

## The 2026 Gala Honorees are...

by Miriam Kobliner

Temple Israel Players, the theatre group at Temple Israel, is this year's honoree for the annual Gala Dinner Dance. Unlike any other affinity group, Temple Israel Players has been welcoming congregants of all ages (8 to 88 plus), all genders, and all abilities for over 50 years. And, unlike every other synagogue theatre group that we know of, Temple Israel Players is cast and produced solely by members of the synagogue. Cast and crew include parents, grandparents, children, siblings, spouses, and partners.

Over the 50 years of The Players' existence, congregants performed *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Milk and Honey*, *Pajama Game*, *South Pacific*, *Carousel*, *The King and I*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Oklahoma*, *West Side Story* and many other shows. More recently, they performed *Into the Woods*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and *The Addams Family*.



For many cast members, Temple Israel Players provided their first opportunity to be on stage. For some, it is a return to something they enjoyed in high school or college.

Most of all, Temple Israel Players is a collaborative, multigenerational group, always welcoming new members and offering, for many, an entry into synagogue involvement.

The Gala will honor all of the past and present cast members, backstage crews, producers, and audience members who kept Temple Israel Players going all of these years. Every year when people show up to audition, to work backstage, and to buy tickets for the performances, they show an appreciation for Temple Israel Players and what The Players create each year.

While choosing The Players might be considered an "out of the box" choice for Gala honoree, it's not the first time that a group has been chosen as the Gala honoree. In fact, our entire congregation was honored for the Gala celebrating

the 75th year of our synagogue. More typically, the honorees are either Temple Israel presidents who are completing their term or individual members or couples who have volunteered considerable time and/or financial support to Temple Israel.

Temple Israel Players is a special group. Unlike any other group at Temple Israel, it brings together people who might never have met. If you audition, you will become part of the troupe. Everyone feels welcome.

### Gala Details

The Gala will take place on Sunday, June 14 at 6 P.M. Details from the invitation are on page 13. The evening will include dinner, drinks, and dancing, with a DJ and live musicians playing music of all genres, including — as you might expect — some Broadway show tunes. The Players are planning a short retrospective to highlight some of their memories over the years.

The Gala is being chaired by Lillian Rokhsar-Cohen and Jon Kaiman. They performed together most recently as Morticia and Gomez Addams in the March 2026 production of *The Addams Family Musical*.

Invitations will be emailed to congregants by mid-May. Included with the invitation will be details about this year's Gala Journal. Congregants, friends, and businesses are encouraged to place an ad in the Journal to honor The Players, someone in The Players, anyone you would like to honor, or to advertise a business.

### Nostalgia & History

Curious about the full history of The Players, Debbie Volk, one of the current producers, has been researching the history of musical theatre at Temple Israel with the help of Sherry Husney, who appeared in several productions, and Carol Smolinsky and Lori Freudman, both of whom had been producers and cast members in several productions. *(continued on page 12)*



**JOIN US FOR MINYAN**  
Monday through Friday mornings at 7:30 a.m.  
Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m.  
Sunday through Thursday evenings at 8:00 p.m.

**JOIN US FOR SHABBAT**  
Friday evenings: check website or call office.  
Saturday mornings at 9:15 a.m.  
Tot Shabbat & Jr. Congregation at 10:30 a.m.

from the rabbi

**Rabbi Howard Stecker**

rabbistecker@tign.org



## All in the Family

**W**e are all children of the same man.” (Genesis 42:11). So said the children of Jacob to their brother Joseph when they met him down in Egypt. According to Rashi, the brothers had a flash of divine insight at that moment. Although they didn’t realize who Joseph was, they instinctively included him as part of the family. They were saying to Joseph, in effect, “we are all part of the same family.”

There are times when the Jewish people feel more like a single family and times that we feel less so. I find that following Passover, when we observe several important days of commemoration and celebration, it can sometimes feel like we are a confederation of loosely connected tribes, rather than a single family.

Based on my reflection on these days as annually observed at Temple Israel, I note the following. There are those who connect strongly with Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance

“...we must do more to inspire shared commitments...”

Day, and make a point of showing up year after year to our program. Yom Hazikaron, Israel’s Memorial Day, tends to galvanize Israeli Jews and their families. Yom Ha’Atzma’ut, Israel’s

Independence Day, has its own devotees, consisting largely of Israeli-born Jews and others, of Ashkenazi and Mizrahi background, who have strong Zionist commitments. Significantly, however, the number of people who attend all three is relatively small.

On the one hand, what’s so terrible about having a variety of commemorative and celebratory days, each with its own pull toward certain groups of people? Is it reasonable to expect young Jews to connect to the Shoah as we approach the hundred year mark since the Shoah began? Is it fair to expect American Jews to be drawn to a program, largely in Hebrew, to commemorate Israel’s fallen soldiers when they likely don’t know such individuals personally? Can we legitimately count on the entire Jewish community to celebrate Israel’s birthday given all the challenges and complexities connected with the State of Israel?

My response to all of those questions is that we should aspire to a reality where all three events inspire the participation of the full range of our Jewish community. It’s not just about getting people to attend the events; it’s about inspiring connection with the essential truths that each event represents. As the generation of survivors passes on, it is even more important that successive generations learn to tell the survivors’ stories to a world that seems increasingly

unsympathetic to Jewish suffering. Moreover, the lessons of the Shoah can and must be applied to current realities facing Jews and other targeted groups.

Regarding Israel-related commemoration and celebration, I believe it’s important that Jews of all ages be encouraged, through educational and cultural programs, interactions with Israelis, and visiting Israel, to deepen their awareness of Israel’s history and current reality. In my efforts to teach about Israel directly and to oversee our Israel-related programming, I have consistently tried to follow the goal of presenting Israel in “high resolution,” looking closely at Israel’s challenges as well as her accomplishments. To the extent that more individuals deepen their connection to Israel year-round, Israel’s Memorial Day and Independence Day will be organic opportunities to demonstrate and deepen that connection.

It is natural and even positive for Jews to have specific tribal affiliations and commitments within the larger Jewish context. We are a diverse people and we each have unique aspects to our Jewish identities that we should not ignore. However, we must do more to inspire shared commitments that transcend these tribal identities.

The post-Passover days of commemoration and celebration provide opportunities for us to demonstrate these shared commitments. We should stand together to recall and retell the stories of the Shoah. We should stand together to express gratitude to all those whose sacrifices have enabled the State of Israel to survive and thrive. We should stand together, and sing and dance together, to give gratitude for the miracle of the State of Israel.

Because along with our individual affinities, we are all part of the same family. ■

A conversation with  
**PROFESSOR YOSHI ROSENWAKS, PH.D.**  
INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED  
NANOTECHNOLOGY SCHOLAR  
& PRESIDENT OF AFEKA ACADEMIC  
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING IN TEL AVIV

**May 18th  
7 P.M.**

TEMPLE ISRAEL  
GREAT NECK

# Rejuvenating Our Synagogue, Together

from the president  
**Rachel Geula**

president@tign.org



It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that I share an update on our Rejuvenation Project.

Thanks to an extraordinary team of architects, interior designers, Temple Israel volunteers, and members with backgrounds in real estate development, construction, engineering, law, and design, we are forging ahead. And the progress is real.

The Blue Room, Library, and Pine Room have been completed, along with the front entrance lawn and landscaping, which has already begun to transform the way we welcome our community. The patio by the parking lot is being redone as I write this with beautiful new porcelain tiles. Our hallways are well underway, with new wallpaper, stonework, wall-to-wall carpeting, and a new accessible ramp leading into the Sanctuary.

It is truly exciting to see our beloved synagogue being refreshed, renewed, and prepared for the next generation.

And now, we look ahead to the next two major spaces: the Crystal Ballroom and the Sanctuary.

The Crystal Ballroom — home to our Shabbat kiddushes, our Temple Israel Players, school programs, celebrations, and so many shared moments — will be receiving a much-needed uplift. The carpeting will be replaced with porcelain tile, and acoustic wall covering will be added to help address the sound in the room. We will also be saying goodbye to the crystal chandelier and replacing it with a more modern, elegant, and understated light fixture.

In the Sanctuary, we are working closely with sound professionals

to upgrade the sound system so that our services, speeches, Torah readings, and special moments can be heard clearly by all. We are also planning new pews, with prayer book storage on the backs of the seats rather than underneath them. On the

*bimah*, we will keep the Aron doors but move the ark forward slightly to allow for a deeper space, with room for two rows of Torahs. Our hope is to carry some of the stonework from the hallways into the design of the ark, creating a Sanctuary that feels even more beautiful, more spiritual, and more uplifting.

This work is exciting. It is meaningful. And it is necessary.

But we cannot begin each room until the funds are in hand. These projects are not paid for through our operating budget. That budget keeps the lights on, supports our staff, sustains our schools, and runs the daily life of our synagogue. The Rejuvenation Campaign is what allows us to dream bigger and build for the future.

So far, we have raised \$1.4 million toward our \$3 million goal. That is an incredible beginning — but we still have approximately \$1.6 million to go.

This is not something we do often — it's the kind of effort we take on only once every couple of decades.

We are not simply changing carpets, tiles, lights, and pews. We are investing in the heart of our Jewish home. We are creating spaces where our

children will learn, where our families will celebrate, where our community will gather, where we will pray, sing, mourn, rejoice, and stand together.

Every gift matters. And yes — we need meaningful gifts to help bring this vision fully to life.

I ask each of you to think about what Temple Israel means to you and your family, and what you want it to be for the next generation.

Please join Kiumarz and me by going to the Rejuvenation Campaign link — or scanning the QR code to the right — and making your contribution today. By doing so, you will help us reach our goal:

<https://tign.shulcloud.com/form/rejuvenationcampaign.html> ■



**“This work is exciting. It is meaningful. And it is necessary.”**



from the rabbi

Rabbi Daniel Schweber

rabbischweber@tign.org



## Keeping Kosher Brings Holiness: The Rules are Ritualistic, Not Scientific



In a warm spring day, Lisa, a long-time congregant, who passionately embraces Jewish practice, called me in a panic. With a few minutes to spare — I was waiting to tee off at the golf course — I took the time to answer the call. I genuinely enjoy being there for congregants 24/6!

“Rabbi, Rabbi my cleaning person Kayla washed this morning’s milky cereal bowl with the pink sponge we use for meat! What should I do? Do I have to throw away the ceramic bowl?”

“Lisa, calm down. Take a few breaths. I have a few questions. Was Kayla wearing rubber gloves to wash dishes?”

“No, she wasn’t.”

“Does Kayla use dish detergent?”

“Of course, she’s washing dishes.”

“One final question. Were there large chunks of beef on the meat sponge?”

Lisa laughs. “Rabbi, of course not. That would be gross.”

I reassure Lisa that there is absolutely nothing to worry about.

“You need scalding hot water to cook at least an olive’s size of edible meat and milk together. Since the cleaning person wasn’t wearing gloves the water wasn’t hot enough. The detergent rendered everything including the milk inedible. Finally, the pink sponge was just that. There was no meat present to mix with any milk residue left in the cereal bowl.”

I concluded, “If you really want to be at ease, replace the meat sponge. Otherwise take a few breaths and remember what God said: “thou shalt not COOK a calf in its mother’s milk”

Lisa’s question reminded me of an oldie but goodie joke — at least for Rabbis!

Moses is on top of Mount Sinai receiving the commandments from God.

God: With regard to food prep, tell the people “thou shalt not cook a kid in its mother’s milk.”

Moses: Yes, yes. I will instruct the people to wait three hours between eating meat and then milk.

God: No, Moses. “Thou shalt not cook meat and milk together”

Moses: No worries. I got it. There will be no Chicken Parm for the Jews!

God: That’s not it. Chickens don’t make milk! Do not cook a calf in its mother’s milk!!!

Moses: I hear you God. I will instruct the Jews to have separate everything including meat and dairy salt shakers.

God: Oh for heaven’s sake, Moses. Play God and have it your way!

Indeed the plain and simple commandment in the Torah is to not cook a calf in its mother’s milk. But even that phrase needs interpretation. Does this mean if we can confirm calf A is the offspring of cow A, that we could use cow B’s milk to cook calf A?

“When it comes to the ritual rules of kashrut, science doesn’t matter.”

A very narrow reading of the verse could perhaps allow cooking A in B’s milk. However, many safeguards were instituted to ensure we never come close to violating the Torah verse.

What resulted over generations of interpretation and implementation is the ritualistic practice we call *kashrut*. Keeping kosher is just that — an elaborate ritual that

brings holiness and divinity into the daily mundane of eating. I do not subscribe to the physical health reasons that some offer. It is also quite likely that the view that ceramic is so porous that pieces of meat or *hametz* get stuck in the dish is incorrect scientifically.

When it comes to the ritual rules of *kashrut*, science doesn’t matter. The phrase “don’t cook a calf in its mother’s milk” appears three times in the Torah (Exodus 22, Exodus 34 and Deuteronomy 16) and is therefore deemed quite important. Talmud derives three different ritual commandments. We cannot cook such a meat/milk mixture. We cannot eat this mixture nor can we even benefit financially from this mixture. And, yes, because utensil materials are microscopically porous, we are also careful of mixing dishes and pots and cutlery. We also wait a period of time, often three or six hours, between eating meat and then eating dairy.

This is all well and good. But what happens when we’ve violated a safeguard? For many, guilt and anxiety set in and it is my job to allay the anxiety like I did with Lisa the other day. The Torah says we are to live by the commandments. That means living our lives with joy, contentment and meaning. Judaism is about striving for the ideal while embracing our imperfection. Most mistakes are easily undoable and/or forgiven as accidental. Some might say living this way is like playing a fiddle while balanced on a roof! ■

# Kol Isha 2026: Our Version of “Moon Joy”

by Rahel Musleah

NASA's Artemis II is not alone in setting its sights on the moon this year. For the past nine months, Temple Israel's Kol Isha community of women has fixed its gaze on Rosh Hodesh, the celebration of the new Jewish month marked by the crescent of a new moon. We have celebrated each new month as a time of renewal and richness.

Our second year of learning and bonding will culminate in a women-led Rosh Hodesh service on Sunday, May 17 at 9:45 A.M., followed by a festive lunch.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join us in the sanctuary as 60 women and girls — a spirited intergenerational chorus — lead the uplifting melodies of *Hallel* and the rest of the morning service to usher in Rosh Hodesh Sivan, the month in which we celebrate Shavuot.

We are especially excited to welcome our keynote speaker, Susan Weidman Schneider, back to her roots. A former member of Temple Israel, she is editor emerita of *Lilith* magazine, the pioneering feminist Jewish publication that is still going strong.

Rosh Hodesh honors the transformative cycle of darkness and light: It is an observance for all to celebrate — both men and women. Traditionally, it is an especially significant time for women, filled with spiritual meaning, ancient texts, and beautiful music. During our weekly learning circles, we have learned to lead every aspect of the morning service, from

*Shaharit* and *Hallel* to the Torah service and final prayers. Since Shavuot follows a few days after Rosh Hodesh Sivan, we have also focused on the timeless narrative of the Book of Ruth (which is read on Shavuot), with its themes of faith, family, otherness, redemption, goodness, and loyalty. Some of our women have learned its beautiful melody and will chant the first chapter both on Rosh Hodesh and Shavuot.

Kol Isha has launched us from the pews to the *bimah*. The skills and confidence our participants have developed will enable us to contribute to *Shabbat* and holiday services throughout the year. Less than a week after we welcome Rosh Hodesh Sivan, Kol Isha women will already participate in leading Shavuot services on Shabbat, May 23.

Kol Isha's weekly learning circles have deepened our connection to our tradition and to each other.

Our ongoing learning, leadership, inspiration, and camaraderie have heightened our individual and collective spiritual growth as we continue

to build a stronger, more vibrant Temple Israel community. It has been my honor to guide this dedicated group of women to reach this joyous *siyyum* — the culmination of our year of growth and study.

On May 17, our voices will mirror the brilliant light of the moon. Everyone is invited to join us in celebrating our own version of “moon joy!”

Join us  
as we welcome the new month of Sivan  
with a  
**Rosh Hodesh Service  
led by women**  
*Kol Isha participants who have been learning together will lead the service. All are invited.*  
**Sunday, May 17, 2026 • 9:45 A.M.**  
**Featured Guest Speaker:**  
**Susan Weidman Schneider**  
Editor Emerita of *Lilith* magazine  
**Festive lunch to follow. RSVP for lunch required by May 12th.**  
RSVP by calling the Temple Israel office at 516-482-7800,  
scanning the QR code below, or by registering at: [www.tign.org/kolishabrunch2026/](http://www.tign.org/kolishabrunch2026/)  
Temple Israel Members: \$36 ■ Non-members: \$45  
Children ages 5-17: \$20 ■ Children under 5: free  
Kol Isha will also participate in leading  
Shabbat morning services during Shavuot:  
Saturday, May 23, 2026  
*Don't miss these inspiring  
intergenerational celebrations!*  


QUEENS COLLEGE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES PRESENTS  
**SHIREINU CHOIR OF LONG ISLAND**

**Sunday, June 7, 3:00 PM**  
**Great Neck North Middle School**  
**77 Polo Road Great Neck**  
**For tickets scan the code**  
**or go to: [www.shireinchoirli.org](http://www.shireinchoirli.org)**



**HIGH HOLY DAYS REMINDER:**

Please return your  
**High Holy Days seat reservation form**  
as soon as possible so we can properly  
plan. The form was mailed to congregants  
in April. It can also be completed online at  
[tign.org/hhdtix](http://tign.org/hhdtix)

Please RSVP for yourself, your family and your guests by calling the Temple office at 516-482-7800 or by using the link or the QR code in the box above no later than May 12. RSVP links are also in Temple Israel's weekly emails. ■

# A Meaningful Observation of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day

by Ellen Widawsky, Co-Chair of the Shoah Remembrance Committee

Temple Israel of Great Neck observed Yom HaShoah, also known as Holocaust Remembrance Day, on April 14. Shirienu Choir of Long Island, conducted by Deborah Tartell, set the tone for the evening with beautiful performances of three songs, including “Eili, Eili,” a poem written in 1942 by Hungarian-born Jewish poet and WWII resistance fighter Hannah Senesh. Shireinu was followed by a candlelight procession of survivors, second generation Holocaust survivors, and third generation Holocaust survivors. Alison Widawsky, a third generation, also known as a “3G,” read the names of victims of the Holocaust. Lighting of the Temple Israel Shoah Memorial Menorah was led by the Waxman High School and Youth House teens.

Rob Panzer, co-chair of the Shoah Remembrance Committee, spoke movingly about former committee co-chair David Albert, z”l, and how devoted David was to the committee and to remembering and honoring the victims of the Holocaust. This year’s evening was dedicated to David Albert.

Temple Israel’s religious school students shared testimony of information about the Ravensbruck Concentration Camp, the largest concentration camp for women in Germany.

We learned that over 130,000 women and children passed through the camp, with thousands dying from starvation, medical experiments, overwork, and by execution.

Guest speaker Gilda Zirinsky spoke about her family’s journey from Belgium to Paris to Morocco and finally to New York. Her story is chronicled in a book she authored, *I Went to Kindergarten in Casablanca*.

Hazzan Brian Shamash passionately chanted prayers and songs, and remarks

were given by Rabbi Howard Stecker and Rabbi Daniel Schweber of Temple Israel of Great Neck, Rabbi Megan Brumer of Temple Beth-El of Great Neck, and Rabbi Gordon Yaffe of Congregation L’Dor V’Dor. The evening concluded with the placement of the Yom HaShoah *yahrzeit* candles on the

Holocaust Memorial in the front of the building, just outside the Sanctuary lobby.

The next meeting of the Shoah Remembrance Committee will be on May 11 at 7:00 P.M. Reach out to either Rob Panzer ([robpanzer18@gmail.com](mailto:robpanzer18@gmail.com)) or Ellen Widawsky ([ellenwidawsky@gmail.com](mailto:ellenwidawsky@gmail.com)) for more information. ■



## Yom Ha'atzmaut



# B'NAI/B'NOT MITZVAH IN OUR TEMPLE ISRAEL FAMILY

**HALLE MELNICOFF** will be called to the Torah as a *bat mitzvah* on May 30. She is the daughter of Mandy and Jared Melnicoff. Halle is a seventh-grade student at Great Neck North Middle School, where she plays violin and is the captain of the seventh-grade volleyball team. Halle plans to attend the Waxman High School and Youth House next year and looks forward to visiting Israel.



**JORDAN SCHOENFELD** will be called to the Torah as a *bar mitzvah* on June 6. He is the son of Lisa and Bradley Schoenfeld and has a brother, Ryan, 16. Jordan is a seventh-grade student at Great Neck North Middle School. He enjoys playing volleyball and cooking. Jordan would like to visit Israel in the future.



**HARLAN KRUGMAN PAPAIZIAN** will be called to the Torah as a *bat mitzvah* on June 13. She is the daughter of Stephanie Krugman, the granddaughter of Temple Israel members

Susan and Sidney Krugman, and has a twin brother, Atticus. Harlan is a seventh-grade student at Great Neck North Middle School. An avid artist, Harlan's enjoys painting as well as drawing by hand and electronically. She also enjoys skateboarding and playing the guitar. Harlan would like to visit Israel in the future.



**ATTICUS MATAN KRUGMAN PAPAIZIAN** will be called to the Torah as a *bar mitzvah* on June 13. He is the son of Stephanie Krugman, the grandson of Temple Israel members Susan and Sidney Krugman, and has a twin sister, Harlan. Atticus is a seventh-grade student at Great Neck North Middle School where he is on the track team. He also enjoys gamind and reading. He will be attending the Youth House next year and hopes to visit Israel in the future.



**ISLA LICHTENSTEIN** will be called to the Torah as a *bat mitzvah* on June 20. She is the daughter of Laura Schutzel Lichtenstein and Eric Lichtenstein and has a brother, Jacob, 15. Isla is a seventh-grade student at Great Neck South Middle School, where she plays violin in the school orchestra and participates in the musical theatre program. Isla currently attends the Waxman High School and Youth House and plans to visit Israel and see her Israeli cousins soon.



## Advanced History Class: An Opportunity to Meet and Learn on Zoom

The class, led by Toby Katz, meets on Thursday mornings from 9:30 A.M. to 11 A.M. year-round. The class is happy to welcome new students. Pictured above, left to right, starting with the top row, are Judy Greenstein, Leon Flax, Marsha Levin, Rabbi Marim Charry, Renee Fleischer, Ron Golden, Sofia Sohayegn, Toby Katz, and Vicki Silver.

# Beth HaGan Brings Traditions to Life with Passover Learning and Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebrations

by Yve Fouladi, Director, Beth HaGan Early Childhood Center

At Beth HaGan, entering the spring season has been filled with meaningful learning and celebrations, as students and families marked both Passover and Yom Ha'atzmaut with engaging, hands-on experiences.

Beth HaGan Passover centers on one of the holiday's most enduring themes: the importance of asking questions. Drawing from the tradition of the *seder*, where the Four Questions guide the retelling of our people's story, we emphasized curiosity as a cornerstone of learning. Children participated in mock *seders* alongside parents and relatives, continuing a long-standing school tradition that encourages intergenerational dialogue.

This practice connects so naturally to early childhood development. Toddlers and preschoolers, already inclined to ask "why" and "how," are encouraged to see their curiosity as something to celebrate. By linking everyday questioning to the Passover ritual, we reinforce critical thinking and reflection as expressions of freedom and growth — so similar to the plight of our ancestors.

Shortly after Passover, the school shifted into a weeklong celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, transforming Beth HaGan into my favorite immersive cultural experience of the year.

Each day featured a new activity designed to bring Israeli culture to life. The children collaborated on blue and white art projects, including

banners and watercolor maps of Israel. Culinary exploration followed, with children preparing Israeli salad and making hummus by hand, then enjoying their creations with pita and olives.

Midweek activities took students on a simulated journey to Israel. Our hallway was transformed into an El Al flight experience, followed by interactive stations where children created jewelry, shopped at a mock *shuk*, squeezed fresh orange juice and ate *Bissli* (an Israeli snack), enjoyed Israeli dancing and listened to stories in a Bedouin-style tent. And, a visit to a recreated *kotel* gave our young learners a moment for reflection, as they recited the *Shema* and placed notes of their wishes on the wall.

The celebrations continued with a Tel Aviv-themed beach day, complete with sand play, beach balls, music, and Israeli dancing, before concluding with a festive *Oneg* and a blue and white parade.

Our goal during this Yom Ha'atzmaut week was not only to celebrate Israel but to do so through the perspectives of young learners. By combining creativity, culture, and tradition, Beth HaGan continues to foster a deep sense of connection to Israel along with a curiosity about the world around us.

What a pleasure to honor our people, religion, and culture through the eyes and souls of our beautiful next-generation cuties!

*Am Y'Israel Chai!* See you all at the parade! ■



# A Religious School Wedding and a Celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut

by Connie Reichman, Director of Education



Our Hay students spent the year studying the Jewish lifecycle. They explored traditions surrounding *brit milah*, *bar/bat mitzvah*, weddings, and *shiva*. As a culmination of their learning, they prepared a presentation of a Jewish wedding. They did a wonderful job explaining the many customs and traditions from different Jewish communities.



The Religious School celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, with an immersive experience centered on the theme "Water in Israel." Students visited rooms transformed into the four main bodies of water in Israel—the Mediterranean Sea, the Dead Sea, the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee), and the Red Sea. In each space, they learned about the unique characteristics of these waters and took part in engaging, hands-on activities. They "swam" through a coral reef in the Red Sea, went fishing in the Kinneret, applied mud at the Dead Sea, and went "surfing" in the Mediterranean.

As the learning continues, students will explore how Israel has developed innovative solutions to address water scarcity, including drip irrigation, desalination plants, and water recycling systems, gaining an understanding of how these technologies help sustain life in a dry region. ■



# A Jewish Mailman?

by Jonathan Koza

“How are you today?” Mr. Fuchs asked me as I delivered his mail for the first time. He was wearing a *kippah*.

“*Baruch Hashem!*” I replied.

“*Baruch Hashem!*” he said, pleasantly surprised.

“Not what I’d expect a mailman to say.”

“There are a few Jewish carriers here in Great Neck,” I assured him.

“My son is beginning Hebrew school at Temple Israel soon.”

“Oh, you’re a local?”

I replied affirmatively.

“My daughter went to kindergarten there!”

Some people had different responses to finding out I was Jewish.

“Mailman? What kind of job is that for a nice Jewish boy?”

“Couldn’t you do something more lucrative?”

“Are you at least working your way up to management?”

“It’s a liveable wage, I suppose.”

I hand customers their mail, exchange pleasantries, and as a way of reaching out and connecting a bit, being a fellow Jewish Great Neck resident can find its way into the conversation. I try to establish a bit of common ground, relax the atmosphere a bit. I hope to let people know that they don’t have to worry about me and my coworkers being anti-Semites. It’s a profound statement, letting my customers know that I am your neighbor and I take my responsibility to get you your mail very seriously and that when things go wrong, I take it a little too personally.

At least I think that’s why I do it.

Sometimes I add a little more of my history. I let people know that I spent 14 years teaching high school English. In other words I have both college and graduate school in my credentials. I stayed in school. I did a lot of learning. They can see the book I’m in the middle of reading sitting on the dashboard of my truck. I’m still learning, reading voluntarily. That’s what being Jewish is about. That’s what I had been told by my orthodox friends at Brooklyn College when I would take part in their Torah discussions. That was the message from a sermon delivered by the rabbi of Eitz Chayim in Monroe, New

York, when I lived and worked in Orange County. He opened the sermon by telling a joke about three women bragging about their sons and their professions. The punchline? “Your son is a rabbi? What kind of job is that for a nice Jewish boy?” I have heard it and seen it, this idea that you should always be learning.

When it comes out that I’m at least reasonably well-educated, I get into some deeper discussions. Sure, people want to know that my favorite Shakespeare play is *Hamlet*, but I only taught his sonnets. People asked me how I could possibly have left a job with amazing vacation time and ended up walking outside in extreme weather. It’s hard to explain that I burned out and needed a job quickly and this was the first job I could get and it allows me to be a few minutes away from my kids should an emergency arise. Spending most of my day alone is an added bonus.

“Being close to your own children when they need you is hard to put a price on,” I remember one customer telling me.

Some people get it. They don’t need the explanation.

“Teaching is a tough job,” another customer told me, a retired pedagogue herself.



“Even if you’re in a good school, it’s a lot of stress, a lot of unpaid work, the parents want answers, administration is intrusive. I get it.”

Another former educator pointed out that when we were students, if we failed a class, it was our fault. Nowadays as teachers, if a student fails a class, it’s our fault.

Why do I feel the need to share this juicy bit of information from my past with my neighbors? Is it a need to validate myself? Is it because I feel that I am being judged? That I’m being looked down upon because I’m not a “professional” in a town filled with affluent doctors, lawyers, scientists, and other professionals with advanced degrees and intelligence in things I can’t begin to fathom? Is that what people think when they see a postal worker?

In the few months I had between careers I would find someplace to sit and write. It was a gift my family gave me, this time to heal before beginning my job search. Writing felt good, like what I was meant to be doing. I would also drive past Temple Israel and see this vibrant congregation. I eventually made my way inside and saw all the activity in almost every part of the building. I introduced myself to a few people and expressed interest in joining the congregation. Even at that point, being unemployed, I felt compelled to tell people I had been a teacher. I was unemployed but I was still one of them. I had a *bar mitzvah* and an MS in Secondary English Education. No one seemed to care one way or another. They cared that I was looking for spiritual fulfillment and that my wife and I were passionate about our son carrying on our traditions for another generation.

Maybe I'm perceiving things incorrectly, but I feel like telling people I used to be a teacher changes assumptions and opinions just a bit. I've had people of my faith ask me what's involved in becoming a letter carrier because their daughter or son needs a job and they are not college material. They seem relieved when I tell them it requires a GED (a high school equivalency credential) and a driver's license and a test to see how well you read addresses.

Coming from me, a guy who experienced a far more difficult career which paid only slightly better than the Postal Service, it gives a glimmer of hope that there is a job out there for their offspring.

Chances are I'm the only letter carrier at our *shul*. Was college really worth my time and money? I suppose it was. I met some people who became life-long friends. I got to travel to Europe and Israel. I learned a lot more about Judaism than I did in my years of Hebrew school.

It was a journey of learning how to learn. It was a journey of self-discovery, what you're made of, pushing you towards the person you're supposed to be.

College isn't for everyone but learning is for everyone, even if it's different for everyone.

As the Herman Hesse protagonist famously said, "You can



learn a lot from a river." You can learn a lot from both thinking and doing. You can learn a lot from reading, from listening, from others and from yourself, if you're open to it.

One of the reasons I enjoy my time at Temple Israel is because there's a large community of people who are passionate about Judaism to the point that traditions from Ashkenazi, Sephardic and Mizrahi have been blended into its own unique culture. There's always more to learn about the Jewish faith. While I didn't pay much attention in Hebrew school, I pay close attention to the wisdom imparted by our clergy.

I continue to deliver mail, reading books during my lunch breaks. I get a certain satisfaction from beginning my work day with a full truck and ending it with an empty one. It's a measurable accomplishment which I rarely experienced in the classroom. I get satisfaction when people see me in my blue uniform staring at a book instead of staring at my phone. I feel pride seeing my fellow letter carriers reading books, one of whom shares his history books with me. It makes me happy to belong, to be part of the Temple Israel community where I continue to learn. ■

*Jonathan Koza and his wife, Dara, have been members of Temple Israel for nine years. Their son, Grant, volunteers at the Temple Israel Religious School to keep an eye on his younger brother, Eitan, in the Gesher class. Jonathan can be seen reading and writing at Bagelman and Dara is a soprano in the Shirenu Choir.*

## Temple Israel Hosts Adam Schefter, ESPN Senior NFL Insider, for a Conversation with Paul Schwartz about Football and Life

Adam Schefter, a Long Island native and graduate of the University of Michigan who went on to become the most powerful and successful newsmaker covering the National Football League, offered some poignant career advice to a receptive Temple Israel audience the evening of April 29.

The event was organized by Lisa Goodwin, a lifelong member of Temple Israel and a Temple Israel vice president who has organized several other inspiring speaker events in the past.

The idea behind inviting Adam Schefter to speak was to bring another Jewish voice who can inspire our youth and community and appeal to our sports fans.

Schefter recounted how he twice failed to get into the Jewish fraternity Sigma Alpha Mu at the University of Michigan and his attempt to work for the school's football and basketball teams also came up empty, leaving him without any real direction as a college freshman. It was at that low

moment that he figured he had nothing to lose and offered his services to the school paper, the *Michigan Daily*. Out of that serendipity, a brilliant career was born.

That tale of resiliency was one of the many anecdotes and lessons Schefter imparted during a lively conversation with Board of Trustee member Paul Schwartz, an NFL senior reporter and beat writer covering the New York Giants for the *New York Post* and someone who has enjoyed a professional relationship with Schefter for decades.



Schefter participated in a question and answer session with attendees and predicted that the Giants and the Jets would win a combined 15 games this season; that is, Giants (9), Jets (6). Schefter also graciously posed for pictures and chatted with attendees during a meet and greet. ■

*Photo left: Paul Schwartz, left, in conversation with Adam Schefter, right.*

## The 2026 Gala Honorees, *continued from first page*

Their research uncovered information about a production of “Milk and Honey” back in 1973, which corroborates the longheld understanding that Temple Israel Players has been around for over 50 years. The 1973 production was directed by Eileen Putterman’s brother, Jerry Goldstein, z”l, and was produced by Stan Goldfarb, z”l, who produced other shows with Eileen Putterman, z”l. In the program for that production, there was mention of previous shows.

*Bells are Ringing* followed in 1974 and *The Pajama Game* in 1975. Musical productions became an annual event... until a hiatus at some point.

Ken Leff, who appeared in 28 shows starting with the 1991 production of a show called *Hot Sake with a Pinch of Salt*, was able to contribute some information about the history of Temple Israel Players. According to Ken, the musical theatre troupe at Temple Israel had been on a hiatus for a few years before starting up again in 1991. From that point on, shows were produced pretty consistently every year.

A cast photo from a 1991 production is shown above. You might recognize some familiar faces in this photograph, including Ken Leff, Stuart De Lott and Eileen Putterman, z”l, in the back row and Manny Alani and Elaine Paris, z”l, in the front row.

For more nostalgia, see pages 14 and 15 for photos from some Temple Israel Players performances from 2004 to 2023. See how many you can recall.

## Welcoming New Members

Many past and current members of Temple Israel Players tell a similar story of how they got involved in The Players. Most have a story that someone encouraged them to audition. For many, it was Eileen Putterman, z”l, who encouraged them. For others, it was a neighbor, someone who they met in another group, or someone they knew from attending services.

Ken Leff has been a member of Temple Israel of Great Neck since he was a child and Eileen Putterman, z”l, knew him well. One day, she saw him in the synagogue lobby and asked him if he got the notice for the casting call. Even though he responded to Eileen that “wild horses couldn’t drag me there,” Ken showed up to audition, albeit with “great trepidation” since he had never been in a performance before.

Thinking back to his 1991 stage debut and the shows that followed, Ken Leff commented, “They made me feel welcome and it was a wonderful experience.”

Ken suggests that parents encourage their children to audition.

Marilyn Goldberg has been with Temple Israel Players since the 1993 production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. (She most recently played Grandma in *The Addams Family*.) Marilyn was a member of the Temple Israel Choir, then led by Cantor Raphael Frieder, and a fellow choir member, Maxine Vogel, z”l, encouraged her to audition. After *Fiddler*, Marilyn and Maxine went on to perform together in many Temple Israel Players productions.

Marilyn remarked that Temple Israel Players gave her the opportunity to meet many people who she never would have met otherwise.

That same sentiment was echoed by others interviewed, including Lillian Rokhsar-Cohen who, despite having a large family, including her parents and her sister and her sister’s family at

Temple Israel, didn’t know a lot of people in the congregation before becoming part of The Players.

## Entry Point to Further Involvement

Temple Israel Players has often been the entry point for congregants’ further involvement at Temple Israel. One such example is Richard Kestenbaum, a past president of Temple Israel, whose first involvement at the synagogue was with Temple Israel Players.

“After about a year or two of being a Temple Israel member, a neighbor encouraged me to audition.” He continued, “Unlike other people who auditioned, I wasn’t a trained singer. I sang ‘Happy Birthday’ at my audition. My first show was *Fiddler on the Roof*. I played Lazar Wolf, the Butcher. I went on to do four more shows.”

“After the first show, I felt much more comfortable at the synagogue and was able to say ‘hello’ to many people I met doing the shows. I decided to join some committees that I was qualified for. In 2006, I became president of Temple Israel, taking over for [past Temple Israel president] Jerry Siler who had passed away.”

Speaking more about the importance of groups like Temple Israel Players, Richie commented that “large synagogues can be offputting to some people, but affinity groups are a great way to help people feel welcomed.”

Jon Kaiman, who has been in 30 Temple Israel Players productions, had a very similar experience.

“Shortly after joining Temple Israel about 30 years ago, I was asked by Eileen Putterman, z”l, to come to a *Milk and Honey*



Cast photo from a 1991 production of “Hot Sake with a Pinch of Salt.”

meeting. I thought *Milk and Honey* was the name of a social group. It turned out to be the name of the musical they were doing that year. I tried out and was cast and that was the start of my three decades with The Players. At the time, I was recently engaged and working as an attorney. Kim, my wife, would soon join me in The Players, and each of our three (now adult) children would come to rehearsals over the years, each one being in at least one production. Being active with The Players led me to be active with the Men's Club and then on the Temple Board of Trustees. I was on the Rabbinic Search Committee resulting in the hiring of Rabbi Stecker."

## Who Has the Time to Rehearse?

People who have not been involved with The Players might think that cast members have a lot of free time — or might wonder how they find the time to rehearse. After all, rehearsals usually begin in December and run through March/April when performances take place. Interestingly, the cast has many members who have very busy careers, family lives or both. When asked, these cast members will say that being in the show is an escape for them from the stress of their everyday lives. Rehearsing and performing gives them something else to focus on, another part of their brain to use, and allows them the time to be creative. It also gives them the opportunity to spend time with a group of people whom they have grown close to and bonded with. There is a strong level of dedication among the cast and crew.

## Family Involvement

It is not uncommon for members to get their family involved — or for their children to be part of the production.

Kim and Jon Kaiman, like many other parents in the shows, had to balance work, rehearsals, and child care. Their solution in the early days was to bring a playpen and have a child (or two) play while they rehearsed.

Others first got involved with The Players because of their children.

Alex Schoen, Stage Manager and one of the current producers of Temple Israel Players, first got involved because his daughter, Nancy, wanted to audition. Debbie Volk, who has been involved with The Players for 15 years, first auditioned because her daughter, then eight years old, wanted to audition.

Over the years, parents and children have been in the cast together, as have couples, and extended family members. Most of all, everyone is welcome and everyone feels part of The Players.

The following Temple Israel members have been part of the casts of at least one of the last four shows: George Abrahams, Rob Aizer, Debra Bykoff, Leila Camhi, Amy Cantos, Shoshana Cellers, Harold Citron, Mark Cwern, Daniel Frankel, David Goldberg, Marilyn Goldberg, Edith Goody, Salem Goody, Joan Greenspan, Ayelet Harris, Matt Hoffman, Sharon Janovic, Jon Kaiman, Kim Kaiman, Mitchell Kaiser, Abe Kanfer, Ron Klempner, Miriam Kobliner, Leah Krigsher, Kenneth M. Leff, Alicia Lev, Ted Lev, Danielle Matalon, Elizabeth Matalon, Lisa Mattaway, Nelly Mizrahi, Jack Murphy, Jennifer Murphy, Andy Nadler, Toby Nemiroff, Ofra Panzer, Harriet Picker, Mark Putter, Lillian Rokhsar-Cohen, Maya Shamash, Steve Smolinsky, Carole Spitzer, Danielle Spitzer, Haley Spitzer, Steven Spitzer, Steve Tasch, Debbie Volk, Ellen Weinberg, Dan Weinstein, and Rochelle Yellen.

## Come to the Gala

Come to the Gala to honor Temple Israel Players and to celebrate their accomplishments over the many years of their history. In addition to having a wonderful evening with other congregants, you might be inspired to audition for the next Temple Israel Players production! ■

Join Temple Israel of Great Neck for

# AN ENCHANTED EVENING

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2026  
*Six o'clock in the evening*

TEMPLE ISRAEL OF GREAT NECK  
*Grand Ballroom*

COCKTAILS • DINNER • DANCING • CELEBRATION

*Kindly RSVP and place journal ads by May 29:*  
[TIGN.ORG/GALA2026](https://TIGN.ORG/GALA2026)

TO RSVP OR PLACE JOURNAL ADS BY PHONE, CALL TEMPLE ISRAEL AT 516.482.7800

\$200 PER PERSON (\$126 FOR THOSE UNDER 35) COCKTAIL ATTIRE

**SCAN this QR code to RSVP to the Gala and/or to place a journal ad.**





**A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE:  
DO YOU KNOW THE SHOW?**  
(Answers are on page 21.)





# SHAVUOT PROGRAMMING

## THE ZIONIST DREAM 2028 — 80 YEARS OF A STATE: AMERICAN-BORN ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN FROM GAZA WILL LEAD SHAVUOT DISCUSSIONS

This Shavuot, Yitzhak Sokoloff, who made *aliyah* from Boston in the 1970s, and his friend, Isaam Sa'adah, who grew up in a Gaza refugee camp, will visit Temple Israel as our Scholars-in-Residence for three days over Shavuot, May 21 through May 23.

Yitzhak is the founder and president of Keshet Educational Journeys and a pioneer in the field of educational tourism in Israel. He is an Israeli political analyst, educator and tour guide.

Yitzhak studied history and international relations at Columbia University in New York and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He taught Political Science and Jewish Philosophy at the Hebrew University. He writes and lectures widely on strategic and cultural issues in the Israel-Arab conflict and contemporary Zionism. He also develops seminars for Israelis who have emerged from difficult combat conditions and is an activist in the Ethiopian immigration movement.

Rabbi Schweber got to know Yitzhak through the volunteer trips to Israel that Keshet Educational Journeys, Yitzhak's company, organized for Temple Israel members and which Rabbi Schweber led.

Isaam Sa'adah, by contrast, grew up in a Gaza refugee camp. He taught himself Hebrew and started a dialogue project with Israelis. He fled to Ramallah when Hamas took Gaza. Isaam continues to advocate, at great personal risk, for coexistence that includes a Jewish majority State of Israel.



Yitzhak Sokoloff

Their 20 year friendship is a testament to the hope for peace and coexistence.

Over the three days of their visit to Temple Israel, they will share insights gleaned over the last two and a half years of Israel's struggles and challenges, and the role of Israel and Zionism in the American Jewish community. They will consider what the future may hold for Israelis and Palestinians, both who wish to live in peace.

The schedule of Yitzhak Solokoff's and Isaam Sa'adah's time at Temple Israel can be found in the right column of this page. On Thursday evening at 9:30 P.M., they will have a special dialogue with adults ages 17 to 30.

We hope that you will take part in this interesting and informative opportunity with Yitzhak and Sa'adah. ■

### THURSDAY, MAY 21

7:45 P.M.

STATE OF THE ISRAELI STATE  
IN THE WAKE OF POLARIZATION AND YEARS OF WAR

9:30 P.M.

INTIMATE DIALOGUE WITH YOUNG ADULTS (AGES 17-30)

### FRIDAY, MAY 22

11:00 A.M. (during services)

HOW CAN 5 MILLION PALESTINIANS AND THE  
JEWISH DEMOCRATIC STATE OF ISRAEL CO-EXIST?

### SATURDAY MAY 23

11:00 A.M. (during services)

ADDRESSING THE MONSTER THAT IS THE IRANIAN REGIME

12:45 P.M.

ISAAM SA'ADAH'S JOURNEY AND PEACE WORK

**Join us**  
and the JCRC Long Island Cluster  
for the annual  
**ISRAEL DAY**  
**ON FIFTH**

**SUNDAY, MAY 31**  
**11:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**  
62nd - 74th Street on Fifth Avenue

(Departure time from Temple Israel  
may be as early as 9 A.M.)

**REGISTER SOON!**

**Registration fee of \$26 per person**  
includes bus transportation & tee shirt

The sooner you register, the more likely  
there will be enough room on the buses.

Transportation is being organized by JCRC.

For security purposes, in order to walk in the parade,  
you must have one of our tee shirts.

Sponsored by the Israel Solidarity Fund

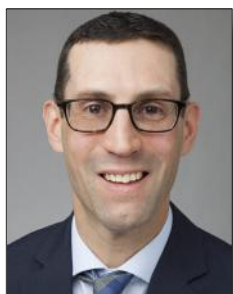
If you would like to march with TIGN,  
use this link: [www.tign.org/celebrateisraelparade2026/](http://www.tign.org/celebrateisraelparade2026/)  
or scan the QR to register.

Logos: TEMPLE ISRAEL (GREAT NECK), JCRC (JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL), JCRC (JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL), UJA Federation (PROUD PARTNER), UJA Federation (NEW YORK)

## Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs Annual Recognition Program: Seth Kurpiel, Elliott Kassin and Raquel Landerer to be Honored on May 17

**T**he Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, New York Metro Region, will host their annual recognition program at Plainview Jewish Center on May 17 at 11 A.M. Among the honorees will be three Temple Israel of Great Neck members.

Seth Kurpiel is being honored as our Men's Club Man of the Year. Elliott Kassin and Raquel Landerer are being honored as Youths of the Year.



**Seth Kurpiel** has been an active and involved member of Temple Israel of Great Neck for thirteen years. Notably, Seth came up with the idea for Shabbat at Steppingstone, a Friday night service that Temple Israel hosts outdoors at Steppingstone Park twice per summer. Seth has also planned many synagogue ski trips. He is a member of the Men's Club, was a member of the Religious

School Education Committee, and can be counted on to help out with other endeavors. An actuary by profession, Seth enjoys running, skiing, snowboarding, basketball, softball and rooting for the Mets. He is also an Eagle Scout. Seth and his wife, Morgan, have two children, Riley and Benson.

**Elliott Kassin** is a junior at Great Neck South High School.

For the past two years, he has been a *madrich* (teaching assistant) in the religious school at Temple Israel. Elliott is an active participant in the Waxman High School and Youth House and enjoys thoughtful and spirited discussions about Judaism with Rabbi Stecker and Rabbi Schweber. He attended Camp Ramah in the Berkshires. In high school, he is involved in Debate, Robotics, Midnight Run and other clubs.



**Raquel Landerer** is a student at Great Neck North High School where she mentors special needs peers and is part of the Model UN Club. At Temple Israel, she assists with Tot Shabbat services, works as a *madricha* in the religious school, and helps with holiday services. She hopes to study education and public administration in college. Raquel has attended Temple Israel services since birth and became a *bat mitzvah* in 2021. She is the daughter of Michelle and Golan Landerer and has three older brothers.



To make a reservation to attend the recognition event or to place a journal ad, go to [www.newyorkmetrofjmc.org](http://www.newyorkmetrofjmc.org)

## Israel Affairs Committee: Standing with Israel in Challenging Times

by Neal Picker

**T**he Israel Affairs Committee serves a vital role in fulfilling the congregation's mission. The committee organizes the synagogue's involvement in the Celebrate Israel Parade and educates the congregation on topics related to Israel. The committee also raises funds for Israeli causes.

In the wake of the devastating events of October 7, 2023, and the ongoing hardships that have followed — ranging from security threats to displacement and emotional trauma — our mission has taken on renewed urgency. Through careful vetting and a commitment to meaningful impact, the Committee seeks to provide smart, effective support to those on the ground, helping communities recover, rebuild, and remain resilient. This work is made possible through the Israel Solidarity Fund, which is sustained by the generosity of our congregants; we are deeply grateful for the community's continued commitment to standing with Israel in meaningful and impactful ways.

One recent recipient of our support is Congregation Eshel Avraham in Be'er Sheva, a Masorti synagogue that sustained physical damage following a nearby missile impact. In



addition to the destruction of property, several members of the congregation have been displaced from their homes, and many—especially children and teens—are grappling with fear and emotional distress. During the attack, Rabbi Mijael Even David and several children were forced to take shelter within seconds, an experience that underscores the daily realities faced by communities in southern Israel.

Our contribution is helping to address both the immediate and longer-term needs of the congregation, including repairs, assistance for affected families, and critical pastoral and emotional support services. Congregation Eshel Avraham is just one example of the many communities the Israel Affairs Committee aims to assist. In future issues of the Voice, we will continue to highlight additional recipients and share how our collective efforts are making a difference across Israel.

If you would like to contribute to the Israel Solidarity Fund, please go to this link: <https://www.tign.org/donate/> and choose the Israel Solidarity Fund or mail a check to the Temple Israel office with a note indicating that it is a donation to the fund. ■

## TEMPLE ISRAEL FUND

### *In appreciation of:*

Alex Yeres' expert advice and guidance  
JAMEY & RAINA KOHN  
Jack Moallem's dedication and  
commitment to our synagogue  
HAL & SUSAN ROTHBAUM

### *In honor of:*

Cheryl Eisberg Moin  
Robert Wurtzel  
MARILYN SACKSTEIN  
Marty and Bracha Werber  
DAVID REIFLER  
Shirley Goldfeder's special birthday  
JAMEY & RAINA KOHN

### *In memory of:*

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Temple Israel  
gratefully acknowledges  
the contributions on these pages  
which were received  
February 17, 2026  
through April 23, 2026

Solomon Glazer  
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**EDWARD "THE CANDYMAN"  
GOLDFEDER MEMORIAL FUND**

*In honor of:*

Cheryl Eisberg Moin  
SHIRLEY GOLDFEDER  
Cheryl Eisberg Moin's birthday  
Gail and Jeffrey Zahler  
Robert Wurtzel's birthday  
JEFFREY FLEIT  
Pete's birthday  
SAM GOLDFEDER & LAURA STEIN  
Shirley Goldfeder's 95th birthday  
MARILYN SACKSTEIN  
CAROL DUNETZ  
FREDRIC WEST  
RENITA HOROWITZ  
AUDREY WEISSMAN  
ROBIN LEONARD  
JEFFREY FLEIT  
JOSHUA GOLDFEDER & BROOKE WEST  
JUNE COHEN & VIC  
SAM GOLDFEDER & LAURA STEIN  
The birth of Jordan Chase Cohen,  
great-grandson of Shirley Goldfeder  
ANITA MOSTEN  
SETH & CHERYL EISBERG MOIN  
MARSHALL RUBIN  
PETER & LORI OPPENHEIMER  
The birth of David Bruce Rubin,  
grandson of Marshall Rubin  
PETER & LORI OPPENHEIMER  
The birth of Jordan Chase Cohen,  
great-grandson of Shirley Goldfeder,  
and grandson of Debra and Mitchell  
Nusbaum  
MARILYN & LEON FLAX

*In memory of:*

Millie Baran  
MARILYN SACKSTEIN  
Natie Kopelowitz  
JEFFREY FLEIT  
MARILYN & LEON FLAX  
Jesse Frank  
Bernard Frank  
Terry Bloom  
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*Contribution:*

Happy Purim to the Temple Israel  
Congregation  
SHIRLEY GOLDFEDER

**BEN ZION ALTMAN SENIOR MITSVA  
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*In memory of:*

Benjamin Fleischer  
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*In honor of:*

Hazzan Shamash  
RAHEL LAHIJANI

*In memory of:*

Chana Raizel Bat Eliezer  
JONAH & CLEO GREEN

**ISRAEL SOLIDARITY FUND**

*In appreciation of:*

The kindness shown to us by Esther  
and Jack Moallem  
JEFFREY & GAIL ZAHLER

*In honor of:*

Cheryl Eisberg Moin's special birthday  
MARILYN & LEON FLAX  
PAM BERGER  
Robert Wurtzel on his 75th birthday  
The birth of Ari Zeke Altman, grandson  
of Rahel Musleah  
The birth of Sadie Morgan Schneider,  
granddaughter of Marilyn Schneider  
PAM BERGER

*In memory of:*

Cheryl Orenstein Feit  
Elliot Fleischer  
Howard Feit  
JOEL & ELISSA SCHIFF  
Hakimeh Moallem  
JACK & MANIJEH MOALLEM  
Michael Braksmajer  
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Natie Kopelowitz  
JOEL & ELISSA SCHIFF  
PAM BERGER

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Terry Bloom  
MARSHALL RUBIN

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**MOJI POURMORADI FUND**

*In honor of:*

The engagement of Zachary Stecker,  
son of Rabbi Howard and Deanna  
Stecker, to Jonah Kelly  
PARVIZ & PARVANEH KHODADADIAN

*In memory of:*

Natie Kopelowitz  
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Adele Bat Aliza  
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*In honor of:*

Cheryl Eisberg Moin on her special  
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VARDA SOLOMON  
Rebecca and Sassan Sassouni for tak-  
ing care of their children  
AARON & SOPHIA ZUCKER  
The birth of Ari Zeke Altman, grandson  
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**RABBI STECKER'S  
DISCRETIONARY FUND**

*In honor of:*

Deanna and Rabbi Stecker on the birth of their grandson, Asher Miles Stecker  
BRENDA & LANCE GREIFF

Rabbi Stecker  
RAHEL LAHIJANI

The baby naming of their granddaughter, Juliette Mia Garibyan  
ROBERT & SUSAN LOPATKIN

The engagement of Zachary Stecker, son of Rabbi Howard and Deanna Stecker, to Jonah Kelly

BARI ZIEGEL  
KAREN ASHKENASE  
PAUL & JUTTA SCHWARTZ

The wedding of Samantha West and Joshua Meisner  
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*In memory of:*

Estelle and Sigmund Iscowitz  
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*Contributions:*

RORY & ADINA BREIDBART

Passover 2026  
BABAK & NAZY DAMAGHI  
KAMBIZ & HALEH DAMAGHI  
NADER & MITRA DAMAGHI

**RABBI SCHWEBER'S  
DISCRETIONARY FUND**

*In appreciation of:*

Rabbi Schweber for doing the 2nd night Seder and for always being there for all of us

LEONARD & BARBARA SCHULTZ  
Rabbi Schweber's friendship and support  
PETER & LORI OPPENHEIMER

*In honor of:*

Rabbi Schweber  
RAHEL LAHIJANI

The baby naming of Juliette Mia Garibyan, granddaughter of Susan and Robert Lopatkin

ROBERT & SUSAN LOPATKIN

Yael Alani becoming a *bat mitzvah*  
DAVID & SHIRA ALANI

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Natie Kopelowitz  
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*In honor of:*

The *brit milah* of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Somek's precious grandson  
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Natie Kopelowitz  
KEYVAN & MINA FROUZAN

**WAXMAN HIGH SCHOOL  
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IRIS & CHARLES ADLER

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*In memory of:*

Moussa Harounian  
DAVID & ROBERTA HAROUNIAN

**SISTERHOOD FUND**

*In memory of:*

Natie Kopelowitz  
JUDI & MARSHALL RUBIN

**Temple Israel Players  
Productions  
Answer Key:**

*Page 14, top to bottom, left to right:*

Oklahoma, 2014.  
Guys and Dolls, 2009.  
Damn Yankees, 2007.  
West Side Story, 2016.  
Carousel, 2003.  
Anything Goes, 2008.  
South Pacific, 2004.  
West Side Story, 2016.  
Fiddler on the Roof, 2023.

*Page 15, top to bottom, left to right.*

South Pacific, 2004.  
Fiddler on the Roof, 2013.  
Oklahoma, 2014.  
Jewsical the Musical, 2012.  
Pajama Game, 2010.  
Beauty and the Beast, 2018.  
South Pacific, 2004.  
Mame, 2015.  
Carousel, 2003.  
Fiddler on the Roof, 2023.

**Women's Health Discussion**

Temple Israel members Dr. Wendy Fried, a gynecologist, Dr. Ronda Bloom, an endocrinologist, and Dr. Eleanor Yomtobian-Askari, a clinical nutritionist, led a well-attended and informative discussion about women's health on Monday, April 27th. They are pictured below.



# Mazel tou to...

## **KAREN LEWKOWITZ-MILLER AND MONTE MILLER**

on the birth of their granddaughter,  
Lily Julie Van Elkan,  
daughter of Rachel and Jesse Van Elkan

## **BETH AND LARRY FARKAS**

on the engagement of their daughter,  
Alana Farkas,  
to Marty Taxay, son of Bill and Amy Taxay

## **DEBRA AND MITCHELL NUSBAUM**

on the birth of their grandson,  
Jordan Chase Cohen,  
son of Jaymee and Liam Cohen

## **SHIRLEY GOLDFEDER**

on the birth of her great-grandson,  
Jordan Chase Cohen

## **DEANNA AND RABBI HOWARD STECKER**

on the birth of their grandson,  
Asher Miles Rimsky Stecker,  
son of Rebecca Rimsky Stecker and Daniel Stecker

## **JOAN SCHUSSHEIM**

on the birth of her great-granddaughter,  
Winona Roy Hoffman,  
daughter of Madison and David Hoffman

## **ANDREA AND JEFF FARKAS**

on the birth of their grandson,  
Jax Miller,  
son of Carly Farkas Miller and Alexander Miller

# In Memoriam

## **Temple Israel extends condolences to the families of:**

### **DONALD DAVID WEINSTEIN**

father of Daniel Weinstein and Lynn Schneider  
grandfather of Emma Weinstein, Samuel Weinstein,  
Justin Schneider, and Mandy Crabb  
great-grandfather of Emmett Crabb

### **MARTIN SPAR**

partner of Barbara Dymond

### **IRWIN (MARSHALL) SCHAMES**

father of Brian Schames

### **JERROLD KASENETZ**

father of Brett Kasenetz and Darren Kasenetz

**May their memories be for a blessing.**

# Kiddush Sponsors

The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees of Temple Israel, on behalf of the congregation, thank the following members who have generously sponsored and enhanced the Sabbath *kiddush*.

A contribution towards the *kiddush* on February 21 was made by Vivian and Yuval Brash to commemorate the *yahrzeit* of Yuval's father, Fred Brash.

Contributions toward the *kiddush* on February 28 were made by Jamie and Oshrat Wiener in honor of the *bar mitzvah* of their son, Zvi, and by Sofia and David Sohayegh to commemorate the *yahrzeit* of Sofia's father, Ayoub Farhadian.

The congregational *kiddush* on March 7 was sponsored by Lori and Peter Oppenheimer in celebration of Cheryl Eisberg Moin's special birthday. Contributions toward the *kiddush* were made by Liza and Alexander Yeres in honor of the *b'nai mitzvah* of their children, Harper and Jared, and by Robert Wurtzel in celebration of his 75th birthday.

A contribution towards the *kiddush* on March 21 was made by Shahin Lahijani to commemorate the *yahrzeit* of her son, Shahrokh David Zechariah Lahijani.

A contribution towards the *kiddush* on March 28 was made by Tinna and Jeffrey Phillips in honor of the *b'nai mitzvah* of their sons, Ethan and Joshua.

Contributions toward the *kiddush* on April 11 were made by Vivian and Yuval Brash to commemorate the *yahrzeit* of Yuval's mother, Judith Brash, and by Shohreh Naim to commemorate the *yahrzeit* of her father-in-law, Nehemia Naim.

A contribution towards the *kiddush* on April 18 was made by Shahnaz Goldman to commemorate the *yahrzeit* of her father, Rouhollah Monasebian.

The congregational *kiddush* on April 25 was sponsored by Linda and Douglas Rosen in honor of the *bat mitzvah* of their daughter, Sydney Rosen. Contributions toward the *kiddush* were made by Farnaz & Shahram (Mike) Delafraz in honor of the *auf ruf* of their son, Eric Delafraz and Devorah Delafraz, and by Ingrid and Robert Fishman to commemorate the *yahrzeit* of Ingrid's father, Rabbi Chaim Gevantman. ■



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**Tuesdays**  
May 12 • May 26  
June 2 • June 9  
8:15 P.M.

**Jews  
and  
the  
News**

**Tuesdays**  
May 12  
May 26  
2 P.M.

**Congregational  
Meeting**

**Monday  
June 1st  
8:30 P.M.**

Gala Dinner Dance  
honoring  
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*A few fun facts:*  
• My Dad used to write music for Cantor Ben Siegel.  
• My oldest brother was a member of the Great Neck Symphony and went on to play oboe with the Israel Philharmonic 1973 - 2020.  
• I graduated from South in 1978.

## D'var Torah

D'var Torah summaries written by Rabbi Marim D. Charry can be found on the Temple Israel website:

<https://www.tign.org/learn/dvrai-torah/>

A printed booklet of the D'var Torah summaries is available by calling the Temple Israel office.

**EMOR** • May 2  
**BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI** • May 9  
**BAMIDBAR** • May 16  
**[SHAVUOT]** • May 23  
**NASSO** • May 30  
**BEHA'ALOTCHA** • June 6  
**SH'LACH** • June 13  
**KORACH** • June 20  
**CHUKAT-BALAK** • June 27

## We're on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube:



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**Editorial Assistance provided by:** Angela Jones, Ken Kobliner, Rob Panzer  
**Photographers:** Robert Lopatkin, Ofra Panzer, and TIGN Staff

**Editor Emeritus:** Marc Katz

#### TEMPLE ISRAEL OF GREAT NECK

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Temple Israel Voice (USPS #078-740) is published monthly by Temple Israel of Great Neck at 108 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023. Periodicals postage paid at Great Neck, NY 11021. Postmaster: Send address changes to: Temple Israel Voice, 108 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023. Subscription: \$5.00 per annum.

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\*Deceased

## Upcoming Events

Events are being added. For more details and updated information, check weekly emails and [www.tign.org](http://www.tign.org).

**Jews & the News with Rabbi Stecker** • Tuesdays, May 12, May 26 @ 2 P.M.

**Torah Study with Rabbi Schweber** • Tuesdays, May 12, May 26, June 2, June 9 @ 8:15 P.M.

**Sisterhood Lunch & Author Event: My Mother's Cancer and a Hidden Family Tragedy Made Me an Advocate for Women's Health with Author Rebecca Bloom (*When Women Get Sick*)** • Monday, May 11 @ Noon

**Tequila, Tacos & Texas Hold 'Em** hosted by the Men's Club • Tuesday, May 12 @ 7 P.M.

**Kol Isha Celebrates Rosh Hodesh featuring Guest Speaker Susan Weidman Schneider**  
Sunday, May 17 @ 9:45 A.M.

**Festive Kol Isha Rosh Hodesh Lunch** • Sunday, May 17 following service (RSVP required by May 12 for lunch)

**Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs Recognition Program** • Sunday, May 17 @ 11 A.M.

**A conversation with Professor Yossi Rosenwaks, Ph.D. from Tel Aviv** • Monday, May 18 @ 7 P.M.

**Shavuot Services** • Thursday, May 21 (Erev Shavuot), Friday May 22 and Saturday, May 23 (Yizkor)

**Shavuot Scholars in Residence Yitzhak Sokoloff & Issam Sa'adah** • During Shavuot May 21 - May 23

**Shamashes Noshes Shavuot Ice Cream Celebration** • Saturday, May 23 @ 4:30 P.M.

**Great Neck Memorial Day Parade: Join Temple Israel to Walk in Parade** • Monday, May 25 @ 9:30 A.M.

**Israel Bonds Event** (with honorees from Temple Israel, Great Neck Synagogue and SHAI) • May 27 @ 8 P.M. (Location TBD)

**Celebrate Israel Parade** • Sunday, May 31

**Congregational Meeting** • Monday, June 1 @ 8:15 P.M.

**Shabbat Evening Service at Steppingstone Park** • Friday, June 12 @ 6:15 P.M.

**Gala Dinner Dance: An Enchanted Evening** • Sunday, June 14 @ 6 P.M.

**Sisterhood Author Lunch with Meryl Ain** • Monday, June 15 @ Noon

#### Online Programs:

**JEWISH COMMUNITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM** • Dates and times vary. Check website and weekly emails.

**ADVANCED HISTORY SEMINAR** • Thursdays at 9:30 A.M. (TIGN Zoom)

**SCHMOOZE WITH SOME JEWS ON ZOOM** • following Shabbat services (TIGN Zoom)