our safety and survival depend—at least in part—on our willingness to live more humbly, less aggressively.

Rabbi Sruli

FROM THE PRESIDENT



I have been inspired!

I just came back from the Maine Conference for Jewish Life in Waterville at Thomas College. The conference has grown so much - from 100 registrants in its first year to 300! And from 6 to 19 rabbis on site, from all over the US. Even Hawaii. There is nothing better than spending a weekend with so many other Jews who share the Maine experience. I do get this feeling of Jewish camaraderie at our own shul, but on a smaller scale. And of course, being a small congregation, we can't begin to offer the diversity of workshops we were able to choose from. But the true miracle of the conference was, that by pooling our resources of Rabbis, educators, congregants and 'fringe' Jews, we were able to create an inclusive, inspiring, informative and fun event. There were 37 different workshops to choose from, and it was really hard to pick only 7. To wet your appetite I took "Jewish Ethics of Speech" with Rabbi Lisa

Vinakoor, "The Heart of Prayer" with Rabbi Chloe Zelkha, "Holy Interruptions, or Humans Plan and God Laughs" led by retired Rabbi Carolyn Braun. I also learned some cool knife skills with Dawn LaRoche and her husband Nick. She's the director of the Jewish Museum in Portland, but she used to be a caterer, so they taught "From Tradition to Technique: Jewish Vegetarianism." Phyllis Graber Jensen and Stephanie Pridgeon showed 2 International Jewish Short Films and then led a discussion about small Jewish communities around the world and their cemeteries. My last session was very healing. Rabbi Lorin Troderman, from Bath, led "An Earth Healing Eco-Grief Ritual" called Refuat Adamah. But our 'grief' was about the state of our planet, especially in today's political climate, ending with our hopes for the future. Talk to the other Temple Shalom attendees, and you'll get a different rundown. They are: Elcha Buckman, Jeff Stern, Deb Katz, Ihara and Emma Dutra, Ruth Friedman, Sruli, Lisa, Johnny and Charlie.

I must mention that Rebbitzin Lisa led a session called "PooPooPoo-Meshuga but True!", and Rabbi Sruli enthralled us all with his Jewish Magic. No matter how many times I've seen the tricks, I'm always amazed. Oh, and Professor Ken Rodman was there giving a talk similar to what he said at our Sunday brunch.

There was also the opportunity to pray with a roomful of Jews. Or not. You could go on a hike, or just sleep in. Of course, one of the best things was the delicious buffet meals and all the schmoozing that went on around the tables.

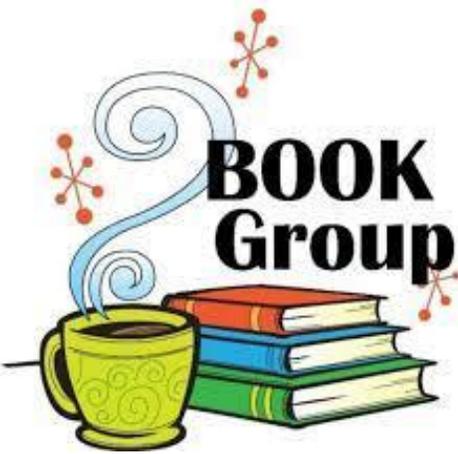
I know by now you're wishing you had gone. Not to worry. Next year's Maine Conference for Jewish Life is already being planned, Thomas College has been reserved for JUNE 12, 13 & 14, 2026. Write it in your calendars. Rub shoulders with your fellow Maine Jews. You, too, will be inspired!

Lesli Weiner
President



**CENTER FOR
SMALL TOWN
JEWISH LIFE**

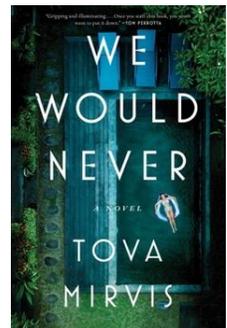
!!BOOK GROUP NEWS!!



On June 9th we talked about “Woman On Fire” by Lisa Barr. Present were Marsha Auster, Bertha Bodenheimer, Linda Griswald, Mitch Ross and me, Lesli Weiner. The plot centered around stolen artwork by the Nazis, particularly a painting called ‘Woman On Fire’. The question of who rightfully owns it - the person whose family had bought it from the artist, or the person whose mother was the model. This novel read like a thriller. To what ends would you go through to obtain the lost art? While it was fictional, it was based on fact and the Nazi who had been hoarding the artwork was true, but the name was changed. Get this book for your summer reading pleasure.

The next book is “We Would Never” by Tova Mirvis, which is also based on true events. I heard her speak at the Newburyport Literary Festival, and I can’t wait to read her book.

“No one appears more surprised than Hailey Gelman when she comes under suspicion for the murder of her soon-to-be ex-husband Jonah. Hailey—nicknamed Sunshine by her mother for her bright outlook and ever-present smile—has always tried to do what is expected of her and is regarded as the family peacemaker. But is anyone, including Hailey, who she has always seemed to be?



The months leading up to Jonah’s death have been fraught, including a bitter separation and a messy custody battle over their young daughter, Maya. When Hailey files a motion to relocate to Florida so she can be near her family, Jonah retaliates and the divorce begins to spiral dangerously out of control.

Sherry, Hailey’s mother, will stop at almost nothing to keep Jonah from getting what he wants. Nate, Hailey’s impetuous and protective older brother, has tried to keep his distance, but he can’t stand to see his little sister suffer. And then there’s Solomon, the patriarch, who is keeping a secret that threatens the stability and security Sherry has worked so hard to maintain. Soon, they are forced to reckon with who they are as individuals and as a family, and just how far they will go for each other.”

Our next meeting is MONDAY, JULY 14 at 4PM via zoom. If you’re not on my zoom list and you want to join in, just email melesli

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO

Jeffrey & Susan Brown	July	1
Behzad & Harriet Fakhery		7
Joe & Chrissy Zidle		8



Linking Generations: Jewish Genealogy Tips

By Labish Kurtz (Richard Kurtz)

#7. The Voyages of Auntie Bella: Ship Manifests

“To be a Jew is to travel. Judaism is a journey, not a destination.”

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Studies in Spirituality*

Often in family lore, you'll hear stories about ancestors' voyages—tales of moving from Europe to North America. Growing up, I heard these stories too. As I got older, the general picture of these journeys stayed with me, but even when I first heard them as a child, the adults telling the tales couldn't remember the details: when exactly they left Europe, where they departed from, or who accompanied them.

One of the most powerful gifts the internet has given genealogists is free online access to ship manifests. This incredible resource helped me trace the two major voyages made by my Aunt Bella, my grandfather Harry Kurcbard's sister. I was able to uncover the details of her trips and even found photographs of the ships she traveled on: The Grampian and the Ile de France. These were not ordinary trips, but life-changing journeys that Aunt Bella often spoke about.

Her first voyage was with her two cousins, Hanna and Faiga, when they left Warsaw, Poland, on November 20, 1920, to immigrate to Toronto, Canada. The second was when she left Toronto to travel to Paris, France, on January 11, 1938, to attend a family wedding. She traveled at the cusp of World War II, and unfortunately, it would be the last time she saw any of her European relatives.

You, too, can trace your ancestors' voyages using online databases of ship manifests and the critical biographical information they contain. You can also find records of border crossings, for example, of people traveling from Canada to the United States. Ship manifests often include details such as the traveler's age, profession, and the name and address of the person they would be staying with in their new country. It's well worth a look!

Practical Resources

<https://heritage.statueofliberty.org/- Passenger Search: The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.>

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/immigration-records/passenger-lists/Pages/introduction.aspx> - Passenger manifests of ships arriving at Canadian ports. Especially Quebec (Montreal and Port of Quebec)

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/collection/1803785> - United States Border Crossings, from Canada to United States 1895-1956

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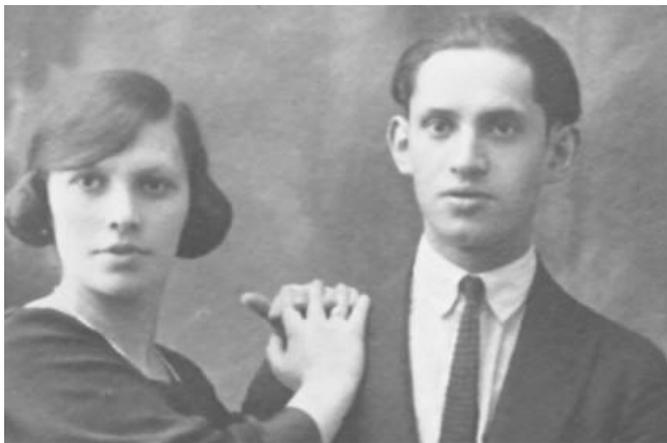
(Linking Generations continued)

ALL ALIENS arriving at a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the insular

S. S. ILE DE FRANCE Passengers

1 No. on List	2 HEAD-TAX STATUS <small>(This column for use of Government officials only)</small>	3 NAME IN FULL		4 Age		5 Sex	6 Married or single	7 Calling or occupation	8 Able to—			9 Nationality, (Country of which citizen or subject)
		Family name	Given name	Yrs.	Mos.				Read	Read what language (or if exemption claimed, on what ground)	Write	
1		STEFPE	Eugene Joseph G.	31		M	D	Boxer	Yes	French-Engl.	Yes	BELGIUM
2	EXEMPT	KURTZBARD	Bella	33		F	S	Seamstress	Eng. Polish			CANADA

Ship manifest for my Aunt Bella traveling on January 11, 1939 from France to the United States



Aunt Bella with Brother Harry (Labish's grandfather, 1920s)

Dinner and a Movie at the Museum: The Garden of the Finzi-Continis

Thursday, August 7- 5:30 pm- 8:30 pm

Join the Maine Jewish Museum and the [Maine Jewish Film Festival](#) for a celebration of art, cinema, and the flavors of Italy! From savory pastas to seasonal salads and delectable desserts, your taste buds will be transported from MJM to the heart of Ferrara, Italy. This pasta-tively amazing meal will take place in our Fineburg Community Room, where diners will have the opportunity to view Eric Finzi's current exhibition Return to the Garden. Dinner will include: a pasta-based, Kosher meal, with salad--and Dawn, who knows about such things, promises it will be delicious. And, yes: wine is involved!

After dinner we'll gather in the main sanctuary for a screening of *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, the poignant and visually stunning film whose themes of love, loss, and the passage of time inspired Finzi's artwork.

\$36/person

The Silence After the Sirens by Raoul Wootliff



It begins the same way every time.

The sirens scream, and for a moment, everything becomes clear.

I stiffen. The country stiffens. Fear is metabolized into purpose. Left, right, religious, secular – we become one body, one voice, one story. We are strong. We are together. We are under attack.

And in that moment, I feel something else too: calm.

Because the siren is not only a warning, it is a balm. It silences the noise inside my head. It reduces the unbearable complexity of this moment to one simple, pure imperative: survive.

I have come to crave that kind of clarity.

Because when the sirens stop, a quiet prevails. And in that silence, my voice is not always welcome.

For the past twenty months, since that long black Shabbat of October 7, I've lived with a growing sense of internal exile. Not because I've given up on Israel, but because I haven't. Because I believe that better days are ahead. And because I ask what the plan is to get there, where it leads, and whether the people leading us are up to the task. And that, in today's Israel, is an act of quiet rebellion.

What does it mean to live under constant war and still believe, despite everything, that military power alone is not a plan? That leadership must be accountable? That morality cannot be optional? That real clarity is earned, not declared?

It means learning to live in a shrinking mental space. It means carrying questions like contraband: What are we actually trying to achieve in Gaza? What does victory over Iran mean? What is our strategy? What is our end goal?

But these questions don't land. They hover, then vanish. Because no one wants to hear them. Not now. Not while soldiers are in the field and pilots in the air. Not while rockets fall. Not while Tehran waits.

So I calibrate my words. I post carefully. I smile and say "yes, hopefully soon," when someone says, "We'll finish the job." And maybe I even believe it, for a moment.

Because this is a country that needs certainty the way lungs need air. And amid the heavy fog of war, uncertainty becomes indulgent. Complexity, a subversion. If you're not optimistic, you're ungrateful. And if you ask what comes next, you are, at best, a nuisance – and at worst, a traitor. Yet I understand the feeling. We all want to feel clean, strong, vindicated. We want to believe we are the heroes in a story that still makes sense. That we are moving toward something noble. That history will understand.

And so, I wait for the sirens. Not for what they warn, but for what they wipe clean. Their sound is an absolution. A single, piercing note of purpose. No nuance. No ambiguity. No past, no future. Just now. Just them and us. Just clarity.

And I've learned: clarity feels good. Clarity is strength. Clarity is safety.

Gaza is subdued. Iran is sobered. Our deterrence restored. Our enemies afraid. Our leaders in control. Our people united. History, surely, will vindicate us.

Until the sirens end.

About the Author

Raoul Wootliff is head of strategic communications at an international strategic, research and communications consultancy. He was formerly the Times of Israel's political correspondent and producer of the TOI Daily Briefing podcast.

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

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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, Ariella Green, Sharon Hemond, Alison Jaeger, Suzan Katzir, Michael Kendall, Linda Koskela, Henry Lefkowitz, Lee Leveille, Carolyn Marshal, Bruce Meyer, Alice Richman, Sandy Traister**, 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.*



Wishing you a speedy and complete recovery.

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

Sharon Bodenheimer	July	2
Melissa Johnson		5
Olivia Casares		7
Jeffrey Brown		8
Bonnie Faiman		8
Jessica Isaacson		11
Paul Rausch		11
Marion Rausch		12
Phyllis Graber Jensen		14
Lisa Mayer		17
Asher Isaacson		18
Benjamin Crocker		19
Donald Isaacson		19
Marianne Wise		22
Anita Miles		25
Richard Rau		27
Melissa Brown		28

YAHREZEITEN

Jeannette Kaye	July	6
Philip Isaacson		8
Harry Kurtzbard		10
Pearl Maloff		13
Elaine Cohen		16
Goldie Goldberg		16
Tilla G. Kurtzbar		16
John Callaway		17
Howard Kates		19
Sarah Shapiro		19
Morris Binstock		20
Esther Shain		22
Irving Goldberg		23
Jacob J. Perlman		24
Ezra Lape Isaacson		28
Stanley Wilner		29
Jennifer Lee Levine		31
Randall Silver		31



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Linda & Will Emmons
In honor of Stan Tetenman's 80th birthday
Harriet & Behzad Fakhery
In memory of Sara Feldman
Juliet & Michael Barr
In memory of Benjamin Barr
Jeff Stern
In appreciation
Cathy & Stan Tetenman
In memory of Bob Allen
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In memory of Evelyn Levine
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In memory of Lynne Kaduson
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To thank Rabbi Sruli for including her
In counting the Omer
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In memory of Eve Shapiro

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In memory of David Alan Levenson

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Wishing safe travels to all who are traveling this summer!

