

Chai~Lights



November 2016

30 Tishrei - 29 Cheshvan 5777

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Keys Jewish Community Center

P.O. Box 1332 • Tavernier, FL 33070 • 305-852-5235 • keysjewishcenter.com

November 2016 30 Tishrei - 29 Cheshvan

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Cole Silverman & Gloria Avner <i>Jane Silverman</i>	5 Cole Silverman's Bar Mitzvah 10 a.m.
6	7	8	9	10 Challah-Making at KJCC 6:00 p.m.	11 Gary Margolis <i>Lorena & Michael Kaufman Dorothy & Larry Wolfe</i> KJCC Dinner 6 p.m.	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 Erica Lieberman-Garrett & Art Itkin <i>Gloria Avner</i>	19 Rabbi Agler Service 10 a.m.
20	21	22	23	24 Thanks-giving	25 Medina Roy & Art Itkin <i>Art Itkin & Roy Pollack</i>	26
27	28	29	30			

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President's Message Sam Vinicur



I hope you'll take some time to carefully peruse this issue. Most of it is dedicated to a report on the recent High Holidays at KJCC. It might sound immodest, but I think we have a wonderful story to tell here. I try to give you snippets and texture and tone each week in my e-mails, but I can't include photos there. (I could, I suppose, but it's not the right medium.) Gloria has written a graceful and enthusiastic report on the entire High Holiday period, and I urge you to read it both for what it says and also how beautifully she says it. But we also have lots (lots) of photos in this issue. Even without captions, they, too, radiate with the KJCC vibe. Look at the faces, the joy, the quiet pleasure, the ease, the sense of community.

I spend a lot of time telling you about the big picture, and the ever-developing story here. That's my job. (I never exaggerate, by the way. I just reflect.) But behind every big story there's also a small story (or three). So far, all Gloria and I have heard about this High Holidays was how great it was, the best ever, so smooth and well-organized. That's terrific. Your happy experiences are the reason for all the work.

Still, anyone who's ever put on a conference, or been

part of an opening night, knows that outward calm is often built on backstage chaos and angst. So I thought it might amuse you to hear some of what went on behind the scenes.

About a month out the sewer system back-up alarm broke. Bathroom problems during High Holidays wouldn't do at all, so that was hurriedly fixed. Replacement of half our air-conditioning systems actually went smoothly. Not so for finding out why I kept getting late-night calls from the alarm company about fire sensor signals; I had visions of alarms going off randomly during Yom Kippur. Until two days before Rosh Hashanah we had a big pile of mulch outside that needed to be spread. I'd bought special two-sided tape to affix labels for our new paintings on the walls, yet just before Erev Rosh Hashanah dinner found labels strewn all over the floor. (Thanks, 3M.) And where, oh where was the cantor thirty minutes before showtime? Happily (gratefully), the new a/c worked perfectly. But then, after each service someone would tell me the sanctuary was too hot and then another would grab me and complain that it was freezing in there.

And so it goes...

Nosh

Torah Learning Service Nov. 19th

If you were present for High Holidays and Rabbi Agler's talks, you know how warm and engaging his Torah Learning Services are. Don't miss this one on Saturday morning, November 19th, as his monthly in-season services resume. The dress code is informal, the service uplifting, the conversation stimulating, and there will be refreshments afterwards. Services begin promptly at 10:00 a.m.

Bar Mitzvah Coming Soon

Come celebrate a special rite of passage with the Silverman family on the weekend of November 4th and 5th. On Friday night, Cole will lead services with his tutor, Gloria Avner, and on



Cole and mom Jane

Saturday morning, Rabbi Agler will lead the Shabbat morning service in which Cole will be called up to the Torah and become *Bar Mitzvah*. (Friends and family of the Silverman and

Blumenfeld sides will be joining us from England and from throughout all of the United States.) The Saturday service begins promptly at 10:00 a.m. Our KJCC *mishpocha* joins Cole's friends, family and visitors from afar in wishing him "*mazel tov*."

Hebrew Classes Begin

Yardena Kamely is pleased to announce that her Hebrew reading classes will resume this month on Friday, November 4th. Yardena's goal



Social Hall Chair Plate

In Memory of
Louis Smith
By Steven and Barbara Smith

is to develop her continuing students' skills to the point where they can follow along in the *Sid-dur* and find increased meaning in the prayers. This level 2 class will meet on Saturday mornings from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. (Beginners are also welcome to join this class.) There will also be an advanced class that engages in contemporary Hebrew conversation. This level 3 conversational class will meet on Friday mornings from 11:30 a.m. until 1:00. New students are welcome, beginner or advanced. Whatever your level, contact Yardena directly with any questions: phone 305-393-1768 or e-mail at yardena@morah-yardena.com. All classes will be held in the David Kamely Classroom at KJCC.



Social Hall Chair Plate

In Memory of
Margrit Davis
By Steven and Barbara Smith



Social Hall Chair Plate

In Memory of
Thomas Davis
By Steven and Barbara Smith

Scrabble Anyone?

There seems to be a spontaneous bubbling-up of interest in games of Scrabble among assorted new and long-time members. Yes, we could of course play in our own homes, but wouldn't it be fun to have a mini-tournament in our own KJCC Social Hall? If you're interested, please jot a note to president@keysjewishcenter.com. Let us know whether you'd prefer afternoon or evening. We'll make sure there are good snacks (some even healthy) and plenty of coffee.



Social Hall Chair Plate

In Memory of
Selma Smith
By Steven and Barbara Smith

Shabbos Project Time Again


You know what they say. Follow the dough! No, it's not about money. It's about challah, and once more, KJCC and Sisterhood will participate in a worldwide project to raise Shabbat consciousness and deepen observance. We have just come through what most Jewish people consider the most important Jewish Holiday of the Year – Yom Kippur, and all the multiple *chags* associated with it. November was coming up as a rare month, one with not a single Jewish holiday. Ah, but that was not to be. Despite Yom Kippur having the reputation as most important holiday, there is another, even more significant, Jewish Holiday, and we observe it 52 times a year. Yes? You in the back row? You are right. It's Shabbat.

Save the date: Thursday, November 10th, for getting your hands well-coated with flour. We'll be making our own challah from scratch. Suggested donation is \$10 for supplies. All materials and instruction will be provided, even wine and a nosh. (We also did this last year, and everyone had a wonderful time.) And on the following night, the 11th of November, there will be a de-

lightful Shabbat dinner sponsored by Sisterhood (also in honor of the worldwide Shabbos Project) with dozens of handcrafted challahs in attendance, eager to be enjoyed. Please see the ad on page 10 for RSVP details.


Three Torahs, Three Yads at Last

For as long as anyone can remember, one of our Torahs has been missing a yad. (That's Hebrew for "hand," of course, the word also used to describe the pointing device — there's actually a little hand on the end — that's used, since we're not supposed to touch the Torah's parchment with fingers, as an aid to reading and chanting.) But now we at KJCC are yad-deficient no longer. Rabbi Agler has donated one. (Can you see the little clusters of grapes in the photo?) Our sincere thanks for this kind rabbinic gesture.



Social Hall Chair Plate

In Memory of
Steven Feldman
By Barney O. Coltman



Social Hall Chair Plate

In Memory of
Kim Peck
By Judy and Frank Greenman

November Birthdays

2nd.....	Madalyn F. Tobias
2nd.....	Brian Boruszak
2nd.....	Jeremy M. Schur
2nd.....	Matt Temkin
3rd.....	Katherine Shabathai
4th.....	Herbert Grossman
4th.....	Zoey Barrett
7th.....	Michele Lindenbaum
7th.....	Joel Stein
8th.....	Nico Wilbur
11th.....	Cathy Dutton
13th.....	Tami Antelman
13th.....	Marilyn Greenbaum
13th.....	Linda Kaplan
14th.....	Rae Wruble
14th.....	Larry Wolfe
16th.....	Lorelei Alexander
17th.....	Jason Orans
18th.....	Ross Alexander
19th.....	Georgia Landau
19th.....	Michael E. Schur
22nd.....	Gloria Avner
22nd.....	Christopher Gould
22nd.....	John Luis Greenbaum
24th.....	Will Travis Pollack
24th.....	Arthur Lee Willner
25th.....	Nancy L. Cohn
26th.....	John Douglas Greenbaum
26th.....	Sam Vinicur
28th.....	Nicole Hudson
29th.....	Benjamin Rakov
30th.....	Steven Horowitz

BOOK PLATE

FOR RABBI AGLER

THANK YOU FOR RECOGNIZING
THE INDIVIDUAL IN EACH OF US

by Linda Pollack

November Anniversaries

	Years
1st	Jeffrey & Patty Schocket..... 13
6th	Thomas & Renee Brodie..... 23
8th	Joseph & Gail Moss..... 35
14th	Donald & Nancy Zinner..... 29
23rd	Marcia Kreitman & John Hawver..... 2
26th	Roger & Danna Levy..... 49
27th	Robert & Joni Sages Dandrea..... 13
27th	Stanley & Jenny Margulies
28th	Joseph & Leslie Reamer..... 23
28th	Sam & Leslie Janowitz..... 19
29th	Louis and Linda Ulman..... 35

BOOK PLATE

IN MEMORY OF OUR
DEAR FRIEND
MARYON GOULD

by Skip Rose and Linda Pollack

Oneg Sponsors for November 2016

November 4th - Jane Silverman to celebrate
Cole's Bar Mitzvah.

November 11th - Michael and Lorena Kaufman
to honor Michael's brother's birthday; Larry
and Dorothy Wolfe in honor of Larry's Birth
day.

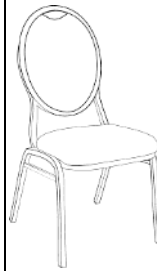
November 18th - Gloria Avner to commemorate
her birthday.

November 25th - Art Itkin in honor of Sasha's
birthday, and Roy Pollack for son Will
Pollack's birthday.



Social Hall Chair Plate

In Honor of
Barbara Knowles
By *Michael, Lorena & Sean Kaufman*



Social Hall Chair Plate

In Memory of
Orit Rouache
By *Judy and Frank Greenman*

Ongoing Projects and Mitzvah Programs of KJCC

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE: If you know of any member who should receive a get well, congratulations or condolence card from the KJCC, call Gene Silverman, 305-664-3316.

CEMETERY INFORMATION: If you wish to plan for the very distant future, you can reserve space at the Kendall Mt. Nebo Cemetery in the KJCC section. Call Bernie Ginsberg, 305-852-9300.

MEDITATION GARDEN: Have you visited our beautiful garden? Call Steve Steinbock, 305-394-0143, to reserve a bench, brick or tree plaque for posterity.

PICTURE POSTCARDS: We have beautiful picture postcards in the KJCC Gift Shop bearing the Millard Wells representation of the KJCC which was commissioned by Sisterhood. They can be packaged to fit your needs and mailed to you or your gift recipient. The price is \$36 per hundred but we will sell lesser quantities. Contact Susan Gordon, 305-766-3585.

ONEG SHABBAT SPONSOR: To schedule your special date with Sisterhood, call Beth Hayden at 305-773-0067 or email her at Hayden.Elizabeth@Comcast.Net.

KJCC TREE OF LIFE LEAVES and ROCKS, SANCTUARY SEAT PLATES, YARTZEIT MEMORIAL PLAQUES: Call Mitch Harvey, 303-521-5240, to arrange your donation.

KJCC BOOKPLATES for siddurim: Call Linda Pollack, 305-852-8575 for information.

CHAI-LIGHTS MITZVAH: Place a greeting or notice in Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 305-852-8575, to make your donation.

ADVERTISEMENT IN CHAI-LIGHTS or DIRECTORY: Your business ad will appear in every issue of Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 305-852-8575, for annual rates.

LIVE GREEN – RECYCLE: We are recycling ink cartridges, laser toners, cell phones, laptops, idevices, tablets and more. Call Steve Steinbock, 305-394-0143, or just bring your items to the KJCC.

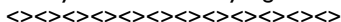
Call the names listed above for assistance or send your request and check to the KJCC, P.O. Box 1332, Tavernier, FL 33070. Recipients of your gifts will be notified by card and listings will appear in Chai-Lights as well. Honorarium and memorial cards can also be requested. Donations can be earmarked to our various ongoing funds; e.g. Holocaust Education Fund, Meditation Garden, Rabbi & Cantor Fund, Scholarship Fund, Sara Cohen Memorial Tzedukah Fund, Sunshine Fund, or General Fund.

In Memoriam November 2016

In Memory Of

Eugene Agler

By Richard & Mindy Agler



In Memory Of

Loretta Messer

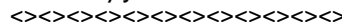
By Marc & Ellen Bloom



In Memory Of

Harold Goldstein

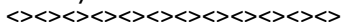
By Joan Boruszak



In Memory Of

Robert Scott Coltman

By Barnet O. Coltman



In Memory Of

Jack Dorf

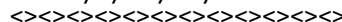
By Barry & Natalie Dorf



In Memory Of

Edward Deutsch Davis

By Sydney! Faye-Davis



In Memory Of

Dr. Alvan Field

By Carol Field



In Memory Of

Lillian Skolnick

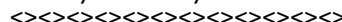
By Susan Gordon



In Memory Of

Donald Graham

By Mrs. Marty Graham



In Memory Of

Susan Ban

By Franklin & Judy Greenman



In Memory Of

Helene Tulskey

By Patricia Isenberg



In Memory Of

David Jacobs

By Lawrence & Pearl Jacobs



In Memory Of

David Kamely

By Yardena Kamely



In Memory Of

Sol Levy

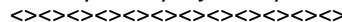
By Beth Kaminstein



In Memory Of

Herta Schapira

By Harvey & Joan Kay



In Memory Of

Jacob S. Raub

By Harvey & Judith Klein



In Memory Of

Fanny Kluger

By Nancy Kluger



In Memory Of

Ethel Hankin

By Richard & Barbara Knowles



In Memory Of

Deborah Krissel Cannon

By Michael Krissel



In Memory Of

Adele Kaufman

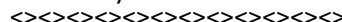
By Jeff & Lisa Miller



In Memory Of

Murray Pincus

By Linda Pincus



In Memoriam November 2016

In Memory Of

Tillie Pollack

By Linda Pollack



In Memory Of

Abraham Travers

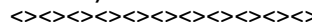
By Michele Riley



In Memory Of

Harry Brownstein

By Pauline Roller



In Memory Of

Selma Moore Sachs

By Joseph & Susan Sachs



In Memory Of

Seymour Schocket

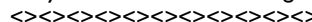
By Jeffrey & Patty Schocket



In Memory Of

Shirley Schulberg

By Alan & Elaine Schulberg



In Memory Of

Albert Kaminsky

By Alan & Elaine Schulberg



In Memory Of

Shirley Singer

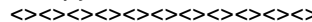
By Lee Schur



In Memory Of

Florence Cohen

By Jules & Nettie Seder



In Memory Of

Martin Lewis

By Robert Silk



In Memory Of

Albert Silverman

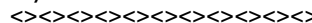
By Morton & Gene Silverman



In Memory Of

Phillip Silverman

By Morton & Gene Silverman



In Memory Of

Ida Cohen Sachs

By Morton & Gene Silverman



In Memory Of

Rose T. Steinberg

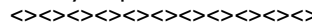
By Richard & Sheila Steinberg



In Memory Of

Marianne Cimkowski

By Stephen Steinbock



In Memory Of

Bertha Swartz

By George & Muriel Swartz



In Memory Of

Samuel Tallent

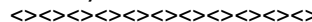
By Lillian Tallent



In Memory Of

Kenny Temkin

By Robert Temkin



In Memory Of

Dick Jacob

By David & Pat VanArtsdalen



In Memory Of

Esther Gold Willner

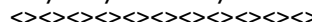
By Arthur Lee & Johanna Willner



In Memory Of

Diana Wolfe

By Larry & Dorothy Wolfe



In Memoriam November 2016

In Memory Of

Morris Mazur

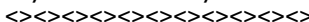
By Sanford & Nancy Yankow



In Memory Of

Katy Kram

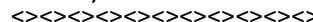
By Sanford & Nancy Yankow



In Memory Of

Eve W. Zinner

By Donald Zinner



How Certain Contributions to KJCC Can Instantly Become Permanent, Living Memorials

Yahrzeit Plaques: KJCC has six special, Israeli-made boards in the sanctuary for yahrzeit memorial plaques. Each plaque is accompanied by its own light, which is switched on for both yahrzeit dates and on Yom Kippur; names are also read aloud in memory from the bemaah each yahrzeit and published annually in our Yizkor Book. The cost for eternal synagogue memory is \$400 for each engraved plaque, with memorial text selected by the donor.

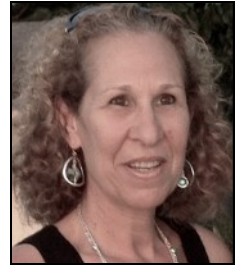
Book Plates: We are, after all, the People of the Book. For \$36 an inscription of your choice will be placed in one of our Siddurim or Tanakhs. An example: "In Loving Memory of my grandfather, who first taught me about the wonders that lie between these covers."

Tree of Life Leaves: We have three beautiful, six-foot Trees of Life — the world's most enduring spiritual metaphor — adorning the wall at the rear of the KJCC sanctuary. For \$75 an individual, golden leaf can be engraved with your message of memory or love. An example: "To our grandchildren: May they always be in the presence of the Eternal Light."

Garden Bricks: \$125 buys a single brick and \$200 a double brick in our magnificent Meditation Garden walkway, engraved with your personal message. An example: "You were the best, Aunt Goldie. Well, you and those amazing cheese blintzes." For \$300 we'll plant the native tree of your choice as the ultimate living tribute, with an outdoor plaque included in the price.

Sisterhood

Erica Lieberman-Garrett



October was a busy month. We began with our Erev Rosh Hashanah dinner. Almost seventy of our KJCC mishpocha attended to feast on a delicious traditional meat dinner that featured my matza ball soup, briskets prepared by Gloria, Susan and Beth, potato knishes, kasha varnishkes prepared by Bernie, turkey and green beans with almonds prepared by Jane, chopped liver prepared by Roberta, Linda Perloff's famous cucumber salad and even vegetarian chopped liver prepared by Gene. We ended the yummy dinner with Jane's sensational apple honey cake. We filled our plates and our tummies, and our New Year 5777 began. I would like to thank Sydney! and Donna for their help getting everything set up and ready.

Following our Rosh Hashanah services, Sisterhood prepared a fantastic lunch of bagels, lox, cream cheese, Marc Bloom's herring, salads from Gene, Geri Smith, Linda Kaplan, and Randy Gross, and finishing with Linda Perloff's homemade rugalabs, Beth's apple dish and Donna's honey spice cake. Special thanks goes to Richard Knowles for rolling all of the lox.

I would like to personally thank Toby and Joel Bofshever for their generosity in donating all our bagels and cream cheeses, as well as their help in the transport of all the special order items not available in the Keys. We fed more than sixty-five people the first day, and about forty the second day.

After a long 25 hours of Yom Kippur atoning and reflecting, we fed a dairy feast to a large and hungry crowd. We enjoyed scrumptious fish dishes thanks Suzi and Beth, hot kugels from Sydney! and Terri, Linda Pollack's yummy corn soufflé, and Muriel's delicious blintz soufflé, Susan's egg salad, Gloria's caprese salad, Jane's egg rolls and so much more. Once again Barb Bernstein amazed us with her Yom Kippur fruit salad creation. So

much goes into making all of this happen, and I want to thank everyone who prepared and donated the food, as well as those who helped underwrite the cost with their generous donations. Andy Tobin's donation of the whitefish salad, as well as the donations of Steve Steinbock, Laurie Blum, Terri Tainow, Gerri Emkey, Renee Salant, Sam Weis and Sheree Savar allowed us to enjoy these fine meals.

We held a special Shabbat Tshuvah Havdalah at Linda Pollack's home. The beautiful sunset felt like a blessing after our good fortune that Hurricane Matthew had stayed away from the Keys. It brought a sense of calm and hope, and this is the feeling that I wish for you and your family as we move forward into our year.

Our Sukkot oneg and Simchat Torah Chocolate Extravaganza were two more of our October celebrations. Thank you to Barb Knowles who provided our chocolate fountain for that fun night.

The next Sisterhood meeting will be on November 6th at 10 a.m., when will introduce next year's proposed slate of officers. We are going strong. All women are welcome; there is no membership fee. We are thrilled to have Geri Smith as our new recording secretary. Beth Hayden continues to handle our finances and the oneg coordination.

This month we will join the worldwide celebration of The Shabbos Project. We will hold our Challah Bake on Thursday November 10th at 6 p.m. and a Shabbat meat dinner on Friday November 11, where we will present our challah creations. Please let me know if you will be joining us. RSVP to me at hippiejap@hotmail.com.

We thank you for your oneg sponsorships ♡

KEYS JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

The Shabbos Project

KJCC Sisterhood Challah Making

**Thursday November 10, 2016 6 pm
in the Cathy Kaplan Social Hall**



Sisterhood invites all KJCC members, men as well as women, to join in a worldwide celebration and honoring of Shabbat. We will embark together in our making of Shabbat's most important ritual food: challah. All supplies will be provided for the low cost to each attendee of \$10.

Bring some wine and cheese and crackers and we will enjoy a happy hour challah bake.

Those with experience will teach those of us with none, and each of us will make enough dough to take home and bake two mini challahs. At our Shabbos Project Dinner on Friday, November 11th, we will eat and enjoy the fruits of our learning.

Please rsvp by Monday, November 7th,
to Erica Lieberman-Garrett
hippiejap@hotmail.com.
For more information visit
theshabbosproject.org



YEDA VE'TORASHA Yardena Kamely



Descendants Of The *Conversos* And Crypto-Jews

Last year, in our Lecture Series on Sephardic Jews, we learned about their fate during the centuries-long Spanish Inquisition. Ultimately, in 1492, the Castilian Alhambra Decree outlawed the practice of Judaism in Spain, requiring all remaining Jews to convert or leave. We discussed *Anusim*, *Marranos*, *Conversos*, and Crypto Jews. *Marranos* became a term used for Jews living in Iberia (Spain and Portugal) who converted or were forced to convert to Christianity yet continued to practice Judaism in secret. (It was not a gentle term, meaning "swine" in Spanish.) The wider term for converts was *Cristianos Nuevos*, meaning "New Christians" (referring to both converts from Islam and Judaism – Muslims had been driven from Spain in that same year, 1492), or *Conversos* (referring specifically to converts from Judaism). *Conversos* numbered in the hundreds of thousands in Spain after 1492. In Hebrew the term *Anusim* ("forced ones") is used; we refer to them as *Anusei Sfarad* and *B'nei Anusim* (sons of *Anusim*). Jews who secretly continued to observe Judaism while publicly professing to be of another faith (the ticket to remaining in a home and culture they'd enjoyed for many hundreds of years) are also referred to as "Crypto-Jews" (from the Greek *kryptos* – "hidden").

After 1492, anyone wishing to openly remain Jewish had to leave. A small number fled to Italy, Amsterdam, and the Americas, but most went to neighboring Portugal. When the Inquisition came to Portugal in 1496, the Jews once again faced a choice: leave, convert, or die. By 1500, some 40,000 and per-

haps more than 200,000 Jews were forced to leave the Iberian Peninsula. Exact numbers are not available because, fearing the gathering storm of persecution, many of the Crypto Jewish family names had been changed as early as the 1300s.

The Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition (official name: Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition) continued for over three hundred years. (It was not officially abolished until 1808, during the brief reign of Joseph Bonaparte.) The officers of the Inquisition kept accurate records of names, numbers, dates and punishments meted out; anyone today who cares to learn about the horrors may read them in documents.

Some had to leave quickly, purchasing documentation for "temporary" (which frequently became permanent) business trips to Italy or Germany. Poorer people fled to the north through the mountains and into France. Entire communities of "Portuguese Christians" were documented in southern France, while others continued northward to Amsterdam, England, Scandinavia, and eastward to the German provinces plus Austria, Hungary and Poland. In most of these European destinations, these "Portuguese Christians" eventually revealed their true identity as Jews, and then subsequently blended into the established Jewish communities; thus, we do not find long histories of Crypto Judaism throughout Europe.

Many Jews and Crypto Jews immigrated to the New World. (It is known that Jews were among the crews of Christopher Columbus, who first sailed toward the Americas mere

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months after the Jewish expulsion.) Their choices were limited to the colonies of Spain and Portugal, so that when the Inquisition came to Peru in 1570, to Mexico in 1571, and to Cartagena (today's Colombia) in 1610, these same people were forced again to convert or flee. The Inquisition spread throughout what is now the southern United States, Mexico, Central and South America, the islands of the Caribbean, and Cuba. No Jew or "Converso" was safe from suspicion, accusation and persecution, thus the numbers of Crypto Jews grew among almost all people of Jewish descent. The experience of the Crypto Jews in the Western Hemisphere was a repeat of the same tragic story: suffering, continual fear, social, political, professional, and religious suppression and occasional murder.

It has been approximately fifteen hundred years since the emergence of Crypto-Jews in the Iberian Peninsula, and five hundred years since Crypto-Judaism moved to the Americas. Today we find a large Crypto-Jewish presence throughout the Western Hemisphere. No one knows for sure how many there really are. In Brazil alone, however, some estimates claim that 10 to 25 percent of the total population are (or are descended from) Crypto Jews; this translates to 15 to almost 40 million people.

Last month members and friends of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Miami were invited to a presentation titled "Descendants of the *Conversos* and Crypto-Jews," by guest speaker Douglas Kaplan, a retired attorney and past-president of Temple Bet Shalom (now Temple Sinai) in Hollywood, Florida. According to Mr. Kaplan, "buried under 500 years of concealment are the identities of millions of living descendants of the forced converts of the Spanish inquisition."

Mr. Kaplan also spoke about the fascinating history of crypto-Jews in the Southwest of

the U.S. Those who claim to be descendants of crypto-Jews believe that *Conversos* sought refuge in what is now the border region between Texas and the Mexican state of Nuevo Leon. Arizona and New Mexico are also mentioned. The "crypto-Jewish" identity in the Southwest has been the subject of controversy. In 1981, New Mexico's newly appointed state historian, Dr. Stanley Hordes, began work in Santa Fe and immediately began receiving visitors in

search of family records, believing themselves to be the descendants of *Conversos*. He began researching in the state's archives and Inquisition records. He discovered genealogical links between families in the Southwest with Jewish traditions and victims of the Inquisition in Mexico, Portugal and Spain. "The biggest challenge in completing a study of this kind was determining the history of a group of people who for centuries tried desperately to cover their tracks..." Hordes writes in the introduction to his book, *To the*



At Douglas Kaplan's presentation to Miami's Jewish Genealogical Society (l-r): Janice McKay, Society president; Prof. Chaim Alhadeff; Yardena; Olga Campillo, descendant of Crypto Jews.

End of the Earth.

At the presentation we met a woman from Cuba, Olga Campillo, who is the descendant of Crypto Jews. Her story about finding her Jewish roots shows many similarities to other stories. In the Southwest there were the grandfathers who refused to eat pork and wore hats at Saturday church services, the grandmothers who lit candles on Friday nights. Plus the sheep and cattle ranchers who slit the throats of their animals, drained the blood, removed the sciatic nerve and salted the meat. At a bedside altar facing the room's eastern wall, one grandmother, a devout Catholic, would pray three times daily with a shawl over her head. Living in Texas in a small town isolated in the high desert, she taught her family to routinely check their hens' eggs for spots of blood. Her last request before she died was that she be buried with her feet facing the East. ◇

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



Membership at KJCC...It's a Real Steal!

Temple Emanu-El, the posh Fifth Avenue synagogue in Manhattan founded in 1845, is the place of worship for some of New York's most prominent Jewish figures, including former mayor Michael Bloomberg, CNN President Jeff Zucker and the late comedian Joan Rivers. Over 2,500 seats were available for High Holy Day services this year. The price for a ticket? For the privilege of sitting in any of the first ten rows, \$3,275 - well above the cost of a ticket to the Broadway musical "Hamilton" (a mere \$1,502). For the "less financially endowed congregants" (their words, not mine), tickets went for \$875. (www.jpost.com, 10-4-16)

Prince Charles' Secret Visit

Prince Charles, representing his mother Queen Elizabeth, attended the funeral in Jerusalem of former Israeli president Shimon Peres, who died at the end of September. But did you know that after the funeral, the prince secretly went to the Mount of Olives Cemetery, also in Jerusalem, to visit his paternal grandmother's grave? Princess Alice of Battenburg is buried at Jerusalem's *Convent of Saint Mary Magdalene* in accordance with her wishes. She died in 1969 in London and her remains were placed in a crypt at Windsor Castle. In 1988 she was transferred to a crypt at the convent. During World War II, Princess Alice lived in Nazi-occupied Athens, where she hid a Greek Jewish family for thirteen months until the Nazis withdrew in October 1944. (She spent much of her life in Greece after marrying Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark.) The story was not known until the early 1990s when Michael Cohen, 78, told officials at *Yad Vashem*, Israel's Holocaust memorial, of how he, his mother and sister were saved by the princess. In 1994, *Yad*

Vashem recognized Princess Alice posthumously as "Righteous Among the Nations." The British royal family generally avoids visiting the cemetery because it is located in the eastern part of Jerusalem, an area they do not recognize as being part of Israel. (www.israelnationalnews.com, 10-5-16)

"Poetry for the Ear"

Bob Dylan, singer-songwriter of some of the most influential songs of the 1960s ("Blowing in the Wind," "The Times They Are a-Changin'," etc.), has received the 2016 Nobel Prize for Literature - the first American to win the prize since Toni Morrison in 1993. Dylan, 75 (born Robert Allen Zimmerman and raised Jewish in Minnesota), was awarded the prize by the Swedish Academy for "having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition." His selection as literature laureate is a groundbreaking choice by the Nobel committee because his career has been primarily as a musician. (www.npr.org, 10-13-16)

"A More Peaceful and Humane World"

Benjamin Ferencz, 96, the last surviving prosecutor from the Nuremberg War Crimes trials, has donated \$1 million to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's *Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide* in Washington, D.C. His motivation is to promote world peace. The donation will be renewed annually and total up to \$10 million. He said he wanted to do something to deter future genocides. Ferencz served as chief prosecutor for the United States Army at the *Einsatzgruppen* (extermination squads) trials of former Nazi leaders in 1947-48. It was his first criminal trial and he successfully prose-

cuted twenty-two SS members for their involvement in murdering over one million Jews and other minorities. He was only 27 at the time. Following the trials, he worked to secure restitution for thousands of Holocaust survivors. He wrote books on international law and became a vocal advocate for the establishment of the *International Criminal Court* (which was officially founded in Rome in 1998 and now sits in The Hague in the Netherlands). Ferencz participated in the first case before the new court at age 91, giving a closing statement in the prosecution of warlord Thomas Lubanga Dyilo of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. (Dyilo was judged guilty of war crimes for using children under the age of 15 as soldiers.) Ferencz was born in Romania; his family moved to the United States when he was 10 months old, fleeing anti-Semitic persecution. He was a sergeant in General Patton's 3rd Army, arriving just days after the liberation of several concentration camps, where he saw conditions that were unforgettable, calling it "the worst of humanity." He is disappointed that current despots and terrorists are killed instead of tried in criminal courts. (He would have preferred to have seen Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden brought to trial in the international court.) Ferencz was awarded five battle stars, though not, he argues, for bravery. "I was hiding under whatever truck or tank I could get under," he said. "My weapon was a typewriter." He has been a long-time supporter of the D.C. museum, where in 2015 he was given the *Elie Wiesel Award*, the Holocaust museum's highest honor. Ferencz currently lives in Delray Beach, FL.
(www.washingtonpost.com, 8-31-16)

Bernie's Brother...From Brooklyn to Britain

Larry Sanders, 81-year-old older brother of Vermont Senator and former Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, is running for a seat in Parliament in Britain, the seat being vacated by former Prime Minister David Cameron. (Cameron resigned as prime minister in July 2016.) Like his younger brother, Sanders was born in Brooklyn but has lived in Oxford, England since 1969. He

taught at Oxford University in the *Social Administration Department*. He currently serves as health spokesman for Britain's Green Party. The elder Sanders was a delegate at this past summer's Democratic National Convention representing *Democrats Abroad* and was given the honor of casting their vote for his baby brother. (www.jta.org, 9-25-16)

Nobel Theory Explained...by a Bagel

British Jewish professor Michael Kosterlitz, along with two colleagues, were the winners of the 2016 Nobel Prize in Physics for their pioneering work in topology, a branch of mathematics that shows the physical properties of matter and space that remain unchanged under pressure or stretching. The discovery leads to advances in electronics that could help researchers in developing quantum computers. The discovery "involved certain materials that go through step changes that affect their electrical properties." The changes are similar to the holes in baked goods, which can have no intermediate steps between one hole or two. A bagel and two pastries were used by Nobel physics committee member Thors Hans Hansson to explain the scientists' theory: "I have a cinnamon bun, I have a bagel and a Swedish pretzel with two holes," Hansson said. "Now for us these things are different. One is sweet, one is salty; they are different shapes. But if you are a topologist there is only one thing that is really interesting with these things. This thing [the cinnamon bun] has no holes, the bagel has one hole, the pretzel has two holes...you cannot have half a hole or 2-2/3 holes." "Thanks to their pioneering work, the hunt is now on for new and exotic phases of matter," the *Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences* said. Kosterlitz is the son of German biochemist Hans Walter Kosterlitz, who fled from Berlin to safety in Scotland in 1934.
(www.reuters.com, 10-4-16)

In Memoriam

★ Shimon Peres, who served as both Israeli president and prime minister and was the last of Israel's "founding fathers," died at the end of September. He was 93. As the country

changed, so did Peres. He began his career in the Defense Ministry and designed Israel's (hypothetical) nuclear program. In his later years, he evolved and worked toward achieving peace with the Palestinians, hoping it would become a reality in his lifetime. Peres was instrumental in negotiating the *Oslo Accords*, the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement in 1993. After that, he became Israel's ambassador for peace, predicting a "new Middle East" where conflict would be replaced by shared prosperity between Israelis and Palestinians. "Shimon Peres...knew that Israel would not be saved by military force, by diplomacy or by economic strength alone, but only by the combination of all three," said Ronald S. Lauder, *World Jewish Congress* president, calling Peres "the embodiment of the Zionist dream." Peres served as prime minister three times and was elected president in 2007. He shared the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize with Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. In 2012, Peres was given the inaugural *Theodor Herzl Award* of the *World Jewish Congress* for his services to Israel and to the Jewish people. That same year, President Obama awarded him the *Presidential Medal of Freedom*, the United States' highest civilian honor. (www.jta.org, 9-27-16 and www.worldjewishcongress.org, 9-28-16)

★ Joseph Harmatz, a Holocaust survivor who was the leader of *HaNokmim* ("avengers" in Hebrew), a group of some fifty Holocaust survivors whose goal was to kill Germans to avenge the Holocaust, has died. He was 91. *HaNokmim* was founded by Abba Kovner, the Israeli poet and leader of Jewish resistance against the Nazis in both the Vilna Ghetto and then later in the Rudnikai Forest, who survived World War II. Born in Lithuania, Harmatz was one of the last surviving group members. *HaNokmim* attempted to poison Nazi SS officers in an American prisoner-of-war camp in 1946. More than 2,200 Nazis became ill, but no one is believed to have died from the poisoning. Harmatz lost most of his family in the Holocaust. After the war Harmatz immigrated to Israel, where he worked for the *Jewish Agency for Israel* and served as director general of *World ORT*, the

network of Jewish-sponsored vocational institutions. (www.forwardandjta.org, 9-27-16)

★ Greta Zimmer Friedman, the Jewish refugee whose Times Square kiss from a sailor on the day when Japan's surrender marked the end of World War II became one of the most famous photographs of all time, died recently. She was 92. Born Greta Zimmer in Austria, she and her sisters were sent abroad by their parents in 1939, after the Nazi takeover of Austria. Greta was then 15. It was six years later, wearing her dental assistant's uniform in Times Square, when a drunken sailor grabbed her to celebrate the end of the war. (At that moment in time, she had no idea where her parents were or whether they were alive. She later learned that they had both died in the camps.) The photograph was taken by *Life Magazine* photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt, a Jewish refugee himself, who was already very well known. The photo was a visual symbol of victory and became Eisenstaedt's most iconic photo. For years, the identities of the two people in the photo were unknown. In 1980, *Life Magazine* attempted to identify both. "The Kissing Sailor: The Mystery Behind the Photo That Ended World War II," a book published in 2012, used forensic analysis and was able to confirm that George Mendonsa, a sailor returning from the Pacific, and Greta Zimmer were the two in the photo. Mendonsa saw Zimmer's dental assistant uniform, and, mistaking her for a nurse, grabbed her and planted that famous kiss on her. (Mendonsa held nurses in high esteem, because when kamikaze planes hit his aircraft carrier he watched nurses care for the wounded.) Mendonsa and Zimmer were reunited in 2012 for a CBS news story. (www.jta.org, 9-11-16)

Did You Know...

★ Theodore Bikel, the 91-year-old actor who died in July 2015, holds the record for performing the lead role of "Fiddler on the Roof." He played Tevya more than 2,000 times, both on- and off-Broadway. Whether or not he ended up a rich man, he certainly enriched the rest of us. (www.thejewniverse.com, 9-23-16) ◇

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KJCC Graduate Goes on Birthright Trip to Israel

by Rita Bromwich

What do Hillel, The University of Central Florida and Israel all have in common? The answer: approximately fifty college students who were given a fantastic ten-day trip to Israel courtesy of The Birthright Israel Foundation. Maxwell Schrader-Grace, a student who possesses a strong sense of community, a desire to learn and explore the world (plus a former graduate of the KJCC Religious School), received that opportunity.

The experience taught him that camels are not the cleanest animals alive, but they photograph very well.

Max's journey began at the kibbutz at the most northern part of Israel. He said, "the most memorable part was the visit to the Israel-Syria border."

His tour guide explained the conflict between Israel and Syria and how Israel helps the wounded in Syria, despite knowing that when their civil war ends their guns might well turn toward Israel. He visited the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem and said that after being to the one in Washington D.C., the one in Jerusalem had a greater impact on his emotions due to its design and portrayals.

Climbing Masada required

getting up at 4 a.m. and is, according to Max, by far the coolest hike a person could ever experience. He spent that morning learning about those who chose to die on top of Masada

instead of being taken as slaves by the Romans. What an amazing sunrise!

Then came a visit to the Dead Sea to enjoy some play-time in the

mud. Then they were off to various other places, including the Western Wall. There was a lot of discussion about the conflict between Jews and Muslims. Among his strongest memories?

Max had the opportunity to hang out with some amazing Israeli soldiers and truly get an up-close view of what life in Israel is really like.

For Max, like most young Jews, it will be an experience to last a lifetime. ♦



The photos, from top: Max (the one not in uniform) with a group of Israeli soldiers; with his U.C.F. group on a hike (center, holding the Israeli flag); at the Western Wall with its regular worshippers; aboard (atop?) a camel, hoping the caravan ropes were strong.

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- ◆ **Items can be working or in need of repair.**



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The Hallel Prayer

by Steve Hartz

In Judaism the ancient prayer known as *Hallel* (“Praise”) is a prayer of thanksgiving and praise that consists of Psalms 113-118 in their entirety. Its origins are not known for certain. Some date *Hallel* to the time of the prophets. Others believe that *Hallel* was first sung by Moses in joy after the crossing of the Sea of Reeds. And a review of the text is certainly consistent with this latter theory. For example, the line in Psalm 118: “In my distress I called to the Lord; He answered by setting me free” recalls several episodes in the Book of Exodus where Moses cried out to G-d and found a divine and saving response.

Often people think that *Hallel* is only recited on Pesach (where it occupies a time-honored place in the Haggadah). However, *Hallel* is supposed to be recited on most festival occasions, including *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, *Sukkot*, and *Hanukah*. It is also recited often on *Yom Ha’atzmaut* (the day commemorating modern Israeli independence), and *Yom Yerushalayim* (commemorating the unification of Jerusalem in 1967). *Hallel* is also recited in a slightly more condensed form (“*Hatzi Hallel*”) on every *Rosh Chodesh* (new month).

Hallel is not recited on the High Holidays because it is felt to be unseemly for the people of Israel to be praising G-d joyously when G-d is deciding their fate for the coming year. It is also not recited on *Purim*, among other things, because the reading of *Megilla* is a substitute. And, the themes of Exodus contained in *Hallel* are not resonant with the story of Esther, which took place while the Jews were subjects of Persia. We can also add that it is not generally easy or dignified to recite *Hallel* if you are tipsy.

Hallel is a powerful prayer, so joyous and significant that the ancient rabbis elevated its recitation to the level of a *mitzvah*. It begins

with the traditional benediction that we recite before fulfilling a commandment. The congregation typically stands for the recitation. Parts of it are read responsively and/or repetitively in ways that lend even more drama to the prayer.

The themes of *Hallel* are among the greatest in the Jewish liturgy: raising up the poor from the rubbish heap, the exodus from Egypt, the love of G-d who remembers us and listens to our supplications, and the opening of the gates of triumph to the righteous. Interwoven throughout is the unrelenting theme of praise and thanksgiving. In a climatic portion of *Hallel*, the faithful recite repeatedly with conviction that G-d’s love endures forever (“*Ki l’olam hasdo*”).

Unlike many pieces of the Jewish liturgy, the theme of death is not the most prominent feature of *Hallel*. And the concept of the return of the Messiah and the ultimate resurrection of the dead, so common to other parts of our service, is not expressed directly in *Hallel*. In fact, Psalm 115 bluntly

states that “[the] dead cannot praise God...But as for us we shall praise the Lord.” And Psalm 118 says that “[t]hough the Lord did indeed chastise me, God did not hand me over to death.” *Hallel* is recited by the living to give thanks for the gift of life. Nevertheless, it should be noted that many commentators have expansively construed various parts of the *Hallel* prayer to support messianic beliefs.

The melodies of *Hallel* are many. Different communities have different chants, and within the chants there are contrasting moods and rhythms. Some of the moods are bright; some are more reflective. But what is common to all of the melodies of *Hallel* is spirited thanks for the good that G-d has brought us and a powerful supplication that G-d will continue to save us and give us success. It is a prayer that is virtually unrivaled in its joy and passion in all of Jewish liturgy. ◊

*The themes
of Hallel
are among
the greatest
in the
Jewish
liturgy.*



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Photo Gallery

At left, the KJCC students created a diorama of Jerusalem's Western Wall. Those here for High Holidays could actually put prayers into the "brick." At right, the new sanctuary plaque honoring those who donated to our Torah Restoration Project.



The oneg on September 23rd was sponsored by Joel and Toby Bofshever, above, in celebration of Joel's birthday. At right, Harry Friedman begins the process of bringing his Eagle Scout Vegetable Garden back to life for the fall planting. The bounty this past year was amazing and was donated to local food banks.





KJCC Meditation Garden

Our extended brick walkway is in place. Come and spend some time walking around our peaceful and beautiful Meditation Garden. Bricks and benches can be purchased as honorariums or memorials and as gifts. Trees line the walkway and are available for dedication to our loved ones or to memorialize a happy occasion.

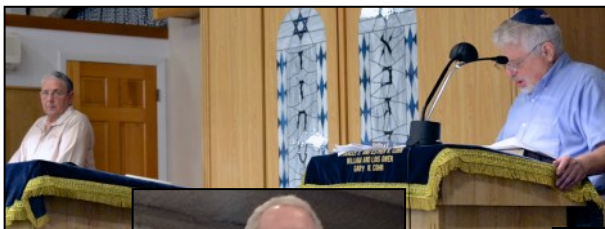
Also newly dedicated is our Orchid Pergola. We invite you to become a part of this fresh undertaking. Make your donation toward a new and beautiful orchid. The orchid will be tagged with the name of the donor and the name of the person being honored or remembered.

Information regarding pricing for orchids, bricks and benches can be obtained by visiting our website, keysjewishcenter.com.





Scenes from the September 24th pizza/movie/service for S'lichot, our beginning of the High Holidays. Bernie Ginsberg and Steve Steinbock led the service, with an able assist from Rabbi Rich Agler.



High Holidays 5777

We came, we ate, we prayed, we learned — together

First came the singing, a sweet “Mah Tov” led by Cantor Michael Dzubin. Then came the big question: “So how is your relationship with God going?” Rabbi Richard Agler, our guide and leader through the Yamim Nora’im, the 10 Days of Awe, set our intent to go deeply from the very start of Erev Rosh HaShanah. He posed other questions too, all serious, all multi-layered. We would return to them throughout our days of introspection, prayers for forgiveness and fresh starts.

We had a full house for Erev Rosh Hashanah. It is a tribute to Rabbi Agler that many of our guests came from as far away as Boca Raton, home of his former congregation. Close to 100 people filled our newly refreshed Sanctuary, three quarters of whom had just enjoyed Sisterhood’s bounteous brisket-fest overflowing with traditional Jewish treats – from the symbolic pomegranate full of seeds (representing the 613 mitzvot) to the delicious matzoh ball soup at the beginning of the meal to apple cake and cinnamon babka at the end. Kudos to Erica Garrett and the women of Sisterhood. They outdid themselves, raising the bar to new heights for quality, quantity, and thoughtfulness through

all the holiday luncheons and onegs. Chanting blessings over candles, wine and our special round challah (the prescribed shape for Rosh Hashanah), we joined with Jews around the world to dip apples in honey with hopes of a good, sweet year.

All New Year’s celebrations steer us towards fresh starts. One fresh start began extra early this year, with clear *kavanah*, intent and commitment to refresh our physical house – the *Beit HaMikdosh* where we gather to pray, form friendships, educate ourselves, and, yes, to share good meals. The initial intent was to make our spaces more visually appealing and reflective of us. But the goal was also to create a comfort level that would inspire and enhance the experience that was



taking place not only within our walls but also within ourselves.



The entire synagogue was repainted with dramatic yet peaceful colors. A new carpet with flowing patterns of God’s flora now grounds our Social Hall. The wealth of talented artists among our members brought us unexpected treasures when we asked for works on the theme of *B’reishit*, in keeping with this special time of year. (The time when our Torah cycle reaches its seamless end and we turn once again to studying the beginning, the creation story.) Each painting, each piece of ceramic sculpture, relates to the work of creation, the seven days of creative handiwork, order com-

ing out of chaos, light separating from dark, spirit moving on the water, the populating our planet with living things of all description. Our “new” house made an uplifting and supportive environment for our days of reflection.

The harmonious interaction between our leaders, Rabbi

Agler’s challenging discussions about how God could have let the Shoah happen – and how people could have stood by while it happened – brought us to the edge of discomfort and back again. It also inspired many to want to “do some-



thing.” The give and take with Rabbi Agler, the repeated “al chet” confessions and fists gently softening our hearts, hearing the penetrating calls of the shofar, tossing bread in lieu of our sins into the ocean at *tashlich*, all made for a very full first day. We were grateful for Sisterhood’s delicious luncheon. (Rumor has it that anticipation of Marc Bloom’s herring and sour cream may have added to the wonderful attendance at the pre-lunch *Musaf* service.)

Our second day in shul for Rosh Hashanah

was easily as powerful and uplifting as the first, but with a different feeling. There was intimacy in this smaller group, sincere participation, and everyone stayed for *musaf* (and lunch). If you miss the *musaf*, you don’t just miss lunch. You miss the plaintive prayer of *Hineni*, the “I am here” prayer, expressing fearful unworthiness to pray on the congregation’s behalf, beautifully and humbly chanted

by Cantor Dzubin. You also miss the priestly blessing given by the eerily haunting voice chanting after the cantor from underneath the tallit by a *Koheyn*, channeling God’s prayer for us.

And then came *Yom Kippur* and the evening of *Kol Nidre*. With ex-presidents and other

officers taking turns holding our precious Torahs, the sanctuary reached its High Holiday peak of fullness. Our inner selves vibrated with anticipation of a full day of fasting, ex-

traordinary services and a full afternoon of exciting supplementary activities, where we spoke about how the fasting affected us, how deprivation with a purpose brought us to a deeper place, free of distraction. We discussed the big questions, argued and meditated, ever guided and challenged by Rabbi Richard Agler, our resident scholar as well as our High Holiday leader.

And then we listened to the piercing, deeply spiritual music of



Leonard Cohen's newest album, "You want it Darker." Released on his 82nd birthday, the title song paints a scornful, sorrowful, deeply disappointed picture of life on today's planet, and it is rife with Hebraic references and echoes a line from the poem of Wordsworth that Rabbi Agler often quotes: "the world is too much with us. Getting and spending we lay waste our powers." But do we wallow in misery and depression? No!! Maybe Leonard does, in his own elegant,

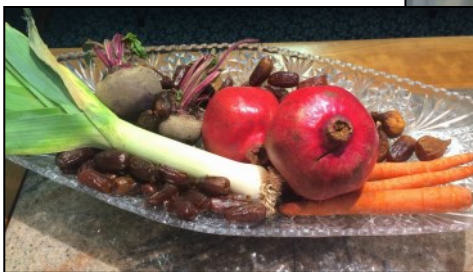
compassionate way, but we go on to the delightful surprise of Rabbi Agler's own version of Cohen's song, "Hallelujah," accompanied by none other than our

own David Feder. "Be a *B'racha*" ("Be a Blessing") replaces Hallelujah as refrain. We sing it over and over, smiling at the new lyrics and the zest with which Rabbi Agler stands before us and performs them.

There is more to come, of course. The Yom Kippur *Mincha* (or afternoon) service,

the *Ma'ariv* and *Neilah* evening service, with three *aliyot/Torah* readings, followed by Susan Gordon's delightful rendition of the *Haftorah* story of Jonah. We

are transfixed and fatigued but firmly ensconced in a rhythm that is reaching toward climax and crescendo. More prayers of confession and appeals to "Avinu Malkeinu, our Father, our King" fill the air and radiate



through the sanctuary, in total harmony with the paintings on the walls and the elevated souls of the people praying.

The final blast of the three shofars is electrifying. There is a new face on the *bi-mah*; one

of our newest members, professional musician Sam Weis, whose strong and beautiful abstract paintings adorn our hallway, blows her *shofar* with grace and strength. Deep gratitude also goes to our returning *shofar* blowers.

Both Zach Schrader-Grace and Jonah Gross have been *Bar Mitzvah* here, and though years have passed since they attended our school, their pride in holding that last note for us fills us with nothing less than the awe

we've been seeking.

Yom Kippur is over. We dim the sanctuary and light the many-wicked Havdalah candle that

represents the many disparate strands of our scattered people, which then burns as a single flame, a "light unto the nations." Blessings duly chanted, we return from the sacred to the secular. Smiles and expressions of gratitude are expressed to our rabbi and cantor. They, too smile and shake hands with us as we leave the sanctuary. The line to the break-the-fast buffet nearly meets the reception line leaving the sanctuary.

We are content, but energized. An unexpected question comes to mind: Is it here-
sy to emerge from the rich experience of High Holy Days and particularly *Yom Kippur*, feeling happy? It has been a good time. There is a sense of enjoyment in the air, of satisfaction, and of something ineffable. Perhaps it is pride in our leaders and the experience we have just undergone with their guidance. It most certainly is gratitude.

May we all be sealed in the book of life for a good year, a healthy year, a year of commitment to *Tikkun Olam*, a year of peace.

— Gloria Avner



**Photos taken at lunch
after Rosh Hashanah Day
One services on
September 3rd,
2016. Year 5777
was underway.**



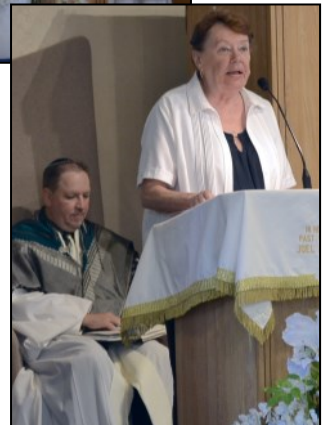
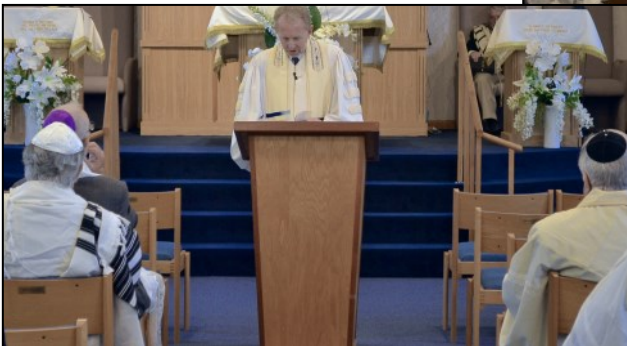


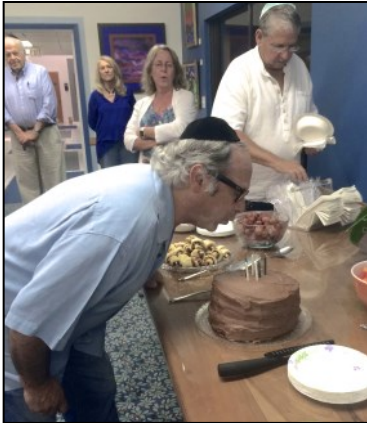
Tashlich, the casting of sins into the sea, took place at 4:00 at Ocean Pointe on Rosh Hashanah Day One, led by Cantor Michael Dzubin. (There's lots of water there, and the birds love the bread we cast away.)





Scenes from Rosh Hashanah Day Two, on September 4th. It's a slightly more relaxed day.





The photo top left is of Mitch Harvey blowing out his birthday candles at the Erev Shabbat Shuvah oneg on September 7th. The next day's full Shabbat Shuvah service was led by Bernie Ginsberg.



Linda Pollack started a new tradition on Saturday evening, September 8th, hosting a Havdalah at her lovely bayside home. These are all scenes from the pre-service meal provided by Sisterhood.





The actual Havdalah service on Saturday, September 8th, led by KJCC Ritual Chair Gloria Avner. A full house showed up for what Gloria likes to call our “short and sweet” transition from the sacred back to the secular. It was the middle of High Holidays, of course, so the secular only lasted until Kol Nidre filled our sanctuary three evenings later.



Yom Kippur







Scenes from Rabbi Richard Agler's "fast talk" on Yom Kippur afternoon after Musaf. Word spreads about how appealing these informal gatherings are, and more stay every year. Yom Kippur offers lots of topics and questions, and nothing is off the table. As always, the discussion was lively.



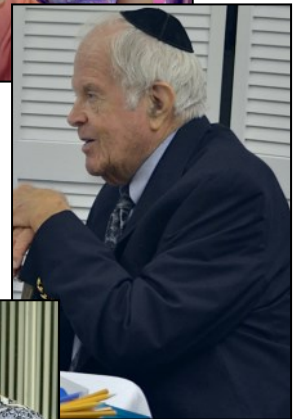
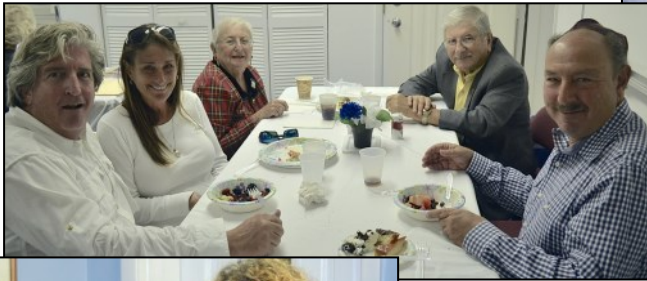
The last subject discussed was Leonard Cohen's poetry. Then a crowd-pleasing surprise. Rabbi Agler had written new lyrics to Cohen's "Hallelujah," and performed them to accompaniment by Dave Feder.



After a long day of concentrated prayer, Yom Kippur ended with clarion shofar blasts from Zack Schrader-Grace, Sam Weis and Jonah Gross. After Havdalah, above right, it was on to Sisterhood's break-fast, which included an amazing fruit sculpture of the Western Wall by Barbara Bernstein.



At break-the-fast, lots of smiles...





On Sunday, September 16th, a number of us joined the Religious School for the annual decoration of the KJCC Sukkah, in the enduring gazebo donated to us (and personally built by) Alan Beth and Candy Stanlake in honor of their parents. It was a first for 3-year-old Madison Bloom, but everyone else had a wonderful time, too.

Gloria led us in a grateful *shehechiyanu*.





What Does All This Tell Us About God?

Rabbi Richard Agler
October 12, 2016
Keys Jewish Community Center
10 Tishrei, 5777
Tavernier, FL
Yom Kippur

An important mandate of the High Holidays is to look inside ourselves honestly. Okay, a little honesty here that will surprise no rabbi: most people who attend High Holiday services aren't at peak attention for every prayer, or song, or lesson. We at KJCC are fortunate for many reasons. Very high on that list is the member who happens to be a rabbi and who happens to be willing to lead us on High Holidays. Rabbi Agler has many gifts; perhaps none of them defines him more than his ability to take the complexities of Jewish law and, through his talks and sermons, make them not only accessible but fascinating. As everyone who was here knows, his sermons throughout the High Holidays followed an interwoven trail of ideas and ethics, each building upon the last. With his permission, we reprint the final sermon here, the one from Yom Kippur morning, the one that tied all the ideas and teachings together.

We've traveled a good distance since Rosh Hashanah morning. With the Holocaust as background, we've addressed some not-so-simple questions: "How Could People Do This?" and "How Could

People Let This Be Done?"

Today's may be more challenging yet: "What Does All This—all this human evil—Tell Us About God?" Once again, we won't answer more than partially, and if you like, we can continue the discussion this afternoon.

Let's begin with something slightly easier: What is the hallmark of the Jewish people? What, more than anything else, has defined us through history? There are many ways to answer but if we asked enough people, I'm guessing that "our relationship with God" would get the most votes. According to the Torah, that relationship goes back to Abraham, who entered into a covenant with the "One Almighty." God basically set the terms. Abraham's job was to "walk with God and be righteous." In return, God would bless him and his descendants.

A few generations later, with Moses and the rest of the nation standing at Sinai, the covenant was expanded. We promised to keep the commandments. God, in return, would protect us. So how well has each party been keeping its end of the deal?

As far as we're concerned, the *machzor* outlines in some detail the numerous ways that we have fallen short. We've been reading and repeating them since last night. In fairness though, in many ways we have also been exemplary. God called us to be a "light unto the nations" and believe it or not, many people consider us to be that. Polls in recent years have shown that we Jews are the most admired religious group in America.

Yes! Go ahead and pinch yourself. It's true. Beyond that, Christians and Muslims, no small percentage of the planet's population, have adopted our "One God who demands righteousness" as their own. So let's say that our record is no worse than mixed.

How about God? How well has "He" held up his end of the bargain? Have we received that promised protection? Think of the Holocaust before you answer. More than a few people consider the Shoah to be a deal-

breaker, or, if you will, a covenant-breaker.

But Jews have been dealing with “gaps” in God’s promised protection for a very long time. Since before there were even Rabbis, over 2,000 years ago, Jews were struggling to fathom, in light of whatever the latest rampage, conquest, exile or enslavement may have been, how God could be doing this to us, or at least, letting it happen to us.

The Shoah was unique in many ways. But as far as our relationship with God is concerned, its questions are not new. We’ve been asking them personally, communally and existentially for a long time.

Before going any further let me say the following: I understand that many people become uncomfortable when their personal religious beliefs are disturbed. It is not my intention to upset anyone or anyone’s relationship with God. On the contrary, I like to think I’m here to strengthen it. But if you are comfortable with your understanding of the Divine and you’ve answered questions like these to your own satisfaction, feel free to doze off. It’s a long day. I won’t be offended, I promise.

On the other hand, if you’ve wrestled with these issues, if your relationship with God has its uncertainties, and especially, if the amount of tragedy in the world, past or present, distances you from a more living faith, you might want to come along.

I don’t claim to possess any higher or hidden truth. I only claim to have thought about the matter. Doing so has helped me enormously. Maybe it will for you, too.

Every rabbi in the last seventy years has been asked the question, “How can you-we believe in God after the Shoah?” For many years, my answer was pretty simple, and I thought, pretty good. I said I believed that the Holocaust was not God’s doing, it was our doing. God did not build the gas chambers. God did not murder the children. God did not march with the mobs. God did not fan the hatred. God did not put authoritarians in power. God was not a perpetrator. To blame

God for the Holocaust is a cop out, I said. It was a human endeavor from start to finish.

I was comfortable with that answer. And I still am. But eventually I realized that it was incomplete. Because “How can you believe in God after the Shoah?” is not just a question about who did what to whom, it is a question about that covenant, the one God made with Abraham and then with Moses and the people at Mt. Sinai. It is a question about protection.

And God did not protect us during the Shoah. Certainly not as well as the Allies, who unfortunately did not get their act together until we were 6 million fewer. And if God didn’t protect us then, of all times, what are we to make of that precious Covenant?

Again, it is not a new question. The Holocaust was not the first mass-scale Jewish tragedy. We have had to respond to things of this nature before. Some say we must have been so irredeemably evil that God decided the Shoah would make a fitting punishment. I suppose you can make that case, but I don’t know how many you’ll get to sign on with you. Certainly not me. However many Shabbas candles we didn’t light, whatever *treif* we may have eaten, whatever gossip or *lashon hara* we may have spread, however unethical we may have been personally or professionally, on no conceivable scale of justice does it add up to six million death sentences.

Others have said that God didn’t protect us because God was “hidden” or “eclipsed” during the Holocaust. Frankly, I have no idea what that means. The moon gets eclipsed. The *afikomen* gets hidden. Neither term makes much sense for a God who is supposedly ever-present.

Others say it happened so there would be a State of Israel or so the murdered could be rewarded in heaven. And there are those who say it happened because God is dead or even because there is no God at all.

None of these are satisfactory to me and I’ll explain why in a moment, but for some people they are and again, if you are one of them, I am not here to separate you from

*Jews have
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whatever beliefs keep you going.

But to me, if God is supposed to be the protector and doesn't protect, it doesn't mean that God is hiding, eclipsed or dead. It doesn't mean that there is no God. It doesn't even mean that God wanted it to happen. What it does mean is that God may not work in the way we have imagined.

The idea that God protects His favored ones is in many of our sacred texts. It is in the sacred texts of most religions. The idea predates even the Bible. Our idol worshipping pagan ancestors sacrificed everything from birds to oxen to children in the belief that God, or the gods, would keep them healthy, prosperous and safe in return. That may sound to us like a primitive notion, an idea that maybe had its day — but its day is not today. It may sound like an idea we need to outgrow, like so many others we've had to outgrow in order to reach a more honest understanding of the world around us.

Like the idea that the world was created in six days, or that the earth is at the center of the universe, or that we can tell our fate by looking at the zodiac. What if the idea that God protects his favored ones doesn't stand up to the evidence any better than beliefs like that?

Karen Armstrong, in her book "A History of God," notes that in both individuals and societies, conceptions of God can and do change over time. Making use of Nietzsche's famous phrase, she writes that for many in the modern world, "God is dead. This is not to say that God is really dead, but rather our ideas of God have not evolved...Our view of God has not kept pace with the complex questions the modern world has forced upon us."

Bullseye. In other words, the fact that God did not save us during the Shoah does not mean that God is dead. It may only mean the idea that God physically protects a particular and favored group of people is dead.

I am extremely grateful that my God is

still alive. After Auschwitz, Nagasaki, napalm and 9/11. After cancer, drunk drivers and tsunamis. After it all. Just because God does not supernaturally protect us from such things, righteous and faithful though we be, it does not necessarily follow that God is dead — or that there is no God.

Once again, each of us is free to believe as we choose. Some people say the fact of Jewish survival is evidence that God protects us. I've said that, too. And it may be true on a spiritual-communal level. But it is not really possible to say that it is true physically. Far too many innocent lives have been lost to claim otherwise.

On the other hand, if you believe that God does not protect us by intervening in history, or that maybe God did so in Biblical times but does so no longer, it does not automatically make you an atheist, or even a "bad Jew."

Maimonides, no less, did not make belief in an intervening God one of his 13 core principles of Jewish faith. So you're in good company.

Centuries before Maimonides, and he lived over 800 years ago, the Rabbis of the Talmud wrestled with these same issues. They looked at God in ways with which we may not be familiar. "Olam k'minhago noheg," they said —

"the world follows its rules."

In other words, we cannot expect God to suspend the laws of physics or alter the rules of nature — not to punish the wicked, not even to save the righteous.

Again, this does not mean there is no God. It does mean that whatever God there is, is likely different from the one who makes people ask, "How can you believe in God after the Holocaust?"

If we hope to live with a faith that is living and meaningful, as opposed to merely decorative, we may need to adjust our beliefs. It is far better that we do this than live with a broken faith, with a faith in which we don't have much faith.

Again, our Sages were more than aware of

*Maimonides,
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principles
of faith.*

the rampant unfairness and injustice in the world. They taught things like, “When the forces of destruction are unleashed, they do not distinguish between righteous and wicked.” And, “There is death without sin and suffering with-

out transgression.” They seemed to be under no illusions about God’s ability, or lack thereof, to protect even the best of us.

So, to return to our starting point, “What does the Shoah tell us about God?” Not much that has not been told before. God or no God, evil is real and it is our job, not God’s, to do our best to stop it. That may be the most important communal job we have.

This answer may have made you wonder: If God doesn’t intervene in human affairs, why are we constantly asking God to do so?

It’s a fair question. The *siddur* and *machzor* are filled with prayers that ask God to rearrange the natural order in order save us from it. We ask God to heal our sick, provide for our families and bring peace to the world. Students ask God to help them pass tests for which they haven’t studied. Sports fans ask God to help their team score touchdowns.

We do things like this because we’ve been taught and conditioned to. But this is the kind of faith, and the kind of God, that has a difficult time surviving disappointment, to say nothing of injustice.

The Rabbis were aware of this problem too. They taught, if you are entering your city and see a house burning, do not pray, “Please God, don’t let it be my house.” Whose house it is has already been determined and no prayer can change it. Similarly, if a woman is pregnant, she should not pray, “Please God, let the child be a girl” Or “a boy.” That, too, has already been determined. They called

“When the forces of destruction are unleashed, they do not distinguish between righteous and wicked.”

such prayers *tefilot shav* — vain, ultimately empty prayers. And if we don’t want our faith to fail us, it is best to avoid them and those like them — and the God we may mistakenly believe is at the other end of them.

So why are all those prayers still in the book, Rabbi? Another good question. Maimonides taught that the Torah is written in everyday language for everyday people. It is filled with narrative, parable and metaphor. The wise can distinguish between its higher truths and the veils around them. The simple cannot, but they at least have something to hold on to. But anyone who seriously asks, “How can I believe in God after the Shoah?” deserves an answer intended for the wise, not the simple.

We have all noticed the supplementary readings that fill our *machzor* — and most *machzorim*. They are also in our year-round *siddur*. These readings, chosen by the editors from our vast tradition, do not usually speak of a protecting or an intervening God. They speak instead about the holiness that can be found in each of us and what we can do to strengthen it within and spread it beyond. We consider that holiness a manifestation of the Divine Spirit, a.k.a God.

It’s an open secret that most of us do not believe that God will alter the laws of nature on

Maimonides taught that the Torah is written in everyday language for everyday people.

our behalf just because we’ve asked nicely. We have too much experience to the contrary. We do a disservice, to our personal faith and to our spiritual lives when we say prayers we don’t really believe. Faith is far too important to treat that way.

So once more, “What does the Holocaust tell us about God?” It tells us that God is not the sea-splitting, lightning bolt-throwing, Pharaoh-crushing superhero we find in so many Bible stories. But God can be found, before, during and after the Shoah, in the spirit of holiness

that lives within us and around us, in the spirit that calls us to live righteously, kindly and even heroically, in the spirit that says, repair the world and refine your selves.

This God may not intervene, but this God empowers. This God places responsibility for our lives, and the life of the planet, in our own two hands. This God is also a long way from

dead. And we are grateful for that.

After the Holocaust, after every horror that has ever been and after the ones that are yet to be, having faith in what is right and working to make the right real may well be the only thing that can save us.

May this Divine Spirit seal us with blessing in the new year. *G'mar tov* and *l'shana tovah*. ◇

“Be a B'racha”

Each year during the afternoon break of Yom Kippur, Rabbi Agler offers the small group who remains something he calls “fast talks.” This year he spoke of the poetry of Leonard Cohen, and then...to the tune of Cohen’s “Hallelujah,” sang (in his own unique way) his own special lyrics for the song, written from his rabbinic perspective and accompanied by co-conspirator Dave Feder. We thought you’d enjoy seeing the lyrics. Sing along if you know the melody.

Now I've heard there was a secret cave
Where Rashbi hid for many days
And thought he heard God sayin', "Overthrow,
yeah."
He looked to the left
And looked to the right
Then burned down everything in sight,
"Back to the cave 'til you become a b'racha."
Be a b'racha. (4x)

Hate comes from fear we all
can see
It has a home in you and me
That we need to, find a way
to, overcome yeah.
And those who say “Let’s
march and arm”
Are those who do the great-
est harm
Better that we, get some
hope and, be a
b'racha.
Be a b'racha. (4x)



We've thought about the refugees
And how they've crossed the seven seas
Just looking for a safe place to call home yeah.
And since we shouted “Never again”
We will stand up and not abstain
As together, us and them, become a b'racha.
Be a b'racha. (4x)

I'm not here to lie, it's pretty tough
The game of life can get quite rough
And that's the truth, even
when they say they
love ya.
But in the end the
question, Jew,
Is what does God want
me to do?
The answer: find a way
to be a b'racha.
Be a b'racha. (4x)



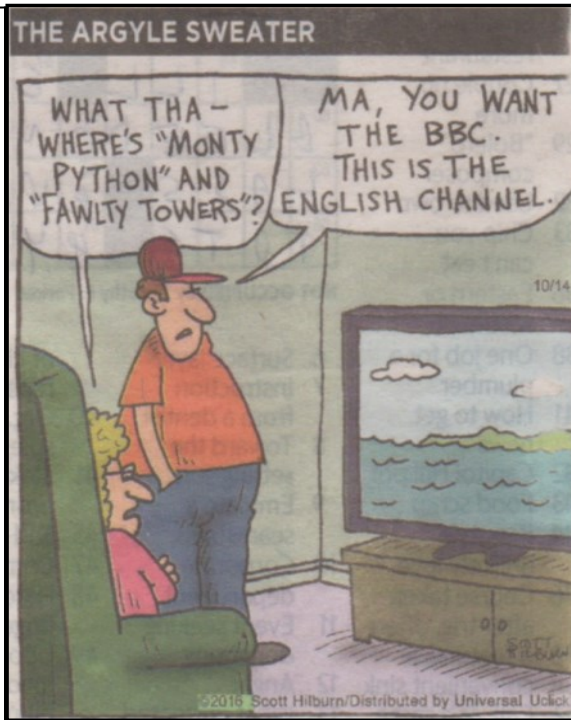
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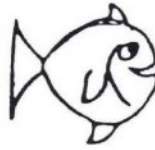
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