

Local man leads simple life; leaves millions to college

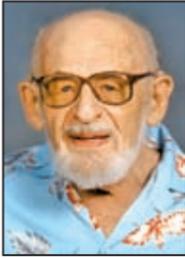
By **BRUCE LOWITT**
Jewish Press

All it took was a visit 18 years ago – the only visit Seymour Bluestone ever made to Brandeis University – to convince him that the university in Waltham, MA., was where he wanted to establish his legacy.

It began when Bluestone, a retired pediatrician born in Brooklyn, made some small gifts to the school in the 1990s at the request of family friends. In 2001 he created the Jesse F. and Dora H. Bluestone Scholarship in his parents' memory.

And when he died Sept. 29 at age 96, he left the university an \$8.4-million bequest.

"He was so frugal. He wouldn't spend a dime on himself," said Merrienne Sotnick, a neighbor, friend and retired hospice nurse. "He had old shoes. He had an old jacket. I said, 'Can we buy a new jacket?' He said, 'There's no need. I'm



Seymour Bluestone

going to be gone before I can use it.' We had no idea how much money he had. He lived almost like a pauper."

The Sotnicks, Chris and Merrienne, lived in the apartment next to Bluestone's at the Hampton, a senior residence in Clearwater, for his last six years (he had moved in four years earlier).

"He was already 90 but pretty okay when we first met him," she said. "He got around without the need for a walker. He'd work out daily on an exercise bicycle but

MILLIONS continued on PAGE 8

Jewish Press of Pinellas County

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VOL. 32, NO. 14

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA ☆ FEBRUARY 9 - 22, 2018

16 PAGES

Pinellas/Pasco Jewish community is all over the map

By **BOB FRYER**
Jewish Press

The Jews of Pinellas and Pasco counties are everywhere and nowhere.

When people consider moving here, it is not unusual for them to call Jewish institutions here and ask, "Where are the Jewish neighborhoods?"

Those of us already here know that the answer is "there aren't any" – at least none with really high concentrations of Jews like we remember back home in Skokie, the Lower East Side or on vacation in Miami Beach.

There are about 23,450 Jews living in Pinellas County and 4,450 in Pasco County. Over the two-county area, Jews comprise just 1.9 percent of the total population, slightly below the national average of 2.1 percent.

While some neighborhoods do have higher concentrations of Jewish households, the recently completed *2017 Pinellas/Pasco Jewish Population Study* concluded that "the Jewish population of Pinellas/Pasco is geographically dispersed and that there is no 'core area' of Jewish settlement" here. No similar demographics study has been done in Hillsborough County.

The point of the study was not to learn what Jews here already knew, but to determine just how many Jews are out there, where we live, how "Jewish" we are in terms of synagogue membership

MAP continued on PAGE 10

How the study was done

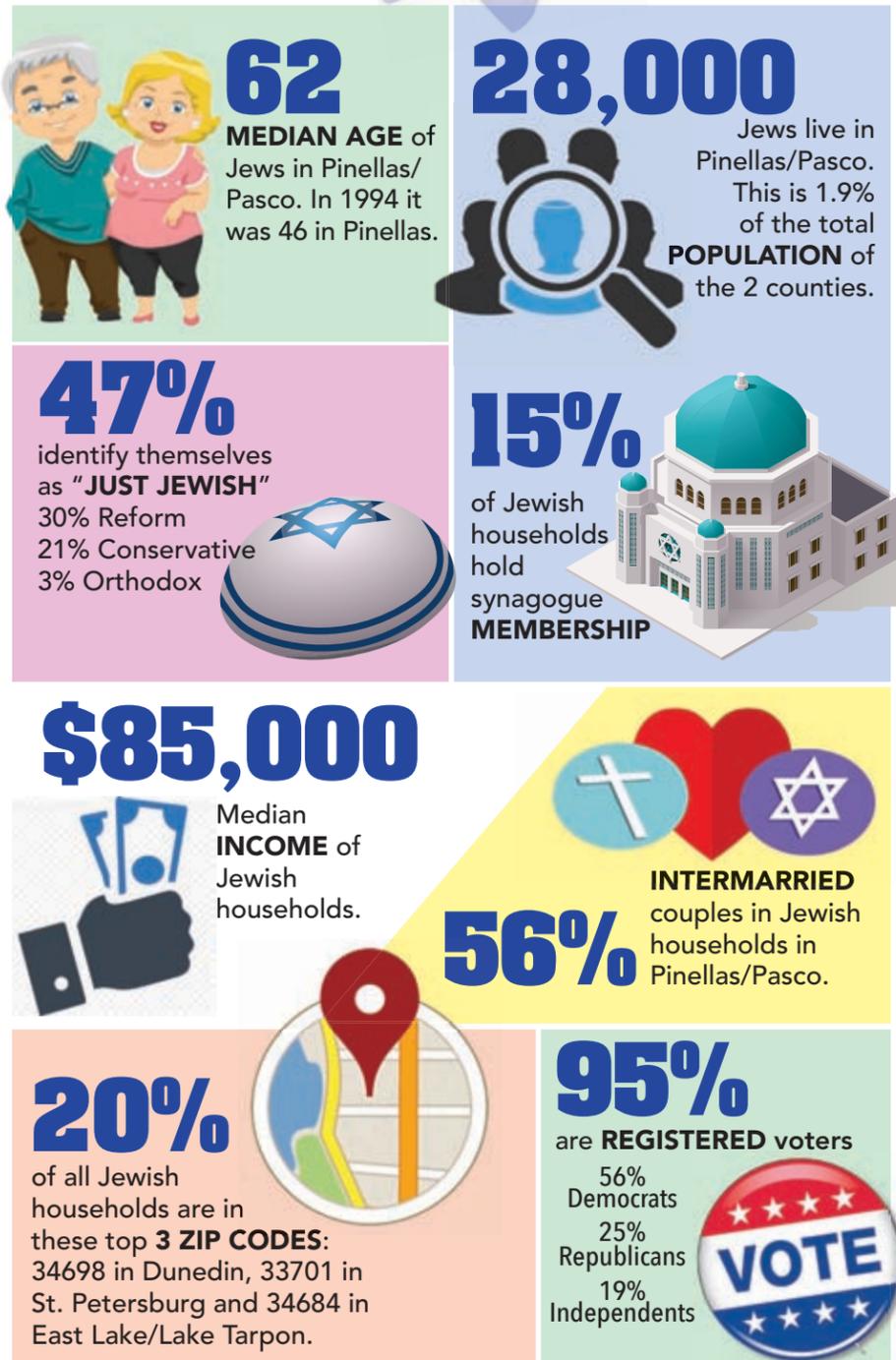
It took 230,000 phone calls to more than 70,000 phone numbers to complete the *2017 Pinellas/Pasco Jewish Population Study* conducted over a three-month period by a staff under the direction of University of Miami Department of Geography chair Ira Sheskin.

The calls were done using a "random digit dialing" method. Also used were call lists from the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties and calls to phone numbers in published phone directories of those with distinctive Jewish names. The effort resulted in 550 interviews of people in Jewish households. Of the 550 completed interviews, 192 were from randomly dialed numbers, 302 from the Federation call list and 56 from those called because

STUDY continued on PAGE 9

Who We Are*

PINELLAS AND PASCO JEWISH COMMUNITY



*Source: 2017 Pinellas/Pasco Jewish Population Study.

The Jewish Press Group of Tampa Bay, Inc.
Jewish Press of Pinellas County
P. O. Box 6970
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Compiled from JTA news service

Putin inherits former teacher's apartment in Tel Aviv

JERUSALEM – Russian President Vladimir Putin is now the proud owner of an apartment in downtown Tel Aviv. He inherited the 1½-bedroom apartment from his former high school German teacher, Mina Yuditskaya Berliner, who died in December at 96, Ynet reported. Berliner left the apartment to Putin via the Russian Embassy. It was Putin, in fact, who bought the apartment for her in 2005.

Berliner immigrated to Israel from the Soviet Union in 1973. But she had followed her former student's rise through the political ranks in Russia. According to Ynet, Putin and his teacher were reunited in 2005, when the Russian president visited Israel. She had asked the Russian Embassy whether she could attend a reception in Putin's honor. Afterward he invited her to have tea with him in private.

A short time later, Berliner, who was a widow, began receiving gifts from the Russian president: a watch and Putin's autographed 2000 biography. Then an employee of the Russian government showed up at her doorstep and took her to see some apartments in the center of Tel Aviv, she told Ynet. "Putin is a very grateful and decent person," Berliner said at the time.

The Russian Embassy sent a representative to the funeral and covered the costs of her burial, Ynet reported.

JCC bomb hoaxer briefly escapes Israeli police custody

The American-Israeli man charged with making hundreds of bomb threats to Jewish community centers in the United States – including two JCC preschools in Tampa – briefly escaped from police custody in Israel.

The computer hacker, Michael Kadar, 19, from Ashkelon in southern Israel, attended a hearing in Jerusalem District Court on Monday, Feb. 5. Following the hearing, he was taken to an interrogation and detention center in Jerusalem. After exiting a police car, Kadar managed to loosen a leg shackle, push away the security officer accompanying him and make a run for it, according to reports. He was chased for a short time, tackled and then returned to custody.

Kadar was arrested in Israel in March 2017 in a joint operation with the FBI. He has been charged in both Israel and the U.S. According to the indictments, Kadar made threats to 2,000 institutions around the world, including the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., and other Israeli diplomatic missions, JCCs, schools, malls, police stations, hospitals and airlines. The offenses charged include publishing false information, causing panic, computer hacking and money laundering.

The *Jerusalem Post* reported that the U.S. has backed away from seeking the hoaxer's extradition, but may seek to have him extradited and tried in the U.S. after he finishes his trial in Israel.

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Ticket Contest
See inside for details.

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Meet Lily Wible,

rising 1st grader and returning camper at the Jewish Community Camp. Lily's looking forward to her best summer ever this year with her camp friends, and plans to fully immerse herself in challah-baking, Israeli dance, Color War, and pursuing the ever-popular fandanas!



*Campaign officially began October 28, 2017.

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Did you know? The 2nd annual Jewish Community Camp offers a full season of fun activities that emphasize community-building: personally, through the pursuit of the camp's core values; within the camp in creating friendships; and in the broader world through a host of mitzvah-making and volunteer activities.

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- Feb 25. Tampa Bay Jewish Food Festival & Purim Carnival
- Mar 10. YAD Purim Pub Crawl

- Mar 11. Congregation B'nai Israel Chaivana Nights Gala
- Mar 13. Community Women's Seder
- Mar 20. YAD Happy Hour, Safety Harbor
- Mar 20-25. Tampa Bay Jewish Film Festival
- Mar 24. Gulf Coast Golf Like a Rock Star

- Apr 13. YAD Shabbat at Home, Land O'Lakes
- Apr 15. Jewish Heritage Festival Israel@70
- Apr 22. YAD Mini-Golf Outing
- Apr 29. Sonya Miller Women of Distinction
- May 12. YAD Lag B'Omer Boat Bash

Young Adult Division (YAD) Event: See facebook.com/pinellasyad for full details

» THROUGH FEDERATION YOU CAN DO GOOD EVERYWHERE. FROM ANYWHERE.

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MARCH 9
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Jewish Press

of PINELLAS COUNTY • Established in 1986

An independent, bi-weekly newspaper owned by
THE JEWISH PRESS GROUP of TAMPA BAY, INC.
Also publisher of the Jewish Press of Tampa
www.jewishpresspinellas.com

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The Jewish Press of Pinellas County is a privately owned, community newspaper published in cooperation with the Jewish Federation of Pinellas & Pasco Counties. The Federation underwrites home delivery to every identified Jewish household in Pinellas County (approx. 4,500), to promote Jewish community cohesiveness and identity.

THE FEDERATION MAINTAINS THE MAILING LIST FOR THE JEWISH PRESS.

To RECEIVE THE PAPER or for ADDRESS CHANGES,

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The Jewish Press is mailed STANDARD CLASS. Standard Class DOES NOT include a speedy delivery guarantee. Date of delivery varies depending on your individual post office.
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What do immune systems and vending machines have in common?

The only time we're expecting change is when we're standing in front of a vending machine. It's an old – and admittedly corny – joke, and I've used it as it relates to our community's demographic study results, our shifting mindset regarding Jewish communal institutions, and even in a recent change to the Federation's team.

Change is hard because as humans we cling to a reality we've constructed as something solid and everlasting. We tend to make sense of things – true or not – in a way that's reassuring, resilient, and remarkably strategic in managing our own anxiety. I personally find comfort in reading up on any topic that's potentially disruptive. Others might find their own safe place in consulting with friends, journaling, or even the tried-and-true head-in-the-sand method.

I've been re-reading the book *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization* to gain fresh perspective on what the changing landscape of our Jewish community might mean at the micro and macro levels. I first read the book last summer as a means of personal development and worked on a goal of becoming more engaged in real-time conversations at work and in my personal life. (True confession: I struggle to enjoy telephone conversations.) The model that authors Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey present is a refreshing take on how we become enmeshed in habits and mindsets that prevent our own positive change: we have an alternate "immune system" that helps us manage the anxiety of our deepest fears in our day-to-day behaviors.

The authors base their premise on solid research (done by them and others) on the theory of adult mental development, spanning across three major plateaus that experience and diligence may or may not cultivate. As young adults, most of us operate from a "socialized mind" in which we're seeking direction, expressing loyalty, and framing our own identities by membership within a group. Some go on to transition to a "self-authoring mind," which is characterized by independence and a recognition that we can truly author our own stories (and play a starring role!). The final stretch that even fewer achieve is the "self-transforming mind" in which an individual can hold contradictory truths, seeks interdependence with the world around, and learns through leading.

As the title suggests, the concept is true for individuals and organizations (and in our case, a community). I'm fascinated with applying this logic to the community at large, and discovering our collective immunity to change, and I invite you to email me your thoughts about the following questions.

PERSPECTIVE

Emilie Socash
Executive Director, Jewish Federation of Pinellas & Pasco Counties



What's our collective improvement goal?

Do we have internal patterns that are not serving us well (like back office tasks handled inefficiently, or breakdowns in communication) or are we facing an opportunity to take a macro perspective and see how dependent we are on one another? Collectively, should we be more grassroots, more collaborative, more entrepreneurial, more welcoming? Perhaps less siloed, less predictive on what affiliation means, less hard on ourselves for our history?

What are our behaviors that are contrary to our improvement goal?

After determining one big goal, looking introspectively and honestly, our community can next list concrete behaviors that prevent our success. For example, if our goal is to be tremendously welcoming to all, we might look to see how we advertise programs (Do we specify programs are open to all?), or how fast our response time is on our "New to Town?" form on the Federation's website. We might find that newbies would benefit from a Welcome Wagon visit or a newcomer's brunch that we have not prioritized. We might also find some difficult truths: maybe we have taken actions that are not welcoming at all!

What are our competing commitments?

This is where my personal immunity-to-change map became difficult, and I believe would also be complex at the community level. Here we consider what our commitments to collective self-protection are. At this stage, we ask ourselves a really hard question: What would happen if we did the opposite of behaviors we identified in the last step?

Let's say we find that we aren't clear in our advertising that our programs are truly open to all. We might ask ourselves what would happen if we listed everyone who we wanted to welcome (including intermarried families, those with adopted kids, those who are not Jewish but interested, same-sex couples, and so forth). We might find, together, that we are committed to making sure that our already-affiliated are comfortable and that we don't risk alienating them!

What's our collective big assumption?

The final step in the process doesn't even approach action but rather goes deeper into the "big why" behind what we do. On my personal immunity to change process last year, I surfaced some significant fears about how likeable I am and how intelligent I am perceived to be. At this point, we'd find a point at which we can impact and alter our system of activity rather than being held captive by it. The big assumption is the fear or feeling driving all that we do. Circling back to our welcoming-com-

munity example, we might unearth a deep sense of overwhelming duty to the future of the Jewish people, and that our strong future rests on a view of what Jewish identity looks like that's rather proscriptive.

Change is hard, but a thoughtful approach offers a sense of growth in complexity, in richness, in experience, and I am hopeful that we can build our own immune system in such a way that it purposefully serves us, together. In your estimation, what's our top-priority community change opportunity?

Liked it? Loathed it? Want to react? I would welcome your feedback and can be reached at emilie@jewishpinellas.org.

Trump: Jerusalem declaration high point of presidency

(JTA) – President Donald Trump told an Israeli newspaper that his Dec. 6 declaration recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital was the high point of his time in office.

Replying to a question by Israel Hayom editor-in-chief Boaz Bismuth on whether Israel would have to give something in return for the declaration, Trump said both Israel and the Palestinians would need to compromise significantly to achieve peace.

Calling Jerusalem "your wonderful capital," he added in the interview that its recognition as Israel's capital was very important for many people whom Trump said thanked him. Trump described the move as an important promise he made and kept.

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Cong. B'nai Israel St. Petersburg

Purim: Erev Purim service will be on Wednesday, Feb. 28 at 6:30 p.m. followed by a family Megillah reading and traditional Megillah reading. Service will include an all-ages costume parade. Young families are encouraged to arrive at 5 p.m. for a Young Families Purim Dinner (\$5 per family) and Early Childhood Purim Spiel prior to the Megillah reading. All attendees are invited to stay for a dessert reception.

Adults are invited to stay after the Megillah reading for Purim After Hours, which will feature a Persian-style nosh and L'Hayim. Cost is \$10 per person.

RSVP to **Maureen Sechan** at dll@cbistpete.org or (727) 381-4900 ext. 1011 for the Young Families dinner and Purim After Hours.

On Thursday, March 1, the 7:45 a.m. minyan also will include the Megillah reading and a Purim L'Hayim.

Shabbat Hazzanut: Celebrate Shabbat on Saturday, March 3 with liturgical compositions by famed cantor and composer Hazzan Adolph Katchko in a full rendition of Musaf by **Cantor Jonathan Schultz**. Known as a cantor of the "Golden Age of Virtuoso Artistes Cantorial Art," Hazzan Katchko was a luminary as well as a pioneer in presenting cantorial music as a serious liturgical art form.

Rosh Hodesh group: "Relationships in the Torah" is the topic of discussion in this women-only program on Sunday, Feb. 18 at 10:30 a.m. This group meets in different congregant's homes each month. For details, contact the synagogue office.

Talmud Made Easy: On Tuesday, Feb. 20 at 5 p.m., **Steve Wein** will lead a study of Talmudic text and selected commentaries. All materials will be provided. The class involves textual analysis, lively discussion and is open to all. The class is free; no previous knowledge is needed. Contact synagogue office at (727) 381-4900 or info@cbistpete.org for details.

Chabad of St. Petersburg

Purim Masquerade Party: There will be a Megillah reading, masquerade party, music, cocktails and treats at the Chabad center on Wednesday, Feb. 28th at 7 p.m. The event is free. RSVP to www.ChabadSP.com

Women's Book Club: Chaya Korf leads a roundtable discussion every Tuesday from 10:30-11:30 a.m., into the book for this year, *Towards a Meaningful Life*, by Simon Jacobson. The group will share strategies for not only discovering where your true meaning lies, but also in actually making it a part

Congregations

of your daily life. Coffee, fruit and homemade pastries will be served at these free sessions. Walk-ins are welcome. RSVP to Chaya@ChabadSP.com.

Camp Gan Israel: Registration is open for Camp Gan Israel, a four-week day camp. Activities include sports, games, crafts, dramatics and trips. The staff will help kids develop skills, confidence and a sense of fair play. The camp runs from June 25 to July 20 with optional before and after care. There will be three divisions of campers, Explorers, Trailblazers and Pioneers. One can register for a week, any individual weeks, or the whole summer. Weekly rates can be as low as \$150 for Trailblazers and Explorers, and \$165 for Pioneers. Tuition includes all field trips and activities. Additional discounts apply for returning campers signing up for the entire summer, for first-time campers and a special offer of only \$25 for the first week of camp. Further details can be found at MyJewishCamp.org or contact the Chabad center at (727) 344-4900.

Temple Beth-El St. Petersburg

Torah on Tap: Young professionals, Gen X, Gen Y and millennials are invited to monthly meet-ups to grab a nosh and a drink and have a conversation with **Rabbi Michael Torop** about Judaism. The next get together will be Wednesday, March 7 at St. Pete Brewing Company, 544 First Ave. N., St. Petersburg.

One for the SAGES: The SAGE (Seniors for Arts, Growth and Education) group will meet on Monday, Feb. 19 at 11 a.m. in the all-purpose room. **Federal Senior Judge Jon O. Newman** of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit will speak. Judge Newman was chief judge from 1993-1997. He was recently honored with the 2016 Edward J. Devitt Distinguished Service to Justice Award and published his autobiography, *Benched: Abortion, Terrorists, Drones, Crooks, Supreme Court, Kennedy, Nixon, Demi Moore, and Other Tales from the Life of a Federal Judge*.

In addition **Marjorie Friedman** will lead a discussion titled "Adventures in Travel." Come and share your unusual, outstanding, or meaningful travel adventures.

Lunch will be \$8 or you can bring your own for free. RSVP to **Pamela Siskin** at prsiskin@gmail.com.

Shabbat on the block: Celebrate Shabbat at the home of a congregational family on Friday, Feb.

23 at 6:30 p.m. After joining together in the candle lighting, kiddush and hamotzee, there will be a pot-luck dinner, then regular Shabbat services will be held at the temple. For location of the home, more information and to RSVP, contact **Jillian** at jillian.bandes@bandes-const.com or call (727) 433-1613.

Save the date: The annual Sunday Morning University, a one-day adult learning program with experts in various fields speaking, will be hosted at Temple Beth-El on Sunday, March 4 at 9 a.m. in conjunction with Congregation B'nai Israel of St. Petersburg. There will be multiple speakers and many opportunities for mental and spiritual growth. Pre-register by e-mailing your information to info@templebeth-el.com.

Cong. Beth Shalom Gulfport

Flea market: The congregation's semi-annual indoor flea market will be held on Feb. 15, Feb. 16, Feb. 18 and Feb. 19. The flea market opens at 8 a.m. each day. There will be furniture, jewelry, clothes – both new and gently used – electronics and household items. Everything must go. For more information, call **Marlene** at (727) 866-7330 or **Sandy** at (727) 348-4406.

Temple B'nai Israel Clearwater

Purim dinner and spiel: Enjoy a '60s and '70s themed Purim spiel on Wednesday Feb. 28 with dinner at 6 p.m. and the show at 7 p.m. The Purim spiel will be filled with comedy and original songs. Cost is \$10 per person or \$20 per family. Reservations are required by calling the temple, (727) 531-5829.

Blue Jean Shabbat: Welcome Shabbat in casual attire, a relaxed atmosphere and a live band on Friday, March 2 at 7:30 p.m.

Fashion sale: Cabi clothing will present its spring and summer collections on Sunday, March 4 from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tuesday, March 6 from noon to 3 p.m. and Thursday, March 9 from 5-8 p.m. Stop by and see what's new.

Cinema café: On Sunday, March 4 at 1 p.m. enjoy a showing of *The Human Resources Manager*, an Israeli dramedy centered on the HR manager of a large bakery who is on a mission to restore his company's reputation. Popcorn and non-alcoholic beverages are provided. There is no charge for members and friends.

Theater excursion: The Adults at Leisure group will take in a play on Sunday March 4 at 2

p.m. when they travel to the Francis Wilson Playhouse for a matinee of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *C Carousel*. Tickets are \$26 and can be reserved by calling the theater at (727) 446-1360. For more information call **Linda Goldman** at (727) 536-7076

Trivia Night: Tickets are now on sale for Trivia Night on Saturday, April 21 at 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$36 for adults and \$18 for kids. Tickets include dinner and two drinks.

Trip to Israel: Registration is now open for a trip to Israel from June 9-19, led by **Rabbi Daniel Treiser**. For more information, visit arazworld.com

Bible study: Explore the Second Book of Samuel and discover a unique period of Jewish history. Rabbi Daniel Treiser leads the classes on Wednesdays from 7-8 p.m. There is no fee for members; \$30 for non-members for the year.

Sunday funday: Preschoolers and their parents can enjoy playtime on Sunday, Feb. 25 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. when the children can play in the kid's center and experience the second annual Tampa Bay Jewish Food Festival. Non-members are welcome. Call the temple office for full schedule and pricing information at (727) 531-5829.

Adult playtime: Play mah jongg, Mexican Train Dominoes or Bridge on Thursdays at 1 p.m. Join active seniors and play the game of your choice. Coffee and cake is served. For more information, contact **Linda White** at linda33217@gmail.com or (727) 688-0626.

Cong. Beth Shalom Clearwater

Purim gala: The congregation will celebrate its sixth annual Purim Gala Cabaret on Saturday, March 10, beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the synagogue's "nightclub." **Kathy and Michael Sobel** will be honored at this Great Gatsby themed party. The evening will include an original Irving Berlin musical show by **Joni Klein Higger**, silent auction, cocktails, dinner and dancing to the Great American Songbook tunes interpreted by Paul Wilborn & The Blue Roses. Cost is \$136 per person. For more information or to RSVP, call the CBS office at 727 531-1418 or email: bookkeeper@cbclearwater.org.

Talmud classes: On Mondays and most Wednesdays, explore ancient legal tradition with **Dr. Priscilla Nathanson**. The class is open to all levels of knowledge. The Monday class is held after minyan from 10-11:15 a.m. and the Wednesday class is at 7 p.m. Con-

Shabbat Candle Lighting Times



Feb. 16 • 6:04 pm
Feb. 23 • 6:09 pm
March 2 • 6:14 pm
March 9 • 6:18 pm

RABBINICALLY — SPEAKING —

has been replaced this edition with a special first-person account by Rabbi David Weizman of Congregation Beth Shalom in Clearwater of his recent trip to Guatemala with the American Jewish World Service's Global Justice Fellowship program.
See story, page 15.

tact the synagogue office to confirm dates of the classes.

Lox & Learn: Led by **Rabbi David Weizman**, explore the weekly Torah portion every Thursday following minyan. Breakfast begins at 9:45 a.m. and the study session at 10 a.m.

Haftarot study: This study will be led by **Johanna Bromberg** in the synagogue library on Wednesday, Feb. 21 at 10 a.m.

Torah study: Take part in an interactive conversation about the weekly Torah portion, incorporating both historical and contemporary reference material on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 12:30 p.m. with **Jason Palmer**. Everyone is welcome.

Chabad of Clearwater

Mega hamantasch bake: A family hamantaschen baking session will take place at the Chabad center on Sunday, Feb. 18 at 1 p.m. as a pre-Purim event. The cost is \$7 per child and includes lunch, games and arts and crafts. Bring aprons and rolling pins.

Megillah & more: A Purim bash including Megillah reading, music, drinks and refreshments will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 28, beginning at 6:45 p.m. There is no charge and all are welcome.

Sports themed Purim party: On Thursday, March 1, "Purim in the Stadium" will be held at the Clearwater Chabad. The event will get underway at 4 p.m. with activities including sports, free throw competition, moon bounce, snow cones and of course, hamantashen and Lechaim. Participants will be able to meet and take photos

• CONTINUED on NEXT PAGE

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PINELLAS COUNTY Reform

Temple AHAVAT SHALOM — 1575 Curlew Rd., Palm Harbor, 34683 • Rabbi Gary Klein • Services: Friday: 7:30 p.m., First Friday: 6 p.m., Saturday: traditional service third week of the month. 9 a.m., call for other service times • Telephone: (727) 785-8811 • Website: www.ahavatshalom.org • Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism

Temple BETH-EL — 400 S. Pasadena Ave., St. Petersburg 33707 • Rabbi Michael Torop • Services: Friday 7:30 p.m., Saturday, service and Torah study, 10 a.m. • Telephone: (727) 347-6136 • Website: www.templebeth-el.com • Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism

Congregation B'NAI EMMUNAH — 57 Read St., Tarpon Springs, 34689 • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1312, Tarpon Springs, 34688 • Rabbi Lynn Goldstein • Services: Friday: 7:30 p.m. • Torah study Saturday, 10:30 a.m. • Telephone: (727) 938-9000 • Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism

Temple B'NAI ISRAEL — 1685 S. Belcher Road, Clearwater, 33764 • Rabbi Daniel Treiser • cantorial soloist, Laura Berkson • Services: Friday, 7:30 p.m. • Telephone: (727) 531-5829 • Website: www.TBclearwater.org • Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism

Conservative

Congregation BETH SHALOM — 1325 S. Belcher Road, Clearwater 33764 • Rabbi David Weizman • Rabbi Danielle Upbin, associate • Services: Friday: 6:30 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m., Sunday 9 a.m., Mon. & Thurs 8:30 a.m.

• Telephone: (727) 531-1418 • Website: www.cbclearwater.org • Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Congregation BETH SHOLOM — 1844 54th St. S., Gulfport 33707 • Cantor David Wicentowski • Services: Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. • Telephone: (727) 321-3380 • Website: sholomgulfport.org • Unaffiliated.

Congregation B'NAI ISRAEL — 300 58th St. N., St. Petersburg 33710 • Rabbi Jacob Luski • Cantor Jonathan Schultz • Services: Friday 6:00 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m., Mon. - Fri. 7:45 a.m., Sun. 9 a.m.; evening minyan, 6:30 p.m. • Telephone: (727) 381-4900 • Website: www.cbistpete.org • Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Orthodox

CHABAD of CLEARWATER — 2280 Belleair Road, Clearwater, 33764 • Rabbi Levi Hodakov • Services: Call for information on Friday service times, Sunday, 9:30 a.m., men only • Telephone: (727) 265-2770 • Website: www.JewishClearwater.com • email: rabi18@gmail.com.

CHABAD JEWISH CENTER OF GREATER ST. PETERSBURG — 4010 Park St. N., St. Petersburg 33709 • Rabbi Alter Korf • Services: Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Shacharit, Mon.-Thurs., 7:15 a.m., Torah study at 10:30 a.m. on Sturday, Sun., 8 a.m.; • Telephone: (727) 344-4900 • Website: www.chabadsp.com.

CHABAD of PINELLAS COUNTY — 3696 Fisher Road, Palm Harbor, 34683 • Rabbi Pinchas Adler • Services: Friday, 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. • Telephone: (727) 789-0408 • Website: Yichabad.com.

PASCO COUNTY Conservative

BETH TEFILLAH/JCC OF WEST PASCO — 9841 Scenic Drive, Port Richey, 34668 • Ron Becker and Elliot Shapiro, spiritual leaders • Services: Friday, 7:30 p.m., Saturday, 9:30 a.m. • Telephone: (727) 847-3814 • website: jewishcommunitycenterofwestpasco.com • Email at: Eileenhochstadt13005@gmail.com • Unaffiliated

Orthodox

CHABAD OF WEST PASCO — Rabbi Yossi Eber • 10733 Maple Creek Dr., Suite 101, Trinity, FL 34655 • Services: Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; class: 10 a.m., • Telephone: (727) 376-3366 • Website: www.ChabadWP.org • email: info@chabadwp.org

HERNANDO COUNTY Reform

Temple BETH DAVID — 13158 Antelope St., Spring Hill • Rabbi Paul Schreiber • Shabbat Services: Friday, 7:30 p.m., third Friday traditional service, 7:30 p.m. • Saturday, 10 a.m. • Telephone: (352) 686-7034 • Website: www.tbdf.org. Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism.

Orthodox

CHABAD SPRING HILL — 13576 Hunters Point St, Spring Hill, 34609 • Rabbi Chaim Lipszyc • Services: Monthly First Friday call for times Telephone: (352) 600-2779 • Website: chabadsspringhill.com

Pride Parade in Israel

The first few months of my stay here, I asked people about places to go and things to see, looking for something exciting. Of course, I kept hearing about St. Petersburg and Tampa, but one thing that came up again and again was Gasparilla, the Pirate Parade.

So a few weeks ago, it finally happened, and all these questions about the parade started popping up in my head. I was curious to know what the whole fuss IS about. Apparently, it is the third largest parade in the United States with approximately 300,000 participants. It got me thinking: Is there a parade of similar scale to Gasparilla in Israel? And the answer is yes, the Pride Parade.

The Pride Parade in Israel has been held every year since 1998, in Tel Aviv during the month of June. It has become one of the main symbols in the struggle for visibility and demand for equality for the LGBT population and many people come from throughout Israel and from all around the world to enjoy the atmosphere of the festival and the unique street celebration.

It is the biggest Pride Parade on the Asian continent and last year was the biggest parade ever held in Israel with over 200,000 participants, many of them tourists who came to enjoy this unique Middle Eastern experience. Songs in Arabic, Hebrew and English emphasize the liberalism and pluralism that Tel Aviv is so famous for. The parade is along the city's fabulous coastline, while thousands of dancers flood the streets. By the way, according to a survey that was held a week after the last parade, one third of the participants were heterosexual, making this event a big celebration for every person who just wants to take part in a huge summer rave.

Unfortunately, all over the Middle East, this kind of public event is prohibited and Tel Aviv was the first city in the Middle East to facilitate and celebrate the Pride

Mor About Israel

Yael Mor

Israel Shlichah (Emissary)



Parade events. Since then, other cities joined the trend and there have been attempts to have more parades elsewhere, like in Jerusalem and Be'er Sheva.

LGBT rights are the result of a gradual process shared by the Knesset (Israel's Parliament), the Government (especially the attorney general) and the court. It started in 1988 when many laws and regulations, which were discriminating based on sexual orientation, were cancelled. Israel became the first in Asia to recognize unregistered cohabitation between same-sex couples, making it the first country in Asia to recognize any same-sex union. Having said that, same-sex couples are not allowed to marry in Israel under the Rabbanut (also known as Chief Rabbinate of Israel – recognized by law as the supreme rabbinic and spiritual authority for Judaism in Israel), but Israel does recognize same-sex marriages performed elsewhere. The couple will be registered on the identity cards as married, and they will have equal rights for inheritance purposes, economic benefits, etc.

Today, regarding personal rights, there is a prohibition of general discrimination in Israel, and according to the law, LGBT couples are entitled to the same rights as heterosexual couples. The main gaps that exist today relevant to rights are related to personal and family status such as adoption, surrogacy and joint parenting. Latest law changes in regarding the LGBT community happened just last month, in January 2018 when the Health



Marchers in a Pride Parade in Israel.

Ministry approved new regulations allowing gay and bisexual men to donate blood, regardless of when they last had sexual intercourse, just like straight men.

Tel Aviv has been referred to by publishers numerous times as one of the most gay-friendly cities in the world and earned the nickname of "The gay capital of the Middle East." According to LGBT travelers, it was ranked as the best gay city in the world for several years now. The estimate by officials in Tel Aviv is that 25 percent of its population is gay, which means that about 105,000 people in the city identify as LGBT.

As it seems, some dancing in the sun with a cold beer in one hand can be a unique escape in such a delicate region. The gay pride parade shows the diversity of Israel's society – like all the colors of the rainbow. It's a magnificent sight, so what do you say? See you there next June?

Yael Mor's yearlong visit to the community is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties. She can be reached at (727) 530-3223 or by email at yael@jewishpinellas.org

Congregations

• CONTINUED from PREVIOUS PAGE

with the Tampa Bay Lightning's mascot ThunderBug. Dress in your favorite sports costume and win Lightning tickets. There will be a Megillah reading at 5 p.m. followed by dinner featuring stadium-style cuisine.

Cost is \$10 per child. RSVP by Feb. 25 online @ JewishClearwater.com or call: (727) 265-2770

For women only: The author of the book, *Thank You G-d for Making Me a Woman*, Rabbi Aaron L. Raskin will be the guest speaker at Chabad of Clearwater on Sunday, Feb. 25 at 9:30 a.m. Rabbi Raskin aims to show that it is a mistaken belief that Judaism values the male contribution to its daily liturgy and life more than the female. His book lays out traditional observance and new scholarship on the Jewish woman's role, which shows it's essential.

All Jewish women in the community are invited to attend. Admission is \$10 and sponsors \$180. RSVP online @ JewishClearwater.com or call: 727-265-2770.

Torah and tea: Rebbetzin Miriam Hodakov leads a "Torah and Tea" exclusively for women on Wednesdays at 11:15 a.m. There is no charge to attend. RSVP to MiriamHodakov@gmail.com or (727) 265-2770.

Pray, eat, watch video: On Sundays from 9-10 a.m., feed your body and soul with a bagel and lox plus tefillin. Afterward there will be a short video presentation. There is no charge and everyone is welcome.

Study groups: Probe the ideas and issues presented in each week's Torah portion on Mondays from 7-8 p.m. The Torah studies classes offer timely lessons for living. The class is free.

Tanya class: A new weekly Tanya class, A Tale of Two Souls, meets on Saturdays from 10:15-11 a.m. The Tanya offers a roadmap for emotional healthy living. The in-depth study will ask the questions: What is a soul? How many do we have? What is our purpose here on earth? How are we to battle our evil inclination? The class is free

Temple Ahavat Shalom Palm Harbor

History lesson: Dr. Eric Steckler will present "Conflict & Coexistence: The History of the Old City of Jerusalem from 70 CE to the Present." Part 1 will be on Tuesday, Feb. 20 7 p.m. on "The Ancient and Medieval City." Part 2 will be on Wednesday, Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. on "The Modern Old City."

Torah study: Congregant Susan Segal teaches a Torah study class on Thursdays from noon to 1:15 p.m. Bring a lunch, and of course, opinions. No prior knowledge or attendance is required. The class will use the book *The Torah: A Woman's Commentary*.

Science and religion: Tuesday morning adult education class is under way on Tuesdays at 11 a.m. Professor Alan Gorlick will conclude his "Science and Religion," portion of the class on Feb. 20, then Rabbi Gary Klein will teach sessions on misfortune and grief. Call the temple office to join.

Judaism basics: An Introduction to Judaism class is offered on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. This class, taught by Rabbi Klein, is appropriate for non-Jewish spouses and significant others; those considering adopting Judaism as their faith, and those who are already Jewish who wish to enhance their knowledge of Judaism. New students are welcome anytime. Cost is \$100 per person or couple, for non-members; free for temple members.

Cong. Beth Tefillah/JCC of West Pasco Port Richey

Purim: There will be an ice cream social followed by the reading of the Megillah interspersed with the congregation's annual original spiel and merriment beginning at 6:30 p.m. on erev Purim, Wednesday, Feb. 28. Costumes are welcome, but optional. All are welcome. There is no charge to attend.

Understanding prayer: A class focused on the history, meaning, and relevance of Shabbat service prayers meets on Wednesdays

through May at 7 p.m. Knowledge of Hebrew is not required. There is no fee, and all are welcome.

Chabad of West Pasco Trinity

Purim in the Palace: Celebrate Purim at the Chabad center on Thursday, March 1 at 5:30 p.m. Come dressed for a royal ball and a feast. There will be crafts for kids, an interactive Megillah reading, Brooklyn hamantashen and entertainment for all ages. The cost is \$25 for adults and is free for children 12 and younger. RSVP immediately to Rabbi@ChabadWP.com or call (727) 376-3366.

Cong. Beth David Spring Hill

Direct from Sweden: Temple Beth David will welcome the Stahlhammer Klezmer Classic band direct from Sweden for its Florida debut. This international group will perform on Sunday, Feb. 25 at 2 p.m. They will play klezmer, Swedish music, tango and more. Tickets, including dessert and coffee, are \$18. Order tickets at (352) 686-7034 or go to tbdf.org. Send checks to the temple.

Torah study: Rabbi Paul Schreiber will conduct Torah study classes on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Free for members and \$5 per class for non-members.

Judaism class: A free Jewish conversion class will be held on Saturdays at 1 p.m., conducted by Rabbi Schreiber.

Talmud for beginners: This class, already under way, is held every Wednesday at 8 p.m., except for the third Wednesday of the month. It is free for members and \$5 per class for non-members.

Chabad of Spring Hill

Torah studies: The Jewish community is invited to attend Torah study classes, with bagels, on Wednesdays from noon to 1 p.m. The classes, taught by Rabbi Chaim Lipszyc, are not sequential, so folks can drop in for any class. The first class is free then the fee is \$7 per class. For more information, call **Ro Kerschner** at (352) 746-6258.

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Temple panel to discuss origins of opioid crisis and where we go now

By **BRUCE LOWITT**
Jewish Press

Barely a generation ago, the problem with pain-killers was that they weren't readily available and doctors were reluctant to prescribe those that were.

Today the reverse is true – too many of them and just about anyone can get them whether or not they're needed.

Dan Zsido, training and education coordinator for the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators, said 2016, the last year for which complete statistics are available, "was the worst year ever in the United States for drug overdose deaths, more than 64,000 of them due to another huge increase in prescription opioid medication."

In the 1990s, "articles appeared in medical journals that doctors were under prescribing pain medication, that they were not adequately treating pain," said Dr. Richard Maza, a Clearwater internist who has had experience in his practice with substance-abuse issues.

"Coincidentally with that, drugs came on the market which were the bulk of the opioids. Purdue Pharma developed a synthetic opioid called OxyContin and marketed it as a safe and effective way to treat pain with no or very little addiction potential. Physicians got lulled into feeling that prescribing opioids was a safe thing to do. And what they did was prescribe too many at a time, or for pain that could be handled by lesser drugs like Tylenol, Advil, Aleve ...

"They wrote prescriptions for, say, 30 (pills). The patient used five, there were

25 left and those 25 somehow got out into the general community and were used as what they call 'diversionary drugs,' meaning they became available to people who didn't need them for pain. And it addicted them because one of the side effects is euphoria," Maza said.

Zsido, a retired lieutenant from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, where he commanded the Narcotics Division, and Dr. Maza, will speak Wednesday evening, March 14, at Temple Ahavat Shalom, 1575 Curlew Road, in Palm Harbor, on "The Opioid Epidemic and How It Hurts You." The free community program starts at 7 p.m.

"It is clear that the opioid addiction crisis impacts every community, including the Jewish community," said Ahavat Shalom's Rabbi Gary Klein. "Over the years I've encountered numerous Jewish people who have told me that they or someone in their family is suffering from an addiction, and I have officiated over the past few years at more than several funerals where family members have indicated that the cause of death was an overdose."

Also speaking are Rochae Zwicharowski, a Certified Recovery Support Specialist and herself a recovering addict, and Laurie Serra, who started the Pinellas County chapter of the Narcotics Overdose Prevention & Education task force after her 28-year-old stepson died in 2008 of an unintentional overdose of OxyContin and other drugs. The program is free and open to the public.

Zsido said data is starting to show that the longer someone is on prescription medication the greater the chance the user will fall into misuse of the drug.

"We've seen people who have an accident, say they slip and fall, or undergo some sort of procedure and they were on a medication and it resulted in a tolerance, which rolled into an addiction, which rolled into making poor decisions," Zsido said, "and ultimately they crossed the line and did something and got in trouble. Then there are people who are just experimenting with it."

Zwicharowski said her message is that addicts "do recover, coming from what-

ever background."

"Yes, I am an addict, I am always going to be an addict. But the woman I am today is not the woman I was. I'm a good mother, I'm clean. I'm a productive member of society."

She is 38, says she's been sober for 10 years, and has children ages 20, 18 and 16, all of whom she had before she was married. "I pulled them through the wringer with me for awhile. The state ended up taking them; they went into foster care."

"I was facing a large prison sentence for trafficking hydrocodone (a semi-synthetic opioid) and I ended up going into treatment and the judge saw in me that I really wanted to change and ended up having three years' probation and getting my kids back."

She met her husband "in the rooms," meaning when they were both in rehab. "He's in recovery as well. I'm not saying I recommend that," Zwicharowski said with a laugh, "but it's better'n meeting him in a bar. ...

"I come from a long line of addicts. As early as I can remember there were drugs in the house, my parents using. And what goes along with that is police officers, ambulances, fighting, all that good stuff. When I was six years old our house got raided, I woke up with guns to my head and I always wanted to change the way I felt. Of course I hated my parents because I never wanted to be like them and I turned out worse than them."

Now she is an outreach coordinator for Associate Recovery Communities, formerly Tampa Bay Sober Living, which provides transitional homes that bridge the gap between substance abuse treatment centers and independence.

Said Zsido: "We have to be more attentive to addiction as a community. Law enforcement can't do it by itself and health care can't do it by itself."



Dan Zsido



Dr. Richard Maza



Rochae Zwicharowski

B'not Mitzvah

Hannah Marie LaPoint Davis



Hannah Marie LaPoint Davis, daughter of Gerald and Shane Davis of St. Petersburg, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, Feb. 17 at Temple Beth-El in St. Petersburg.

A seventh-grade legacy student at Shorecrest Preparatory School, Hannah participates in both cheerleading and volleyball and received the Most Valuable Player award for the 2017 Shorecrest volleyball team. Active year round in Hunter Jumper English Riding at Owen Equestrian, Hannah also is a member of the St. Petersburg Audubon Society where she works as a bird steward, studies wildlife, creates reports and works to grow indigenous trees to benefit birds and other wildlife. She is currently growing trees to donate as part of her mitzvah project to the city of St. Petersburg.

Gerald and Shane Davis will host a luncheon at their home, Moon Acre Manor, on Saturday afternoon, Feb. 17.

Special guests will include Mayor Rick Krise-man, and representatives of the Audubon Society.

Kayla Jasmine Harter

Kayla Jasmine Harter, daughter of Dr. Karen Wolstein and Michael Harter, of Dunedin, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Sunday, Feb. 18 at Temple Ahavat Shalom in Palm Harbor.

A seventh-grade honors student at Academie Da Vinci Charter School, Kayla excels in dance and the arts at her school. A member of the Dreamers Dance Company in Dunedin, Kayla is also active in Temple Ahavat Shalom's youth group.

Dr. Karen Wolstein will host a celebration at Safety Harbor Resort and Spa on Sunday evening, Feb. 18.

Special guests will include family and friends.

As the time nears for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you will want to let the community know by announcing it in the Jewish Press. There is a \$5 charge to cover the cost of reproducing the photo. Mail to the Jewish Press, PO Box 6970, Clearwater, FL 33758.

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Holocaust survivors and students plant trees for Tu b'Shevat.



(L-R) Eduardo Kornworcel and Ezra Gamson in the garden.

With help of Holocaust survivors, students tend garden

Two Holocaust survivors joined sixth-grade students at Hillel Academy to work in the school's garden on Jan. 30 as part of the school's open house program.

Together they planted parsley in the hydroponic garden installed by Tampa Urban Benefit Farms (Tub Farms), hoping it will be ready to harvest for Passover. In addition, they planted a tree in celebration of Tu B'Shevat.

"I had the joy of spending my morning with two Holocaust survivors (who asked to remain anonymous) as they spent time with the children and planted in the hydroponic garden," said Tub Farm founder and Hillel alumni Nava Kirk. "I personally was so moved just to spend a little time with both ladies, who are as kind as can be."

Hillel students have been planting in the garden and donating the produce since 2015. Originally, each class had 16 plants, which they monitored frequently. Crops have included cucumbers, Swiss chard, lettuce, squash, green beans and basil.

The garden can now hold close to 400 plants, said Kirk. Over the three years TUB Farms has worked with Hillel Academy, they have donated "hundreds of pounds of produce" to Meals on Wheels and Hillsborough County Family Partnership Alliance (HCFPA), which helps people in the dependency system, including foster parents and relative caregivers.

This year, donations are going to local Holocaust survivors as well. There are nine survivors who receive vegetables every two to three weeks, and there is enough food to support more, said Kirk.

For more information on the TUB Farms program, visit www.tubfarms.org or email tubfarms@gmail.com.



A Holocaust survivor plants parsley in the Hillel Academy tub farm.

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Engagement

Eisenberg/Wasserberger

Michael Eitan Wasserberger and Julie Dora Eisenberg announce their engagement.

The perspective bridegroom is the son of Manya Rubenstein of St. Petersburg and Abe Wasserberger and Lissa Abrahams of Baltimore. He spent much of his childhood in Tampa and Palm Harbor and is a graduate of Towson University in Maryland. He is a commercial pilot for Spirit Airlines.

The bride-to-be is the daughter of the late Debbie Kieffer Eisenberg and Stan Eisenberg and Nance Alexander of Minneapolis. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, and is a registered nurse at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

A June wedding is planned at Temple Israel in Minneapolis, with a honeymoon in Tuscany.

The couple will reside in Chicago.



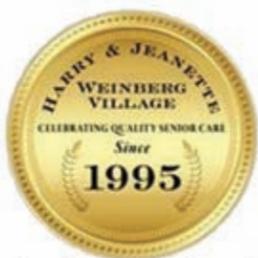
Students from Brandeis University meet with Seymour Bluestone at his Clearwater home in 2013. (L-R) Bluestone's neighbor Chris Sotnick, a student from Kenya, Bluestone, a student from India and Brandeis professor Laurence Simon.

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MILLIONS

• Continued from FRONT PAGE
after a while he started getting short of breath. He needed a pacemaker. I went with him to the hospital so he wouldn't be alone. ... Then there was a bout with cancer. That's probably when I started being a nurse as well as a friend."

"He watched the news every day – and Lawrence Welk. He loved Lawrence Welk," Chris said. "He was extremely intelligent, started college when he was 16, and he was all about education, all about knowledge and all about world peace. It disturbed him so much, things that were going on in the world and how people were treated."

Prof. Laurence Simon, founding director of the Sustainable International Development (SID) program at Brandeis' Heller School for Social Management, said from his office that Bluestone "had come up to consider the possibility of a gift to the university, and he was introduced to a few people on campus who were in programs that (the school) thought he might be interested in."

A lunch with Simon at the faculty club was the beginning of a long friendship. "I knew it would be an excellent relationship when he handed me a business card – he was retired by then so I guess it was more of a calling card – and along with all his contact information was a little phrase, One World," Simon said.

"I told him that at orientation every year I had an event for incoming students from all over the world that I called the One World Cafe. So that phrase was part of the attraction for

each other, that we had this rather idealistic view of putting people together from all faiths and nationalities and walks of life."

Bluestone's bequest will provide financial aid for up to five students in the SID program in future years, and support research and program development in the Center for Global Development and Sustainability, also at the Heller School.

Bluestone graduated from Cornell and the New York University School of Medicine and held a number of medical positions, including serving for 10 years as director of the New York State Rehabilitation Hospital.

He spoke French, German, Italian, Spanish and Hebrew as well as English, the Sotnicks said. He loved his computer, was on it all the time, receiving and sending jokes to people all over the world. He was never Seymour. Always Sy, "and he would sign his e-mails 'Sigh,'" Merrienne said. "Con amore (With love), Sigh."

Simon visited Bluestone annually, often bringing along a couple of his international students. "He just adored these visits. ... Even in his old age Sy would sit there speaking to them in French or Spanish. He was incredibly intellectually curious and had a tremendous knowledge of world history and cultures. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say he considered those visits among the highlights of his year."

Bluestone also served as a medical officer in the U.S. Army in Korea during 1945-47, reaching the rank of captain. "He married at age 39 in Jamaica – the island, not Queens," Chris Sotnick said. "His wife died many years ago – I don't think he ever mentioned her name – and they had no children.

"He was very political, ultra-liberal. He gave to charities, to hospice, and to Democratic causes. He voted for Bernie Sanders. He could not stand the current president. Loved Obama. And he was very agnostic. He lost his religion. He saw what was going on in the world and he lost his faith."

Still, the Sotnicks said, Bluestone observed many Jewish traditions. He kept strictly kosher, and he would light Yahrzeit candles on the anniversary of family deaths.

"He did not want anybody to know he was a doctor," Merrienne said. "He was very humble and very private. ... He just didn't want any attention at all. He didn't want any (funeral) service. No memorial, no obituary, nothing.

"He left very specific instructions," Merrienne added. "He wanted to be cremated, and we took his ashes to Bay Pines (Veterans Hospital in St. Petersburg), where his brother's ashes were buried."

The Sotnicks put a Star of David on his grave marker. "He would have liked that," Merrienne said. "He lost his religion but he was proud of his heritage."

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Tampa-Orlando-Pinellas Foundation extends reach to Jewish families, organizations elsewhere

The Tampa-Orlando-Pinellas Jewish Foundation (TOP) ended 2017 with assets supporting the Jewish and general nonprofit communities approaching \$50 million.

The TOP portfolio includes \$3.7 million in Israel Bonds and net investment performance of 9.57 percent.

“The past 12 months mark a banner year for the Foundation and its donors as we together embarked on an expansion program to bring our philanthropic and investment management services to organizations and families outside Central Florida where no Jewish Foundation currently exists,” said Emilie Socash, TOP’s executive director.

TOP also successfully completed a two-year legacy program with the nationally recognized Harold Grinspoon Foundation, yielding over 400 new legacy commitments with an estimated future value of more than \$15 million. The Life & Legacy program further ensures and protects the financial strength

and stability of the local Jewish community, a parallel mission of the Foundation.

“The beauty of creating legacy gifts, an investment in our next generations, is that they provide the permanent financial resources to protect and sustain the Jewish community in the midst of a rapidly changing world,” said Jeffrey Herman, TOP Jewish Foundation president.

Of the nearly \$50 million in assets at TOP, approximately 40 percent – or \$20 million – are held in endowments. An additional 28 percent are invested for Jewish agencies and synagogues throughout Tampa, Orlando, Pinellas and Gainesville, the newest community to join TOP as a result of its expansion program. The remaining 32 percent are held in over 250 donor-advised funds for individuals and families throughout Central Florida and a handful of other states.

From all TOP funds, the Foundation distributed 1,822 grants totaling \$7.4 million,

supporting both Jewish and secular causes throughout the country and around the globe.

“Our level of reach continues to grow as we work with donors and supported organizations in a truly global fashion,” Socash said, “and yet we maintain our commitment to making giving easier and developing the personal, one-on-one relationships that all of our donors and community partners have come to expect.”

TOP’s asset base grew 6 percent between 2016 and 2017 due to the confidence of donors in using TOP as their primary charitable investment partner as well as strong growth in market performance.

“Our goal is to grow the Foundation to \$100 million in the next five years. We are confident that with the proper investment and management decisions, the communities who choose TOP will continue to be bolstered by the Foundation,” said Al Schiff, vice president of TOP’s Investment

Committee.

Six years ago, TOP selected investment manager Goldman Sachs and adopted a new forward-thinking investment policy with a strict anti-terror and now anti-BDS preventative screening approach. As a result, TOP’s primary investment pool (called the “Balanced Pool”) has seen strong returns. “In a nutshell, a donor who had given \$10,000 to TOP last year would now have \$957 more to give to charity in their fund. Considering larger gifts in funds that total \$100,000 or greater, the ability to give more is that much greater,” said Socash.

To further serve the interests of savvy philanthropists, TOP added another investment pool comprised of strictly equities, allowing for further customization of the risk tolerance (and return) of funds.

To learn more about TOP, visit topjewishfoundation.org or email Ellen@topjewishfoundation.org.

Rabbi who served as U.S. ambassador for religious freedoms to speak at St. Leo’s

The public is invited to a free presentation on religious freedom issues globally – including the persecution of religious minorities – from the nation’s former top diplomat on religious freedom issues, Rabbi David Saperstein.

The rabbi will speak from 1-3 p.m., Thursday, March 8, at the Saint Leo Abbey Church, 33701 SR 52, St. Leo.

The Saint Leo University Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies is sponsoring Rabbi’s Saperstein’s talk.

From 2015-17, Rabbi Saperstein was the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious

Freedom, the first non-Christian to hold that post. He is senior advisor to the Union of Reform Judaism for policy and strategy and director emeritus of its Religious Action Center, where he served for more than 30 years.

To reserve seating, contact Megan Orendorf by email, jennifer.orendorf@saintleo.edu, or call (352) 588-8401.

The mission of the Saint Leo University Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies is to build mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation among different faiths by providing opportunities for interfaith education and dialogue.

STUDY

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

they had distinctive Jewish names such as Levy or Goldstein.

Sheskin and his staff have conducted scores of similar Jewish community studies throughout the country. While some of the questions in the survey were specific to Pinellas and Pasco counties, a number of them were general questions that could apply to many Jewish communities, and it is through those questions that comparisons were drawn between our local Jewish community and, in some cases, up to 60 other Jewish communities.

Topics covered in the survey include geographic profile, migra-

tion, age distribution, household size and structure, marital status, secular education and employment status, household income, Jewish identification, religious practices, intermarriage, synagogue attendance/membership/attendance, sense of involvement/feeling part of Jewish community, Jewish education, familiarity with and assessment of local Jewish organizations, social service needs, the Jewish elderly, Israel, anti-Semitism, philanthropy, and a political profile.

To read the full study or summaries, go to Berman Jewish Databank, a project of the Jewish Federations of North America at jewishdatabank.org.

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How Jewish Are We?

PINELLAS AND PASCO JEWISH COMMUNITY

Here is a sampling from findings of the Pinellas and Pasco Counties Jewish community study. Because the demographer conducted the 1994 and 2017 studies, we can see how the community has changed over time. Because he also has done scores of similar studies in Jewish communities throughout the nation, sometimes using common questions, it is possible to see how we stack up against other Jewish communities on certain issues. For full details, go to www.jewishdatabank.org.

Size, distribution of Jewish population

- There are 18,000 Jewish households in Pinellas and Pasco with a total of 28,000 Jews and 8,000 non-Jews living in those homes.
- In Pinellas County the number of Jews dropped from 25,200 in 1994 to 23,450 in 2017.
- Pinellas/Pasco is the 39th largest Jewish community in the U.S.

Geographic profile

- 8% of Jewish households are in the top ZIP code, 34698 – Dunedin and 20% live in the top three ZIP codes: 34698 - Dunedin, 33701 – downtown St. Petersburg, and 34684 - Lake Tarpon. This reflects the fact that the Jewish population of Pinellas/Pasco is geographically dispersed and that there is no “core area” of Jewish settlement.

Migration

- 5% of Jewish households have always lived in Pinellas/Pasco. In total, 36% moved from other parts of the South (including 5% from Tampa), 35% from the Northeast (including 20% from New York, 7% from New Jersey), 17% from the Midwest (including 5% from both Michigan and Ohio) and 5% from the West.
- 56% have lived here for 20 years or more. In 1994, that figure was 26%.
- Based on the migration of Jews into and out of the area, the number of Jewish households in Pinellas/Pasco is expected to remain about the same for the next few years.

Age distribution

- The median age for Jews in the Pinellas/Pasco is 62, up from 46 in 1994. The median age for all Americans is about 38.

Household size and structure

- The average Jewish household size is 2.03 persons, down from 2.37 in Pinellas in 1994.
- 10% of those households have children up to age 17. In 1994 in Pinellas it was 25%.

Intermarriage

- 56% of couples in Jewish households are intermarried.
- 66% of the children in those households are being raised Jewish or partly Jewish.

Jewish identification

- 3% of the Jewish respondents identified as Orthodox (the same in '94), 21% as Conservative (23% in '94), 30 percent as Reform (39% in '94) and 47 percent as “Just Jewish” (36% in '94)
- 98% said they were proud to be Jewish, 85% said they have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people and 70% said they have a “special responsibility” to care for Jews in need.

Part of Jewish local community

- 9% feel very much part of the Jewish community, 25% somewhat, 25% not very much and 43% not at all.

Overall involvement

- 81% of Jewish households are involved in Jewish activity in that they are either associated with the Jewish community, observe a religious practice, contain a Jewish respondent who attends services at least once a year, or donated to a Jewish charity in the past year (88% in '94).

Israel connection

- 34% of Jewish households have a member who visited Israel.
- 17% of respondents are extremely emotionally attached to Israel, 26% very attached, 38% somewhat attached and 19% not attached.

Philanthropy

- 22% of Jewish households donated money to the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties in the past year (34% in '94). The average donation per household was \$66.

Here is how we fared when compared to other Jewish communities (between 40 and 55 communities were surveyed on the topics below, except where noted).

Religious practices

- 49% – always/usually participate in a Passover Seder (ranked lowest)
- 58% – always/usually light Hanukkah candles. (ranked third lowest)
- 52% – have a mezzuzah on the front door (ranked fourth lowest)
- 17% - light Sabbath candles. (ranked eighth lowest)
- 44% – always/usually have a Christmas tree at home (ranked third highest)

Synagogue attendance

- Second lowest - 14% - attend synagogue services once a month or more
- Second highest - 45% - never attend synagogue services.

Jewish organization membership

- 15% - hold a membership in a Jewish organization. (ranked third lowest). Jewish organization membership was 36% in Pinellas in 1994.

Jewish education – children

- 54% of children from 5-17 who have received some formal Jewish education (ranked lowest)
- 46% of children from 13-17 have received some formal Jewish education (ranked lowest)

Social service needs

- 18% of Jewish children age 0-17 in need of programs for children with learning disabilities or other special needs. (ranked highest among 30 communities)
- 18% of those 75 and older are need in-home health care. (ranked third highest among 35 communities)

MAP

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

or participation in Jewish religious or cultural activities, how philanthropic we are, and what our needs are.

The study was commissioned by the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties and Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services and conducted by Ira Sheskin, chair of the University of Miami Department of Geography. Sheskin has done scores of demographic studies of Jewish communities throughout the nation and did the last comprehensive study in Pinellas, in 1994.

Painting a picture

The findings of the 2017 study not only provides a picture of today's Jewish community here, but also tells us how we have changed from 1994 and how we stack up to Jewish communities throughout the United States.

Sheskin told the *Jewish Press*, he found the 2017 study “depressing.” If you are looking for the utopian Jewish community, it is certain you won't find it here.

When compared to other Jewish communities, the Pinellas-Pasco Jewish community is older, less religious and less philanthropic than many, Sheskin said.

“You want people to feel connected to the place, but no one feels connected here,” he told a community presentation on the survey results. Without certain communal facilities like a JCC or day school, “there is a lack of a central Jewish community,” Sheskin said.

One thing Sheskin had never seen in a demographic study before was that the number of Jewish households went up, while the overall number of Jews actually went down by 1,750 since 1994. As a way to explain this phenomena, Sheskin said, “The community got older so there are fewer Jews per household. Also, there is more intermarriage.”

Though the study showed a high percent of folks who identified as “Just Jewish” and did not seem to be engaged with, or sometimes not even aware of, local Jewish institutions, he said the fact that they would spend up to 45 minutes on the phone to participate in the study shows an encouraging degree of connection to their Jewish identity.

The 1,090-page report include hundreds of findings. Among those that stand out: a low percentage of synagogue membership and attendance and a low percentage of those in Jewish households who donate to Jewish organizations.

Findings also show there is a high percentage of intermarried families, a high divorce rate and a low percentage of children up to age 17 living in Jewish households.

One very telling finding: from 1994 to 2017, the median age of local Jews increased from 46 years old to 62 years old.

On the bright side

The report did contain some positives. For instance:

- 98 percent said they were proud to be Jewish, 85 percent said they have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people and 70 percent said they have a “special responsibility” to care for Jews in need.

- 81 percent of Jewish households are involved in Jewish activity in that they are either associated with the Jewish community, observe a religious practice, contain a Jewish respondent who attends synagogue services at least once a year, or donated to a Jewish charity in the past year. As good as that figure looks, it was even better at 88 percent in '94.

- The level of anti-Semitism experienced is appreciably lower now than in 1994. In the case of the 6-17 age bracket, the percentage of those who experienced anti-Semitism dropped from 30 percent in 1994 to just 3 percent in 2017.

- For most age groups, the level of attachment to Israel has increased since '94.

While some findings may prompt people reading the study to see the glass half empty, Emilie Socash, executive director of the Pinellas/Pasco Federation, found room for optimism.

“The thing that stood out to me was how connected to the Jewish community were those who may not have synagogue affiliations. More than 40 percent attended a Jewish event in the past year and more than 80 percent had done something Jewish in their home. That makes me feel there is a level of Jewish engagement that can grow,” Socash said.

As for whether the findings are good or bad, Socash said, “It is all just data. There is no place for judgment, or even worry; it is all just data.”

Socash said what the data tells her is, “We have the opportunity to be a welcoming and inclusive community, one that is known for offering programs for the reality of our community vs one that is stuck in a belief of how communities should be.”

In regard to the increase in the median age, Socash said, “We have a lot of adults who would appreciate even more activities ... We spent a lot of time programming for young families and we need to recognize those adults also need events, programs and services.”

Given how Jews here are scattered throughout the area, Socash said, “We need to go where they are.”

While not ignoring the local Jews already plugged in and engaged in Jewish life, the challenge is to reach out and try to engage the significant number who identified themselves as “Just Jewish” as opposed to particular streams of Judaism such as Orthodox, Conservative or Reform.

Recently the Federation promoted a Hanukkah family event that aimed to be inclusive of all types of families, including LGBT, single parent and intermarried families. The Federation also has held PJ Library events at local public libraries. Given the results of the study, it is likely more attempts like this, to reach those who might not be as likely to show up at a synagogue, will be held, Socash said.

Five “areas of concentration” emerged from recent discussions of the study results: Israel, Jewish culture, demographics, children and education, and public relations. The Federation created committees to address these five topics and it will likely be months before an overall strategic plan is developed to address needs indicated by the study. (See Federation statement on these topics, page 11.)

From a rabbi's perspective

Understandably, from the perspective of a long-time rabbi in the community, the low percentage of synagogue membership and low percentage of those attending synagogue or other Jewish religious events is not ideal, says Rabbi Gary Klein of Temple Ahavat in Palm Harbor.

He said he was originally okay with the population study being done, but in hindsight feels it revealed little that the local Jewish community did not already know, and that the funds could have been better used to enhance synagogue programming.

In order to build a stronger Jewish community here, he said synagogues need to be the heart of Jewish life and they need to work hard to that end. He also noted that the community has been hurt by the closing of the Pinellas County Jewish Day School in 2010 and the JCC of Pinellas a few years later. Those institutions are the sort that families look for when choosing a community in which to live where to move. But synagogues with strong programming can help mitigate the lack of a JCC and Jewish day school, he said.

“While I am concerned about the trends here and in other communities, I think we have a wonderful community and can sustain it into the future,” Rabbi Klein said, “I think the synagogues play a disproportionate role in sustaining it. I am firmly committed to help make it as vibrant a community as it can be.”

Rabbi Klein said the Federation is “doing a good and appropriate job. They do not need to do more, but I think we need to strengthen our synagogues.”

Federation President Steve Klein noted that the Federation is already working in that direction, “helping expand synagogue programming through innovation grants.”

With the Federation's lead in completing the first comprehensive demographics study in more than 20 years, Steve Klein said, “So many more firsts will be tackled as we are armed with this new data.”

Socash said, “Doing the survey at a time when the community does not have a JCC and Day School, gives us an interesting perspective about the needs and wants for these type institutions. When we look at the behaviors people reported, the data shows our community wants to gather and to learn together and we need to consider how our entire institutional structure can meet these needs and wants.”

Exploring new models

The Federation is actively exploring models used in other Jewish communities without such institutions, she said. “What we had, did not work, so it would be irresponsible to try to resurrect what we had that did not work. But that does not mean we cannot have what our community needs in the future.”

Does that mean we won't have have a brick and mortar Day School in the future? Socash would not rule out the possibility of a new Day School, but said “I think the better use of our creative energy is not what could have saved the old model but what we might come up with in the future to meet the needs of the future.” She said she has “a lot of hope and inspiring ideas to examine.”

Two Federation board members voiced ideas as to how to address the study findings.

Toni Rinde feels the study shows the need to create a Jewish identity among children. “Camp, programming, and community involvement shape the Jewish identity of young people in order to assure the endurance and perpetuity of the Jewish people for years to come,” she said.

Louis Orloff pointed to study data that showed many who identified themselves as Jewish are not getting news about the local Jewish community through the *Jewish Press*. Finding a way to reach those folks, he said, “will help bring our community together and build pride for all that we have.”

To find the full report on the demographics study, go to www.jewishdatabank.org.

Federation defines focus areas from demographic study

After a months-long process of collecting and analyzing data from over 500 phone interviews, the demographic study of Pinellas and Pasco Counties' Jewish community has been completed.

The next steps for the community are currently under consideration by synagogues and agencies, and the board of the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties has now brought focus to the areas that the community service organization will emphasize in the next three to five years.

Five areas of concentration emerged from the three-hour session: Israel, Jewish culture, demographics, children and education, and public relations. Drawing from multiple findings of the study, each of these areas was further explored in terms of goals and future success.

In the early part of 2018, Federation leadership will craft a more specific and time-delineated strategic plan encompassing these areas with benchmarks for success.

Israel

As a theme, the community's connection with Israel will deepen and expand, with particular efforts to enhance the effectiveness of advocacy and people-to-people work. This includes bolstering the current work of the Jewish Community Relations Council and continuing relationships with the Partnership 2Gether region and schlichot program. Additional expansion to engage with local Israelis and offer even more in Israel program scholarships are also on the list.

Steve Schwersky, co-host of the *Sunday Simcha* radio show and co-chair of the JCRC, said he looks forward to doing more to connect the community with Israel, including helping to lead a musical mission to Israel later this year.

Schwersky added that the JCRC aims to help the Federation and community "reach new heights in creating and funding programs to help not only the Jewish community and Israel, but the general communities of Pasco and Pinellas Counties."

Children and education

Several resounding findings from the study highlighted the need to continue to expand educational and identity-building programs for children (like the Jewish Community Camp and PJ Library) as well as adults. The educational needs of adults and older children will be one of the key areas of focus in the Federation's strategic planning, with interest in

developing a formal educational initiative serving the entire community.

Jewish culture

Bridging from education, the group also defined "Jewish culture" as an area of focus in the coming years, seeking to offer Federation-sponsored programs that speak to those who are intermarried and consider themselves "just Jewish."

An increase in programming that acknowledges the community's unique desires and demographics was of primary interest. "Very few people surveyed reported that they feel very much a part of the community, yet well over 80 percent reported having engaged in something cultural or heritage-oriented in the last year. We see this gap as a significant chance for the Federation to create collaborative on-ramps to community involvement," said Emilie Socash, executive director of the Federation.

Demographics

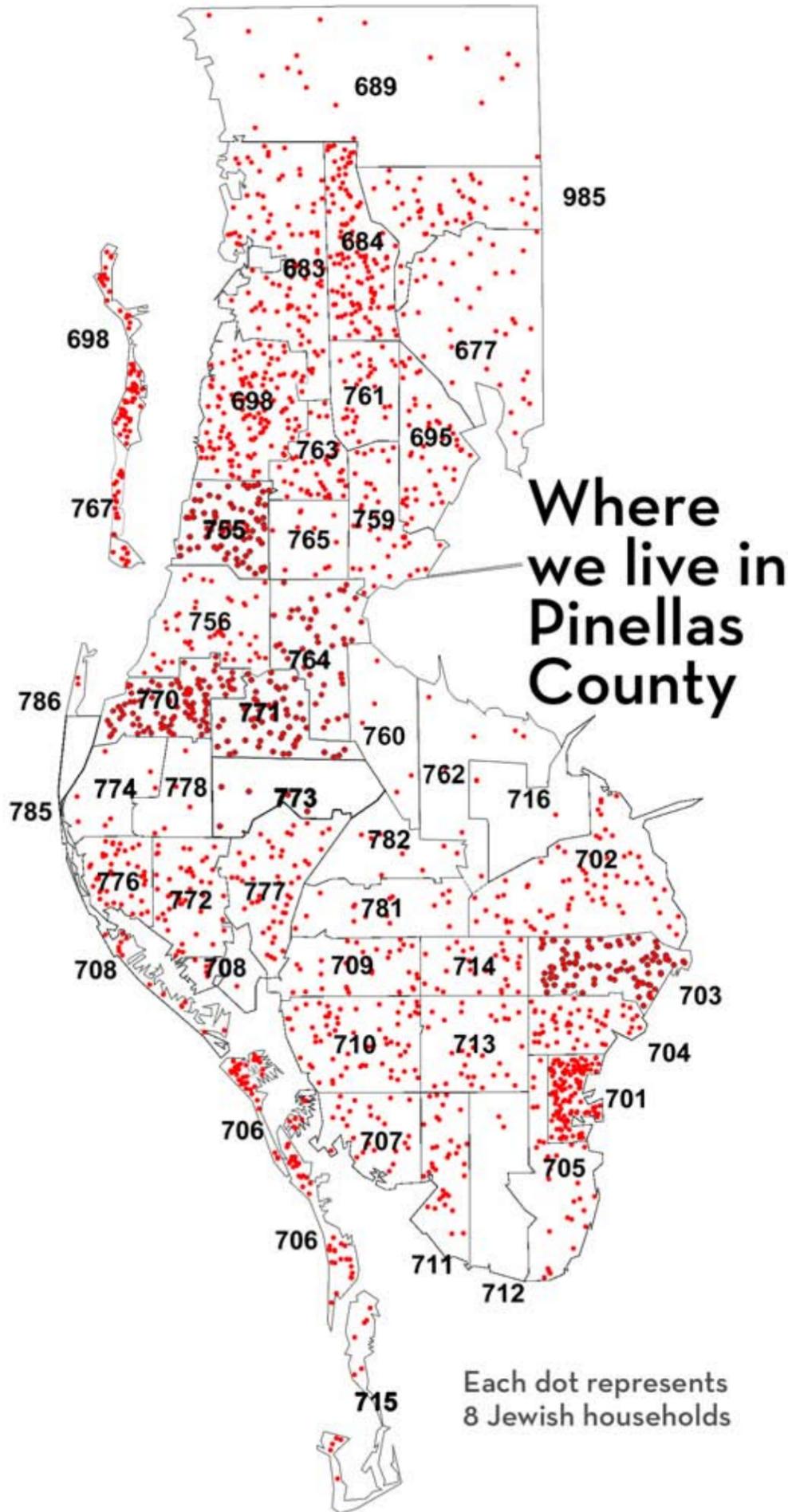
Addressing the demographics of the community led the group through a consideration of what the region's average age of 62 really means.

Having an average age far higher than the rest of the country requires a special emphasis on age-based considerations for programs and weaving in planned giving and legacy giving opportunities more closely, while recognizing the top three pockets of dense Jewish population (Dunedin, Lake Tarpon, and downtown St. Petersburg) in geographic event planning will lend focus to the Federation's efforts.

Public relations

Finally, of great interest is addressing the findings that only 12 percent of the community is "very familiar" and only 33 percent "somewhat familiar" with the Federation as a whole. The idea of public relations and awareness spawned thoughts on expanding readership of the *Jewish Press* and other Jewish information sources; enhancing the Federation's visibility on non-Federation and secular events, and measuring the effectiveness of marketing efforts.

Ezra Singer, Federation board member, noted "There are significant opportunities for the Federation to engage the hundreds of Jewish families who are new to our town and the thousands of families who have no affiliation whatsoever. If we do this right, we can enhance and grow the active Jewish community and make this that much of a greater place to live."



Gulf Coast JFCS ponders how to reach more of the 'Just Jewish' crowd needing services

By BOB FRYER
Jewish Press

For Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services officials, one of the co-sponsors of the 2017 demographics study, two things jumped out in the results: the significant rise in the median age of those in the local Jewish community – from 46 in 1994 to 62 in 2017 – and a surprisingly large number of families in Jewish households that have children with developmental disabilities.

Since Gulf Coast's mission is to provide social services to those in need through a variety of programs, the study results show there may be more need for programs that serve the increasingly elder population and serve children with developmental disabilities.

There are two other findings in the survey, however, that present challenges in offering such services. One is that a large number of those surveyed were unaware of Gulf Coast and its services, and the other is that many of those surveyed who identified themselves as "Just Jewish" have little to no connection with local Jewish insti-

tutions. The Pinellas/Pasco Jewish community ranked second highest in a comparison with 60 other Jewish communities for highest percent – 47 percent here – of those identifying as "Just Jewish."

Of all respondents to the survey, 66 percent of them said they were not at all familiar with Gulf Coast, even though the agency has been around for more than 50 years, employs more than 370 case managers agencywide and boasts a point-in-time case load of more than 6,000 individuals.

Gulf Coast covers a 37-county area in Florida and provides a wide range of family support and counseling services. Many of those services are for anyone in need, but the agency also offers a range of services for the Jewish community in Pinellas and Pasco Counties, from programs for Holocaust survivors to emergency financial and food assistance, mentoring Jewish children, providing Jewish Life education and counseling.

Gulf Coast CEO Sandra Braham said they have to find different ways to promote the agency among Jewish households in need

of services but unaware that Gulf Coast offers them.

"One area we identified as a challenge for families is those with special needs," Braham said. This is an area where people need more support and there is a gap between services available and connecting with those in need, she said.

Jay Miller, Gulf Coast's immediate past board president, said Gulf Coast already has programs serving adults with developmental disabilities but those programs may not be appropriate for families that have children with those disabilities.

"We work extensively with children, but more with children from troubled families" as opposed to those who have children with developmental disabilities, Miller said, noting that Gulf Coast may need to help with such things as providing transportation, or educational or therapeutic services.

He said Gulf Coast will need to study the survey results and find additional ways to gauge the needs. "There may be new programs to address specific needs, once we understand it more," he

said.

Before there is a rush to roll out new programs, however, Braham said more time and thought is needed. The population study was a huge community undertaking, she said, and the desire is to "get right to the problem solving," but "We need to resist the urge and look for the above-the-forest view and see if we can look across agencies and communities. We have to rely on a weave of connections to identify where we fit and where it is up to us to take the lead."

Cindy Minetti, who heads the Jewish Family Services portion of

the agency said she sees the survey results as a positive because now there is more data to support the need for services.

She said this is "our opportunity to blow our own horn because in most cases we have the programs" to address needs found in the survey.

"Overall, it [the survey] was enlightening and helpful for us. Rather than focusing on, 'Oh my God, we are older' it tells us the needs and that we are not just doing this by gut feeling.

Miller agreed. "It is up to us to digest it and take advantage of what the study tells us."

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Organizations

Jewish Women International

Art talk: Christine Renc-Carter, curator at the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art, will speak at the next meeting of Jewish Women International North Pinellas on Tuesday, Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. at the Preserve, 2010 Greenbriar Blvd., Clearwater. She will cover what's new at the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art, especially relating to the Jewish experience through Abraham Rattner, and a potential exhibition of contemporary artists from Israel. She will also touch on art preservation. Guests are welcome. Contact **Lynn Brodsky** at lynnielmb@aol.com or (727) 804-4406 for more information.

Hadassah

New officers: The St. Petersburg Chapter of Hadassah recently elected officers for 2018-19: **Harriet Stein**, president; **Adele Morris**, organization vice president; **Marjorie Friedman**, membership vice president; **Leslie Kirsner**, programming, advocacy, Zionism and education vice president; **Michele Kidwell Gilbert**, programming vice president; **Patricia Levinson** and **Rachel**

Dorison, fundraising co-vice presidents; **Judith Ross**, recording secretary; **Laurie Reiskind**, corresponding secretary; **Diane Litt**, IT secretary and **Sheryl Feinman**, treasurer.

Genealogical Society

Immigration research: The Jewish Genealogical Society of Tampa Bay will offer the second of a two-part seminar titled: "The JGSTB 2018 Guide to Immigration Research: "Why You Can't Find Your Bubbe's Immigration Record" on Sunday, March 11 at 2 p.m. at Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, 14041 Icot Blvd., Clearwater. Registration will begin at 1:30 p.m. This seminar will enable participants to discover their family's immigration records. The presentation will concentrate on both traditional and recently available internet resources. **Dr. Emil H. Isaacson**, who will lead the seminar, has more than 33 years of experience in genealogy. The seminar is free to members. Cost for non-members is \$25 for individuals or \$35 for a family, which will include an annual membership. To pre-register for the class, for more information, or for directions, call **Bruce Hadburg** at (727) 796-7981.

Young Adults

*#Gather offers a mix of social and interactive activities designed to help young adults connect. It is open to young adults of all faiths and backgrounds. For more information or to RSVP for any #Gather events, visit: www.bryanglazerfamilyjcc.com/gather or contact **Lisa Robbins** at lisa.robbins@jewishtampa.com or (813) 769-4723.*

Art night: Create a self-portrait at the private art studio of local artist **Sara Scher** on Monday, Feb. 26 from 7-9 p.m. The cost is \$15 for #Gather members and \$20 for guests (includes art materials, snacks and wine). This event is limited to 14 people. No skill is needed.

Wearable art: Take your rummaging skills to the next level at a "Junk Box Jewelry" event on Wednesday, March 7 from 6-9 p.m. at the visual arts center in the Bryan Glazer Family JCC. Choose from a variety of unsuspecting items to combine, alter, fabricate and recombine into wearable jewelry. Dig through a treasure trove of metal, parts, pieces, leather, hinges, springs, zippers and other found and recycled options to create your very own piece of original jewelry. Bring snacks and wine to share during social hour. The cost is \$10 for members and guests.

Job-Links

Monday Morning Links: Free sessions of Monday Morning Links are offered at the Jack Roth Center for Career Development at TampaBay-Job-Links, 4100 W. Kennedy Blvd., Suite 206, Tampa from 9:30 - 11 a.m. On Feb. 19, the topic is "Staying Optimistic During Career Transition." On Feb. 26 the topic is "Why the Most Qualified Candidate Doesn't Always Get the Job." Monday Morning Links is supported by the Vinik Family Foundation.

Job-search aids: There are Success workshops on select Thursdays to aid with job-search skills. On March 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. the topic is "Transferring Your Skills and Re-Careering." The workshops are free for TampaBay Job-Links full program participants and \$15 for guests. Reservations required for all programs. To RSVP, call (813) 344-0200, email RSVP@TBJL.org.

Support groups

Alzheimer's caregiver group: Menorah Manor offers a support group meeting in the Samson Nursing Center at Menorah Manor, 255 59th St. N., St. Petersburg, on the first Thursday of the month from 3:30-5 p.m. For more information, call **Gwen Kaldenberg** at (727) 302-3750.

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COULD YOUR CHILD USE ANOTHER ADULT IN THEIR LIFE? Do you have children between the ages 6-17 who would benefit from frequent interaction with another Jewish adult/mentor? Call the Yad B'Yad Program Coordinator at Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, Deena Silver, at (727) 450-7278, for more information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

WANTED: Adults with a desire to befriend a Jewish youngster. As a mentor/role model you can greatly influence a child's life. For details, call Deena Silver, Yad B'Yad Program Coordinator at Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, (727) 450-7278.

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Photo courtesy of Josepp Martinson/ISU/ISU via Getty Images

Paige Conners skating with Evgeni Krasnopolski in Oberstdorf, Germany, last September.

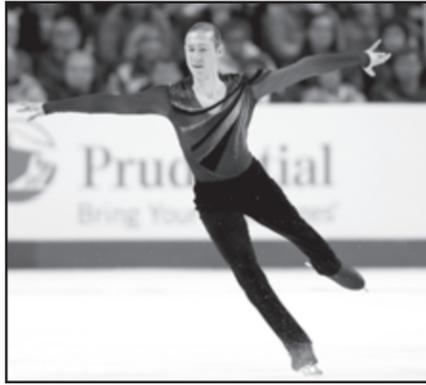


Photo by Matthew Stockman/Getty Images

Jason Brown competing at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships in San Jose, CA in January.

Winter Olympics 2018: Jewish storylines to watch

By GABE FRIEDMAN
JTA news service

Jewish fans don't have quite as many standout athletes to cheer for at the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea as they did in 2016, when multiple American members of the tribe won medals at the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro. But there are several compelling Jewish stories.

Israel sends its largest team ever

Before this year, the largest Israeli delegation at a Winter Olympics was five. That shouldn't sound too surprising, given that over 60 percent of the country's landscape is desert, and it isn't the best place for winter sports training.

This year, however, the record will double.

Seven of Israel's 10 representatives will compete in figure skating. That group is anchored by Alexei Bychenko, who in 2016 became the first skater to earn a medal for Israel at a European Championships event. Bychenko, 29, who skated for Ukraine until 2009 and has been ranked as one of the top 10 male skaters in the world, is likely Israel's best chance to win a medal (and like U.S. Jewish gymnast Aly Raisman, Bychenko has been known to perform to "Hava Nagila").

The Jewish state is sending another kind of skater, too – the faster kind. Vladislav Bykanov, who won a bronze medal earlier this month at the European Championships, will compete in speed skating. Itamar Biran, a 19-year-old born in London, will represent Israel in alpine skiing.

This American never dreamed she'd skate for Israel

Paige Conners is having her Olympic dream come true in about the last way she expected.

According to 13WHAM, the ABC affiliate in Rochester, NY, the 17-year-old Conners was ill when she was supposed to try out for the U.S. figure skating team. With her hopes of competing in peril, her mother, who has Israeli citizenship, pointed out another

opportunity: skating for the Israeli team.

Conners jumped at the opportunity, but Israel offered her a spot only if she competed in the pairs competition. She had never tried it before and figured she never would. But she quickly connected with Evgeni Krasnopolski, a 29-year-old pairs veteran, and in barely six months after Conners adopted the new style, the duo performed well enough at the Olympic qualifiers in September to make the cut.

"No one really believes it," she told 13WHAM.

Israel's first skeleton Olympian

A few years ago, A.J. Edelman was an MIT graduate who worked as a product manager for Oracle. Now the Brookline, MA, native will get a chance to make history for Israel as he becomes the country's first skeleton Olympian, steering a flimsy sled down the track at the Pyeongchang Sliding Center.

"I want to challenge the perception of what Jews and Israelis can do in sports," he told the *Forward*.

He is also clearly a fan of the comedy film *The Hebrew Hammer*, since he goes by the protagonist's nickname. While his teammates and friends love it, his mother apparently doesn't.

A former NHL player to play for the U.S.

Jonathon Blum probably longs for the time he spent playing in the NHL. These days, the Jewish 29-year-old plays for a team in Vladivostok, Russia – a city so remote that flights of six hours or more are required to play 24 of its 26 opponents. It is closer to Alaska than it is to St. Petersburg.

Blum, a former first-round NHL draft pick, played for the Nashville Predators from 2010 to 2012, again in 2012-13, and for the Minnesota Wild for stints in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons. Those cities are just a little closer to where he grew up in Southern California.

This year, the NHL decided that it would not let its players participate in the Olympics to protect



Photo by Adam Pretty/Bongarts/Getty Images

A.J. Edelman of Israel competing at the IBSF World Championships in Innsbruck, Austria in 2016.

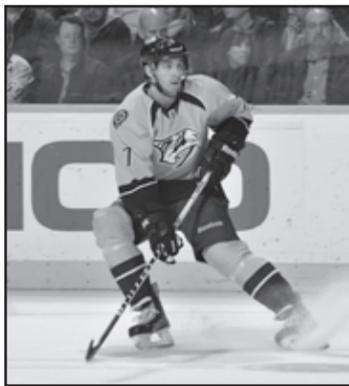


Photo by Frederick Breedon/Getty Images

Jonathon Blum playing for the Nashville Predators in 2013.

them from injuries. That opened the door for non-NHL players like Blum, a 6-foot-2 defenseman who has played on the U.S. team before, to represent his native country in South Korea.

Israel isn't the only country sending Jewish skaters.

On the U.S. squad, look out for Jason Brown if he gets a chance to skate. After a disappointing performance at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships this month, Brown is the U.S. team's first alternate. But on the ice, the 23-year-old is known for skating to music from *Riverdance* and *Hamilton*.

And who would have thought that a certified Krav Maga instructor would skate for Canada and not Israel? Dylan Moscovitch helped Canada win a team silver medal in Sochi four years ago, and he's back competing in the pairs contest with partner Liubov Ilyushechkina.

Obituaries

GARMAINE PITCHON, 90, of Clearwater, died Jan. 29. Born in Salonika, Greece, she was a longtime member of Congregation Beth Shalom in Clearwater. A Holocaust survivor, she was the author of the 2016 book, *Undaunted: The Tiger of Auschwitz*. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

SIDNEY ROSEN, 89, died Feb. 4. Born in Newark, NJ, he worked for many years as a school educator. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

STACI SACHS, 45, of Clearwater, died Jan. 23. Previously from Providence, RI, she moved to the area in 1979. A graduate of the University of Florida, she was a certified paralegal, active in politics, her cancer survivors group at Mease Hospital and also at Camp Living Springs. Survivors include her daughter and son-in-law Morgan and Stephen Green, Riverview; parents, Paul and Elaine Sachs, Clearwater; sister Kyli Sachs. The family suggests memorials to Suncoast Hospice. (Curlew Hills Memory Gardens)

HERBERT SOLOMON, 91, died Feb. 1. Born in Pittsburgh, he was a United States Navy veteran. A newspaper publisher for many years, he was founder and publisher of *South Nassau and Queens Pennysaver* for more than 30 years, and gave generously to many cultural institutions. Survivors include his wife Helene; children Laura Solomon and Fran Wiggins, son-in-law Ken; and one grandson. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

PETER SUDARSKY, 88, of New York, NY, died Jan. 27. He recently

moved to the area. Born in Hartford, CT, he attended the Forman School in Litchfield and then University of Connecticut, where he wrote songs for musical theater and the football team. A United States Navy veteran of the Korean War, he was stationed in Guantanamo. He was a reporter for the *Hartford Courant* and then entered the corporate world at the Superior Steel Ball Company and later Lydall, Inc. where he served on the board of directors. He also served on the board of the Hartford Ballet. After directing his first film *A Child is a Wild Young Thing*, he moved to New York to pursue real estate and vaccine development, swimsuit design and ping-pong. Survivors include his wife Roseanne DeMarco Sudarsky; his children: Julie Sudarsky and Marty Gross, Long Beach, NY; Dr. Laura Sudarsky and Cory Belschner, Fort Lauderdale; Dr. Jennifer Sudarsky, Los Angeles, CA; Noah Sudarsky and Lily Alexander, Berkeley, CA; and six grandchildren. The family suggests memorials to the Forman School or to Elizabeth Park Conservancy in West Hartford. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

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Gail Allen stands in front of nearly empty food bank shelves.

Food bank cupboards almost bare, seeks help to restock

The William and Sally Israel Food Pantry is nearly empty and Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services is looking to the community to restock the shelves.

Gulf Coast's semi-annual food drive, Operation Afikomen, gets under way next month, ending on the night of the First Seder, March 30.

When the pantry is very low, as it is now, the program relies on donated food to help those in need to get adequate nourishment.

"Our clients rely on the food pantry to help feed their families and fill in the gap area between paychecks and food assistance programs," said GCJFS Family Support Coordinator Gail Allen. "We have had an increase in clients with food insecurity and with cutbacks in food stamp programs, keeping the pantry stocked is a challenge."

The food pantry is available to all clients in Gulf Coast's programs.

Non-perishable items most needed include: canned fruits; canned fish such as tuna and salmon; canned meats such as chicken; hearty soups; peanut butter and jelly; pasta and rice; tomato sauce; canned vegetables; cereal; powdered milk; boxed juices; and sugar-free and low-sodium items. Of course, cash and gift cards are always welcome.

Donations can be dropped off at Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, 14041 Icot Blvd., Clearwater.

Besides donated food items, Gulf Coast seeks cash donations, so the food pantry can purchase additional food from Feeding Tampa Bay. As part of its Chicken for Shabbat program,

Gulf Coast is also accepting cash donations that can be used to purchase gift cards to help families buy perishable food items at the grocery store and fuel cards to help with transportation.

For more information, contact Gail Allen, JFS/Family Support Coordinator, at (727) 479-1806 or email gail.allen@gcjfcs.org.

20th annual Women's Seder set for March 13 at Beth Shalom

More than 200 women from throughout Pinellas and Pasco counties are expected to turn out for the 20th annual Community Seder on Tuesday evening, March 13, at Congregation Beth Shalom, 1325 S. Belcher Road, Clearwater.

This year's theme is "What it means to say, 'I am a Jew'" and the program will reference personal reflections inspired by the last words of Daniel Pearl from the book *I am Jewish* edited by Judea and Ruth Pearl, Daniel Pearl's parents. Daniel Pearl was a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal* with dual American and Israeli citizenship. He was kidnapped and beheaded by terrorists, but before he was murdered, his final words were, "I am a Jew."

The list of participants for the program is not firmed up yet, but organizers are seeking multi-generational family members, such as a mother and daughter, or grandmother and granddaughter to read short passages from the book and discuss how the passages resonate with them. Later, during the seder meal, those attending will be asked to discuss with one another how they reacted to the multi-generational readings.

The leaders of the program come from various congregations in the community: Rabbi Danielle Upbin from Congregation Beth Shalom, Cantorial Soloist Laura Berkson from Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater and guitarist Eve Alman-Goldstein from Temple Ahavat Shalom in Palm Harbor. Violinist Rebecca Zapen of St. Petersburg and Cantorial Soloist Lily Lucey, who will be traveling from New Jersey, will also participate.

The program will feature a specially prepared Women's Community Seder Haggadah which includes readings and poems highlighting women's contributions throughout the generations to their faith and culture. As a shout-out to the cultural diversity of Judaism, both an Ashkenazi and Sephardic charoset will be offered during the Seder. The meal will be vegetarian and wine will also be served.

The sponsors of the Women's Seder are Menorah Manor, Lylah and North Pinellas chapters of Hadassah, Hadassah-St Petersburg, Jewish Women International and the Sisterhoods of Congregation Beth Shalom, Temple B'nai Israel, Temple Ahavat Shalom and Congregation B'nai Israel in St Petersburg.

The program began in 1998 and has grown from 50 attendees to almost 250. In 2005, the annual Community Women's Seder was the recipient of the Jewish Federation's Yitzhak Rabin award for Program of Distinction.

This program sells out fast so make reservations quickly. Cost is \$26 prior to Feb. 28 and \$30 after that date. Call Congregation Beth Shalom at (727) 531-1418 for a reservation form.

Construction begins on Western Wall section for egalitarian prayer

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Construction has begun to upgrade the section set aside for egalitarian prayer at the Western Wall. The work, which has a budget of more than \$7 million, comes more than a year after a more comprehensive plan was approved, and more than half a year after the plan was frozen.

In June, the Cabinet suspended the 2016 deal negotiated with the Reform and Conservative movements, the Women of the Wall, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Israeli government. The suspension came after the government's haredi Orthodox coalition partners pressured Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to scrap the agreement.

The original plan included a common entrance to the Western Wall plaza for all three sections and a public board to oversee the egalitarian prayer space that would include representatives of the non-Orthodox movements and Women of the Wall.

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FIRST PERSON Rabbi humbled, inspired, educated during mission to Guatemala with American Jewish World Service

By RABBI DAVID WEIZMAN
Cong. Beth Shalom, Clearwater

On the road up to the mountain city of Quetzaltenango, our bus stopped at an idyllic rest stop where they served us, a cohort of 13 American rabbis, locally grown Guatemalan coffee.

I found there an artist from whom I bought a painting of a pair of tropical birds, and just as I was finishing the transaction, our guide and local liaison for the American Jewish World Service, Megan Thomas, walked by and offered the story of how this Quetzal bird got its red breast feathers. The Quetzal bird, after which the city is named, as well as the national currency, used to fly in great numbers throughout the forests. The legend is emblematic of the story of the indigenous people of Guatemala.

In the year 1524, there came from Spain a warrior named Pedro de Alvarado and he marched with his army into Guatemala. Alvarado found the Mayan world filled with many riches, but he had only come to take their gold. It came to pass that Alvarado battled the Maya chief Tecun Uman by himself. When Alvarado's lance cut through the chief's heart, the quetzal fell upon his prince, it's emerald green feathery breast drenched in Uman's blood. In the morning, the quetzal rose and flew up off of Uman's body. It's beautiful green chest feathers had turned crimson, and from that moment on, the chest feathers of the quetzals have been the color of blood.

At the Museum of National Memory in Guatemala City, we reviewed how the Mayan Kingdom had been populated by 70 million people, but after the Spanish Invasion, only 3 million were left. When Guatemala claimed its independence from Spain in 1821, the people continued to suffer under a series of ruthless dictatorships, until the first free elections were held in 1944. But the country enjoyed only one decade of democratic governance until a U.S. sponsored coup overthrew the government to protect the interests of the United Fruit Company. As a result of the coup, the country plunged into an armed conflict that spanned from 1960-1996, during which, the military dictatorships, with U.S support, carried out the systematic extermination of entire villages of the indigenous non-combatant Mayan people. A peace was signed finally in 1996, but the wounds of that conflict are still open.

One afternoon our group, *Global Justice Fellows*, met for lunch in Antigua, once the capital of the Mayan kingdom, and now somewhat of a tourist stop. We sat in the open-air section under a canopy of blooming vines, with the sound of falling water in the background. After the meal, we were introduced to Edward Canil, who will become the next liaison for AJWS in Guatemala. With tears in his eyes, he told us the story of his family, what happened to them when they fled from their village into the forest. He spoke Spanish, pausing to gather himself, and we listened through our interpreters to this story of a massacre, told in detail through the eyes of a 6-year-old child.

"After the shooting stopped, I came out from my hiding place. I didn't even know what dead meant. I kept shaking my mother and my sisters, saying, get up, we have to get out of here." Edwin's father and brother had been apart from the rest, looking for a safer place for the family, and managed to survive as well. They were united a day later. Because their village had been burnt to the ground and all of their animals slaughtered, they fled, along with many others across the swamps to a refugee camp in Mexico where he lived for the next 12 years. There were approximately 200,000 casualties during the armed conflict, most of them indigenous Mayan, and over 1 million people displaced from their land.

You might imagine what kind of stereotypes would be associated with a group of Americans traveling in Guatemala in January, only a few days after their president characterized countries like this, in less than favorable terms. In fact, one of the Mayan women remarked at the end of a session, "It



Rabbi David Weizman gets a warm greeting from a member of a midwives group in Guatemala.

was nice to see that not all Americans are the same."

These women had traveled for two days to meet with us. Grantees of AJWS, they were working for the inclusion of women's voices in civic governance. The example that they offered us was this: Their community was allotted a minimum budget for maintenance and development. The city council allowed one woman to sit on the board, but she could not be an officer. This woman proposed using the money to build a water system so that a pipe could bring water to the center of their village, if not their own homes. The men on the council decided to use the money to make a baseball field instead. So as it still stands, the women continue to spend hours carrying water vessels on their heads, from the source to their homes.

The mission of AJWS is to address the root causes that inhibit growth and advancement in the developing world. We know from experience what kind of contributions women have made to western society and what factors have enabled that. These Mayan women from *Neuvo Horizonte* spoke openly about the demands that large families have which keep women out of the work force, of early marriage that prevents higher education, of social norms that subjugate women like the example given above. The integration of more women outside the home can be a benefit to the whole society. *Neuvo Horizonte*, (New Horizons), is a group of 21 communities working to advance the political participation of women on various levels of government.

One of the ways that our Constitution ensures the honesty and efficiency of our government in the U.S. is through the transparency that is offered by the freedom of the press. Our group had the opportunity to meet with members of *Prensa Comunitaria*, the Community Press, on several occasions, a news source whose journalists suffer from false criminalization. In fact, the International Federation of Journalists reported six targeted killings of journalists in Guatemala in 2016, second only to Mexico in Central America.

We met Norma, who was taking photos with her phone of a river that was being dammed for hydro electric power without the consultation of the local residents, when she was arrested, beaten, blindfolded and put in jail in solitary confinement. She had no way to contact anyone, and didn't know where she was being held. Fortunately, for Norma, her co-workers were able to locate her, and with the help of another AJWS grantee which advocates for the security of human rights defenders throughout Central America, she was freed, and continues her journalism. We met another journalist later who had a warrant out for his arrest for writing about the same subject: Land grabbing by foreign companies.

When we met with the U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala, Luis Arreaga, at the U.S. Embassy, we were accompanied by two other members of *Prensa Comunitaria*. After hearing the presentation of their work and their challenges, Arreaga said he had been reading their articles online, but did not know who they were. Now that connection was made, the embassy was in a better position to advocate for their protection. "Although I am a U.S. citizen," he said, "I was born in Guatemala, and I want to see a better



Megan Thomas of AJWS listens as Edwin Cavil, right, shares painful memories of his mother and sister being killed during a raid on his village during a period when Mayans were being systematically exterminated.

photos: © 2018 Christine Hon Photography

life for the people here."

We asked Arreaga if there was any message that we could convey to our representatives when we visit Capitol Hill later this month. "Yes there is," he said. "We need to abolish the corruption in government here that plagues the country of Guatemala. And we need to continue the kind of foreign aid that will help people make a living in their country of origin, so they will not need to migrate."

Since my return from Guatemala, most people ask me this opening question: How was your trip? A difficult question to answer in 10 words or less. So I have come up with two words: Humbling, and inspiring.

Humbling to realize, by way of contrast, what freedoms and opportunity I enjoy in the USA.

Inspiring to see the resilience of a people who have suffered, the devotion to their people and their land, and the patriotic spirit that drives them to make their country a better home for all of its inhabitants. Inspired as well, to feel that way about my own country.

I will add one more word: educational. Maimonides taught us that it is better to teach a man to fish than to give him a fish. This is the work that AJWS does in 19 different countries around the world; it helps



Rabbi Weizman lights candles during a Mayan ritual with Nuevo Horizonte, a group seeking to involve more women in government.

people who are helping themselves. It was an honor to witness that holy work, and to see firsthand, how they accomplish their mission.

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Food Festival returns to satisfy the craving for authentic Jewish cuisine

A Jewish Press report

Last year organizers expected a turnout in the hundreds for the first ever Tampa Bay Jewish Food Festival at Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater, but a couple thousand showed up and some food items were sold out before noon.

“We have increased all the food amounts, so we hope for enough to feed about 4,000 this year,” said Barbara Bloom, temple coordinator for the event, which will take place on Sunday, Feb. 25 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the temple, 1685 S. Belcher Road. The Jewish Federation of Pinellas & Pasco Counties provided a grant to help boost this year’s food fest.

Not only will there be more food, the list of foods offered has grown. In addition to the crowd favorite from last year – pastrami and corned beef sandwiches from Carnegie Deli in New York – the fare will include homemade matzoh ball soup, chopped liver, stuffed cabbage, latkes, bagels with the works, kugel, hamantaschen and a variety of other baked goodies. Sour pickles on a stick,

one of the first items to sell out last year, will again be offered.

There will also be kosher hot dogs served from a hot dog cart on loan from Joel and Ellen Goetz, owners of Jo-El’s Delicatessen and Marketplace in St. Petersburg, plus falafel made in partnership with the temple and Mana Mana restaurant in Clearwater. A nosh-to-go booth will also be set up for those who want to grab take-out food.

Cost for food starts at \$2 for a whole pickle to \$15 for a corned beef platter that includes an oversized sandwich on rye, cole slaw and pickle.

“Using food as the excuse, it is our hope to create a greater feeling of a Jewish community in the Tampa Bay area,” said Sharon Finkelstein, Festival chairperson. “But at the same time, we also hope to reach out to our non-Jewish neighbors to learn and be a part of this celebration of our culture.”

Those attending are asked to bring a can of food for local food pantries.

Among the expanded offerings will be a tented beverage garden that will include

wine and beer tastings. Entertainment will be provided by a harmonica group and the Chai Notes klezmer band. The *Sunday Simcha* show on WMNF-FM radio will also broadcast live from the event.

Triple the number of vendors from last year are expected plus more Jewish organizations have signed up for booths including Hillel Academy in Tampa, Jewish Women International, Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, Hadassah, Tampa Bay Jewish Genealogy Society, the *Jewish Press*, and the Community Women’s Seder.

In the Kid’s Zone, there will be a Kona ice truck, a boutique cotton candy vendor, face painting, balloons, and bounce houses. Children are also invited to dress in costumes for Purim and prizes will be awarded for the best costumes.

More tents will be set up for the comfort of patrons and vendors.

Making it all come together are 200 volunteers, some of whom have been working on the 2018 Food Festival almost since the day the 2017 event ended.

One problem the organizers ran into last year and hope to have resolved this year is parking.

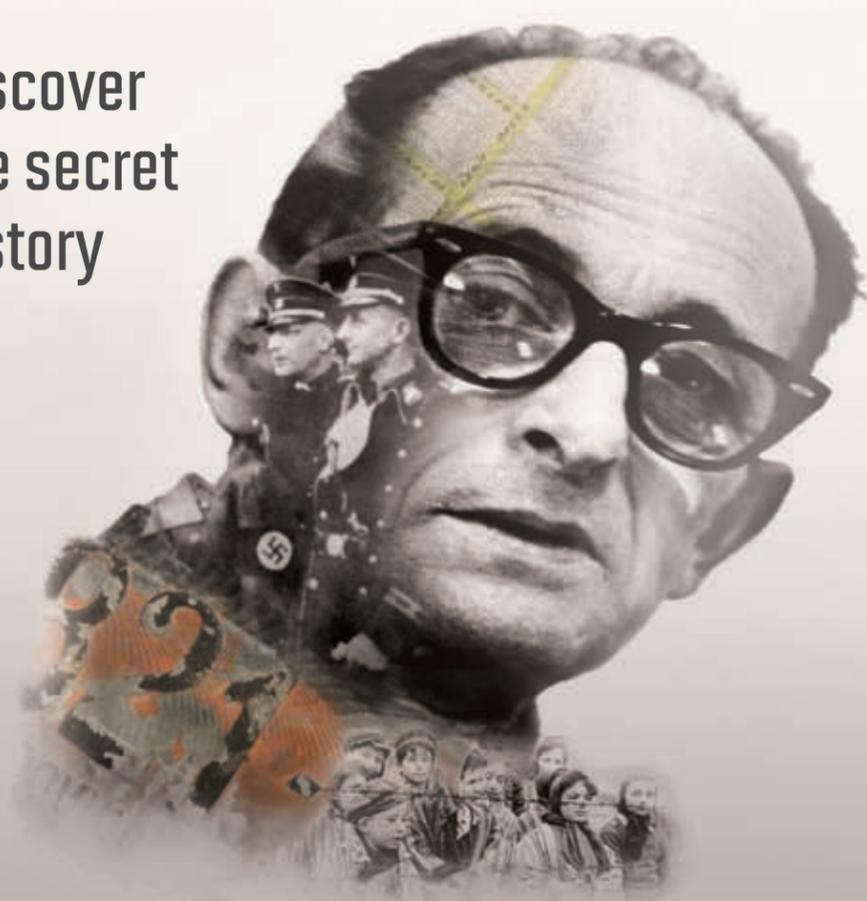
Hope Presbyterian Church and St. John’s Episcopal Church, both across the street from temple, will once again be available for parking with police stationed to safely escort festival goers across Belcher Road.

In addition, this year remote parking lots with shuttle service will be offered from Oak Grove Middle School, 1370 S. Belcher Road, and St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, 1955 S. Belcher Road.

Two senior communities, The Preserve in Clearwater (formerly Inn on the Pond) and the Palms of Largo, have donated use of their buses and the temple has hired the Jolly Trolley to shuttle festival goers from the remote parking lots. The temple parking lot will only be available for those with handicap permits.

The food festival will occur rain or shine and there is no admission fee; food prices are posted on the event website, www.tampabayjewishfoodfest.com.

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USF students sampling free homemade ice cream.

USF Hillel creates tasty (and free) way to enlighten students about Israel

What’s the newest item on the University of South Florida Hillel menu? Homemade ice cream.

It is the latest addition to the kosher kitchen that opened last year when USF Hillel expanded its facilities. A commercial ice cream maker, donated to Hillel, resulted in the new treat: the USF Hillel Ice Cream Parlor.

Like other ice cream shops, this one serves delicious, homemade ice cream. Unlike other ice cream shops, USF Hillel’s ice cream is free to any student who attends a fun, social and welcoming weekly event at the Morris and Bertha Escoll Center for Jewish Campus Life.

And the cherry on top, at the event, the general USF student population learns about the wonders of Israel at a time when anti-Israel sentiment is out-front on college campuses throughout the country.

Rabbi Ed Rosenthal, Suncoast Hillel’s executive director and a self-proclaimed ice cream fanatic, explained how the idea for the Hillel Ice Cream Parlor was conceived.

“One of our donors offered to underwrite a commercial ice cream maker as part of our USF Hillel Kitchen Registry,” said Rosenthal. “Not only was I extremely excited about the prospect of having our own homemade Hillel ice cream on campus, but I also realized that this would be a really creative and unique way to reach the 80 percent of USF students who don’t know or care about Israel, Jews or Hillel beyond what they see in *The Oracle*, USF’s weekly newspaper.”

But that changes when students come to one of the weekly ice cream parlor programs. “They’re greeted by Hillel students and staff, they see photos and videos of Israel on a high-definition monitor, they hear contemporary Israeli music and read large banners about Israeli innovations and contributions to the world,” said Rosenthal. “They talk with USF Hillel students about Israel on a positive, one-on-one basis, which is what I hoped would happen with this program.”

While the ice cream is free, in the spirit of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world,) students who come to the Ice Cream Parlor are encouraged to make a small donation to one of three charitable organizations: the Humane Society, the American Diabetes Association or the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. This request is meant to teach students about the Jewish values of philanthropy and giving back to make the world a better place.

Since the USF Hillel Ice Cream Parlor opened in the fall, several hundred students have already taken part in the tasty weekly events.

Offering a variety of custom flavors that change weekly, Ice Cream Parlor nights have attracted different groups and organizations including: the Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) Interfaith Leadership Council, multiple USF Medical School Student Association groups; the USF Campus-Wide Relay for Life Committee; and the USF World Study Abroad program. More student organizations are already on the schedule for future Ice Cream Parlor nights in the spring semester.

USF Hillel has also recently created a 36-flavors campaign, giving donors in the community an opportunity to design his or her own custom flavor, name it and become a part of this unique Israel education program.

For a donation of \$250, the donor’s custom creation will be a featured Flavor of the Month at four weekly USF Hillel Ice Cream Parlors, and the donor will also receive two complimentary quarts of his or her ice cream.

The weekly USF Hillel Ice Cream Parlor is funded, in part, by a Hinenu mini-grant from Hillel International, the parent organization of Hillels of the Florida Suncoast.

For questions or additional information about the USF Hillel Ice Cream Parlor or Hillel’s new 36-Flavors program, call Linda Wolf, Suncoast Hillel’s assistant director, at (813) 899-2788 or email shalom@suncoasthillels.org.