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In Emotional Appeal to U.S. Jewish Leaders, Zelensky Calls Russian Invasion ‘Pure Nazism’



President Volodymyr Zelensky speaking at a virtual meeting of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations on March 7, 2022. (Screenshot)

Ron Kampeas, Asaf Shalev

WASHINGTON (JTA) – In an emotional call with American Jewish leaders, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky characterized the Russian invasion of his country as “pure Nazism.” Zelensky also invoked his Jewishness in an appeal for assistance while speaking last Monday via Zoom with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. On the call, Zelensky angrily rejected claims by Russian President Vladimir Putin that Russia launched the war to

“denazify” Ukraine, saying that it was the Russians who were acting like Nazis. “This is just pure Nazism,” Zelensky said of the indiscriminate Russian attacks that have killed civilians. “He’s just destroying the citizens of Ukraine of different nationalities. This is just pure Nazi behavior. I can’t even qualify this in any different manner.” He also decried Putin’s demand that Ukraine concede totally and likened what is happening to the start of the Nazi Holocaust. “For some reason, we have to kneel down and give our weapons away. We have to hoist the Russian flag. We are supposed to say that we don’t want anything, we want to put our hands up,” Zelensky said. “Listen, all of this already happened. In Europe. All of this happened during Nazi times when the German army rolled through Europe, and everyone gave the Jewish people away.” Zelensky’s meeting with the Conference of Presidents comes amid his campaign, so far rejected by NATO, to create a no-fly zone over Ukraine, which has faced bombings by Russian plans for more than a week. “We need to make

pressure to make sure this bombardment to stop, we need to close the sky,” Zelensky said. A portion of the meeting was held privately. During the public portion of the meeting, Zelensky invoked, as he has several times before, Russian strikes near areas of Jewish importance, including the site of the Babyn Yar mass murder during the Nazi Holocaust, and Uman, a sacred site to haredi Orthodox Jews. And he said he felt intense sympathy with Americans on 9/11, when he realized that all people are connected. “Despite the fact that I’m a Ukrainian citizen with Jewish blood, I was looking at what was happening with the American people, and it was as painful to me,” he said through an interpreter. “It was hurting because I thought if America is not protected, if terrorists can just kill people..., if the Twin Towers are falling down in the United States it can happen in Ukraine as well.” Also speaking on the call, Ukraine’s ambassador to the United States, Oksana Markarova, invoked Golda Meir, the Israeli prime minister who was born in Kyiv, Ukraine’s capital. “It would be great to have her now with us,” she said.

“I think she would help a lot in this great fight.” Markarova also likened Russian military strikes in Ukraine to the rocket fire Israel endured in conflicts with Hamas and Hezbollah, saying that the Russian strikes were indiscriminate and hitting civilians. “The majority of the strikes are from the air, and it’s something that again, you know, all brothers and sisters in Israel are, unfortunately, too familiar with,” she said. William Daroff, the CEO of the Conference of Presidents, said Zelensky’s appeal to U.S. Jews was timely. “During this troubling and chaotic time for Ukraine, President Zelensky’s appeal to the leadership of the Conference of Presidents is particularly salient given his role as a member of the Jewish community whose citizenry are suffering in ways unseen in Europe for many decades,” he said in a statement to JTA. “In tandem with American Jewry donating tens of millions of dollars for rescue and relief efforts in Ukraine, we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters praying for peace and continued U.S. leadership to end the conflict.” **HW**

Pence, Bennett Discuss Iran, Ukraine in Jerusalem



Former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence meets with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett at the Prime Minister’s Office in Jerusalem, March 8, 2022. Credit: Kobi Gideon/GPO.

(JNS) – Former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence met last Tuesday with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett at the Prime Minister’s Office in Jerusalem. The two discussed the nuclear agreement with Iran taking shape in Vienna and its implications, as well as the situation in Ukraine, according to a statement from Bennett’s office. Pence landed in Israel last Monday for a short visit, following which he is scheduled to travel to Morocco. In an interview with Israeli daily Israel Hayom, part of which was published last Monday, the former vice president was harshly critical of both Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Biden

administration. “I must tell you that as the travesty unfolds on the landscape of Ukraine, it is just unconscionable that the American administration is at the same time negotiating at the side of the Russians to restart the Iranian nuclear deal,” said Pence. Reviving the 2015 deal would be bad even in peacetime, but “to literally be working with the Russians” despite Putin’s invasion of Ukraine “to achieve once again some deeply flawed and dangerous agreement with the ayatollahs in Iran is just utterly unacceptable.” The United States, he said, “Should not be working with Russia to ease sanctions or in any way put Iran back

“Putin must stop or Putin must pay,” the former U.S. vice president tells Israeli newspaper. among the community of nations.” “Putin must stop, or Putin must pay,” he said. “We need to focus the world’s energy on ending the Ukrainian invasion and continuing to put pressure to bear until the Russian troops are out of Ukraine.” **HW**



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Universal Mantra: Naqshon’s Leap



Naqshon’s Leap
By Shoshana Center

A moving and uplifting vibe was bursting out of Royal Studios in South Memphis recently. A unique group of incredible musicians in a band called Naqshon’s Leap gathered for an amazing virtual live show. It felt like an entertaining and enchanting family reunion. The band was originally formed by Memphis transplant Jason Caplan and his pals – musician William Ruiz and lyricist Gilbert Smith – back in New York City about 20 years ago.

Today, things sure are poppin’ for Jason, the band and some amazing programs he’s created. This is how it all came about. In the late ’90s and early 2000s, Jason had been on a spiritual journey to grow religiously, which also led to his quest to unite people through music and positivity. Through that effort, while playing blues guitar gigs across NYC, he’d met musicians of different faiths – Sikh, Bahai, Christian, Muslim – like William and Gilbert. Bonding with them, the trio then added a few more musicians to their band, and Naqshon’s Leap played at colleges and community centers.

Such a diverse group of people inspired Jason to figure out how to encourage interfaith relationships and communication through music. So, he created the Universal Language Room (ULR) – a welcoming environment that promotes interpersonal communication and making connections through improvisational music. Participants are guided through a musical experience to communicate through melody, rhythm and meditation. Best of all, you don’t need any musical background to be involved.

Jason and other facilitators demonstrate how to create simple melodic call-and-response statements that par-

ticipants share with each other in a fun, dynamic experience. The result of such powerful openness and creativity is inclusivity, belonging, a sense of calm and overall well-being. ULR also showcases that music – which can serve as a bridge builder – is accessible to anyone. ULR has been successful in Richmond, Va, NYC, and here in Memphis.

Jason’s musical work and the Universal Language Room are also informed by his ongoing study of Rabbi Abraham Abulafia’s mystical teachings. Out of that learning came the Beit Abulafia program, a collaboration with the Memphis Jewish Community Center’s Center for Jewish Living and Learning. On each Zoom event, Jason shares some background about the Kabbalist, and how he broke the code of Abulafia’s Kabbalah through modern jazz improvisation.

“Rabbi Abulafia was the founder of the school of ‘Prophetic Kabbalah.’ He was born in Zaragoza, Spain, in 1240 and was one of the first people to teach Kabbalah in public,” explained Jason. “He believed that philosophy and mysticism can exist in harmony. However, his Kabbalah has not been talked about for 800 years. Scholars began to discover Abulafia about 80 years ago, and his teachings are now becoming more and more popular. Rabbi Abulafia is one of the most universal rabbis I have found in Jewish philosophy and Kabbalah.”

On each Beit Abulafia session, a world-renowned musician is invited to discuss their background, their thoughts on music as a universal language and showcase their remarkable talent with musical interludes, to everyone’s delight. Jason teaches the concept that music equates to open dialogue, as Abulafia provides a tool for people to communi-

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Weekly Torah Portion: Tzav

cate through combinations of music and letters.

“The combinations help us see ideas from multiple angles and approaches,” noted Jason. “This opens the door to a sincere sharing of ideas.” Past programs have included musical masters such as Andy Statman, Kenny Werner, Howard Levy and Dave Liebman. On deck for Beit Abulafia are Julie Lyonn Lieberman and Adam Jacobs.

It’s been a wonderful year of growth for the ULR and Beit Abulafia programs, but there’s even more. An Israeli TV star just filmed Naqshon’s Leap performing

at American Recording Studio for an Israeli documentary. And, through The Bridge Institute, which Jason founded and funds ULR programming, he also partnered with professors and researchers at the University of Memphis to study the Universal Language Room and its positive effects on interprofessional development.

“Students approached the activity with curiosity,” said Naomi Eichorn, U of M Assistant Professor. “This was nothing like the kinds of training experience they were used to in their clinically focused programs. They gradually became less inhibited and started connecting with each other through the music they were creating. It was fascinating to watch the ice breaker activity unfold, observe students’ reactions to the experience, and hear them interpret the applications to collaborative team-based care.” Several journals and conferences have accepted the study for publication.

Back to Naqshon’s Leap – when Jason moved to Memphis a few years ago, he played the blues around town and connected with supremely talented musicians to form version 2.0 of the band. Each artist is critical to the group’s unique makeup, both musically and spiritually: Dalion Russell on drums, Cecil McDaniel on bass, vocalist Eric Stone, Raishene Webb on keys, Dr. Stephen Wachtel on clarinet and saxophone and Jason on guitar.

(See Naqshon’s Leap Page 3)

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Baron Hirsch Unites with Entire Jewish Community for Sixth Annual Sandwich Project

Baron Hirsch Congregation announced this week that it was kicking off its 6th Annual Sandwich Project partnering with the entire Jewish community, including all congregations, schools and agencies.

Two days will be set aside for community members to sign up for 90-minute shifts at Baron Hirsch to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Sessions will be held throughout the day on Sunday, March 20 and Tuesday, March 22. A new session will begin each two hours, and a maximum of 25 people may participate in each session.

In addition, volunteers can also choose to make sandwiches at home and drop off their finished product at the synagogue. For those that are making at home, they can pick up supplies from the congregation or purchase their own.

This year, the project aims to bring the community together to assemble and donate 10,000 peanut butter and

jelly sandwiches to those in need. In the five years that this project has taken place, over 40,000 sandwiches have been made.

“The response to this initiative has been explosive, and coming into our sixth year of doing this, the excitement and participation only compounds with each year’s launch of the project,” said Baron Hirsch Board President Marc Lennon. “Last year, even though we were all confined to our homes, we still made over 10,000 sandwiches.”

The Sandwich Project is an effort to help provide food for the hungry in Memphis through service, learning and active volunteering. With the participation of the local Jewish agencies, it is hoped that over 10,000 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches will be donated to local soup kitchens that serve the homeless and those who are food insecure.

The organizers are asking volunteers to register in advance so that they can

be better prepared for the evening. A website has been set up to make signing up quick and easy –www.baronhirsch.org/pbj. There are links for whether you want to attend a session in person or to pick up supplies to make at home. Volunteers can also call the office at 901-683-7485 to register.

Undertaking this herculean effort requires a massive amount of supplies. It is expected that this year’s event will involve 800 loaves of bread, 800 pounds of peanut butter and 400 pounds of jelly. The congregation is seeking donations to assist in covering the costs of the product. Donors can make a gift through the website or the Baron Hirsch office.

The congregation is excited to have been awarded a major grant by Jewish Foundation of Memphis B’nai Tzedek to help support the program. The B’nai Tzedek teens, a group of budding philanthropists, have always been active in the Sandwich Project, presenting a generous grant to the congregation to underwrite many of the costs, and attending as a group to actively participate in making sandwiches.

The congregation appreciates the support of all its sister organizations including Anshei Sphard Beth El Emeth, Beth Sholom, Bornblum Jewish Community School, Chabad Lubavitch, Hillels of Memphis, Jewish Community Partners, Margolin Hebrew Academy, Memphis Jewish Community Center, Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab, Or Chadash, Plough Towers, Temple Israel, Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Services at the MJCC and Young Israel. **HW**

Naqshon’s Leap... (Continued From Page 2)

The band’s performance at Royal Studios back in February was in partnership with the East Valley JCC, near Phoenix, Arizona, for its 3rd Annual Klezmer Fest. Hosted by the fabulous local celebrity Felicia Peat, who brought her energy and excitement, the show was streamed live on YouTube.

Founding member Gilbert flew in from NY. He and Jason shared some details about ULR and Beit Abulafia. Special guest Jan Peterson of the Bahai faith talked about her positive experiences joining ULR programs, and as the moderator of Beit Abulafia, I was honored to participate in the Q&A and a little music-making ULR style.

The music was magic. It was palpable. Organic. Raw. An inspiring toe-tapping, boom-whacking good ole time. Everyone in the room felt all the feels. Just watch the show, you’ll see what I mean. The band closed the live performance with a rousing rendition of their signature song, “One G-d, One Human Family,” with Gilbert’s energetic rapping.

“The entire concept of ‘One God, One Human Family’ is genuinely ingenious and is heartfelt in every musical note that radiates through each band member as he plays,” said Felicia Peat, WKNO Channel 10 Education & Outreach Manager. “It’s not just a feeling but an experience of sheer brotherly love shared throughout this band from all different backgrounds and faiths, yet unified. I am humbled to be a part of the that experience.”

There’s another opportunity to check out a virtual live show. Naqshon’s Leap is heading back to Royal Studios, helmed by Grammy-winning producer Boo Mitchell, for another live streaming performance on Sunday, March 20. This time, they’ll be joined by founding member William.

“Bonding with players of diverse backgrounds, and making music with outstanding Memphis professionals, all plugged into the same universal vibe,” added musician Dr. Stephen Wachtel, “Naqshon’s Leap is a unique experience.” **HW**

For more details about ULR and to reach Jason: ulr1.com

Register for Beit Abulafia: ulr1.com/beit-abulafia

Watch the “Unity” clip from the Royal Studios performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sXclm9qvwE>

Watch a blues clip from the Royal Studios performance: <https://youtu.be/4vwW3VVbSqq>

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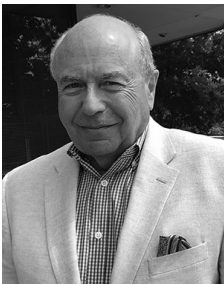
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Bornblum Launches the Flock Force



Newly appointed members of Bornblum’s Flock Force received their Flock Force gear at Kabbalat Shabbat on March 4, 2022.

The Flock Force is the latest new club at Bornblum Jewish Community School. Made up of 15 students who applied to participate, the mission of the Flock Force is to be the “protectors of the poultry,” Bornblum’s five chickens.

Bornblum acquired their five hens in August of 2021 as newborn chicks. There was a school-wide naming contest where the students named their feathered friends Snowball, Fluffy, Nugget, Waddles and Hen Solo. In October, the students held a parade, with Bornblum Head of School Daniel Weiss dressed in full chicken garb, to escort the chicks to their new coop. Today, the hens are fully grown and have started laying eggs.

“We are so happy that our chickens have begun laying their eggs,” said Weiss. “We have been gathering them up, and I will be cooking breakfast for our staff this week. People keep asking me for a good egg joke or egg pun, I can finally let them know I have a dozen.”

The members of the Flock Force, led by Flock Commander and second grade teacher Nathan Collier, are responsible

for the care of Bornblum’s chickens. They will feed them and give them water, gather the eggs and change their bedding. Commander Collier will also teach students how to monitor the chickens for any sickness or injuries. Finally, members of the Flock Force will serve as chicken ambassadors, taking them to classes so the students can get to know and interact with each of the chickens.

Explaining the role of the chickens at Bornblum, Jill Cross, the school’s Director of Curriculum and Instruction shared that, “Caring for and learning about chickens on campus allows our students to learn about life cycles, sustainable agriculture and animal care. Students, faculty and staff collaborate to ensure the chickens are healthy and happy, which creates a valuable connection between the environment and our school community, and a better understanding of where food comes from. The chickens have also become a component of our social emotional program. If a student needs a break, they can visit our chicken coop to reset.” **HW**

Memphis Jewish Federation Hosts Memphis Shoham Seminar



Attendees and speakers at Memphis-Shoham webinar

More than 60 people joined a March 8 Memphis-Shoham webinar featuring four inspiring women of distinction from Memphis and Shoham, Israel. Highlights include Judge Sheryl Lipman noting the need for “formality with empathy” in the courtroom, Dr. Sandra Arnold calling on women physicians to

choose specialties like infectious disease, Israeli CEO Dr. Gili Hart acknowledging the painful, personal family sacrifices she had to make in her career, and Israeli criminologist Dr. Ronit Peled-Laskov noting how prison is a shelter and safe space for many Israeli women offenders. **HW**

Iran Says it Will Retaliate for Israel’s Killing of Two IRGC Members in Syria

(JNS) – Iran declared that it would avenge the killing of two Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) members as the result of an Israeli airstrike in Syria.

Holding Israel accountable for such attacks “is one of the main goals of the resistance [forces] in the region,” said Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Saeed Khatibzadeh last Wednesday, reported Reuters.

The IRGC Sepah News website named the two killed soldiers as Cols. Ehsan Karbalaipour and Morteza Saeidnejad. It also said Israel would “pay for this crime.”

Their funerals were to be held last Wednesday.

The alleged Israeli airstrike killed two others identified by the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights as pro-Iran militiamen. **HW**

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Ronna Newburger, a Life Well Lived



Ronna Karchmer Newburger

Ronna Karchmer Newburger passed away peacefully on Sunday, February 27, 2022, after gracefully weathering a long illness. She was at her home in Memphis, surrounded by family and loved ones. She is survived by her husband, Hal, her brother, Don, and her children, Nicki Newburger, Dina (Eli) Benita, Marty (Deb) Newburger and Nat Newburger; and five grandchildren Daniel, Benji, Maya, Noah and Leo. She is preceded in death by her firstborn son, Mark, following his birth, and her parents, Aaron and Gertrude Karchmer.

Ronna went by many aliases, including Ronna-Like-Donna, Ricky, Ronna Rose, Ronnabelle, Mimi, and her road trip CB handle “Blue Eyes,” which accurately reflected her special twinkle. Born in Memphis, she grew up in the small town of Centralia, Illinois, where she became known for getting things done, riding unicycles, climbing water towers, driving pick-up trucks and being a tomboy, all while sporting a lipstick.

Upon graduating high school, Ronna attended Skidmore College in upstate New York where she met her “beshert,” the love of her life, Hal, when he asked the open-ended question of, “will you go out with me sometime?” suspecting she was not Jewish. On their first date, Ronna wore a Magen David, and quickly they established the foundation of their lives together with an emphasis on living “Jewishly” – with warmth and generosity, giving back to community, and making indelible memories. After graduation, this wizard mathematician moved to Brooklyn

where she worked for a bank while preparing for marriage. After their wedding, she was also a teacher, bookkeeper, and Gin Rummy champion.

The Newburgers moved to Memphis where Hal took on what his mother thought was the “dirty job” of Scrap Metal Recycling at A. Karchmer & Son, as third generation of scrap metal dealers in the historic Tennessee Brewery. Ronna and Hal operated their business together for nearly 50 years until their “caboose” Nat took charge. The Newburgers also developed Founder’s Pointe, an upscale downtown subdivision on Riverside Drive, and were actively involved with Downtown Neighborhood Association and transformation of South Main.

In addition to raising four busy children, wearing numerous “hats” and juggling day jobs, Ronna always insisted on a balanced check book, was lightning fast with a 10 key calculator, typewriter, sewing machine, and had some of the largest accounting ledgers ever created. Hundreds of yellow legal pads occupied her To Do Lists. She created fun games out of tabulating Coke machine money, rolling coins with her kids, putting checks in numerical order and making Halloween costumes with homemade materials and imagination. She served as family historian and organizer of family reunions.

Ronna taught her kids how to “Make Nice,” how to “Cross that Bridge when you get There,” and, “If you got yourself up that Tree, you can get yourself Down.” Most importantly, she instilled a strong sense of family and deep-rooted sense of integrity and commitment in her children. A builder of strong relationships and community, she crusaded for diversity and inclusion teaching her young kiddos, “We don’t have just one best friend, but many friends.” In later years, she would encourage each of them to travel and work internationally while remaining a steadfast anchor, mailing articles of Memphis news long before there were links.

Before the advent of Wikipedia, Google, Siri, or Emojis there was Ronna. When someone had a question, they called Ronna. Her high school yearbook remarked, “If there is something to do, and no one to do it, give it to Ronna, and she’ll see to it.” She had an incredible memory pertaining to family history, phone numbers, license plates, and historic events. She was an expert at any puzzle. Her signature on

letters was always a large smiley face!

Ronna also had the innate ability to diagnose problems with toilets over the phone, earning her an honorary PhD in Toilets. She was known as the “Tree Lady” for planting trees to celebrate friend’s new homes and new organization’s opening. She painted tulip signs and toilet seats, made yard work joyful, conquering any task and capturing burglars at the scrap yard. Chores were adventures. She had absolutely no musical talent but could create a cutesy rhyme for every celebration. She enjoyed calligraphy for all the cards and invitations she sent for so many occasions and took gobs of photos for family friends at their special events.

No-nonsense with business matters, Ronna was a master of persuasion and negotiation, with determination and optimism. She had a quiet, sweet way about her causing people to occasionally underestimate her, before she bent them to her will. She was a firm disciplinarian when her children needed “correction,” and her voice would take on a very slow, serious, deliberate tone whenever she had an important lesson to teach. She gave “tough love” gently.

Ronna believed strongly in supporting public school education and integration, natural childbirth, “biting bullets” and the honor of hard work and productivity. She made school lunches with math questions, Daddy’s eggs, Mom’s spaghetti, infinite matzah meal pancakes, blintzes, challahs and Sunday brunches. Her Heavenly Hash was indeed heavenly. She fought like hell for her kids, her brother, and Hal when they needed her. She refused to take no for an answer and took care of everything until she couldn’t anymore. Her life was characterized by continually squeezing

10 lbs. into a 5 lb. bag.

Always a trooper, she once straightened a fishhook with her teeth, piercing her tongue and refusing to go to the hospital. Her strength and resiliency cannot be compared. A Happy Camper, she loved butterflies, the color blue, air-popped popcorn, and riding shotgun in colorful vintage convertibles with Hal, the wind in her hair. No one enjoyed a good Hallmark Movie more.

A master multi-tasker, Ronna re-invented the definition of the “power walk” starting each morning with 5 miles daily, listening to books on the move, while also picking up trash, recycling cans, collecting four-leaf clovers and random coins along the way. She practiced Yoga and Pilates and enjoyed burning leaves at Horseshoe Lake as much as fishing. She had a shrewd eye for detail and astute ability to find objects in antique stores that could be transformed into lamps or functional containers for plants. A consummate problem-solver with sense of adventure and joy, she was always ready with a screwdriver in her purse and a magnet on her keychain.

Serving as the first female president of the MJCC, Ronna was instrumental in the expansion of the Center and brought Maccabi games to Memphis. Additionally, she was one of the founders of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis and was actively involved in the development of its the “Legacy Program.” She was involved with the Jewish Student Union at Memphis State, as well as the Ronald McDonald House at St. Jude Hospital. An active member of multiple organizations, she was especially proud of her 15 years involvement in Rotary, receiving award buttons for “perfect attendance.”

A true dynamo, she will be remembered as a pure force of nature, an inspiring role model for independence, excellence, and leadership, a humanitarian and a true blessing to all who knew her well. Her loving brilliance and pioneering spirit will live on eternally. She will always be our Sunshine.

Please remember Ronna when you wear any shade of blue or plant something. If you wish to honor her legacy by making a contribution, some ideas are: the MJCC, Chabad, the Ronald McDonald House or the Ronna Karchmer Newburger Fund for Alzheimer’s Disease Research at the Mayo Clinic <https://philanthropy.mayoclinic.org/give> **HW**



Hal and Ronna

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Chabad Dedicates New Sukkah and Outdoor Arbor



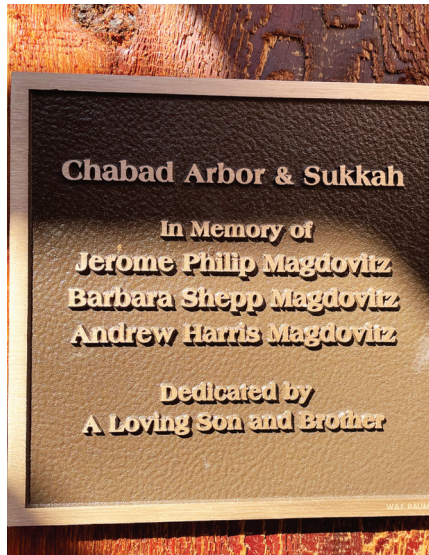
A women's class with Mrs. Rivky Klein in the new expanded sukkah and arbor at the Chabad Center of Jewish Life.

The Chabad Center for Jewish Life celebrated the dedication of their recently expanded Sukkah and outdoor arbor. Since its dedication, the newly renovated space has been put to great use for hosting community simchas as well as

programming and classes that have been held outdoors in accordance with pandemic guidelines. The arbor is crafted with intricate cedar woodworking and permanent lighting and fans, making it a beautiful and comfortable location to

be enjoyed all year round. Additionally, a paved walkway leading from the parking lot to the arbor was installed to ease accessibility for those with limited mobility to be able to enjoy the space.

The sukkah and arbor are dedicated in loving memory of Jerome Phillip Magdovitz, Barbara Shepp Magdovitz and Andrew Harris Magdovitz by their loving son and brother, Mr. Brad Magdovitz. **HW**



Baron Hirsch Plans Over- the-Top Purim

With the pandemic in decline, Baron Hirsch Congregation has announced plans for an over-the-top Purim celebration – exactly two years since the community began to shut down.

The fun begins with the reading of the Megillah on Wednesday evening, March 16. During the services, which begin at 7:30 p.m. graggers will be handed out to everyone in the sanctuary.

Following services, the annual 'Purim-Palooza,' held in conjunction with Anshei Sphard Beth El Emeth Congregation, will feature music, giveaways for the kids, moon bounces and delicious carnival food, including corndogs, fresh pretzels, popcorn and more. The Palooza is sponsored by Rob Kabel in memory of his father, Rafael Kabel, and by the David M. & Belle Rosenberg Purim Fund. The Palooza is free and open to all.

Several readings of the megillah will take place on Purim Day to give everyone ample opportunity to fulfill the important mitzva of hearing the reading. There will be two options for Shacharit services at 6:10 a.m. and 7:10 a.m., with Megillah readings during each. A women's Megillah reading will take place at 11 a.m. in the Cooper Chapel. A separate reading will take place for anyone in the sanctuary at the same time. A final reading of the megillah will take place at 5 p.m.

The day will culminate with a grand community Purim Seudah at 6 p.m. The Seudah is the festive meal and celebration honoring the Purim holiday, and is collectively sponsored by Anshei Sphard, Baron Hirsch and Young Israel. Everyone, ages 0-120, is encouraged to wear costumes and enter the costume contest! Live music, dancing and door prizes will also be part of this fun-filled evening.

There will be a fun children's carnival for kids and a fantastic 'Round-the-World Grand Buffet catered by Michael Francis of Heart & Soul Catering. The delicious food is always an important part of every Jewish celebration, and this Seudah will have plenty of options to choose from.

Children will be busy with the annual Purim carnival, which will be held in the adjoining Parker-Margolin Tabernacle and Fogelman Foyer. There will be new games and activities for children of all ages and lots of prizes to be won. Every child attending will get 20 free tickets.

All of the food, entertainment and fun is just \$25 for adults and teens, \$10 for children ages 4-12, and children 3 and under are free. There is a family cap of \$100 and sponsorships are available for \$180.

Payment must be made with reservations.

Advanced reservations are highly recommended, as the Seudah is sure to be a sold-out event!

For reservations or questions call the Baron Hirsch office at 901-683-7485 or email gwen@baronhirsch.org. **HW**



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Orders will be ready for curbside pickup on **Friday, April 15, between 10:00am – 2:00pm**. Please provide credit card information when placing your order – your card will not be charged until the week of pickup.



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OBITUARIES



Steven Paul Kesselman

Steven Kesselman, age 71, passed away on Wednesday, March 2, 2022. He was born on July 28, 1950, to Moses and Diana (Greenwald) Kesselman of Queens, N.Y. He grew up in Valley Stream, N.Y, completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Memphis (formally Memphis State) and earned his MBA at the University of Utah. He proudly served in the United States Air Force, retiring with the rank of Lt. Colonel and was part of the 765 AC&W Squadron at Charleston, Maine, 48th Fighter Wing at Royal Air Force (RAF) United Kingdom, and 377 AB Wing at Kirtland Air Force

Base, Albuquerque, N.M.
Steven was a resident of Albuquerque since 1978 and retired as a manager for Fleet Operations (Parts/Inventory) for the City of Albuquerque’s police and fire vehicles after 27 years, all while serving in the USAF Reserves. In his spare time, he enjoyed reading, movies, theater, music, traveling, watching sports and going out to eat – trying new restaurants. He also enjoyed writing letters and emails to family and friends across the country. He was active in keeping up with happenings in his college fraternity, Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi), and enjoyed participating in Jewish activities at Congregation Albert, where he was a member for 44 years. Additionally, he loved history and seemed fascinated by Jews in the Southwest. He is survived by his wife, Debra (Kane) Kesselman, of Rio Rancho, N.M., his daughter, Rachel Kesselman of Memphis, Tenn., his sister, Ilene Kesselman of Albuquerque, N.M., and several cousins.

The funeral service was held graveside on March 8, 2022, at Fairview Memorial Park in Albuquerque.


In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to be sent to Congregation Albert, St. Jude Research Hospital, Jewish Federation of New Mexico or a charity of your choice. [HW](#)



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Your Social Security Statement: What’s in It for You?

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director – Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors...Questions for Mike? Call 901-761-8151.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides personalized Social Security Statements to help Americans age 18 and older better understand the benefits that Social Security offers. Your Statement contains a detailed record of your earnings and estimates of retirement, disability, and survivor benefits – information that can help you plan for your financial future.

You can view your Social Security Statement online at any time by creating a my Social Security account at the SSA’s website, ssa.gov/myaccount. If you’re not registered for an online account and are not yet receiving benefits, you’ll receive a Statement in the mail every year, starting at age 60.

Benefit Estimates
Your Social Security Statement tells you whether you’ve earned enough credits by working and paying Social Security taxes to qualify for retirement and disability benefits and, if you qualify, how much you might receive. Generally, retirement benefits are projected for up to nine claiming ages, including full (ages 66 to 67), early (age 62), and late (age 70). If you qualify, you can also see the benefit amount your survivors might receive in the event of your death.

The amounts listed are estimates based on your average earnings in the past and a projection of future earnings. Actual benefits you receive may be different if your earnings increase or decrease in the future.

Amounts may also be affected by other factors, including cost-of-living increases (estimates are in today’s dollars) and other income you receive, and are based on current law.

More than 50 million individuals

have established online Social Security accounts.

Source: Social Security Administration, 2021

Annual Earnings
In addition to benefit information, your Social Security Statement contains a year-by-year record of your earnings. This record is updated when your employer reports your earnings (or if you’re self-employed, when you report your own earnings). Earnings are generally reported annually, so your most recent earnings may not yet be on your Statement.

Because Social Security benefits are based on average lifetime earnings, it’s important to make sure your earnings have been reported correctly. Compare your earnings record against past tax returns or W-2s. If you find errors, let the Social Security Administration know right away by calling 800-772-1213.

This information is not intended as tax, legal, investment, or retirement advice or recommendations, and it may not be relied on for the purpose of avoiding any federal tax penalties. You are encouraged to seek guidance from an independent tax or legal professional. The content is derived from sources believed to be accurate. Neither the information presented nor any opinion expressed constitutes a solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security. This material was written and prepared by Broadridge Advisor Solutions. © 2022 Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc.

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Spring has Sprung at Plough Towers



By Harleen Tague

Plough Towers emerges into spring from the prologue of February’s Sweetheart Party and Dance, Temple Sisterhood’s daffodils blooming and the amazing Creative Aging workshops and parties, to the beautiful blue skies of March with its continuing blooming flowers, eating pie on Pi Day and longer days with sunshine.

We will continue our spring celebration with the Purim holiday thanks to the Memphis Jewish Federation’s Fed-ovation Grant for *Jewish Holidays: Celebrating and Learning Together*. This display case in the lobby will focus on the enjoyment that Purim brings including welcoming Torah Mitzion back to Plough Towers on March 15, for a good time.

As always, you can see Memphis Hot Notes having musical fun around the Towers. And artists from Creative Aging of the Mid-South will offer Plough residents entertainment, arts programs, workshops, and on March 16, will take residents to Theater Memphis for “Opera Goes to Broadway.”

Residents are welcome to join Rabbi Akiva Males of Young Israel for a Shabbat Service on March 18 at 2 p.m.

As we speed through another amazing month at Plough Towers, we look forward to all the daily events that sparkle the lives of its residents. And as always, family, friends and volunteers of Plough Towers are welcome to all events. For more information about activities and events visit ploughtowers.org. [HW](#)

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How a Beth Sholom Member Made a Shidduch Between the Red Cross and Journey Coleman Elementary School



Joely Cifre (l) of the Red Cross and Mindy Lipson of Beth Sholom delivered enough emergency supplies to fill 208 pillowcases.
Credit: Mindy Lipson

A shidduch is typically made between two people, but Beth Sholom board member Tresha Mandel used her match-making skills to connect the American Red Cross-Mid-South Chapter to Journey Coleman Elementary School in Raleigh (a Memphis suburb). Thanks to Mandel’s efforts, her friends, and the generosity of Beth Sholom, more than 200 student families are now equipped with emergency supplies in case a disaster strikes.

It began when Mandel, a Mass Disaster Volunteer with the local Red Cross Chapter, got involved with the organization’s Pillowcase Project, a national emergency preparedness education program for grades 3-5. Mandel also is connected to Journey Coleman through the Beth Sholom Tikkun Olam committee, which supports the school’s students and families by donating school supplies, winter coats and holiday gifts for children to give family members.

As part of the Pillowcase Project, the Red Cross visits schools located in communities at high risk of home fires, tornados and earthquakes. Through the Red Cross disaster preparedness curriculum, the Red Cross teaches survival techniques to students. To re-enforce what students learn and help their families put an emergency plan into action, the Red Cross program gives students sturdy pillowcases to decorate and take home for their families to fill with emer-

gency supplies.

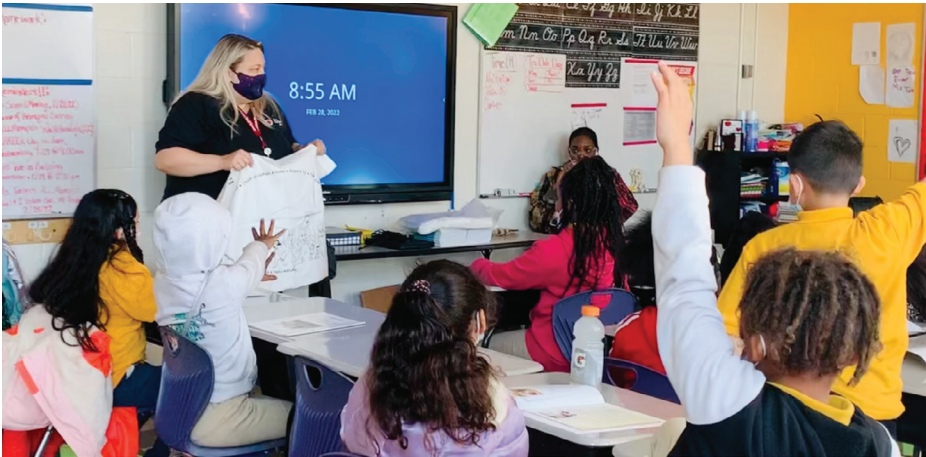
But Journey Coleman students brought home pillowcases stuffed with supplies. “Call it beshert,” Mandel says. “I told Joely [Cifre, Red Cross Disaster Program Specialist] about Beth Sholom’s special relationship with Journey Coleman and the match was made. I decided to take it one step further by launching a fundraising drive so we could supply the emergency items families so desperately needed. With the generosity of the Beth Sholom community and my Facebook friend group, Journey Coleman students were able to take home filled pillowcases that could be used immediately.”

Each child received flashlights and batteries, first aid kits, emergency blankets, soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste (donated by Mitchell Godat, DDS), water bottles, notebooks, pens and stuffed toys for their pillows.

Mandel urges the Memphis community to reach out to Cifre at joely.cifre@redcross.org if you know of an elementary school that could benefit from the Pillowcase Project.

“Maybe you could start a fundraising drive and fill the pillowcases for your chosen school. It’s all about helping our vulnerable neighbors,” said Mandel.

To learn how you can get involved with the Beth Sholom Tikkun Olam committee, visit bsholom.org. **HW**



Joely Cifre handed out pillowcases to 3-5 grade students.
Credit: Mindy Lipson

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Miracles Everywhere



*Editor's note:
This story is being
reprinted in memory
of Ted Roberts in
appreciation of his
longtime service
as a newspaper
columnist.*

By Ted Roberts

I guess it all depends on what you mean by “miracle.” Or to use a fancy schmancy German word that I’ve been trying to work into a story for months – “weltanschauung” – world view. (Germans can’t express anything philosophical in less than eleven letters.)

For example, Believers and Evolutionists have dueled since Darwin’s day over the origins of humanity. Silly. The scientists ignore the poetry of G-d’s breath on clay and all its implications, and the Believers can’t see G-d’s hand in the magical clump of clustered cells within the well-dressed ape called man.

Woman born of a rib of Adam? “You shall become one flesh,” said the Miracle Maker to Adam and Eve. Big deal? Miraculous? I find it literally unimpressive compared to the appearance of your infant daughter conceived from a microscopic drop of fluid that the Master Magician turned into a girl child that insisted on first, dolls then a two-speed,

yellow bike and later a wedding that would sustain Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac for a week. That’s not a miracle? Miracle of miracles, you say. OK, but not compared to the natural state of events designed by the Creator.

I mean – open your eyes – he sculpted the Earth and hung it among the galaxies, and it hasn’t fallen once – due to His law. Who needs small stuff like manna and quail in the Sinai and the several resuscitations that follow in the prophets?

Yes, the parting of the Red Sea was maybe a “miracle” (or a gusty west wind) and so was manna in the sandy Sinai, and there’s a few more when we get to the prophets. But I say they’re small potatoes compared to the common tabby cat manufactured by the millions by the G-d who plucked Israel from the claws of the Egyptians. That cat is a survival machine. No confusion here – no pantheism – we don’t worship the cat – we marvel and worship the Creator of cats and people and galaxies and sunsets.

But you must admit He did a heckuva job on that cat. (But more about that later.)

We admire His unimaginable mechanism that he designed for the human plumbing system. Orthodox Jews say a prayer every time they use the system. Talk about miracles – so many conduits

and passageways and pipes and tubes in the human body. As delicate as your bubbe’s lace tablecloth and yet it works. Observant Jews praise His genius every time they use the system that after all, He only loaned to them for hopefully seven to nine decades. Asher Yotsar, they call the prayer. Again, we are awed by creation, but we always bow to the artist, not the painting.

But to get back to my cat, she’s an exhibition of hard-wired survival techniques. Unlike the strong human mother, she has a litter of four or five – the mama salmon lays 100,000 eggs, thereby assuring that under the worst conditions the species is perpetuated. Secondly, the cat can scamper up the Pine tree whenever she’s inclined. A great talent if you like squirrels for supper. And the cat is like your cell phone in that she must recharge her batteries with frequent naps. She seems to understand that you must cleanse your hide. Like Cleopatra, she’s constantly grooming her skin. She knows 101 tricks about hunting.

But here’s the mystical part. Most cats never read that classic called “Cat Raising for Dummies.” Yet habits, necessary to life, somehow pass from the mother cat to that ball of fur called the kitten. Now that’s a miracle! We use the word instinctive, but we don’t know its meaning. Autopsy a cat and you won’t

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find “instinct” any more than you find soul in the human cadaver. There’s as much of Hashem in the cat as in the Humash, which is not to be disrespectful. He made it with His usual powers. The same natural powers He used to part the Red Sea.

Why would He who created and sanctified the rule of nature break his own protocol? He hates to interfere, you know.

The syndicated humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the roof, has appeared in newspapers around the U.S., on National Public Radio, and numerous websites. HW

INSIGHTS FROM ISRAEL Our Roots are Embedded in Ukraine

By Howard Weisband

In a powerful interview in Tablet Magazine, Natan Sharansky opened with the following:

“I have to say that it is very difficult for Jews to believe, but the Jewish question has nothing to do with this conflict. The fact that Zelensky is a devoted Jew is an absolutely outstanding fact of Ukrainian history, as well as the fact that even Putin, with all the awful things he is doing, is unique in Russian history for his positive attitude toward Jews and Israel. There are no anti-Jewish pogroms at this stage, neither in Ukraine nor in Russia, and it’s not the case that Jews are at the center of this.”

He continued: “When I was growing up in Donetsk, (Ukraine) “Jew” was the worst thing you could have in your papers. It was like being born with a disease, and many parents dreamed of how to bribe officers to write in anything else for their children. Today, when refugees move to the border, the best thing they can have in their ID is the word “Jew,” because the only country that sends official representatives there to get people and give them citizenship is Israel.”

I encourage you to read the entire Q&A with Natan, who I am proud to call a friend and colleague.

(March 8, 2022; <https://www.tablet-mag.com/sections/news/articles/five-questions-for-natan-sharansky>)

He provides a glimpse into his own life; the Jewish situation and anti-Semitism in the USSR, today Russia and Ukraine; a perspective on Zionism; and a brilliant analysis of the current tragic situation, as one who knows both Putin and Zelensky, and what motivates each of them respectively.

As I read Natan’s replies, I became quite pensive, thinking back to the roots of my own family, similar but very different. Both my maternal and paternal grandparents emigrated to America from Ukraine, from Kiev/Kyiv itself and from a nearby shtetl; my father, z”l, was born in Ukraine. They all were fortunate to arrive in the U.S. soon after

WW I and in the early 1920s.

The conditions that they left behind were so harsh and violent that I was seldom able to successfully have them describe the life that they left behind. It was a different era.

Putin today ironically lives in a different era as well, albeit his attitude toward the Jewish people and Israel is positive as Natan indicated above. A former KGB officer, it now appears that Putin never left the 20th Century, as he desires to recreate the old USSR/Soviet Union. Humanity seems to have little meaning to him in a 2022 context, and certainly he does not accept the concept of Democracy.

As I have read almost everything I can, and listened to numerous webinars, on Putin’s invasion and the history of Ukraine, I’ve learned that many within the Jewish people are somewhat conflicted given the history of vicious anti-Semitism within Ukraine. They are right; that cannot be erased.

Ukraine has a terrible, barbaric, anti-Semitic history. Both 500 and 600 years ago and during the Holocaust merely 80 years ago. We cannot, must not forget that history.

However, I believe that this is a different Ukraine in 2022. A democratically elected President, Zelensky is Jewish no less. He received 73% of the vote. And his popularity has risen dramatically in the Ukraine and internationally during this Russian invasion as he has stood with his people providing them a necessary and welcomed leadership.

The people of Ukraine and President Zelensky deserve our unwavering support.

Howard Weisband served as Assistant Executive Director (1975-77) and Executive Director (1977-84) of the Memphis Jewish Federation. Following Aliyah with his family in 1986, he served as Secretary General of the Jewish Agency for Israel through 1997, and then in other senior professional positions in Israel. Now retired, he and Kayla live in Jerusalem. He can be reached at hweisband@gmail.com HW

MJCC Brings Jewish Magician Joshua Jay to Memphis on March 31



Joshua Jay

Professional magician and bestselling author Joshua Jay will be doing a special performance and book talk at the Memphis Jewish Community Center on Thursday, March 31 at 7:30 p.m. During this magic-filled evening, Mr. Jay will reveal the artistry, inside history and fascinating traditions in the world of professional magic.

“Magic has many Jewish themes and roots,” said Lauren Taube, director for the Center of Jewish Living and Learning at the MJCC. “We are thrilled to feature such a talented and engaging performer in Memphis, who will share

his own Jewish journey and bring the community together for an evening of magical fun.”

Joshua Jay is a critically acclaimed magician who has stumped Penn & Teller and developed illusions for HBO’s Game of Thrones. He provides a rare glimpse into a truly secret world in his new book *How Magicians Think: Misdirection, Deception, and Why Magic Matters*. Mr. Jay has worked with and learned from some of the greats, including David Copperfield, David Blaine and Teller, all of whom have allowed him behind the scenes to observe their highly confidential creative processes.

Mr. Jay will perform a full magic show at the MJCC, followed by a conversation and Q&A about his book. Exploring the unknown facets of this fascinating profession in a series of 52 short, lively essays (referencing the number of cards in a deck), *How Magicians Think* describes the making of illusions, the psychology behind them, and the characters who create them.

This in-person evening will begin with drinks and desserts at 7 p.m., followed by Mr. Jay’s performance at 7:30 p.m. in the MJCC Shainberg Art Gallery. It is in partnership with the Jewish Book Council, and the book is available for purchase at the MJCC or novel bookstore in Memphis.

To learn more and register for this magical evening with Joshua Jay, visit www.jccmemphis.org/judaicstudies. HW

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A Weekend of Community and Tikkun Olam with 10th and 11th Graders from Temple Israel and Miami’s Temple Beth Am



As part of the Large Congregations Network of Reform Synagogues, high school students and staff from Temple Beth Am of Miami flew to Memphis for a “Judaism and Social Justice” weekend led by Rabbi Micah Greenstein.

“When our sister congregation and my colleague and friend, Rabbi Rachel Greengrass, asked about a weekend of Jewish learning, praying, and Tikkun Olam work in Memphis, I was happy for us to deliver,” said Rabbi Greenstein.

The trip, enjoyed by sophomore and junior high school students from both congregations, included an invigorating Shabbat evening service with music

from Temple Israel’s Carly Abramson, Sophie Chertow, and David Bearman, a delicious dinner in the Courtyard Gallery at Temple Israel, and spiritual programs over the weekend of March 4, 2022.

The occasion marked a welcomed return to in-person programs and communal expression of Jewish life!

“The best part,” said Rabbi Greenstein, “was the sense of normalcy among our high school students and their interfacing in large numbers. I can’t wait for Temple Israel’s high school trips to resume this fall as we visit our sister congregations in New York City!” **HW**

MJCC Will Host Women’s Challah Bake on March 23

The Memphis Jewish Community Center will host a community-wide women’s challah bake on Wednesday, March 23.

“The Women’s Community Chavurah Challah Bake will bring together women of all ages and all walks of life to spend one evening learning and making challah,” said Jessica Weiss, challah bake committee chair. “I have been wanting to put together a challah bake for the entire Memphis Jewish community since I moved here. Sharing a tradition like this is a beautiful thing.”

During this free event, participants will receive step-by step instructions for creating two beautiful challah loaves. Challah experts and novices will be able to share their knowledge and learn how to braid and recreate the recipe at home.

“The ties that bind women are unique,” said Lauren Taube, director for the Center for Jewish Living and Learning at the MJCC. “Every woman has her own story, but there is a shared history and connection that has been kept alive throughout the generations. We believe that there are incredible benefits to building community and creating connections among Jewish women of all backgrounds, affiliations and generations in Memphis.”

During the event, several women will share their experiences with making challah and connecting to Judaism in their own unique way. The Women’s Community Chavurah is a project of the MJCC Center for Jewish Living and Learning. Each month, women will gather to inspire and learn from one another in an ongoing and deep way. The next program will be creating Passover centerpieces with Holiday Flowers on Wednesday, April 13.

For information and to register for the Women’s Community Challah Bake at the MJCC, visit www.jccmemphis.org/judaicstudies. **HW**

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