



SHEMA

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VOLUME 7 • NUMBER 1 | SPRING 2023/5783

WHAT MAKES US SPECIAL?

Our Famous Members

Interfaith Wedding Memories

How We Give Back

Plus: Why Eating More Vegetables Aligns with Jewish Values



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

We Sure Are Special

By Gary Slobin, President

Temple Beth-El of Great Neck has always been unique. In 1928, we were the very first temple on the peninsula. Our North Shore suburb was a community of farms and estates with a population of 12,000 and only 115 Jewish families.

Over the years, our synagogue has welcomed many special members and has hosted countless extraordinary events.

Our diverse congregation has included titans of industry, luminaries in the entertainment world as well the not so famous who made tremendous contributions to enhance the Jewish community. Our temple has hosted so many notable people whose voices have reverberated throughout our sanctuary, including the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Congregant Elayne Gardstein shared a memory that resonated with her. "I recall the Friday evening service

on September 14, 2001, following the horrific events of 9/11," she told me. "My husband, Hank; our older daughter Tracy who came from Manhattan to stay with us for a few days and I went to Temple Beth-El, where Cantor Lisa Hest led us in patriotic songs. We all stood in the sanctuary and tearfully sang 'God Bless America' together."

A concert from decades ago is still impactful for Howard J. Herman.


"The Kinnor Children's Choir of Riga, Latvia, performed at Temple Beth-El in October 1990," he reflected.

"The performance and the children's visit to our homes was one of the most glorious events in our 40 years at TBE. It was groundbreaking that a choir consisting of young Jewish people from the Soviet Union could appear in the United States."

One of this year's most exceptional services occurred when New York

State Attorney General Letitia James presented a powerful speech in honor of Dr. King. This past year, Temple Beth-El also became home to hundreds of new members as we offered more programming for each group, from preschoolers to religious school children, teens, college students, learners of all ages and longtime members with varying interests.

Our temple has always been welcoming and inclusive. Temple Beth-El has historically paved the path to change for other synagogues, like when we welcomed the first ordained female cantor in Jewish history to our team. In this issue, we share the sweet story of our first interfaith marriage ceremony.

Read about what makes us unique in the following pages—and continue to share your uniqueness with our temple community. 

RABBI
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Adam Davis

RABBI EMERITUS
Jerome K. Davidson, DD

RABBIS EMERITI
Meir and Tara Feldman

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





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Managing Editor
Leslie Abrams and
Howard J. Herman,
Proofreaders
Hallie ArbitalJacoby,
Designer

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On the cover (from top left): Oscar Brand; Murray Seeman; Ralph Kreitzman; David, Lauren and Sean Carpenter; Josh Kopelman; Sol Wachtler; Adam Kantor as Motel in *Fiddler on the Roof*; Morrie Yohai; Cy Block; Barbra and Sheldon Streisand; Eddie Cantor; Jon Avnet; Hillary Clinton; Erica Groshen; Steve Cohen; Andy Kaufman; Blythe Danner and Gwyneth, Bruce and Jake Paltrow; Emily Hughes; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; Sarah Hughes; Leonard Litwin; Howard Miskin; Dan Raviv; Jack Liebowitz; R.J. Cutler; May Newburger; Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir; Lee Seeman; Lilo and Gerry Leeds; and Michelle Schimel.



TBE Is Blessed by Warmth, Curiosity and Exceptional Lay Leadership

By Rabbi A. Brian Stoller

After being a part of Temple Beth-El for seven months, it is very clear to me what is special about this community.

Three things come to mind: First, TBE is an exceedingly warm and welcoming community of people who genuinely enjoy being together; second, the congregants are genuinely curious to deepen their understanding of Judaism; and third, we are blessed to have a lay leadership that is smart, strategic, visionary, collaborative and committed to the long-term vibrancy of TBE.

I'll say a few words about each of these in turn.

TBE IS A WARM AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY

Even before my family and I officially moved to Great Neck, the congregants of TBE reached out to us with such kindness and graciousness to welcome us to the community.

From the moment we arrived here, Karen, Lindsay, Zachary and I have felt like part of the TBE family. This is not just what you do for your rabbi and his family, though; I have learned that this is the TBE way. This is a community of people who genuinely like each other and enjoy being together—not only at services and temple events, but outside them as well.

That's not something a congregation can take for granted, and it's one of TBE's most beautiful features. And because the people here have such sincere affection for each other, they find it very easy and natural to welcome others

to enjoy the congregation. I love that about TBE.

THE CONGREGANTS ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND GENUINELY CURIOUS

As I discussed in my Kol Nidrei sermon this past fall, curiosity is a desire to understand other people's points of view and learn from them.

Sadly, curiosity is in short supply in our culture today—but not at TBE. Every time I walk into a classroom at our synagogue, I find myself immersed in an environment of deeply engaged learners who, though already quite

This is a community of people who genuinely like each other and enjoy being together—not only at services and temple events, but outside them as well.

knowledgeable, are hungry for more knowledge.

The congregants at TBE understand intuitively that learning can be a transformational spiritual practice and that every time we gain a new insight, we glimpse just a little bit more of God.



The culture of curiosity makes it a pleasure to lead Torah Study at TBE.

This culture of curiosity makes it such a joy and a pleasure to study with our TBE adult learners.

WE ARE BLESSED TO HAVE SMART AND COMMITTED LAY LEADERSHIP

Our congregation is blessed to be led by an incredible group of people who are both dedicated Jews and highly experienced professionals and communal leaders. Each member of our board of trustees brings to their role a wealth of knowledge, a sharp mind, a passion for Judaism and a genuine love for TBE.

As we navigate the road ahead and chart a vision for the future of our congregation, the energy and dedication of our lay leaders will be invaluable. I feel blessed to have such wonderful partners in the sacred work of leading our congregation.

All these things and more make Temple Beth-El an incredible place to be a member and to be a clergy person. I feel tremendously blessed to have the privilege of serving as your senior rabbi, and I am excited for the amazing things that lie ahead for our community! 🌟

Embracing New Melodies

By Cantor Adam Davis



One thing that's special about Jewish tradition is that it asks us to keep one foot in the past while the other steps into the future. On one hand, we recall the exodus from Egypt daily. As our ancestors experienced their newfound freedom, they sang "*Shirat HaYam*" (the "Song of the Sea") declaring "*Mi chamocha, Adonai*," "Who is like, You, Adonai?"

Conversely, our Psalms openly declare, "*Shiru Ladonai, Shir Chadash*," "Sing unto God a new song." Why new songs? For many of us, new songs represent uncertainty, change and discomfort. God, it seems, wants us to live in the moment, not just in the past.

When returning the Torah to the ark, we sing a verse that combines both these ideas: "*Chadesh yameinu k'kedem*," "Renew us as in days of old." These are not opposites but in tension with one another.

Many melodies we consider "traditional" are only two centuries old and some less than 50 years old. Others are newer still, but no matter their age what matters is our experience of them. The first time we hear them, they are new to us.

Every generation sings new melodies and settings for prayer that create meaning for them. This is one of the secrets to Jewish vitality: We constantly refresh our ancient texts by updating musical settings.

I've written a couple dozen such melodies in recent years. Something special this year is that one of them, "*Uvchein*," was chosen to be published in *High Holy Days Anthology Volume II*,

coming out from URJ's Transcontinental Music Publications.

Every year our religious school children go away to summer camp, where they learn new melodies composed by songleaders, cantors like me and friends who help shape their Jewish identity. The songs they carry home in their hearts define Jewish music and meaning for another generation.

For their sake and ours, we must periodically examine our prayer practices so Judaism remains ever fresh. It behooves us to be open to new prayer settings and formats. We owe it to ourselves to question old assumptions and sing new songs. Through this process, every generation can renew our prayers once more.

This is why Rabbi Stoller, TBE's Worship Committee and I are embarking on a Congregational Conversation on Prayer. We aim to explore and examine what is meaningful to all of us about worship—and then apply that to our practices at TBE.

As part of this initiative, we are offering a series of varied prayer and music experiences called *Shir Chadash* (New Song). These special Shabbatot range in style, seating format and, of course, music. They're based on some of the best, most exciting Jewish prayer models around the world. Attending them will be like globe-trotting to many synagogues without leaving Great Neck. That is something truly special.

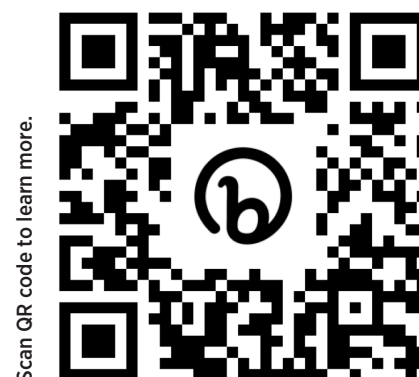
Many feature talented, world-class musical guests—whom I'm fortunate to also call my friends. Congregants can experience Yahalah Lachmish, a Jerusalem-based cantor and jazz singer;

Bluegrass on the Bimah with Matthew Check; a service focused on energetic communal singing called Shabbat Shirah; a renewal-style service led by Basya Schechter; a Sephardic-influenced Shabbat; and one filled with Israeli jazz featuring The Mattan Klein Quartet.

We hope these Shabbat experiences will open all of our minds, hearts and ears to new possibilities in prayer and worship at TBE. To see a full schedule, view videos from participating musicians and learn more about the variety of experiences in *Shir Chadash*, scan the QR code below or visit <http://bit.ly/MusicTBE>.

These aren't models of what will become, but rather aids to help us hear and imagine what *could be* at TBE. I hope you'll join us and immerse yourself in these new experiences, as well as in the important conversations that surround each one. The most important element isn't the new song itself but your experience and how it makes you feel.

We hope by the end, the songs themselves won't be new—but what will be is your perspective on your own spiritual life and prayers. 🌟



Scan QR code to learn more.

Engaging Our Members

By Joy Allen, Director of Engagement and Programming

Temple Beth-El has had countless moments of joy and unity during the past few months, as we've come together to take part in so many new and exciting programs. To enhance the spiritual energy and strengthen our offerings for members of all ages and interests, we have committed to developing engaging programs for each demographic within our temple community on a monthly basis.

Our Early Childhood Education Center families have shared many joyous events both inside and outside the classroom with our staff and clergy.

One particularly memorable milestone occurred earlier this year when our children, parents and clergy celebrated a school-wide consecration. The preschoolers each received a personalized certificate, as well as a small individual Torah, from Temple Beth-El during this special day.

Other uplifting memories include our children's beaming smiles, as they welcomed the Sabbath with tot Shabbat and bid farewell to Shabbat at a pajama havdalah made extra sweet with ice cream.

Clockwise from top: Dorrit Title teaches Kulanu students during a social action program. Joy Allen's daughter Simonne receives a consecration certificate. After a rooftop dinner and free play, the clergy blesses the children on the bimah. New and longtime members socialize at a pre-Shabbat Oneg (3 photos). ECEC families gather for the Bluegrass Pajama Havdalah (7). Families get to know each other at a temple function (2). Teens pack bags for the Interfaith Food Pantry. Kulanu students meet monthly for social action programs. Participants play ping-pong and various games at Friday Night Live (2).



Teens make a difference by packing bags of supplies for the St. Aloysius Interfaith Food Pantry.

Working in partnership with our newly formed Young Family Committee, we are making sure programs for children in Grades K to 7 are front of mind and planned to perfection. Our evening Friday Night Live events enable our families to come together to form a community while enjoying dinner as

a group before services and playing games afterward.

During our own special Martin Luther King Jr. Erev Shabbat in January, our families participated in a messy service while making slime. At each monthly session, a parent oversees the activities while our seventh graders

Both new and longtime members use the same





embrace the responsibility of leading this initiative and help bring the vision to life.

In addition to exceeding demand with these unique offerings, many congregants have assisted by personally welcoming new members through our *chaver* program, a buddy system we reintroduced to help newcomers acclimate and become comfortable with our temple programs and ritual experiences.

When a prospective or new congregant expresses interest in our temple home, we immediately invite them to attend our services and connect them with one of our *chaverim*. The *chaver* reaches out to the newcomer prior to the service or event, introduces themselves and greets the new or prospective member at the beginning of the program.

The *chaver* then introduces these newcomers to congregants, so they feel welcome in our community. The goal is to integrate new people

and make them feel connected instead of anonymous.

Since our buddy program began, all our prospective members who were greeted by *chaverim* became members of our temple. In return, many of our *chaverim* have formed meaningful relationships and friendships with our new members.

In addition to warmly welcoming new members into our community, we have offered three new member experiences to our congregants. During these events, temple lay leaders have helped our new members find a place where they can work with other congregants and become integrated into the greater community.

By continuously reaching out to include our newest families, our Membership Engagement Committee aims to ensure that all of them feel connected.

Our new member pre-Shabbat Oneg in January was a big success. New and returning members joined together

with our clergy and the Membership Engagement Committee to talk about their experiences at temple. It's heartwarming to hear that both new and longtime members use the same word to describe Temple Beth-El—home.

Temple Beth-El continues to be a home away from home and, most importantly, a welcoming and safe space for our members' families.

As we plan upcoming engagement opportunities, we feel excited, energized and thankful. We are excited to see what the future holds; and we are thankful for the committees, the relationships we've formed—and for all the participants' hard work.

We have a plethora of programs planned for the spring and summer—and can't wait to welcome our new assistant rabbi, Megan Brumer, in early summer.

If you would like to become involved in a committee or volunteer, please email jallen@tbegreatneck.org or call 516-487-0900, ext. 115. 🌟

word to describe Temple Beth-El—home. ”



Staying Connected to Our College Students

By Debbie Sutin

“Our joyous role is to deliver a slice of cheer during holidays.”

Ian's gel letters set a festive mood for Hanukkah.



With great pride, joy and maybe just a couple of tears, I joined the ranks of many parents before me when I sent my firstborn child off to college in September of last year. Getting used to this transition has been difficult at times, especially during the Jewish holidays. The reality is: Because my daughter is 956 miles away (but, who's counting?), she will no longer be home to fully experience Jewish celebrations and the rich connection with the Temple Beth-El family that have always been an integral part of her upbringing.

There will likely be an empty seat next to me in the sanctuary during High Holy Days; my daughter may not be home to enjoy *sufganiyot* with friends at the TBE Hanukkah Oneg; and she will likely be at school during Purim festivities.

My family is not alone, as the same holds true for so many other TBE families.

Many of us came together to consider the question: “How do we, families of out-of-town college students, bridge that gap between campus and our spiritual home?”

Our answer: A brilliant TBE program started in December 2021 called College Connect, a rebooted version of the one other concerned parents have contributed to before us, including Sandy and Fred Gretch who ran the College Committee of Beth-El for many years.



College Connect is currently run by committee members Danna Sobiecki, Felisa Myer, Lorin Ugolini Prince, Jill Ranieri and me, along with TBE Director of Engagement and Programming Joy Allen.

Our joyous role is to deliver a slice of cheer during holidays, as well as at other times, to ensure that our college kids maintain a sense of connection to TBE and traditions.

The program currently has 18 college students enrolled—and it is growing quickly.

Several times a year, these students receive packages containing holiday goodies and greetings.

For Hanukkah this year, our college students received festively wrapped gifts that included boxes of candy, holiday window clings, chocolate *gelt* and Dunkin' gift cards (so they could purchase jelly doughnuts!).

As the children settled into spring semester, they were sent gift cards and chocolates to let them know TBE was thinking

of them. For Purim, each student was given *Mishloach Manot*; and for Passover, they will get another festive package.

A WhatsApp group also helps the students stay connected with one another, as well as with TBE clergy. At different points during the year, Rabbi Stoller and Cantor Davis send meaningful video messages and holiday greetings through the student WhatsApp group.

I'm not sure if this program brings more joy to the smiling college kids who feel the connection when they open their packages and receive video messages or to us parents who are happy to witness and facilitate this gift of connection.

If you have not already signed up your child for the College Connect program and are interested in joining in the fall, stay tuned for emails with details. Any adoring adult, including *bubbes* and *zaydes*, can register a TBE college student to share this special gift of community and connection with them. 🪄



Clockwise from top left: Jordyn, Ayden, Hannah, Emily and Marly get in the holiday spirit with their Hanukkah packages.

OUR FAMOUS MEMBERS

By Sheri ArbitalJacoby



As the very first synagogue in Great Neck, Temple Beth-El has achieved countless successes during the past 95 years—and so have our members.

Who knows whether famous Jewish residents such as The Marx Brothers, Paul Newman or George Segal ever had the opportunity to spend time at TBE in the early years? Some longtime members remember quite a few accomplished congregants over the past several decades. According to Rabbi Jerome Davidson, the late comedian and actor Alan King was definitely on the waiting list to become part of the TBE family.

Familiar temple members' last names, like Bass, Fortunoff, Gershwind, Jacobson, Kupferberg and Pergament, grace the signs of area establishments and are prominent on lists of philanthropic leaders. Our main sanctuary was built under the presidency of Gilbert Tilles, z"l, in 1970, and his family name can be seen on the eponymous Tilles Center for the Performing Arts at LIU Post.

Notable congregants also include real estate developer Leonard Litwin, z"l, whose company, Glenwood Management, specialized in residential construction and currently owns and operates approximately 24 buildings and rents about 4,200 units in Manhattan. He cofounded the Litwin-Zucker Research Center for the Study of Alzheimer's Disease at The Feinstein Institute for Medical Research.

Gerard "Gerry," z"l, and Lilo Leeds started CMP Publications out of their home in Great Neck in 1971 and expanded to more than 1,700 employees by the late 1990s. Their oldest son, Michael, along with his brother Daniel, began overseeing day-to-day operations in 1988. Their parents then focused on philanthropic endeavors, including the Institute for

Student Achievement, a nonprofit they formed in 1990 to help disadvantaged high school students graduate and succeed in college. By 1996, the charity provided aid for 1,000 students.

Not only have Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Hillary Clinton and Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir spoken at TBE, but well-known politicians have belonged to our synagogue throughout the years, including former Great Neck Plaza Mayor Jean Celender; former New York State Senator and Town of North Hempstead Councilwoman Anna Kaplan; former Village of Great Neck Mayors Ralph Kreitzman and Howard Miskin, z"l; former New York State Assemblywomen May W. Newburger, z"l, and Michelle Schimel; former Town of North Hempstead Councilwoman Lee Seeman and her husband, former Mayor of Great Neck Estates Murray Seeman, z"l; former Chief Judge of the New York Court of Appeals Solomon "Sol" Wachtler; current Thomaston Mayor Steven Weinberg and many who have held various trustee positions.

Our democracy has also been enhanced by congregant S. Stanley Kreutzer, z"l, best known as the principal author of New York City's code of ethics, which was adopted in 1959 and became a model for municipalities across the nation. The reform-minded lawyer served as counsel to New York City and State legislative bodies.

The field of accountancy was profoundly impacted by congregant Abraham Briloff, z"l, who was known as the "most prominent accounting critic." He was a scholar as well as a professor at Baruch College.

Others have gone on to make a name for themselves in the entertainment industry, sports arena and business world. Read on to learn about their accomplishments.

JON AVNET



Jon Avnet, born November 17, 1949, has directed, written and produced more than 80 motion pictures, television movies, series and Broadway plays, winning Oscar, Emmy and Tony awards. The Great Neck North 1967 grad is best known for cowriting, directing and producing *Fried Green Tomatoes*. He produced both *Risky Business*, which launched Tom Cruise's career, and *The Burning Bed*, starring Farrah Fawcett, which told the true story of a woman in a highly abusive relationship. The film is credited with creating the battered woman syndrome as a legal defense for victims of domestic violence. In 2001, he directed, cowrote and produced *Uprising*, which he and his coauthor researched for five years to tell the story of the armed resistance during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943. He interviewed more than 200 survivors of the Holocaust in Poland, Germany, Israel and the United States, and studied these historical events with leaders from the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC; Yad Vashem; the Ghetto Fighters House and Yivo, which led to him lecturing on resistance during the Holocaust at universities around the world.

CY BLOCK

Cy Block, born May 4, 1919, played both second and third base for the Chicago Cubs during his three seasons of professional baseball. His sports career was interrupted by his service in the U.S. Coast Guard during the Second World War. He appeared as a pinch-runner in Game Six of the 1945 World Series, and the Cubs won the game in the 12th inning. He ended with an impressive .302 batting average. Congregant Howard Herman remembers him as a very friendly man who would bring a supply of his baseball cards to autograph and hand out to young sports fans during the High Holy Days at TBE.



OSCAR BRAND



Oscar Brand, born February 7, 1920, wrote books, articles and the scores for Broadway musicals and documentary films. In 1945, the actor and composer was hired as coordinator of folk music for New York City's municipal radio station, WNYC. His hugely popular half-hour Sunday, and later Saturday, evening broadcast, *Folksong Festival*, has the distinction of being the longest continuously broadcast program on radio, worldwide, as noted in *Guinness World Records*. The show was originally supposed to be a temporary program but was broadcast for 71 years through September 24, 2016. The host died less than a week later in his Great Neck home at age 96. ►

EDDIE CANTOR

Eddie Cantor, born Edward Israel Iskowitz on January 31, 1892, and raised by his maternal grandmother, Esther Lazarowitz Kantrowitz, was a singer, songwriter, comedian, author and actor. He made his first public appearance in Vaudeville in 1907 and later performed in many plays on the Broadway stage, including the Ziegfeld Follies. He had a radio program in the 1930s, frequently appeared on television in the '50s and made many records. He invented the name March of Dimes for the donation campaign to the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and began the first appeal on his radio show in January 1938, asking people to mail a dime to the nation's most famous polio victim, President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Other entertainers promoted it on their shows, and The White House wound up receiving 2,680,000 dimes. The performer resigned from TBE when he moved to California to become the president of the Screen Actors Guild in 1933.



DAVID AARON CARPENTER

David Aaron Carpenter, born April 5, 1986, is one of the world's premiere viola soloists. He began studying violin at age six and viola at age 11. His mother, Grace, was a temple member for three decades from 1990 to 2020. He performed with his two older siblings, Sean and Lauren, at TBE's High Holy Days services for many years and maintained a warm relationship with Cantor Lisa Hest. The trio run Carpenter Fine Violins & Collectibles, specializing in rare instruments and artwork. The Great Neck North 2004 graduate has been performing with leading musicians and orchestras in the United States and Europe. The violist has won many prestigious awards and was presented with the Presidential Gold Medal at a performance in Washington's Kennedy Center after winning the first-ever Gold Award from the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts.



STEVE COHEN

Steve Cohen, born June 11, 1956, is a hedge fund manager and owner of the New York Mets. He grew up in Great Neck as the third of seven children and graduated from Great Neck North in 1974. The founder of Point72 Asset Management was named one of the hundred wealthiest people in the world by *Forbes*. The publication reports that he has contributed as much as a billion dollars to philanthropic causes throughout his lifetime. Through the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation, he and his wife have donated to projects involving children, veterans, health, education, the arts, sustainability and underserved communities. Cohen Children's Medical Center in New Hyde Park was named to honor their generous donation in 2010. The character Bobby Axelrod on Showtime's hit show *Billions* was loosely based on the former temple member.





R.J. CUTLER

R.J. Cutler, born September 28, 1961, is an American filmmaker, documentarian, television producer and theater director. The 1979 Great Neck North Senior High School grad's first film, *The War Room*, was nominated for an Academy Award. His other works include the documentary films *A Perfect Candidate*, *Thin*, *The September Issue* and *The World According to Dick Cheney*; the nonfiction television series *American High*, *Freshman Diaries* and *30 Days*; the prime-time drama series *Nashville*; and the feature film *If I Stay*. His parents were TBE members.



ERICA GROSHEN

Erica Groshen, born August 6, 1954, and a TBE member since 1993, is senior economics advisor at the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations, and Research Fellow at the Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. She served as the 14th commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the principal federal agency responsible for measuring labor market activity, working conditions and inflation, from 2013 to 2017. Previously, she was vice president in the Research and Statistics Group of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.



SARAH & EMILY HUGHES



Sarah Hughes, born May 2, 1985, began skating at the tender age of three on a rink her father built in their backyard. She became a Gold Medalist at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City when she was just 16. The 2003 graduate of Great Neck North High School is currently active with several social causes and sports organizations, including the Women's Sport Foundation and the Hope organization, which holds skating events to raise funds for breast cancer research and awareness. Her younger sister Emily Hughes, born January 26, 1989, was also a competitive world figure skater, finishing seventh at the 2006 Winter Olympics. The 2007 Great Neck North High School graduate cowrote the book *I Am a Skater* in 2002 and currently serves on the U.S. Olympic Committee's Athletes Advisory Council. Their older sister Rebecca became a bat mitzvah at TBE. ►

ADAM KANTOR

Adam Kantor, born May 27, 1986, is an actor and singer, best known for his Broadway and off-Broadway roles as Mark Cohen in the closing cast of *Rent*; Motel, a tailor, in the 2015 revival of *Fiddler on the Roof*; and as an original cast member in *The Band's Visit*. Judi Rosenzweig remembers him as a student in her second-grade religious school class at TBE. (Maybe magical melody-enhancing molecules were sprinkled in her classrooms, as Craig Resmovits from the Jewish a cappella group Six13 was a student in her TBE toddler class.) Interestingly, the Broadway actor made his theatrical debut in *Fiddler*, playing Mendel, the rabbi's son, in sixth grade at Great Neck North Middle School and portraying Tevye in a Great Neck community youth theater production two years later. He became a bar mitzvah at TBE and graduated from Great Neck North. His family belonged from the early '90s through 2010.



ANDY KAUFMAN



Andy Kaufman, born on January 17, 1949, grew up in Great Neck, became a bar mitzvah at Temple Beth-El and graduated from Great Neck North High School in 1967. His family remained temple members as the American comedian, actor and performance artist quickly became a comedy sensation in New York. His appearances on *Saturday Night Live* included a famous debut as Foreign Man, which he then adapted into the character Latka Gravas on the sitcom *Taxi*, on which he was a regular from 1978 to 1983. A lifelong health fanatic and nonsmoker, the comedian was stunned when he was diagnosed in January 1984 with a rare form of lung cancer, which killed him a few months later. His life was the topic of the 1999 film *Man on the Moon*, in which Jim Carrey starred as the main character.

JOSH KOPELMAN

Josh Kopelman, born April 17, 1971, is managing director of First Round Capital, a seed-stage venture fund, and an investor, director and advisor to a variety of businesses. The son of congregants Carol, z"l, and Richard Kopelman is an inventor of 16 U.S. patents for his work in Internet technology, was ranked third on the 2018 *New York Times* list of Top Venture Capitalists, consistently ranks in the top 20 of the *Forbes* Midas List of top 100 tech investors and has been named as one of the top 10 angel investors in the United States by *Newsweek* magazine. He and his wife created the Kopelman Foundation, a nonprofit philanthropic organization that provides start-up grants to social entrepreneurs. In 2002, the Kopelman Foundation funded a project to digitize and host the complete text of the Jewish Encyclopedia online.



JACK LIEBOWITZ



Jack Liebowitz, born on October 10, 1900, was an accountant and cofounder of National Allied Publications which became DC Comics. He was a founding member of TBE, and Rabbi Davidson bought his daughter Linda Stillman's house in Kings Point, according to congregant Gloria Landsberg. His younger daughter, Joan Levy, joined TBE shortly after his death at 100 and still lives in Great Neck. He stayed at the forefront of new technologies and entertainment media, helping oversee Superman's transition to movie serials, radio, theatrical animated shorts and brought the syndicated series *Adventures of Superman* to television. When DC Comics went public in 1961 and became known as National Periodical Publications, he remained president of what was America's foremost comics publisher. Kinney National Services acquired the company six years later, and the following year bought Warner Bros. to form Warner Communications, of which he was an active member of the board into his 90s. A founding trustee of Long Island Jewish Hospital, later renamed North Shore-LIJ, he served on the board for more than 50 years and was the medical center's second president. He was also a trustee for the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies in New York.

BRUCE PALTROW

Bruce Paltrow was born November 26, 1943, and raised in Great Neck. Andy Aaron recently spoke with Fran Paltrow to confirm that her brother was indeed a member, became a bar mitzvah at TBE—and their grandfather was a founding member of the temple. The 1961 graduate of Great Neck South High School is most famous for producing two television series, Emmy-nominated *The White Shadow* and *St. Elsewhere*. He and actress wife Blythe Danner are parents to Oscar-winning actress Gwyneth Paltrow and film director Jake Paltrow. Sadly, he passed away in 2002 while visiting his daughter in Italy.



DAN RAVIV



Dan Raviv, born September 27, 1954, became a senior Washington correspondent for i24 News after serving as a national correspondent at CBS News for 40 years. While at CBS, he was headquartered in the Washington, DC; New York; Tel Aviv and London bureaus and was host of the national radio magazine *Weekend Roundup*. The Great Neck North High School 1972 grad coauthor of several books about Israeli espionage and U.S.–Middle East relations, *Spies Against Armageddon: Inside Israel's Secret Wars*, *Every Spy a Prince: The Complete History of Israel's Intelligence Community* and *Friends in Deed: Inside the U.S.–Israel Alliance*, a journey behind the scenes to examine the four-decade evolution of the complex political, strategic and economic relationship between Israel and the United States. He is also author of a book about the Marvel Comics bankruptcy and renaissance called *Comic Wars*. His mother, Esther, was a beloved teacher in TBE's religious school, and she and husband, Benjamin, “a great guy and a heroic member of either the Irgun or Haganah or both,” according to Howard Herman, were members. ►

SHELDON STREISAND

Sheldon Streisand, born May 13, 1934, is remembered by congregants as a member and the older brother of singer, actor and filmmaker Barbra Streisand. Interestingly, comedian, entertainer, theater and film actress Fanny Brice (1891–1951), upon whom *Funny Girl* was based, lived in Great Neck and was famously portrayed by our congregant's sister. Several years before becoming a temple member in the early 1970s, he was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Album Cover for his sister's album, *My Name Is Barbra*. He, his wife, Judith, and daughter, Erica, were members through 1995.



MORRIE YOHAI

Morrie Yohai, born March 4, 1920, was president of Old London Foods, the company that developed a cheese-flavored cornmeal snack in 1960 that he named Cheez Doodles. Originally founded by his father and his father's cousin in the early 1920s and then called King Kone, the company first produced ice cream cones and later popcorn, cheese crackers and Melba Toast. As a result of its success, the company was purchased by Borden, which also made Cracker Jack and Drake's cakes, and he became senior vice president. One of his responsibilities was deciding which tiny toys would be included as prizes in Cracker Jack. He was also professor of Marketing and Management at New York Institute of Technology and became dean of its business school. A pilot in the Marines in WWII, poet, businessman and professor, he was a true Renaissance man and beloved by many at TBE. The family joined in 1959 and remained members for more than 50 years. His funeral service was held at TBE on July 30, 2010, at age 90, and his family continued as congregants until five years later when his wife, Phyllis, passed.



ROSLYN WIENER

Roslyn Wiener, born January 7, 1939, is granddaughter of the founder of Joyva, the chocolate and confectionery manufacturer started in 1907 when her grandfather Nathan Radutzky began producing sesame-based halvah and selling it on pushcarts on Manhattan's Lower East Side. In the late 1920s, he built a factory in Brooklyn and expanded to include a variety of sesame, marshmallow and jelly-based kosher parve candies. Initially called Independent Halvah & Candies, in the 1950s the company was renamed Joyva—merging the patriarch's granddaughter's name, Roslyn Joy, with halvah. The company is still family owned and is operated by cousins and descendants of the founders, Richard Radutzky and Roz's son, Sandy Wiener. She joined the temple in the early 1970s and was very involved for more than four decades, serving as cochair of The Black-Jewish Dialogue between Mt. Olive Baptist Church and Temple Beth-El for 20 years. Her memorial service was held at TBE on July 28, 2014. 𐤒𐤍



See "Making the World a Better Place" to read about more accomplished temple members.

Making the World a Better Place

How our Judaism inspires our civic involvement

Compiled by Sheri Arbital Jacoby



Roger Tilles reads poems to elementary students in Sayville.



Hope Slovin, Stockbridge Risk office administrator, presents loaded carts of necessary items to Bertha del Carpio, director of the St Aloysius Outreach Program.

Though *tzedakah* has come to imply charitable giving, the word means righteousness or justice in Hebrew. This benevolent Jewish tradition involves contributing individual resources for the good of the entire community. Of the 613 commandments that Jews are obligated to observe, the *mitzvah* or good deed of *tzedakah* is considered one of the most important.

The Aleinu prayer recited toward the end of every Jewish worship service reiterates that a goal of the Jewish people is to “perfect the world under the sovereignty of God.” In Hebrew, the phrase “perfect the world” translates to *tikkun olam*, which means to fix or repair the world.

Congregants of Temple Beth-El give back in many ways. Throughout the temple’s storied history, its members have furthered advancements throughout Great Neck as well as the surrounding area. Their names grace the wings of local hospitals, and many facilitate change as board members of health, education and service organizations. Others make a difference by raising funds for charitable causes or collecting food for people in need. Meet these special congregants who are making the world a better place.

RESTOCKING THE FOOD PANTRY

Faith Sterling, Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter, Stockbridge Risk Management

Bob Sterling, cofounder and president, Stockbridge Risk Management; board chair, Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation

Along with our staff at Stockbridge Risk Management, we have made it an annual November event to collect and donate food to meet the needs of the St. Aloysius Interfaith Food Pantry in Great Neck.

Through our involvement with Temple Beth-El, we know how important the food pantry is. With the guidance of Bertha del Carpio, director of the St. Aloysius Outreach Program, we focus on donating items that meet the needs of those in our Great Neck community.

Everyone at Stockbridge Risk is happy and proud to participate in this cause. ►



Faith and Bob Sterling collect and donate food to the St. Aloysius Food Pantry.

EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

Roger Tilles, member of the NYS Board of Regents representing Long Island

My mother and father were both very much involved in Temple Beth-El as a leader in the religious school and former president, respectively.

Growing up in Great Neck with them as role models, I became president of the Junior Temple Club here at Temple Beth-El. Under the leadership of Rabbi Jerome Davidson, my horizons were broadened by such things as the march in Washington to see Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In addition, I was able to meet and see him as he talked here in our temple in 1967. My passion for social justice continued into my professional life, which has involved public-policy making and activism throughout my life.



For his position as a regent, Roger Tilles meets with the Elmont school officials and the education commissioner.

Seeing that the world was unfair helped me lead a life trying to repair some of the most blatant examples. As chair of the Long Island Regional Planning Board, I saw clearly how land use created pockets of poverty right here

on Long Island when I became a regent almost 20 years ago.

Those governmental decisions were clearly responsible for Long Island having some of the most segregated schools in the country. For 20 years, the delicate balance of trying to maintain the excellence of so many of our schools had to be maintained with an emphasis on equity. Until we view all kids as “our kids,” we cannot say that our education system is working.

As a regent, I have been in more than 500 schools on Long Island, reading poems to elementary school students and seeing some of the most creative programs in the world. But I’ve also seen tremendously dysfunctional schools that lack the knowledge and resources necessary for the kids to get a basic education.

Our temple has been a creative force for social justice since the days of our beloved Rabbi Jacob Rudin. Starting when I was president, and throughout the past 25 years, I have been involved here with the Interfaith Martin Luther King Jr. Shabbat Service.

I’ve had the pleasure of bringing to our temple speakers such as Hillary Clinton; Senator Chuck Schumer; Hakeem Jeffries; Congressman John Lewis; Khalid Muhammad; Reverend Calvin Butts, whose recent passing we mourn; Congressmen Gary Ackerman and Steve Israel; our state comptroller and Great Neck resident, Tom DiNapoli;

as well as my colleagues at the Board of Regents and in State Education Department leadership.



Roger Tilles receives an award from Erase Racism.

This service has become a meaningful community observation of Dr. King’s life. This year we were fortunate enough to have our New York State attorney general, Letitia James, give a riveting presentation that captured the spirit of Dr. King. Arm in arm, our congregants, with members of the greater community, felt the passion of working together to create a better world for all.

Such is the nature of the experiences that I started here at Temple Beth-El.



Roger Tilles was able to meet Dr. King when he spoke at TBE in 1967.



Cantor Davis, Roger Tilles, Joe Key, Letitia James, Rabbi Stoller and Stu Botwinick were influential in making this year’s MLK Shabbat service memorable.

Seeing that the world was unfair helped me lead a life trying to repair some of the most blatant examples.

—Roger Tilles

FUNDRAISING FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

Dr. Beth Hochstein, founder and organizer, Dance Party for Parkinson's, Inc.



Beth Hochstein raises money for Parkinson's at her 2019 fundraiser Costumes and Cocktails.

My journey of raising funding for Parkinson's research began in 2010 when I decided to retire from my career as a podiatrist as a result of my diagnosis of young onset Parkinson's disease two years prior. I was 36 at the time.

To learn about ways I could help raise funding to promote research toward finding a cure for Parkinson's disease, I visited the website of The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research. I then signed up to become a member of Team Fox.

In 2011, I hosted my first two fundraising events—one in May and one in October. We named these two events Dance Party for Parkinson's. The events raised approximately \$30,000

for Parkinson's research through The Michael J. Fox Foundation.

Because I grew up dancing and still love to dance, I attended the training for the official Dance for PD program given by Mark Morris in Brooklyn. I was so impressed by this program that I started to explore the possibility of bringing this wonderful dance program to people living with Parkinson's disease on Long Island, since studies have shown dance develops balance, increases cognitive activity and social connections, and creates joy in the lives of people living with Parkinson's disease.

With the help of a board member, in 2015 Dance Party for Parkinson's,



In 2016, participants dance the time away at Beth Hochstein's Shakin' It for a Cure event.

Inc. was born as an official nonprofit organization.

One day in 2018, I received a phone call from someone at the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts saying that they wanted to start a dance class for people with Parkinson's disease—and they asked for our help. We decided as a board that we would fund the program so that everyone attending, with or without a caregiver, could come free of charge.

This program is still going strong, and we have been able to fund it every year since 2019 through our fundraising events.

This year's Rock Your Body for Parkinson's fundraiser will take place at the Tilles Center on May 10. The New York City Off Broadway group The Boy Band Project will be entertaining. Participants will enjoy food, drinks, a silent and live auction, music, dancing—and tons of fun.

Proceeds from the event will once again sponsor the Tilles Dance for Parkinson's sessions for the year and support Parkinson's research through The Michael J. Fox Foundation. Learn more at www.dancepartyforparkinsons.org.

My hope is to continue this very successful program at the Tilles Center while funding Parkinson's research for years to come. ►



Attendees have fun working out while raising funds at Zumbathon 2014—Dancin' for a Cure.

COMING TO THE RESCUE

Dr. Paul E. Levin, executive vice chairman, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Montefiore Medical Center



Paul Levin helps a little girl who sustained a pelvic fracture following the earthquake.

I don't think it is possible to answer the question of how Judaism inspires my involvement in *tzedakah*, whether in Temple Beth-El, the local community or globally. We are all products of our family upbringing, environment, the relationships we develop in college and life, and our personal moral compass.

I grew up in a typical American Jewish family, attending a Conservative synagogue, going to shul on High Holy Days, lighting the menorah on Hanukkah and attending two seders on Passover.

My family was very liberal minded and concerned for others. Despite the limited involvement in many of the common Jewish observances, my parents' actions embodied *tzedakah*, and they were strong supporters of Israel.

My mother was active in Hadassah and volunteered in a nursing home. We took a two-week family trip to Israel when I was 11, and my father took a six-month sabbatical in Israel. I was already volunteering in shul during high school as a weekly member of the Thursday morning minyan team, and the team leader would drop me off at school after the minyan.

My wife, Terri, and I don't feel an obligation to be involved, but it just feels "right." Our participation is rewarding and fulfilling. I truly experience pleasure when I can help people by repairing

their severely broken bones, treating them in my office and also assisting them in my non-professional life.

That's how I ended up in Haiti.

My orthopaedic subspecialty is orthopaedic trauma. After the devastating earthquake centered in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in January 2010, I had an immediate need and desire to assist in one of the poorest nations in the world.

The Orthopaedic Trauma Association created a web page for groups going to Haiti and were looking for orthopaedic surgeons. I saw a local 631 number and called.

It was a group of doctors from New York and Chicago, most originally from Jérémie, Haiti. The doctors in a Chicago church parish had a sister relationship with a parish near Jérémie and were planning a mission to the city, approximately 120 miles from Port-au-Prince and recipient of around 200,000 earthquake survivors. They needed an orthopaedic surgeon to be part of their group.



Doctors head to Jérémie, Haiti, to help residents injured in the earthquake.

My chairman gave me support to leave my clinical responsibilities in the Bronx on short notice; and two days after I called that 631 number, I was on a flight to Miami. Our group then flew on a small Cessna plane to Jérémie, landing on a dirt runway.

During my weeklong stay, I cared for people who had been injured and had initial surgery in Port-au-Prince, those injured but not treated immediately and local residents who heard an orthopaedic surgeon was in town. I was the only



The volunteers help victims at Hospital Saint Antoine.

orthopaedic surgeon in the region; and although the local hospital did not have the capabilities to perform any fracture surgery, I was able to treat many people who didn't require surgery but were desperately in need of skillful care.

The experience was so rewarding, and the demand for seasoned physicians to mentor the few orthopaedic surgeons who practiced in Haiti was so great, that I returned to Port-au-Prince the following three years with Project Medishare for Haiti, a collaborative program between the University of Miami and a hospital in Port-au-Prince.

When you're involved in global health care, you gain added perspective of our American health-care system. Undoubtedly, we have the most modern technology and spend more per capita than any other socioeconomically advanced country, but often the expense is unnecessary and our outcomes rate poorly in relation to other countries. When you work in poor regions, you quickly realize that very often you are able to successfully care for people without all of the bells and whistles we have in the United States.



Paul Levin learned that really good care can be delivered without all the bells and whistles.

SNACKS FOR HUNGRY STUDENTS

Susanne Marcus, ESL teacher in Great Neck Public Schools and immediate past president at New York State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages



I don't know if my Judaism impacted my penchant for community engagement—or if it is the other way around.

Born into a traditional holiday-observing Jewish family, I never questioned my Judaism. We were not really connected to any synagogue, but we were involved in civic engagement and “doing good” in our Brooklyn community. My father always welcomed “the stranger” into our house and stood up for those without voices.

As a child, I attended a summer camp in Beacon, New York, run by the University Settlement, a pioneer in the social service arena. Campers represented a wide diversity of backgrounds and socioeconomic status. We sang civil rights and anti-war songs with Pete Seeger nightly and engaged in projects to improve our world.

It's no surprise that my camp friends became social workers, political advocates and community organizers. Though my involvement in giving back to my community was never connected in a discernible way to my Judaism, it does shout a loud *tikkun olam*.

Fascinated by everything linguistic, I became an English as a Second Language

(ESL) teacher and was fortunate to spend most of my professional career in the Great Neck Public Schools.

When I shared my work with Rabbi Tara Feldman, she was intrigued and wanted to learn more about my student population. I told her how the school can help just so much—but there was great need beyond that. Some of these students needed prom dresses and accessories, winter jackets, food and funds to attend extra programs. I shared what I did on my own, outside of my “teacher role,” because that is my calling and what I feel should be done.

For many years, we at the Hispanic Community of Great Neck offered scholarship funds, distributed turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas and worked with Bertha del Carpio of St. Aloysius RC Church to bridge some of the need.

To me, these things aren't necessarily Jewish but are compassionate things good people do to share their blessings. After studying as an adult bat mitzvah at Temple



ENL summer school students enjoy the snacks provided from TBE's Great-Full program.

Beth-El, I saw how sharing one's blessings is, in fact, quite a Jewish thing, but not necessarily an exclusively Jewish thing.

My deeper and more hands-on connection to the social justice arm of Temple Beth-El began after, as I drove Tara through our peninsula and gave her a tour of the “Great Neck she did not know.” With her encouragement, Brotherhood partnered even more closely with the local food pantry at St. Aloysius.



Since food services aren't offered during summer school, even to those who receive free and reduced-cost lunches during the school year, Temple Beth-El's Great-Full program was created through leadership from many families, including Jane and Gary Stone, to provide snacks to all summer school ENL students. The Great-Full program now also provides snacks to these students during school vacations.

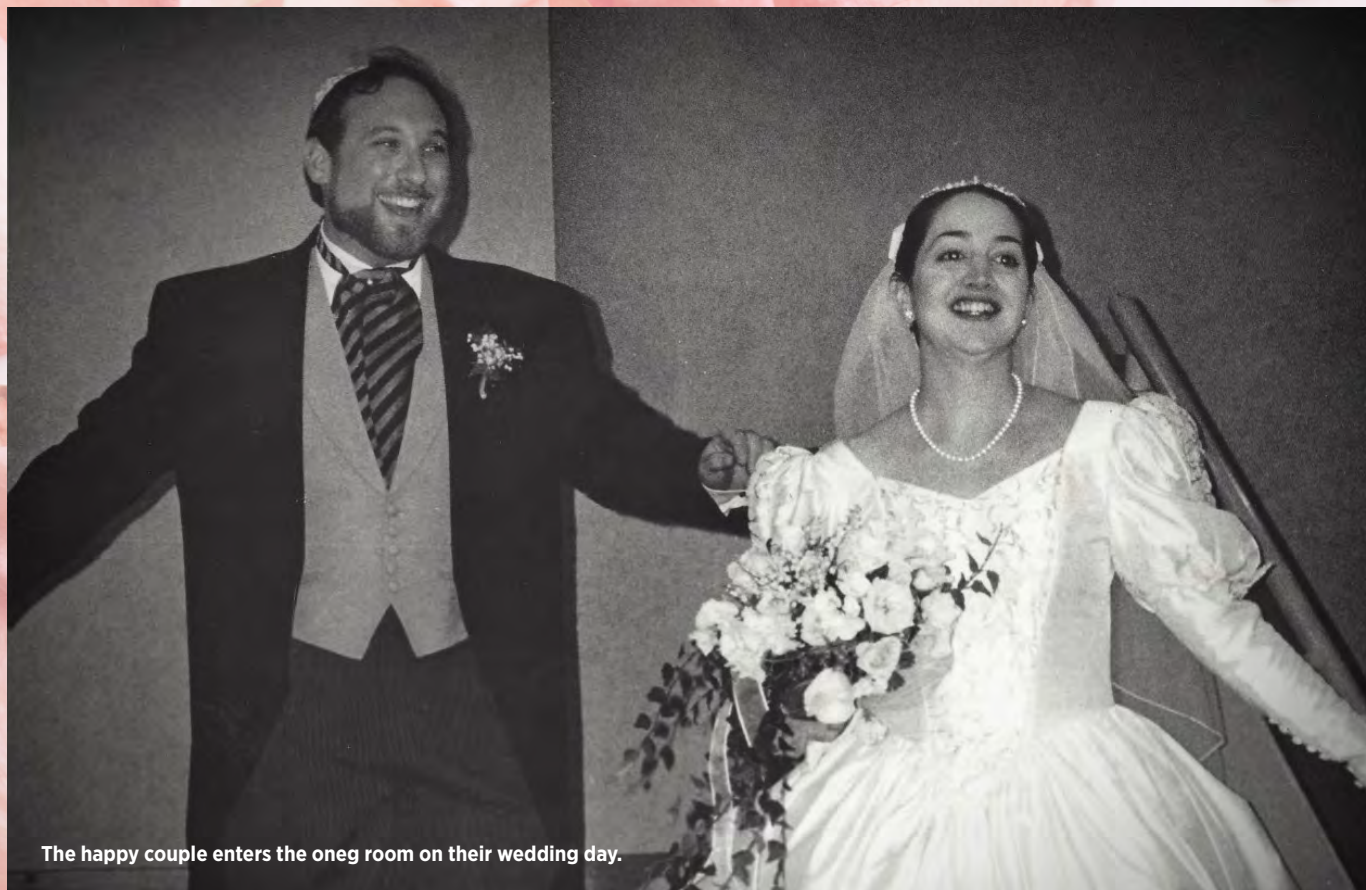
I am humbled to be part of Temple Beth-El for its recognition of those in need who live among us. As in similar suburbs, great wealth exists in this community, but a web of workers and other less fortunate people live here, too. These folks often provide vital support to the community at large, send their children to the same schools, play at the same parks, yet live largely “unnoticed” among us. They are strangers to many of us, but if we befriend them it's less likely we'll oppress them.

As an adult bat mitzvah, I learned in a formal way that welcoming the stranger is quite a Jewish thing—and mentioned at least 36 times in the Torah! Judaism echoes an endless concern for the stranger. For me, Jewish values entail giving back in the largest sense. Judaism is action. Though I always knew I was Jewish, I may not have connected my community engagement, my commitment to welcoming the stranger, to my Judaism. Now I know it's called *tikkun olam* or doing *mitzvot*. 🌟

If you know a temple member who has made a difference and would like to be featured in an upcoming issue of Shema, please email the details to sheriarbitaljacoby@tbgreatneck.org.

The Temple's First Interfaith Wedding

By Jennifer Still-Schiff



The happy couple enters the oneg room on their wedding day.

“The traditions and folkways our rabbis included in welcoming everyone continue to keep the doors open wide—and make a special place to grow new families and an inclusive community.”

Temple Beth-El has been special to us for a long time, and in fact it helped make “us”—Len and Jenn—possible as we are today. There were tears, to begin with. Young, in love and fighting to reconcile two different religions, we weren’t sure how to make a life together. I did some reading about Judaism, and Len glanced at my Episcopal beliefs from an uncomfortable distance. After a late night arguing that there was no way forward, I wiped my eyes and told him, “You and me, we’re meant to be, we’re *bashert*—and who am I to throw that back at G-d and say no thanks?!”

We wanted to make a unified family, so I was going to learn to do Jewish. Once I had decided that, everything would be easy. Oh, but then I learned about Conservative Judaism, Reform, Reconstructionist, huge Manhattan synagogues, tiny *chavruta* and more things I hadn’t even heard of.

Looking for a synagogue, a rabbi and a celebration venue, we didn’t realize at first that this would be difficult. I was frustrated that my fiancé and his family didn’t have a community or a connection, but we set out to make our own. He was most comfortable within the Conservative world he’d been raised with. It was soon made clear—and not gently, either—that I was not accepted there. It happened in two steps: First, assumptions were made that I would be converting; and then second, I felt judged and found wanting as doors were shut on us.

The old congregation nearest our city apartment was exactly what Len envisioned for himself: walking distance, a powerful woman rabbi and an

old-country cantor. I tried, but attending a Friday night there meant looking at solid pages of Hebrew text: impenetrable. We broadened the search.

When I looked for Reform temples, we were delighted to find in Beth-El a place with three women and a man on the bimah: a female cantor and two women as associate rabbis!

My impression of the chapel was so familiar and instantly comforting—I guess I had missed the dark woodwork and blue stained glass of my previous spiritual home. The prayer book had enough English for me to orient myself during the evening service. The music pulled at my heart. “Let us light these lights. ...” Cantor Lisa Hest encouraged participation in certain songs that everyone seemed to know.

We heard Rabbi Karen Bender chant from the Torah scroll, translating into English as she read each verse. Afterward, Rabbi Jerome Davidson thanked her for chanting so beautifully, a phrase that I heard him use frequently in the following months. Looking back, hearing Torah read on Friday nights seems unusual. Rabbi Davidson favored this Reform practice so that the congregation would have the chance to hear it regularly. To me, it was just another elevating element of Jewish ritual.

There was a meditation adapted from Heschel in the *Gates of Prayer* that arrested my attention, and I’m so glad that we still find it in the *Mishkan T’fillah*. “Prayer may not bring water to parched fields, nor mend a broken bridge, nor rebuild a ruined city. But prayer can water an arid soul, mend a broken heart and rebuild a weakened will.” This felt different from the petitionary prayer my church seemed to prefer, and I was taken aback. I did not expect services to affect me; my spirit was moved.

When we approached the rabbi at the oneg, we introduced ourselves and asked if we could meet with her. She could have told us to call the temple office on Monday morning. Instead, even though it was Shabbat, she jotted down her direct number for us.

Surprisingly, Rabbi Bender had been open to officiating at an interfaith marriage but had not yet met a couple that she felt comfortable marrying. She had met with about a dozen couples and none of them matched her criteria. I was dismayed—how hard or exacting were the rules?

The non-Jewish partner would need to understand that a Jewish wedding ceremony is intended to create a Jewish home and a Jewish family. So they wouldn’t be practicing another religion or celebrating their previous holidays in the home.

Important values like *shalom bayit* and *tzedakah* would be part of our agreement. Hypothetical children would be raised Jewish. Finally, we would both need to embark on a course together to give me an Introduction to Judaism.

After discussing these factors and agreeing to them, we seemed to fit the rabbi’s requirements.

We began a series of classes through the Reform movement and joined a small discussion group for people in interfaith relationships. Through that group, we found our first two friends at TBE, Erica Groshen and Chris Bazinet. Another younger pair were in the class, but after a few weeks they realized that they couldn’t square their different religious beliefs and plans; it was a sign that this wasn’t easy, a sobering thing.

Other members of TBE were also welcoming—we met the

astounding temple librarian Dorothy Zimbalist, z”l, and were befriended by Rabbi Renni Altman, the Rosenzweigs, Elaine Springer, Herb Leiman, z”l, and John Hirsch. There was a kindness in the community that helped us feel welcome.

And then the long-awaited wedding! Before the ceremony, we said the *shehecheyanu* prayer together and I started to cry in the rabbi’s office. She asked if I was OK, and I managed to pull myself together. The meaning of those words, so recently learned, had made an impression—in saying them together, I realized that I was entering a sacred agreement that would last our whole lives.

Our friends and family had created a quilt *chuppah* with images of candles, challah, wine, flowers and blessings in Hebrew and English, from guests who both knew or were new to Jewish

symbols. Their good wishes literally surrounded us. Before the rabbi chanted the seven blessings in Hebrew, she asked the guests to participate with a strong “amen” at the end of each *bracha*; Jews and non-Jews together, our community helped bless our union.

Today, our congregation welcomes the stranger, the Jewish-adjacent, the intermarried, the interested—and has a place for all. Celebrating our child’s bar mitzvah achieved one of the goals of making a Jewish marriage. And it inspired me to go further, taking on my own spiritual path to a Jewish identity. The traditions and folkways our rabbis included in welcoming everyone continue to keep the doors open wide—and make a special place to grow new families and an inclusive community. ✡

Many thanks to Rabbi Karen Bender for the huge favor of double-checking the recollection of the couple’s conversations—and for being proud, happy and honored to have been part of the creation of the Still-Schiff family.



Jenn and Len celebrate with their son, Adam, at his bar mitzvah.

Getting to Know Jackie and Andy Aaron

By Stuart Botwinick



Jackie and Andy are flanked by their children, who grew up at TBE, and their children's mates.

Jackie and Andy Aaron both grew up in Great Neck, were married by Temple Beth-El's rabbi and have been involved with our synagogue for decades. In fact, Jackie's parents became members before she was born. The Aarons have three children and two grandchildren.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO SHARE YOUR STORY WITH OUR TBE FAMILY. YOUR FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO OUR TEMPLE ARE AMONG THE LONGEST! WHEN DID YOU BECOME PART OF TBE?

Jackie Aaron: My parents joined around 1951 when they moved to Great Neck. That was before I was born, so you could say I've been a member my entire life.

Andy Aaron: Rabbi Jerome Davidson performed our wedding in 1979. That's when I joined TBE. I grew up at Temple Emanuel and became a bar mitzvah there. My parents had wanted to join TBE, along with many other families, but the waiting list was so long that TBE's Rabbi Jacob Rudin gave his blessing to these families to start another Reform synagogue in town. Temple Emanuel was founded in the 1950s.

Otherwise, we would have been part of TBE—and maybe I would have met Jackie sooner! Growing up, I knew some of her family. Her uncle was my Little League coach and I was on the school bus with her cousins, but Jackie and I didn't know each other growing up.

SO THE BIG QUESTION THAT OPENS UP THE EXTENSIVE FAMILY HISTORY AT THE TEMPLE: WHAT HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT BEEN AT TBE?

Jackie: When I started in third grade, I was in the non-bat mitzvah track that led to confirmation. I continued on with Senior Seminar and graduated at the end of high school. When I was small, I used to attend Sisterhood meetings with my mom and go to Cradle Roll. I'd hide in the temple—I knew all the good hiding places. When we rebuilt the building, I lost some of those spots.

I was consecrated and got my jelly apple. I've loved Simchat Torah ever since. I attended services as a kid with

Rabbi Rudin. He had a special aura—a gravitas around him. He was a big imposing figure in our synagogue and community. I was involved in the youth group and went to social events—dances and many conclaves [retreats]. In 10th grade, we went to Eisner Camp in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Those were great. Rabbi Davidson was the best impromptu song leader! I was connected during my college years, but my next big involvement was when Andy and I got married in 1979.

Andy: Rabbi Davidson performed our wedding ceremony. We lived in the U.S. Virgin Islands for the first two-and-a-half years of marriage, and we are still Chai Members of the Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas. We've been married 44 years so far!

We “rejoined” TBE and got our first year of membership for free since the rabbi officiated at our wedding. At the time, the temple had a couples club but most of them were older. We were in our 20s and most of them were in their 30s. Everyone was very nice, but all the others had kids.

We didn't quite fit in, so we started the YMC—the Young Marrieds Club. This was mostly for 25- to 30-year-old couples. When Roger Tilles became president in the early '90s, he asked Jackie, along with David Cohen, to coordinate all young family activities, in addition to social activities. We needed to bring together families for education, worship, social action, etc. It was named Beth-El Connection (BEC).

Jackie: At that time, both of us were asked to be on the temple's board of trustees—we were among the youngest ever. We think Roger Tilles wanted to bring in some of the younger people to leadership. Being a leader of BEC with David, we started doing more programming. I recall working with Debbie and David Cohen, who had started the forerunner to what is now TBE's Tzedakah Project in their garage and then brought it to BEC at the

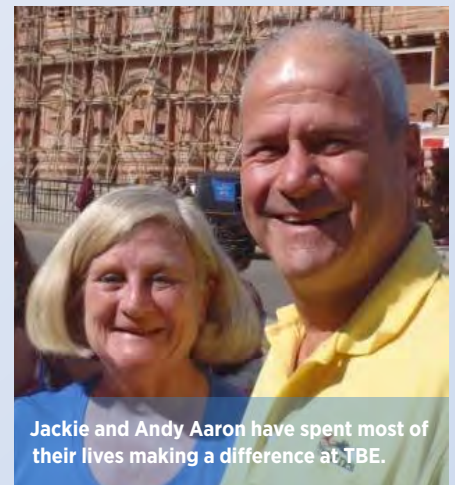
temple. It grew from 30 to 40 turkeys to the 350+ meal program led by Jordana Levine and Danna Sobiecki.

Andy: During that time, we were honored by the temple at a special Sunday Honorees' Brunch, where three couples were recognized for their contributions to the temple. I think it was around the time Rabbi Renni Altman was the assistant rabbi and was very involved with our work. I remember Cantor Lisa Hest was there, too!

Jackie: We continued to get more involved. I had always wanted to be on the Ritual Committee [which is now called the Worship Committee]. My mom was on it; its work mattered at the temple—and it was important to me. I was turned down several times, but when Carol Levine was chair she was looking for someone to lead a Strawberry Breakfast during Passover. She said that if I did it, she would let me join the committee. So I stepped up. I've been on the committee for at least 25 years and was the chair for seven. As our kids went to religious school, I joined the Religious School Committee in the mid '90s. I felt it was very important to be a part, as education is so important. I stepped down just a few years ago—well after our children left.

WOW, YOUR INVOLVEMENT TOUCHED SO MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND POPULATIONS AT THE TEMPLE. IS THERE MORE?

Jackie: I was very proud of my work with Jerry Tilles, z”l, on the committee that was charged with creating temple reports on the role of the non-Jew in the synagogue while Shelley Limmer was president. It was a major project. At its completion, it was presented to the congregation and discussed. It continues to be a resource to this day. Beyond the leadership, both of us were active in Saturday morning children's services that were started by Rabbi Steven Folberg, the assistant rabbi at the time. Then we continued with Rabbi Morris Barzilai, Rabbi Renni Altman



Jackie and Andy Aaron have spent most of their lives making a difference at TBE.

and Rabbi Susie Moskowitz. It was for families with newborns through five year olds. It was a great way to bring young families in. We met some of our dearest friends there. It was singing and then art projects.

SOUNDS LIKE WHAT IS HAPPENING AT TBE AGAIN TODAY! OUR YOUNG FAMILY PROGRAMS ARE ALL ABOUT THE JOYS OF BEING JEWISH, AND CELEBRATING SHABBAT. MUSIC, ART AND FOOD ARE ALWAYS KEY FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN.

Andy: We've been involved in so many things over the years. I've been honored to be a part of many clergy searches. Roger Tilles had his eye on me and was kind enough to put me on the Cantor Search Committee when Cantor Barbara Ostfeld was leaving. This led to the hiring of Cantor Hest. Just recently, I was the chair of the Assistant Rabbi Search Committee and had the privilege of working with a great group of dedicated temple members and leaders.

Of significance, Jackie and I were the cochairs of the Litwin Campaign with Ina, z”l, and Mark Kupferberg. In addition to raising the needed funds, we had more than 90 percent of congregants participate. For this, we were most proud. We chaired the 90th anniversary Shabbat service ourselves. More recently, I've been on the board; and for the last 10 years, I've been the financial secretary. ►

JACKIE, YOU MENTIONED YOUR MOM, LOUISE FELDMAN. I RECALL THAT SHE SERVED AS A BOARD MEMBER DURING HER LATER YEARS. TELL US MORE.

Jackie: In addition to the board, my mom was very involved in Sisterhood, serving as its president. She and my father, Fred, were very involved. They were both leaders in the bazaars, a top fundraiser for the temple. My father worked a lot, but his retail knowledge was key to pricing and maximizing the success of the bazaar. My mom also started the Jewish Books for the Blind program at TBE. It went beyond our community—many outside of Great Neck benefited. I remember mom ran the recording studio and auditioned people to be readers! They had to have the right voice.

ANDY, BEYOND LEADERSHIP, WHAT HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT BEEN?

Andy: I've always been a member of Brotherhood. I had a lot of commitments in the general leadership, so I was not a regular participant. I used to drive my convertible with World War II vets from TBE in the Memorial Day Parade, too. We would also go to barbecues and brunches.

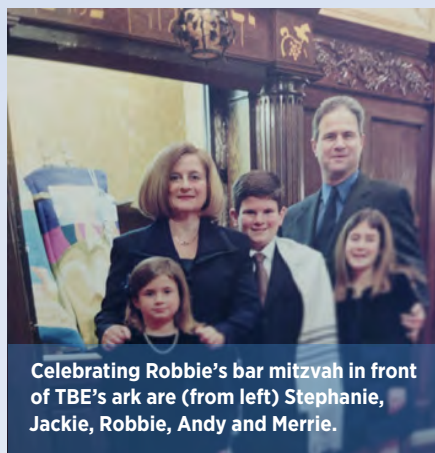
Singing at TBE continues to be important to me. Cantor Hest reimagined a congregational choir at TBE, expanding beyond High Holy Days. I've sung for 15 years in our special MLK Shabbat choir and in our Christmas singing at North Shore Hospital for 10. That's when I got involved—in choirs, plays, Purim shpiels, etc. I even wrote one of the shpiels!

Jackie: I was an adult bat mitzvah at TBE. Then I stayed on with many of the people in my class, and Andy joined us in the adult confirmation class.

Growing up, this was one thing that I really wanted. I really wanted to become a bat mitzvah, and so I finally became one!

YOUR TIME AT TBE SPANS DECADES, SO MANY PEOPLE, SO MANY PROGRAMS, SO MUCH INVOLVEMENT. FOR OUR READERS, CAN YOU CHOOSE A FAVORITE MOMENT AT TBE?

Jackie: There were so many! One of my favorites happens every year. It was bringing the kids to participate in the Tzedakah Project. I had the opportunity to bring my grandchildren this year! Seeing our kids do it as parents and feel that feeling of how special it is to see their own children, our grandchildren, do it—it is so very special. Our four-and-a-half and two-and-a-half-year-old grandchildren came this year for the first time and loved it.



Celebrating Robbie's bar mitzvah in front of TBE's ark are (from left) Stephanie, Jackie, Robbie, Andy and Merrie.

Andy: A very special TBE moment for me was when we were confirmed together and I was selected to give a speech about my Jewish life. It was incredibly moving to share my Jewish journey. I had not been involved in serious Jewish study since my bar mitzvah, so it was more than 35 years.

Jackie: So many more special memories include the Hanukkah dinners, Purim shpiels and more. When Rabbi Davidson laid down on the floor during a shpiel for part of the show, I'll never forget it—it was so out of character.

Another fun memory I have is when I taught Rabbi Davidson to sail. It was an hour of classroom learning and two hours on the water. This was the age

before cell phones, and before we'd go out he'd go to the pay phone and call his secretary to be sure there was no emergency at the temple. This was when I realized the important role of the rabbi and the seriousness of the position. I was about 18. It made a huge mark on me and gave me a deep appreciation for the rabbi.

One more important moment in my TBE history: My mom did the needlepoint on one of the Torah covers we use during the year—the one with the sun on it. She allowed me to help her. I did the needlepoint for one of the High Holy Days Torah covers with Nancy Lowenkron—the one with Jacob's Ladder. That meant a lot to me, too.

WHAT AN AMAZING AND STORIED HISTORY YOU HAVE WITH TBE. FROM A FAMILY WITH MANY YEARS OF SPECIAL MOMENTS AND MEMORIES, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR MESSAGE TO THOSE WHO ARE NEWER TO TBE OR THINKING ABOUT JOINING US?

Jackie and Andy: We have a fantastic rabbi, a cantor whose songs lead us to higher spiritually, a wonderful community, a place to call a second family. We've had the experience where even those who we don't know will stop us on the street to chat. We have a deep sense of social justice and charity work, philanthropy and our food pantry. That is so important. We are committed to Great Neck. We live our Jewish values.

ANY LAST THINGS TO SHARE?

Jackie: All of our kids, Robbie, Merrie and Stephanie, all became b'nai mitzvah and confirmands at TBE, and two went through high school graduation. Now we are enjoying time with Maddy and Jake, our grandchildren. They come with us to many of TBE's children's activities.

Andy: A lifetime of membership just shows how much we love and care about Beth-El and its continued importance to the Reform Jewish community of Great Neck. 🌟



PLANT POWER

Compiled by Sheri ArbitalJacoby

Hungry for a change? Many nutritionists, wellness experts and scholars believe that a plant-based diet embodies the core values of Judaism. Not only is eating this way deeply aligned with Jewish ethical principles but choosing these foods is also spiritually nourishing.

And given the health concerns associated with the standard American diet—loaded with processed, high-fat foods—incorporating more plant-based ingredients can transform your meals so they are low in saturated fat, free of cholesterol and rich in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber. In fact, research suggests that consuming a diet rich in plant-based foods may decrease the risk of heart and digestive disease, hypertension and various cancers. Plus, choosing these foods has been shown to reduce body weight and cholesterol levels.

Whether your motivation for building the bulk of your diet around fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts and seeds is to promote better health, be more eco-conscious or show compassion for animals, eating lower on the food chain can accomplish all three.

This issue's food column focuses on plant-based recipes—and members of our Temple Beth-El family have contributed some of their thoughts, along with their favorite dishes. Don't miss the accompanying sidebar for tips on how to get started. ►



Rabbi Tara Feldman's Cauliflower Soup

Choosing a plant-based diet is an affirmation of my most deeply held Jewish values: the aspiration and calling to care for our planet and our physical selves. As our planet continues to warm at an alarming rate, it's important to remember that meat and dairy production are the leading causes of deforestation.

How did our enslavement begin? Jacob's family went down to Egypt because of famine.

As drought ravages so many countries, let's remember the vast amount of water used by factory farms. At the heart of the Passover story is a call to create a world of justice for those without power. Not only are slaughterhouses a major cause of air and water pollution, they are often places of dangerous, unjust working conditions and animal cruelty.

Jewish life and ritual seek to sanctify and elevate our everyday choices, reminding us that each and every act is imbued with sacred potential.

Passover empowers us to reconsider old habits and embrace new ideas (and recipes!) that can create openings for healing and balance in our world. With its—almost obsessive—focus on food, this holiday reminds us that what we put on our plates matters.

Consider this recipe gifted to me by my wonderful sister-in-law Jodi Feldman. It makes a lot of soup, so you can definitely cut it in half. This recipe is also very forgiving—you cannot really mess it up!

Olive oil for sautéing

1½ lbs carrots, grated or chopped

3 large or 4 medium onions, diced

Salt and pepper to taste

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 large heads cauliflower, in small florets

32 oz vegetable broth

1. Drizzle olive oil into a large pot over low to medium heat, and sauté carrots slowly. Once the carrots begin to soften, add the onions and continue to sauté. Add salt and pepper, keeping in mind that the broth already has salt. When the carrots and onions are mostly soft, add the garlic and continue to sauté for a few more minutes without browning.
2. When the carrots and onions are nicely soft, add the cauliflower and enough broth to cover the florets. Cover the pot and bring to a boil. Then, lower the heat to keep a low boil. Cook for 30 to 45 minutes, until the cauliflower is soft enough to be mashed with a fork.
3. Use an immersion blender or transfer to an upright blender and puree to desired consistency, making it either smooth or leaving it a little chunky. If too thick, add extra broth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.



Lea Caplan's Roasted Butternut Squash Soup with Tomato

Being a vegetarian is very important to me—and it's an extension of my Judaism.

When I think about my Judaism, a couple of ideals come to mind. The concept of *tikkun olam* literally means repairing the world; and early in Bereshit, we are tasked with being stewards of the earth.

I have been an environmentalist all my adult life, which matches stewardship of the only planet we have to live on.

In order to “grow” meat, a tremendous amount of water and feed are required. The enormous amount of land necessary for growing feed could be much more efficiently utilized for growing human food, and it would go a long way to solving hunger.

On factory farms—where large numbers of livestock are raised indoors in conditions intended to maximize production at minimal cost—huge amounts of waste are also produced, including nitrogen, which is poisoning our land and water. And these factory farms are inhumane to the animals as well as to the humans who must work at breakneck speed to slaughter the animals.

To prevent disease when raising so many animals in such close proximity, antibiotics must be administered to the animals. These antibiotics promote quick growth and tamp down infections, but those chemicals are then introduced into our water and land. With so many antibiotics in use, we increase drug-resistant bacteria to the animals, and then to the humans who consume them. These are just some of the reasons I have chosen to avoid eating meat.

On cool days, I really enjoy eating soups. Butternut squash is a great cold-weather vegetable, which can keep for a couple of months. Winter squash are versatile, and when roasted they caramelize—intensifying the flavor. To save time, you can roast the butternut squash the day before making the soup.

1 (3–3½ lb) butternut squash

2 Tbsp olive oil, plus more for the squash

1 large onion, diced

1 (32 oz) box vegetable broth or

4 cups homemade broth

1 (28 oz) can diced or crushed tomatoes

2–3 stalks celery, diced

Salt and pepper to taste

Cinnamon to taste

Cardamom to taste

1. Preheat oven to 400F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Cut off the top and bottom of the squash, so it has a flat end to stand it on. Cut the squash in half lengthwise. Scoop out the seeds and discard. (I use a grapefruit spoon to scrape them out.) Lightly spread some olive oil on the cut side, then place the cut side face down on the baking sheet. Bake for 45 minutes, checking it occasionally. Squash should soften and become pliable. Caramelize the squash but do not overcook it. If making the soup immediately, turn squash over to let the steam escape and to let it cool enough to handle. If making the soup the next day, refrigerate the roasted squash in the parchment paper used for roasting.
3. Heat a large pot on the stovetop over medium heat, add the 2 tablespoons of olive oil and the diced onion. When the onion has softened, add vegetable broth, cover and bring to a boil. Add tomatoes and diced celery.
4. Scrape the squash flesh from its skin into the pot and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. Stir a couple of times while simmering, to make sure the squash is fully broken up.
5. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Season with cinnamon and cardamom to your preference. (I use 3 parts cinnamon to 1 part cardamom.) Simmer another 5 to 10 minutes, so seasoning is well absorbed.



Lea Caplan's Homemade Applesauce

For every holiday, I make my family's homemade applesauce using a pressure

cooker and food mill. Applesauce is a dish my sister and I made with our mother starting as soon as we were old enough to help, though we didn't use a pressure cooker back then. Each holiday when I make it for my own family, it brings back delightful memories of working in the kitchen with my mom.

For this recipe, don't peel the apples; the skin has lots of vitamins and the pectin thickens the applesauce.

4 lbs apples, washed and cut into quarters
¼ cup water

1 Tbsp cinnamon and/or pumpkin spice

1. Cut out the stem and core from the apples. Then halve each quarter and place apples into the pressure cooker.
2. Follow the pressure cooker directions but use just ¼ cup of water to get the steam going, as the apples will produce a lot of liquid. Once the pressure cooker has the steam vent on and you hear the steam hissing, turn the heat down and cook for another 45 minutes. Turn off the heat and let the pressure cooker cool for at least an hour.
3. Set up the food mill over a deep bowl. (I use the blade with the largest holes.) When you pour the contents from pressure cooker into the mill, it will seem like a lot of liquid. But as you use the food mill to grind down the skin, it will thicken up.
4. Use a spatula to scrape all the apple to bottom of the mill and to scrape underneath into bowl. Stir the cinnamon or pumpkin spice into the applesauce and mix thoroughly.

Sharon Epstein's Easy Zoodles with Nut-butter

Though I am not a vegan or vegetarian, as I do eat eggs and fish occasionally, I enjoy and just feel better when eating more plant-based dishes. So many options are available today—it is a matter of getting creative with vegetables!



This recipe offers an alternative to cold sesame noodles, a favorite found in Chinese cuisine. My version becomes lighter and healthier by incorporating the high nutrient content of zucchini topped with healthy and satisfying almond butter.

I love this dish, because it's easy to make and involves a no-heat cooking process, which is wonderful for warm-weather dining. Once you have the spiraled zucchini noodles (or zoodles!), either purchased from one of the many stores that carries them or made at home with a spiralizer, it is very simple to assemble the rest of the ingredients.

To boost the protein in this delicious cold side salad or main dish—and add a bit of heat—top with Trader Joe's Sriracha Flavored Baked Tofu.

2-3 raw zucchini,
spiralized to look like noodles
1 Tbsp creamy unsweetened almond butter
1 Tbsp tamari soy sauce
½ Tbsp apple cider vinegar
½ Tbsp sesame oil
1 tsp honey or agave (optional)
½ Tbsp water, for thinning (optional)
2-3 raw green scallions tops, sliced
1 package baked tofu, cubed (optional)

1. Place spiralized raw zucchini in a large serving bowl.
2. Whisk together remaining ingredients, except for the scallions and tofu, and toss with the zoodles.
3. Top with sliced scallions and tofu cubes, if using.
4. Refrigerate and enjoy! ►



Sharon Epstein's Healthy Vegan Chocolate Mint Smoothie

This smoothie is an alternative to a milkshake and satisfies my cravings for something chocolatey and minty.

1 cup almond milk or any plant-based milk
1 handful raw baby spinach, washed
½ frozen banana
1 Tbsp cocoa or cacao powder
1 drop peppermint extract or doTerra peppermint essential oil
3 ice cubes
1 Tbsp maple syrup or favorite sweetener
Mint leaves for garnish

In a blender, combine all ingredients except for the mint leaves. Mix until smooth. Add the mint leaves as a garnish.



Sheryl Silverstein's Cowboy Caviar

Anybody who knows me, knows that I love to read cookbooks; although today with Pinterest, cookbooks may be becoming a thing of the past.

I had read about plant-based diets, and the science was convincing. Then,

a patient gave me the *How Not to Die Cookbook* by Michael Greger, MD, as a gift. It appeared to have really wonderful recipes. I tried a few and loved them. I kept trying different recipes from this book and found I felt better and had more energy after eating these dishes. It wasn't my imagination. I was hooked.

I chose to share this Southwestern-inspired corn and bean mixture because it is easy, quick to prepare, goes with every dish and is always a crowd pleaser. This recipe doesn't come from Dr. Greger's cookbook. It's a combination of various Cowboy Caviar recipes, though I still need to give it a proper name because I don't like the name Cowboy Caviar.

Salad

1 (15 oz) can black beans, drained, rinsed and dried
2 ears corn, microwaved 1 minute, shucked and kernels removed in chunks using a sharp knife on a cutting board
½ cup red onion, finely chopped
1½ cups heirloom tomatoes, diced
1 avocado, chopped
Parsley leaves for garnish

Dressing

1 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp cider vinegar
1 tsp lime juice
1 tsp sugar

1. In a large bowl, toss all salad ingredients together.
2. Combine all dressing ingredients, drizzle over salad and toss.
3. Let the salad sit for 30 minutes before serving.

Donna Lefkowitz's Soft Bean Tacos

I originally became vegan for health reasons. Then, as a proud pet mommy, I made the connection to my dog and cat and grew more concerned with animals.



Once I made the switch, it was easy to continue. There are so many opportunities to prepare beautiful, delicious and healthy meals. A bonus is the time I save avoiding certain aisles in the grocery store.

After a long day as a teacher in Temple Beth-El's Early Childhood Education Center, I enjoy making simple vegan dinners like these black bean tacos. You can make them more elaborate by adding chopped lettuce, tomato, red onions—or any topping you choose.

1 package 100% corn tortillas
1 (15 oz) can black or pinto beans, drained and rinsed
1 avocado, sliced
Salsa

Plain soy, almond, cashew or coconut yogurt (optional)
Lettuce, chopped (optional)
Tomato, chopped (optional)
Red onion, chopped (optional)
Black olives, chopped (optional)

1. Heat 2 to 3 tortillas per person in a pan on the stove.
2. Warm black beans or pinto beans in a saucepan over medium heat for 5 minutes or in the microwave for 2 minutes, until heated through.
3. Place 2 to 3 tortillas on each plate and spoon beans, avocado slices and salsa on each one.
4. Top each tortilla with vegan yogurt, lettuce, tomato, onion or olives, if desired.
5. Fold and enjoy!

HOW TO GET STARTED?

Tips for Adding More Vegetables to Your Meals

Adhering to a plant-based diet may seem drastic to some, but since the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion's MyPlate guide recommends that approximately half of our food come from fruits and vegetables, only the meat—and possibly milk—sections require substitutions to make the transition. Seitan, tofu and beans are simple substitutions for animal protein in your favorite dishes. Start by incorporating more plant-based food at each meal, then devote one meal a week to being entirely plant based, then gradually increase the number of dishes that feature protein solely from legumes, nuts and seeds each and every day—and see how much better you feel!

In our area, we're lucky to be exposed to such a plethora of ethnic foods, which tend to rely on more plant-based protein sources. Dining out at these restaurants makes eating lower on the food chain fairly easy and can inspire you to recreate your favorites at home. Select hummus, falafel and salad from Mediterranean menus; tofu and vegetable dishes from Chinese cuisine; seaweed salad and various vegetable rolls at Japanese meals; classics made with black or pinto beans in Mexican dining; sautéed vegetables, white beans and pasta at Italian spots; and chickpeas, lentils and vegetables from Indian cooking.

Soups, stews and chilis made with beans, lentils, split peas, barley, potatoes and vegetables can highlight the flavors from a variety of cuisines, like miso for Asian, salsa for Mexican and coconut for Indian.

Easy meals like poke or grain bowls can be assembled using whole-grain, high-fiber carbs, like pasta, potatoes, brown rice or quinoa; sautéed, roasted or air fried vegetables; beans, lentils and edamame; and sprinkled with chopped nuts, seeds, seaweed or B vitamin-rich nutritional yeast.

A tray of various roasted vegetables, along with a protein like chickpeas or tofu and a grain like potatoes or corn on the cob cooked in the husk, is super simple to prepare. Just cut the vegetables and potatoes to the desired shape, drizzle with olive oil, vegetable broth or aquafaba (chickpea liquid) and sprinkle with garlic powder, sea salt and other favorite spices. The tofu will absorb soy sauce and sesame oil and can be sprinkled with garlic and ginger powder. Once it's in the oven, you'll have about an hour of free time to enjoy while it cooks.

As the weather gets warmer, main dish salads filled with a variety of greens and vegetables, and topped with beans, tofu, avocado, seeds and nuts are easy to prepare, delicious and nutritious.

Browse plant-based blogs and recipes for inspiration and visit ethnic grocery and specialty stores to find new and interesting ingredients. Many plant-based eaters find they have more options than they ever did before—along with more energy to embrace the adventure. Add in embodying the core values of Judaism and Jewish ethical principles, and you have the recipe for spiritually nourishing meals. 🌱

—Sheri Arbib/Jacoby



Bubbie & Rivka's Best-Ever Challah (So Far!) by Sarah Lynne Reul
By Jennifer Still-Schiff



Sweet, nourishing and a bit wonky—this children's book is a lot like its eponymous baking project! In this warm family story about the importance of process over product, it isn't only the youngest generation that learns something new. Playful, comforting illustrations are energetic and contemporary, depicting an extended family of mother, daughters and grandparents who are at ease with a few Yiddish phrases.

Rivka, missing her front teeth, enjoys dressing up in her Bubbie's costume jewelry. Bubbie is a modern career woman; unlike her own grandmother, she knows *bupkis* about baking. But now they have a lot of time together and decide to start a new tradition of baking a challah every Friday.

The first time they try baking, the dough doesn't rise very much.

The whole thing is underdone and underwhelming. The second time—well, at least the smoke alarm worked! But once the duo learn the rhythm of baking, Bubbie and Rivka are well on their way to making the best challah ever.

In picture books, we look at a text and a series of pictures—sometimes the illustrations tell a quiet story of their own. While Rivka and her grandmother play in the snow and work in the kitchen, her grandfather is taking care of the baby as her mom works at a laptop in the other room.

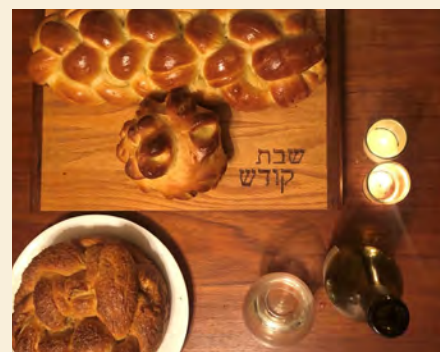
This author-illustrator seems to be bringing a universal baking experience into a very specific moment when we all found ourselves with more time, more family togetherness and more bread making. I may be reading my own life into the book, but I see it as taking place during the pandemic work-from-home

era of 2020–21. In many families, generations were suddenly living together and working from home—and creating new habits to fill the days. I love the way these characters connect with their past and find ways to bring traditions into the present, focusing on the positive togetherness of the moment.

It could also be showing the moment when grandparents have retired from careers and are suddenly more available for extended interaction with their grandkids. Rivka is entertained, painting and playing in the snow as well as puttering in the kitchen.

Grandparents will have plenty of discussion material when they share this book with their families. Characters enjoy each moment, feeling the dough under their fingers, and learning that “practice makes progress!” This family values a growth mindset and finds positive ways to react even when the charred or “crunchy” challah is less than ideal. As everyone is stuck together with lots of free time—loved ones work as a team.

The best-ever recipe is included with a playful voice, to inspire readers in their own baking journey. 🥰



The Still-Schiff family challah tradition was on a roll during the work-from-home times of 2020–21.

What's So Special?

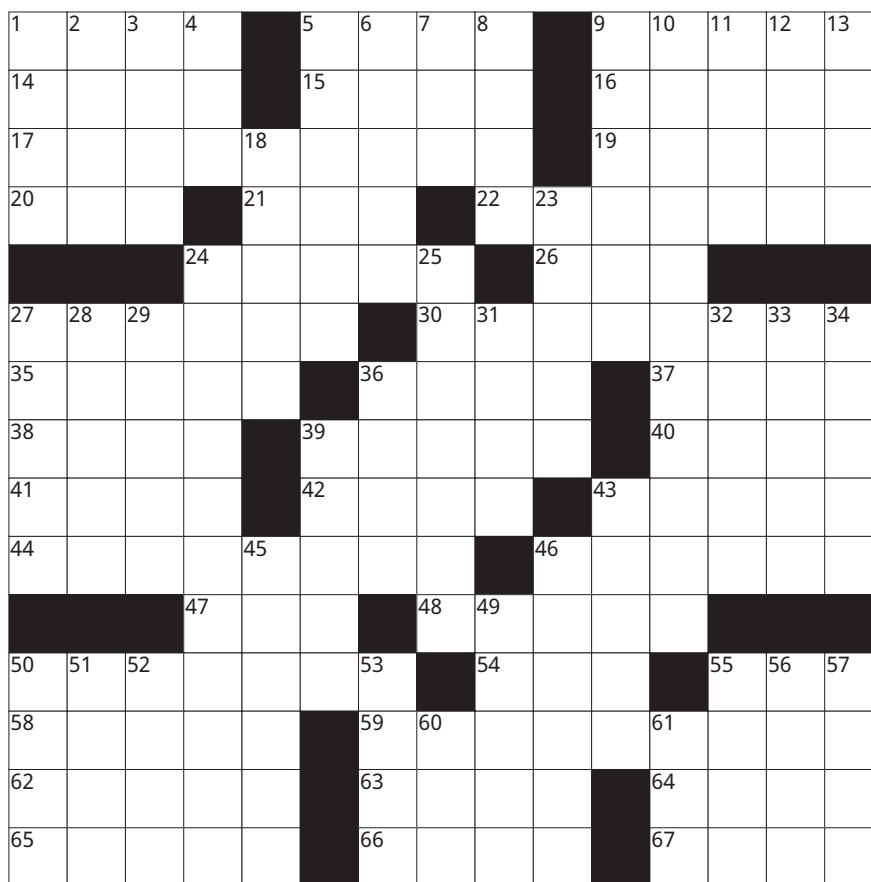
By Len Schiff

ACROSS

- 1 Ashkenazic house
 5 *The _____ of the Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge
 9 Made by hipsters?
 14 Regarding
 15 Chopin tale, "The Story _____ Hour"
 16 Umbrella brand
 17 Threat to the worm
 19 First programmable computer
 20 Chess opening Lopez
 21 _____ *Mubarak!*
 22 Some are side or sound
 24 Tippy vessel
 26 Swift nickname
 27 May be civil
 30 Time before we let it all hang out
 35 "As fast _____ legs could carry him"
 36 Phoney friend?
 37 Mosel river tributary
 38 Hotshot of the quad
 39 Detergent brand
 40 *The Third Man's* Harry
 41 Soak in some rays
 42 Scan
 43 Novel, film and opera _____ *Lescaut*
 44 Hobby
 46 Landlord need
 47 Noodge
 48 Alter
 50 Jam time?
 54 NBA tiebreakers
 55 Spikes up a gummy
 58 Witches, bears and stooges, to name but a few
 59 Schooling; or, like 17, 22, 30, 44 and 50 Across, an answer to the title
 62 Not earned
 63 Hasty
 64 "_____ and a two..."
 65 _____ and tatties, Scottish dish
 66 6/6/44
 67 Block of lessons

DOWN

- 1 Wore the Magen David when he took down Schmeling
 2 Loser of birthright and blessing
 3 "Lord knows _____!"
 4 The sun
 5 Signs of spring
 6 Challenge: "And what _____?"
 7 Opposite of mend



- 8 Author, *The Neverending Story*
 9 Austrian novelist Zweig
 10 Cyclone home
 11 Suffix with kin or path
 12 Off the rocks
 13 Some PC keys
 18 "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" poet
 23 Military base in NJ
 24 Soul food?
 25 Bahrain or Kuwait
 27 Stoller, Feldman or Muhlbaum
 28 Heschel book of essays: *Who _____*?
 29 Shady one?
 31 Vexed
 32 "Lose a son, _____ daughter"
 33 _____ *Rye*, Bukowski novel
 34 Lott or Reznor
 36 Takes to court
 39 Answer to *grazie!*
 43 Brainy bunch
 45 Doesn't call, bet, fold or check
 46 Irritable

- 49 2021 Egyptian SF thriller
 50 Phaser setting
 51 Sea eagle
 52 Fries or slaw
 53 Might know the answer to 49 Down
 55 Suffix with mo or emo
 56 "_____ *soit qui mal y pense*"
 57 Tech news site
 60 Pop
 61 Sigma follower



Preplanning at Beth Moses Cemetery



In our tradition, when saying “Happy Birthday,” people may wish their loved ones the blessing that they live to be 120 years old. Few will see this age, and everyone will one day face the reality that our earthly journey will come to an end.

The sages of the Midrash, the early interpreters of the Torah, had important wisdom for thinking about our end of days. In fact, they advise us to purchase a burial plot even while we are still alive and well. It is sometimes said that doing so will actually bless one with a long life. On a more practical level, purchasing a grave avoids a burden for a loved one. Sometimes this is a parting gift to those around us.

Our Temple Beth-El family is blessed to have its own sections of the Beth Moses Cemetery in Farmingdale. In the coming year, the purchase price for our plots will increase as we continue investing in care and upkeep of the property.

Please consider purchasing graves for your family. Plots are only available for purchase by temple members, but can be used for your extended family. Single graves are available, and there are also plots for any number of graves, including 20+. Stuart Botwinick, our executive director, is happy to tour the grounds with you.

For additional information, please contact Joy Palevsky in the main office at jpalevsky@tbegreatneck.org or 516-487-0900, ext. 110. 🕍

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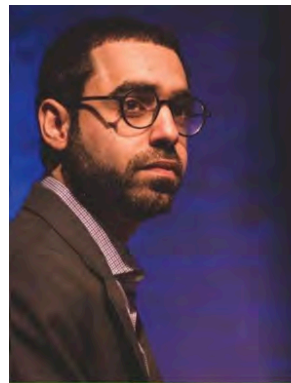
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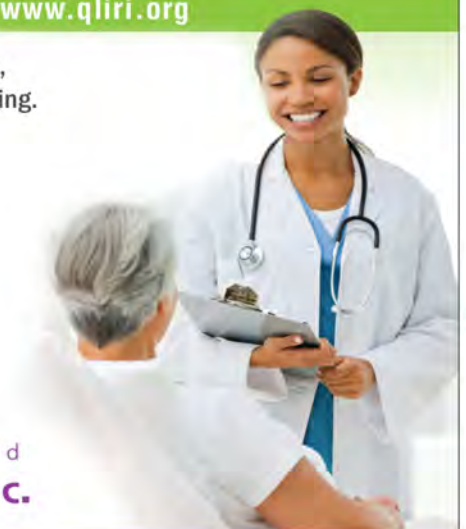
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Our congregants share their thoughts.

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"TBE is special because of its people: clergy, staff and congregants. We shouldn't take for granted the fact that we all work cooperatively to make our sacred community the best that it can be."

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"Rabbi Stoller makes TBE special. Not only did he quickly learn congregants' names, he also takes the time to send *yahrzeit* and birthday messages that mean so much. His compassion and empathy are genuine and unique."

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