

29<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL  
**Bar & Bat Mitzvah**  
PLANNING GUIDE  
**SECTION B**

## Federation nosh for newcomers, networking

A Newcomer Nosh, for those who are new to the local Jewish community as well as anyone else who just wants to drop by and schmooze, will be hosted by the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties on Sunday, Aug. 26 from 9:30-11 a.m.

The event will be held in the Federation's new community room. The space in the back of the Federation's offices used to serve as a conference room, but has been transformed into a more user friendly space with flexible tables and chairs and a comfy  
**NOSH continued on PAGE 6**

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TWO SECTIONS 28 PAGES

## Suncoast Hillels enlists congregations for first Tashlich with a twist

On Rosh HaShanah, it is customary for Jews to go to a body of water and symbolically cast away their sins during the Tashlich service. But this year, nine Tampa Bay area Reform and Conservative congregations will join with Hillels of the Florida Suncoast to reverse the Tashlich tradition, removing human sins from the water by cleaning up local waterfronts.

The first Tampa Bay Jewish Community Reverse Tashlich will take place on Sunday, Sept. 16, which falls between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The congregations that have signed up to participate in the Reverse Tashlich project are: Congregation B'nai Israel, St. Petersburg; Congregation Beth Am, Tampa; Congregation Beth Shalom, Clearwater; Congregation Kol Ami, Tampa; Congregation Rodeph Sholom, Tampa; Congregation Schaarai Zedek,



**Eckerd College's Reverse Tashlich, sponsored by the school's Scubi Jew group two years ago, shown above, inspired plans to involve the entire Jewish community in the effort to clean up our shoreline.**

Tampa; Temple Ahavat Shalom, Palm Harbor; Temple B'nai Israel, Clearwater; and Temple Beth-El, St. Petersburg.

**TASHLICH continued on PAGE 8**

## Just a nosh..

Compiled from news wires

### Kuwait Airways will pay damages to Israeli passenger refused ticket

Kuwait Airways agreed to pay damages plus legal costs to an Israeli who was refused a ticket on a flight from London to Bangkok on the grounds of her nationality.

Mandy Blumenthal, with the help of UK Lawyers for Israel, had claimed damages against the airline for racial discrimination and harassment after she tried to buy a return ticket to the Thai capital at Heathrow Airport in November.

Blumenthal's encounter at the Kuwait Airways desk was filmed and the video is available on YouTube. It shows that Kuwait Airways was prepared to sell her the ticket but refused once it saw the Israeli passport. The ticket clerk repeatedly explained that "Israeli passport holders are not permitted to travel on Kuwait Airways."

The airline has agreed to pay Blumenthal damages but without admitting liability, UK Lawyers for Israel said. The report did not say how much the airline was willing to pay.

"The law is clear: Direct discrimination on grounds of nationality in the provision of a service to the public is illegal," said David Berens, one of Blumenthal's attorneys. "Kuwait Airways is now legally obliged to end this policy or end its services from the UK altogether."

"It is horrible to be singled out, to be told you are not allowed to do something because of who you are," Blumenthal said. "In my mind it is an anti-Semitic policy to single out the only Jewish state to boycott."

In 2016, Kuwait Airways ended its New York to London service over its refusal to carry Israeli passengers, which prompted the U.S. Department of Transportation to issue the firm an ultimatum.

The airline has also been taken to court in Germany for refusing to fly Israelis, but a court in Frankfurt ruled the practice was legal.

## Israel again suspect in assassination; does it pay off?

RON KAMPEAS  
JTA news service

WASHINGTON – Aziz Asbar was a leading Syrian rocket scientist, working with Hezbollah and Iran to develop systems that could reach deep inside Israel. Now he's dead, blown up in a car.

The natural inclination in the Middle East and even farther afield is to blame the Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency, for such killings. Indeed, Mossad was named as the perpetrator in a *New York*

*Times* story.

The *Times* cited "a senior official from a Middle Eastern intelligence agency" in reporting Asbar's death on Aug. 4 in May-saf, which is near a major Syrian weapons development facility. It also reported that it was at least the fourth assassination attempt by Israel in three years against an enemy weapons engineer on foreign soil.

The Mossad hardly ever confirm its operations, which the prime minister must approve. An exception came in April when

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu extolled an operation in which Israeli agents stole a literal ton of documents from Iran related to its nuclear program.

But that operation, as far as anyone knows, did not involve a killing. Another, in Kuala Lumpur the same month, did: Two motorcyclists shot dead a Hamas associated engineer, Fadi Two motorcyclists shot dead a Hamas associated engineer, Fadi al-Batsh.

**ASSASSINATION continued on PAGE 8**

## Birthright Israel grapples with Palestinian questions

By BEN SALES  
JTA news service

When Samuel Green talks about Israel's West bank security barrier with the Birthright groups he guides, he first explains the Israeli view that the barrier was built to prevent Palestinian terrorists from breaching Israeli territory and that Israelis generally feel it has saved lives.

But then he'll talk about what the barrier – which is part wall, part fence – means for Palestinians: how it cuts into West Bank territory, how it has separated people from their farmland, how they see it as an imposing wall.

"It's a disservice to the people in front of me to leave out such information," Green said. "So if you're

trying to understand why there's conflict, you have to understand why people are annoyed. It's important to talk about."

That approach contrasts with the one viewed by 2.7 million people in a viral Facebook video taken by activists of IfNotNow, a group of young American Jews who oppose Israel's control over the West Bank. In the video, a Birthright tour guide spars with a participant on a Birthright bus over the status of the West Bank.

Rather than aim to present a range of views on Israel's control of the territory, the guide says "Israel sees the West Bank as part of Israel" – a misleading claim that does not accord with the legal  
**BIRTHRIGHT continued on PAGE 15**

### Israeli hospitals see record baby boom

Several hospitals in Israel have reported record-breaking numbers of deliveries of newborns.

Maternity wards in most of Israel's hospitals are at capacity, with some mothers being referred to other departments and others having their babies delivered in hallways, Ynet reported Thursday, Aug. 9.

Soroka Hospital in Beersheba had the largest number of births, a July record of 1,518 deliveries. Other hospitals in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Afula also reported noticeable spikes in births.

The uptick is connected to rising fertility rates and the fact that there is a significantly higher number of births during the summer months compared to winter, according to the report. August is typically the month with the most births.

In 2016, Israel had 181,405 deliveries – August led the way with 16,540 – and a fertility rate of 3.11 children per mother. It's by far the highest fertility rate among the members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, which has 34 industrialized nations. Israel had a fertility rate of four children per mother in 1970, but it dropped to 2.9 by 1999 before climbing to its current level.

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### Meet Our Teenage Israeli Visitors!

The Jewish Federation of Pinellas & Pasco Counties is part of Partnership2gether (P2G), a program of the Jewish Agency for Israel. We were honored to have hosted four young people in our community for this two-week exchange program.



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Check Out  
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Dates!

- Aug 23. Jewish Federation Media Breakfast
- Aug 25. The Florida Holocaust Museum Night with the Tampa Bay Rays
- Aug 26. Newcomer Nosh
- Aug 28. Jewish Women International Meet and Greet
- Sep 1. Leil Selichot begins after nightfall



New to the area? New to the Federation? This event is just for you!

- WHAT:** Bagels, coffee and networking
- WHERE:** Federation's Community Room
- WHEN:** 9:30 - 11:00 am on August 26th

RSVP to Lucé at [luce@jewishpinellas.org](mailto:luce@jewishpinellas.org).



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**SEPT 7**

HIGH HOLIDAY EDITION II

Press Release .....Aug 14

Advertising.....Aug 28

**SEPT 21**

Press Release .....Sept 7

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**PERSPECTIVE**

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



**Bat Mitzvah as starting line:  
Final words for my daughter**

It seems apropos that in this edition I mention that Hila is just weeks away from her Bat Mitzvah. This girl, who has been raised in a rather uniquely immersive Jewish environment (consider: she's attended at least 10 Super Sundays including one in the womb, and might know how to run a table at a Jewish event better than some adults), will be standing at the Torah, beautifully chanting, a spark in her eye reflecting all that our Jewish future holds on her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A friend and Federation board member, Ezra Singer, recently lent me the audiobook version of *Here I Am* by Jonathan Safran Foer. Foer paints a grim-yet-relatable picture of the family patriarch Isaac as he contemplates suicide or a move into a "home." Isaac had set as a finish line for his life the birth of his first grandson; he revised this finish line to be the grandson's Bar Mitzvah, now just weeks away at the time of the novel's opening.

Reading this, I found myself wondering: is Hila's Bat Mitzvah a finish line or a starting line? The last few years of Hebrew tutoring, religious school, and learning have felt like a marathon for certain; yet in its true meaning, it's really more of the start. Shortly, she will be considered an adult in terms of Jewish spirituality and observance, and will take her place as a member of the community alongside the rest of us.

For her, it's her life's starting line.

But for me, her Bat Mitzvah is perhaps a finish line, and crossing it requires me to let go of the idea that I have much control over the person she becomes.

This heavy paradox compels me to reflect on my final tokens of wisdom for her (and all of the near-horizon B'nai Mitzvah kids out there). I know that my regular readership is not comprised largely of new teens; if you have one in your life, please feel free to clip and share this piece as you see appropriate.

**Final Pearls of Wisdom for Hila and All Those Approaching B'nai Mitzvah**

- While it feels like a finish line, your Bat Mitzvah is just the beginning. You've only had a chance to taste from the grand buffet of Jewish life, so keep considering what you want your Jewishness to look and feel like. In Devorah Baum's *New York Times* piece (shared with me by Phyllis Tauber), "We are all Jew-ish Now," she points out that identity is a continually crafted "ish," which for Jewish people may mean an uncomfortable re-evaluation of our Jewish "sensitivity." Baum notes, "How pleasurable it can be to find oneself unbound by categories." Take the chance today, and in all the days of your life, to explore the vast opportunities to be who you are, categorized or not.

- Don't let perfect be the enemy of good enough. Yes, your parents are taking you to two speech practices, three bimah dry-runs, and two dress rehearsals, yet my biggest hope for you is that you just smile and enjoy the beauty of the blessings even when you get part of the trope wrong or say something out of order. It's a noble pursuit to bring beauty to ritual, but perfection is not required. Embrace the hiccups and speedbumps along the way, both during your service and in the rest of your life. Good enough lives are lives well-lived.

- Embrace boredom: it's short-lived. If you're feeling bored, do something nice for someone (including yourself). Send a text to grandma, lay on your back on the front lawn and look at the clouds, wave to a passing car. Sharing your brightness in moments of boredom adds to your own sparkle. (And remember: thousands of years ago someone fought his or her own boredom by rubbing sticks together. Now we have fire!)

- Remember that listening doesn't mean agreement. This goes for everyone in your world. Sometimes you'll listen to your own heart telling you to follow a path, but you don't have to agree. Sometimes you'll hear out a close friend (or a parent) and find yourself disagreeing; other times you'll find that your parents want to really listen to you and in the end don't actually agree. The two are completely separate activities and both are important. Make your peace with this fact.

- Do the things you're afraid of (including making bad decisions). Life is one big experiment, and learning to do fear-inducing things now, while you're still under the care of your adults, is a great way to grow as a person. This includes everything from calling that boy you like to skipping studying for a test; going to the movies by yourself or giving honest (yet kind) feedback to a friend who's on a bad path. It also means being brave enough to be honest with yourself about your choices.

- Give. Of Yourself. Of your resources. A damn. Just give. A core piece of your Jewishness is giving. Extend this beyond the confines of your "project." (Hila opted to bring together her love of Israel, dogs, and helping those living with disabilities by organizing a "Bow Wow Walk 1K" to raise money for Israel Guide Dogs for the Blind. As a "Puppy Sponsor," her \$500 goal [if attained] will fund 6 months of food and medicine for a puppy in training.) My wish for her and all other young people is that this sparks a confidence in the joy that giving brings, and the desire to continue in tzedakah regularly.

Liked it? Loathed it? Want to react? I would welcome your feedback and can be reached at [emilie@jewishpinellas.org](mailto:emilie@jewishpinellas.org).



Courtesy Polish Ministry of Culture and Heritage  
**A portion of the so-called Eiss Archive showing fake passports issued Jews by Polish diplomats in Switzerland.**

**Poland obtains WWII-era archive showing Polish diplomats' efforts to save Jews during Holocaust**

(JTA) – Poland has obtained a World War II-era archive that documents efforts by Polish diplomats to get Jews out of Europe by issuing fake passports from Latin American countries.

The Eiss archive shows that 330 people survived the Holocaust due to the efforts of the Polish diplomats based in Switzerland, and another 387 were killed despite having the forged passports. The fate of 430 others is not known.

Poland's Culture Ministry and the Auschwitz-Birkenau state museum negotiated with a private owner in Israel for the archive for the past year, the museum said Monday in a statement.

The statement calls the archive "irrefutable proof that Poles, the Polish state, and its representatives systemically and institutionally were involved in saving Jews during World War II."

"The activities of the then-Polish diplomats in Switzerland, newly discovered and documented, can be an inspiration for historians, but also for writers, filmmakers, and creators of culture," it said.

The rescue effort was led by the Polish ambassador to Switzerland, Aleksander Lados, as well as three other Polish diplomats and two representatives of Jewish organizations.

The archive is named for Rabbi Chaim Eiss, one of the Jewish activists, who died of a heart attack in late 1943. The documents reportedly came to Israel with one of Eiss' descendants after World War II.

The collection includes eight of the false Paraguayan passports; photos of Jews requesting the passports; and letters between the Polish diplomats and Jewish organizations. It also includes a list of Jewish children in Warsaw orphanages.

The documents, which will be displayed at first in Bern, Switzerland, will become part of the collection at the Auschwitz museum next year. They will be subject to conservation and thoroughly analyzed by archivists and historians once they arrive at the museum.

Poland passed a controversial law early this year making it a criminal offense to accuse the country of complicity in the Holocaust. Lawmakers later revised the law to make it a civil offense.

During the war, Poles saved thousands of Jews. Other Poles killed thousands of Jews or betrayed them to the Nazis. The Nazis killed 3 million Jewish Poles and another 3 million non-Jewish ones.

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## RABBINICALLY — SPEAKING —

### Elul: A Jewish time of opportunity, growth, and spiritual preparation

By **RABBI AARON M. LEVER, BCC**  
Director of Spiritual Care, Menorah Manor

We have entered the Jewish month of Elul – the month before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. In its wisdom, the Jewish tradition sets aside the entire month of Elul as a time of self-reflection to help us prepare spiritually for the High Holidays. Indeed, Judaism is a thoughtful and intentional religion.

As we think about the promise of a New Year, Elul is a time to take stock of the last year and our lives in general: Who am I? Where am I in my life? What were my greatest successes and failures during the last year? Am I pleased with the direction of my life? What are my regrets, and what do I wish to change? Am I facing difficult life challenges, and how am I coping with them? What have been meaningful experiences this past year, and what has brought me joy? What are my failings, and how do I wish to grow as a human being in the coming year? This process of self-exploration and soul-searching is called *Heshbon haNefesh* – “an Accounting of the Soul.”

For some, this kind of intense soul-searching may not be an easy or natural process. Many of us lead busy, fast-paced lives and may not feel we have the time to do *Heshbon haNefesh*, but this is an important opportunity we must not miss.

The first step is to give yourself the time and space to think, even if just for a few minutes. You may find it helpful to pull yourself out of your regular, daily routine to find the peace and solace needed to embark on a process of self-reflection. For me, I find that going to the beach at sunset is a spiritual time and place. Going for a walk along the beach and watching the sun set over the ocean helps me create the space I need to do *Heshbon haNefesh*. This is my spiritual practice. I encourage you to find what works for you. At our core, we are truly spiritual beings, and – just like physical exercise – we all need this kind of time, whether we realize it or not.

You may discover that journaling may assist you in doing your *Heshbon haNefesh* this Elul. To journal, you might start by answering the questions listed above. You might find it meaningful to maintain a journal dedicated to these annual reflections.

I also have found that reading some-thing meaningful and spiritually thought-

provoking is another way to initiate this process of self-reflection during the month of Elul.

Along these lines, I would like to recommend the book *How Then, Shall We Live? Four Simple Questions that Reveal the Beauty and Meaning of Our Lives* by best-selling author Wayne Muller, who is a minister and psychotherapist. In this book, which is an ecumenical piece that draws upon the wisdom of many different religious traditions, Muller focuses on four spiritual questions that shape our lives: (1) Who am I? (2) What do I love? (3) How shall I live, knowing I will die? (4) What is my gift to the family of the earth? Throughout the book, Muller includes spiritual practices and exercises that assist the reader in engaging in a process of *Heshbon haNefesh*. I find the reflections and stories in *How Then, Shall We Live?* to be particularly meaningful, and I offer this book to you as a spiritual tool.

During the High Holidays, we recite the prayer *Unetaneh Tokef* which contains what I would consider to be the most haunting passages in all of Jewish liturgy:

“On Rosh Hashanah it is written, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed: How many shall leave this world, and how many shall be born; who shall live and who shall die; who in the fullness of years and who before ...” As a child, I remember being frightened by these words. And then the prayer continues: “But *T’shuvah* (Repentance), *T’fillah* (Prayer), and *Tz’dakah* (Deeds of Kindness) can remove the severity of the Decree.”

And what is the decree? It is our mortality – our coming to grips with the fact that we will not live forever. While we all must face our morality, Judaism teaches us to find hope through our infinite potential to live a richer, more meaningful, purposeful, and joyful life through acts of *T’shuvah*, *T’fillah*, and *Tz’dakah*. Judaism believes that these three spiritual acts help us to make each day count.

It is because of the penetrating depth of these words from the *Unetaneh Tokef* that we need the entire month of Elul to prepare. Elul presents us with an exciting opportunity. I wish you well in your spiritual preparations this year. *Shanah Tovah*.

*The Rabbinically Speaking column is provided as a public service by the Jewish Press in cooperation with the Pinellas County Board of Rabbis. Columns are assigned on a rotating basis by the board. The views expressed in the column are those of the rabbi and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Jewish Press or the Board of Rabbis.*



## Congregations

### Temple Beth-El St. Petersburg

**Confessions:** The temple is launching a Community Confessions project on Saturday, Sept. 14 at 7 p.m. on the topic “The Confessional... Catholic or Jewish?” The program allows people to anonymously reflect and seek forgiveness for whatever they may be sorry for from the past year. It includes a discussion of the contrasts between the “Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation” (commonly called Confession) as one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church and the practice of “Vidui” (Confession) as part of the process of teshuvah (repentance/returning) in Jewish practice.

The evening will conclude with a Havdalah and S’lichot service from Mishkan HaLev.

**Religious school kickoff:** Meet the new director of the temple’s religious school, **Sarah Grace Nadler**, and connect with friends at a religious school kickoff on Sunday, Aug. 19 at 9:30 a.m.

For more information, contact Nadler at sarahgrace@templebeth-el.com.

**Museum outing:** The SAGE group (Seniors for Arts Growth and Education) will be going on a tour of the James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art, 150 Central Ave., St. Petersburg, on Thursday, Aug. 23 from 10:45 a.m. to 2 p.m. Enjoy a private highlight tour in the morning then pause for a lunch at noon in the Canyon Café (at the museum) before enjoying free time in the afternoon. Spots are limited, so RSVP immediately to **Cantor Pamela Siskin** at prsiskin@gmail.com. The group will meet at the museum, where parking is plentiful. Those needing transportation should call the temple office at (727) 347-6136.

**Shabbat Wonder:** A program designed to engage preschool age children and their families will be held on Sunday, Aug. 26 at 9:30 a.m. This month’s program kicks off the new year with challah and candlestick making.

### Cong. B’nai Israel St. Petersburg

**Youth Breakfast:** Youths ages 2-12 and their families are invited to learn “side by side” and enjoy a breakfast nosh as part of opening day events for the religious school on Sunday, Aug. 19. Start with morning minyan at 9 a.m., followed by a breakfast nosh. There will be a “meet and greet” for students, parents and teachers, with fun programming and activities. Share your breakfast and bring a box of cereal to donate to Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services.

RSVP for this free event to info@cbistpete.org or call (727) 381-4900.

**Coffee Talk:** Join **Rabbi Philip Weintraub** on Wednesdays at 9 a.m. at Black Crow Coffee Co., 722 Second St. N., St. Petersburg.

**Selichot events:** Begin the process of teshuva (repentance) on Saturday, Sept. 1, with a pre-Selichot musical program at 8:45 p.m. The program, featuring **Cantor Jonathan Schultz** and the congregation choir, includes “Three pre-Selichot Preludes” – excerpts from *The Hush of Midnight: An American Selichot Service* by Ruth F. Brin and Hazzan Charles Davidson. Stay for a dessert reception before the Selichot service begins at 10:30 p.m.

## Shabbat Candle Lighting Times

Aug 17 • 7:49 pm  
Aug 24 • 7:42 pm  
Aug 31 • 7:34 pm  
Sept 7 • 7:26 pm



### Cong. Beth Shalom Gulfport

**Israel trip:** The congregation is planning a trip to Israel next year. For more information, call the synagogue at (727) 321-3380.

### Cong. Beth Shalom Clearwater

**Rosh Chodesh:** The Rosh Chodesh women’s study group will meet on Sunday, Aug. 19 at 4 p.m.

For more information, contact **Anne de Marlor** at ademarlor@tampabay.rr.com.

**Holiday prep:** A series of sessions to help prepare for the High Holidays will be offered by **Rabbi Danielle Upbin** at 12:30 p.m. on Thursdays, Aug. 23 and 30 and Sept. 6. These sessions offer the Jewish tools to nurture self-growth and spiritual awareness.

Call the synagogue office to RSVP.

**Back to school, back to shul:** A day full of activities, learning and food in planned for Sunday, Aug. 26 beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the synagogue. Help welcome prospective members and from 9 a.m. through 1 p.m. The OneBlood bus will be on site for blood donations.

**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. Contact the synagogue office at (727) 531-1418 to confirm dates of the classes.

**Torah study:** Study the Torah with **Jason Palmer** on Saturday, Aug. 25 at noon.

### Chabad of Clearwater

**Torah and tea:** **Rebbitzin 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.

### Temple B’nai Israel Clearwater

**Religious school open house:** Try a new Jewish holiday food, learn a new song and see why this is not your parents’ religious school at an open house on Sunday, Aug. 19 from 9 a.m. to noon. This is a time to meet the teachers and hear about the temple’s educational programs for all generations. For more information, email **Dani Gamson**, director of education and youth, at danig@tbclearwater.org

**Welcome back service:** A blue jean musical Shabbat service to welcome folks back from summer vacations will take place on Friday Aug. 24 at 7 p.m. Meet and mingle before services and enjoy some wine and cheese at 6 p.m.

**Sunday Cinema Café:** Watch the movie  
• CONTINUED on NEXT PAGE

## Religious Directory

### PINELLAS COUNTY Reform

**Temple AHAVAT SHALOM** — 1575 Curlew Rd., Palm Harbor, 34683 • Rabbi Gary Klein • Cantorial soloist, Allison Rosoff • 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

**Temple B’NAI ISRAEL** — 1685 S. Belcher Road, Clearwater, 33764 • Rabbi Daniel Treiser • cantorial soloist, Laura Berkson • Services: Friday, 7:00 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 • Evan Cohen, lay leader • 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 Philip Weintraub • 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: rabbi18@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, 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m • Sunday, 8:30 a.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: rabbi@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.

### 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: chabadspringhill.com

# Jewish Dems contend with wave of progressives critical of Israel

By CHARLES DUNST  
JTA news service

NEW YORK— After Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez shocked the political world by defeating longtime New York Rep. Joseph Crowley in a Democratic primary last month, Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez quickly aligned himself with the former political outsider, saying on a radio show that “she represents the future of our party.”

If so, that future appears to include the kind of sharp criticism of Israel once considered taboo in both major parties.

Ocasio-Cortez ran on a platform of Medicare for all, fully funded public schools and a universal jobs guarantee. But she has also been critical of Israel, calling its military’s killing of Palestinian protesters in May a “massacre.”

The Democratic Socialists of America, of which Ocasio-Cortez is a member, supports the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel. Ocasio-Cortez has remained silent on the issue.

In Minnesota, Democratic congressional candidate Ilhan Omar calls herself an “intersectional feminist” and Israel an apartheid regime. In Virginia’s 5th Congressional District, Democratic nominee Leslie Cockburn is the co-author, along with her husband, of *Dangerous Liaison: The Inside Story of the U.S.-Israeli Covert Relationship*, a scathing 1991 attack on the Jewish state.

“It seems to me that some criticism of Israel is part of a package among young progressives along with health care for all and jobs for all,” Democratic strategist Brad Bannon told *Newsweek*.

That puts Democrats who are both liberal and pro-Israel in a bind. Whether the result of “intersectionality,” which links Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians to other left-wing causes, or a willingness to call out its right-wing government, progressive criticism of Israel may make for some hard choices come Election Day.

According to a Pew Research Center survey, the percentage of Democrats saying

they sympathize more with Israel than the Palestinians has declined from 38 percent in 2001 to 27 percent in 2018 – the lowest level of support on record. Support for Israel further decreased among self-identified “liberal” Democrats from 48 percent in 2001 to 19 percent in 2018. In the same time period, their support for Palestinians rose from 18 percent to 35 percent.

Although the Pew survey received notable criticism, the general trends it notes have been shown elsewhere.

Some credit Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-VT, with normalizing such criticism of Israel. While the 2016 Democratic presidential candidate defined himself as “100 percent pro-Israel,” he recently called on the U.S. to adopt a more balanced policy toward Israel and the Palestinians. In late March, Sanders’ office posted three videos to social media harshly criticizing Israel for what he deemed its excessive use of force in Gaza and the Trump administration for not intervening during the border clashes.

Last year, Perez appointed as his DNC deputy Rep. Keith Ellison of Minnesota, who in addition to being dogged by ties to the anti-Semitic Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan implied that U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East is “governed” by considerations of what is good or bad for Israel. (Ellison, who was the first Muslim elected to Congress, is running for attorney general in Minnesota and is not seeking re-election. Omar is seeking his seat.)

The Republican Jewish Coalition is expected to make the rise of the Democratic left a target of its activism. It already has run ads in a Philadelphia-area congressional district where the Democratic candidate, Scott Wallace, faced heat after a charity he runs was shown to have given to anti-Israel groups. (He said he wasn’t aware and is pro-Israel.) RJC spokesman Neil Strauss told JTA that anti-Israel rhetoric has become mainstream in Democratic politics and is a means to securing left-wing support.

“Democrats running in competitive primaries, some in swing districts, are getting left wing, base votes by attacking Israel. For Democratic groups to pretend like this is a made up wedge issue is audacious considering they won’t commit to supporting (or denounce) these candidates,” Strauss told JTA.

“Make no mistake about it, Scott Wallace, Leslie Cockburn, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and other candidates attacking Israel, one of our closest allies and the only democracy in the Middle East, is bad for U.S.-Israel relations. It is also a bad political strategy,” Strauss added. “We will continue educating voters in many other districts about the anti-Israel behavior of Democrats, between now and November,” Strauss promised, referencing the midterm elections.

Halie Soifer, the executive director of the Jewish Democratic Council of America, said there is no contradiction between Zionism and Democratic politics, maintaining that the Democratic Party continues to best represent Jewish interests.

“JDCA is supporting Democratic candidates who share our policy platform and values, and we have, in some instances, spoken out against candidates who are not aligned with our views. JDCA is proudly serving as the voice of pro-Israel and socially progressive Democrats,” Soifer said.

Although anti-Israel attitudes certainly exist within progressive circles, some liberal Jews believe they are on the margins.

“I believe that support for Israel remains as strong among both Republicans and Democrats as ever,” said Rabbi Jack Moline, the executive director of the Interfaith Alliance and the former head of the National Jewish Democratic Council. “With some few exceptions on both sides of the aisle, the notion of a national homeland for the Jewish people is accepted and secure. However, just as people who were formerly on the margins of both parties are now considered part of a big tent, ideas that were once marginal in Israel are being entertained by mainstream leaders.

“For a liberal Zionist like me, objecting to bad policy in Israel is an indication of deeper concern, not lesser support,” he said.

Daniel Shapiro, the former U.S. ambassador to Israel under President Obama, said there is no contradiction between liberal values and Zionism, which he described as “the expression of the wholly legitimate right of the Jewish people to sovereignty in their ancient homeland.”

“If there are those in the Democratic Party or the progressive coalition who misunderstand that – there may be some, but we tend to exaggerate the phenomenon – it is incumbent on people like me to educate them about Israel’s inherent legitimacy,” he said.

The larger divide, Shapiro said, relates to the Palestinian issue, not Israel’s existence.

“An Israel that is seen as still seeking to keep a realistic two-state solution alive, where its security needs are met and it is recognized as a Jewish state – and even though Palestinian leaders have not yet met their obligations to make that outcome possible – will not have trouble retaining the broad, bipartisan support it has historically enjoyed,” he said.

Rabbi Jill Jacobs, the executive director of T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, said the Pew study was flawed, insofar as it suggested that support for either Israel or the Palestinians implies a lack of advocacy for the other.

“The question of whether one is pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian is a false dichotomy,” Jacobs said. “The only defensible position is one that stands up for the human rights of both – and insists that these are not in conflict. That means working toward two states, and opposing the occupation and the growth of settlements that entrench it.”



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

## Congregations

• CONTINUED from PREVIOUS PAGE

*Maktub*, an Israeli comedy, on Sunday, Aug. 26 at 1 p.m. Popcorn and non-alcoholic drinks will be provided. There is no charge for members and friends.

**For new and prospective members:** A Shabbat service on Friday, Aug. 31 at 7 p.m. will welcome new and prospective members. A pie oneg, sponsored by Women of Temple B’nai Israel, will follow the service.

**Selichot dinners:** Congregants are invited to gather in one of six local restaurants with other temple members and friends on Saturday, Sept. 1 at 6 p.m. for a dinner. Each participant will pay for their own dinner, then folks will come to the temple for the Selichot service at 8:30 p.m. A dessert oneg will follow. Babysitting is available. Reservations are required by Aug 24 by calling (727) 531-5829.

**Playtime:** The temple invites preschoolers and their parents to gather with other families with young children on Sunday, Aug. 19 from 10 a.m. to noon. This is an opportunity for families to engage in fun activities with their tots. Non-members are welcome. Call the temple office for schedule and pricing information at (727) 531-5829.

**Adult play time:** Join active seniors and play mah jongg, Mexican train dominoes or bridge on Thursdays at 1 p.m. Coffee and cake is served. For more information, contact Linda White at linda33217@gmail.com or (727) 688-0626.

**Temple Ahavat Shalom Palm Harbor**

**Religious school starts:**

Sunday Judaic and Hebrew school will kick off the season with introductions and a lunch on Sunday, Aug. 26 at 9:30 a.m. This is for pre-k through seventh grade children. Contact the temple office at (727) 785-8811 or email rssecretary@ahavatshalom.org for registration information.

**Brotherhood meets:** Join the Brotherhood for a light breakfast on Sunday, Aug. 26 at 9 a.m. and learn about programs and events for the upcoming year. For more information contact the temple office.

**Book club:** Join book club members as they discuss the book *Invisible City* by Julia Dahl on Sunday, Aug. 26 at 10:30 a.m. It is a murder mystery novel that takes place in Hasidic Brooklyn. A bagel breakfast will be served.

**Special Selichot event:** Gather to watch the film, *1945*, on Saturday, Sept. 1 at 8 p.m., prior to the start of the Selichot service. Set in Hungary just after World War II, an Orthodox man and his grown son return to their village. Following the movie there will be a brief dessert reception and Selichot service.

**Welcome back bonfire:** Youth group members, will meet Saturday, Aug. 25 at 7 p.m. in the temple courtyard for fun, jamming and smores. This is open to all kids in grades 6-12. RSVP by Tuesday, Aug. 25 to Talia.E.Shuman@gmail.com

**Be a winner:** The Youth Group will hold a “Minute to Win It” event on Sunday, Aug. 26 at noon. Contact Talia.E.Shuman@gmail.com for more information.

**Honey of a fundraiser:** The Sisterhood is holding a fun-

draiser to enable folks to wish loved ones and friends a sweet New Year by sending them jars of kosher honey. To order, go to [www.orthoney.com/phf](http://www.orthoney.com/phf).

### Young Israel Chabad of Pinellas County

**Shabbat learning:** Attend a class on “Ethics of our Fathers” at the shul an hour before sunset on Shabbat afternoons. The class is free and no reservation is needed.

For more information, call (727) 789-0408 or email [info@yichabad.com](mailto:info@yichabad.com).

### Chabad of West Pasco

**Classes with the rabbi:** Rabbi Yossi Eber teaches weekly classes, alternating between Torah study and the Tanya, on Mondays at 7 p.m.

**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.

**Tanya class:** A 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 such questions as: What is a soul? What is our purpose here on earth? The class is free.

### Temple Beth David Spring Hill

**Shofar factory:** Create your own shofar and learn about its history at workshop on Sunday, Aug. 26 at 10 a.m.. This program includes a breakfast buffet. RSVP to [chabad.springhill.com](http://chabad.springhill.com) or call (352) 600-2779.

**Afternoon tea:** The Sisterhood will hold an afternoon tea on Sunday, Aug. 26 at 3 p.m. in the

tea room at the temple. The cost for paid-up members is \$20 and the cost for guests is \$30. Call the temple office for details and methods of payment.

**Selichot:** On Saturday, Sept. 1 there will be a president’s reception at 7 p.m., a Havdalah service bidding farewell to Shabbat at 8 p.m. and Selichot-themed activities and videos and the changing of Torah covers at 8:15 p.m. A contemplative and music-filled Selichot service will begin at 8:45 p.m. This is a free program and all are welcome.

**Torah study:** Rabbi Paul

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

### Chabad of Spring Hill

**Torah studies:** The community is invited to attend Torah study classes on Wednesdays from noon to 1 p.m. The classes, taught by Rabbi Chaim Lipszyc, are not sequential, so drop-ins are welcome. Brunch and coffee will be served. The first class is free then \$7 per class.

For more information, call (352) 600-2779.

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The Federation's repurposed conference room – now called the Community Room – includes this homey spot.



## NOSH

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

couch for more relaxed conversations. It is expected to become a gathering spot for a variety of community activities.

The event is not only a chance for folks to sip coffee and nosh on bagels, but it will offer an opportunity to learn more about the Jewish community and particularly the many programs offered by the Federation. Executive Director Emilie Socash, other members of the Federation staff and board members will be on hand to chat and answer any questions.

“There is an emphasis on being a ‘newcomer,’ but ultimately, whether you are new to the area or just looking to network and get more involved in our Jewish com-

munity, this event would be perfect for you,” said Federation board member Ezra Singer.

“We learned from the Federation’s 2017 Demographic Study that we need to improve our visibility,” he said, “This will be an opportunity to personally introduce ourselves and the Federation to those new to the community and educate them as to what exactly we do and what we can offer to residents of Pinellas and Pasco Counties.”

Community members are welcome to stop by any time during the Newcomer’s Nosh. The Federation office is located at 13191 Starkey Road, Suite 8, Largo in the Crownpointe office complex.

Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP to [luce@jewishpinellas.org](mailto:luce@jewishpinellas.org).

# Jewish? Democratic? Israel’s nation-state law raises questions over the country’s purpose

By CHARLES DUNST  
JTA news service

Last month Israel’s government passed, by a narrow 62-55 margin, a controversial nation-state law, which declared Israel as the “nation-state of the Jewish people.”

Scores of liberal critics denounced the measure as an unnecessary and racist provocation, while defenders called it a statement of the obvious.

Akin to a constitutional amendment, the “basic law” declares – much like the country’s Declaration of Independence – that Israel is “the home of the Jewish people.” Unlike the declaration, however, it asserts that Jerusalem is its capital, that Hebrew is its only official language and that national self-determination is “unique to the Jewish people.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the passage of the law “a pivotal moment in the annals of Zionism and the State of Israel,” while Ahmad Tibi, an Arab Knesset member, denounced it as “the end of democracy” and “the official beginning of fascism and apartheid.”

Prior to its passage, Israel’s president, Reuven Rivlin, called the law a “weapon (for) our enemies.”

Outgoing Jewish Agency head Natan Sharansky said it would end up “driving a wedge between Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora.” And likewise, Jerry Silverman, CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America, told JTA he is concerned the legislation, with its focus on the Jewish aspects of Israel, will alienate young American Jews who are “so social-justice conscious today.”

Other reactions to the law reflect the wide divides within Israeli society itself and among observers abroad. Here’s a sampling:

### Do Arab citizens have a place in Israel?

The bill “failed to grapple with Palestinians citizens’ insistence that they have a right to live in Israel with full and equal rights, and that they will not give up their Palestinian national identity to do so,” Maha Nassar, an associate professor at Arizona University, said in the *Forward*. “It’s time that we have a serious conversation about whether it was ever really possible to have a ‘Jewish and democratic state’ that took seriously Palestinians’ national identity and ties to their land.”

Noah Kulwin, senior editor of the left-wing Jewish *Currents* magazine, said the bill codifies discrimination against Arabs, comparing Israel to apartheid South Africa and noting that the country is “finding common cause with the European far right.”

### Stating the obvious

David Hazony, founding editor of *The Tower* magazine, says the critics are distorting what the bill actually states.

“Building a Jewish homeland – through sovereignty, through culture, and through settlement – has always been the core purpose of the country,” Hazony wrote in the *Forward*. “The bottom line is that Israel is the Jewish State, and this law tells us what that means, just as other Basic Laws tell us what goes into its democratic foundations.”

Avi Dichter, the Likud party Knesset member who sponsored the bill, suggested it was meant as a response to Arabs – both Israeli citizens and living in the West Bank – who believe that Israel would one day become a binational state of all its people.

“We are enshrining this important bill into a law today to prevent even the slightest thought, let alone attempt, to transform Israel to a country of all its citizens,” he said.

In remarks to the Knesset, Dichter responded to members of the Joint List, the Arab Israeli bloc in the parliament.

“When I listened attentively to the Joint List MKs, it was impossible to miss their clear words: ‘We, the Arabs, will win, we are in our homeland, we were here before you and we’ll be here after you.’ This Basic Law is the clear-cut answer to those who think that and it is clear: You were not here before us and you will not be here after us,” he said.

### Jewish and democratic? Jewish or democratic?

The arguments on both sides get at an implicit tension that has hounded Israel since its founding in 1948: The Jewish state, founded as such, wants to privilege and shelter Jews and explicitly be a homeland for the Jewish people while simultaneously maintaining a democracy that supports all of its citizens – non-Jews included. Israel aimed to tolerate its minorities in a

way the world, including Europe and the Middle East, had not previously tolerated Jews.

The tensions are seen in the Declaration of Independence.

Israel’s foundational text is fiercely ethnonationalistic, saying that the recognition of Israel by the United Nations General Assembly “is irrevocable. This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.”

At the same time, the declaration ensures “complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex.”

### Riding a wave of ethnic nationalism

Max Fisher of the *New York Times* insists that the bill puts Israel firmly on the nationalist side of the equation, comparing countries like Hungary that “have overtly embraced an old-style national identity, with leaders championing the ethnic origins of the state, warning darkly of foreigners and curtailing basic rights.”

Fisher also cites polling in Israel that suggests Jewish identity is winning out over democracy.

“Those who say Israel should be Jewish first overwhelmingly belong to the political right, which pushed through this week’s national self-determination law,” he wrote. “But even those who say democracy should prevail express support for some caveats. In 2014, most Jews said that ‘crucial national decisions’ – like, say, self-determination – should be left to the Jewish majority.”

### Words have meaning

Israel still remains a democracy, with Freedom House deeming the Jewish state a fundamentally free “multiparty democracy with strong and independent institutions that guarantee political rights and civil liberties for most of the population,” referencing political moves against minorities. There is a large Arab bloc in the Knesset, and a robust NGO culture of Jews and Arabs that promotes a “shared society” for all Israelis.

And the nation-state bill won’t change that in a single stroke. Still, “the law could eventually have far-reaching implications for Jewish-Arab relations within Israel and for Israeli-Palestinian relations,” wrote Dov Waxman, professor of political science, international affairs and Israel studies at Northwestern University.

Gila Gamliel, Israel’s minister for social equality, said on Israeli TV that the nation-state law will act as a counterweight to a previous Basic Law that enshrines human rights, freedom and dignity. That law, Gamliel said, ensures Israel’s democratic character and this law will place the state’s Jewish character on the same level.

As an example, Gamliel suggested that the nation-state law could give greater legal force to Israeli government efforts to deport African asylum seekers from Israel. Previous laws targeting asylum seekers have been struck down by Israel’s Supreme Court on the basis of the Human Freedom and Dignity Law.

“The nation-state law is not meant to hurt any citizen of the State of Israel,” Gamliel said.

But Waxman wrote that the law contains no “recognition of the presence of a Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel.”

“On the contrary, the new law implicitly denies their very existence as an indigenous national minority that also has a legitimate claim to national self-determination, or at least collective rights. In doing so, the nation-state law will only anger, and further alienate, Israel’s Arab citizens. The message the law sends to them is unequivocal: This state is not yours and this land does not belong to you.”

Amir Fuchs, an expert at the Israel Democracy Institute, told the *New York Times* that even if the law is only declarative and won’t change anything in the near future, “I am 100 percent sure it will worsen the feeling of non-Jews and especially the Arab minority in Israel.”

Lucy Aharish, an Arab-Israeli newscaster who broadcasts in Hebrew, offered a fiery monologue against the law.

“I feel like the state has been taken from me,” she said. “They’re taking the state and excluding me from the community of Israelis that you so want me to belong to. And it hurts me. It hurts me because you’ve excluded me. You’ve excluded me and 20 percent of the population.”

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# 4 Israeli teens spend time in Pinellas with campers, volunteering in community

With the premise that nothing builds relationships better than spending meaningful time together, for the last two years the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties has been sending local teens to Israel and finding hosts for Israeli teens to visit here.

This is done through a Partnership Together program in conjunction with the Jewish Agency for Israel, and because the Federation's sister city in Israel is the Hadera-Eiron area, the Pinellas teens visit there and teens from that area come here. The exchange is also part of the Federation's Tikun Olam Teen Program and it is designed to enrich the local community and the Israeli visitors.

This summer four Israeli teens – Omer Cohen, Yuval Ladany, Maya Podrazhansky, Liel Gurovich and chaperone Gilad Rosenbaum – visited and participated in an array of tikkun olam projects. Local community members Natalie Feldman and Doug Weiland, Lisa Schmid, and Barry and Polly Kraus, served as hosts.

The teens visitors joined the Sabrim program at Jewish Community Camp, where the teens performed mitzvot throughout the county. The concept of tikkun olam seeped into the activities and taught the kids that everyone has a responsibility to positively impact the world.

Activities the Israeli teens participated in include sorting donated clothing and other sundries at Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services and at Clothes for Kids. They also volunteered at Feeding Tampa Bay and a beach clean-up on Gandy Beach.



Campers and Israeli visitors sing "Hatikvah," the Israeli national anthem, around the flag pole.

In their second week of the visit they worked with the campers at Jewish Community Camp. Geography lessons about where in Israel the teens live, Hebrew word games, Israeli dances and songs, tastes of Israeli favorites – Bamba and halva – were featured. The group, along with five local teens, also took a trip to Orlando's Universal Islands of Adventure to meet up with a Jacksonville/Israel delegation.

For more information on the exchange program, contact mkaufman@jewishpinellas.org or at (727) 333-3106.



Israeli teens teach Israeli dancing at the Jewish Community Camp, which was held on the campus of Temple B'nai Israel and sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties.



The four Israelis who visited the area as part of the Federation's Tikun Olam Teen Program.

## Beach House Guy



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# SPOTLIGHT

## The Abelson Group at Morgan Stanley

A Q&A with select Jewish Press advertisers

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**Location:** We are headquartered in Palm Harbor. Our clients reside throughout the USA.

**Ownership:** David and Adam Abelson (and Morgan Stanley)



Adam, left, and David Abelson

**Q What product or services do you offer?**

**A** Intellectual capital. We offer expertise in financial planning, retirement planning and estate planning.

**Q What inspires your work and what sets you apart?**

**A** The importance of our work makes a big difference in people's lives. We take this responsibility seriously and treat other people as we would want to be treated ourselves.

**Q Why do customers select your business?**

**A** We give back to the community. We return phone calls the same day. Between the two of us, we have a Columbia University, MBA, a Duke University BS, a Certified Investment Management Analyst™ (CIMA®) from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania and a Certified Financial Planner™ (CFP®) degree. We stress education and, most importantly, we give 100 percent effort and truly care about our clients.

**Q Tell us an interesting tidbit about your business.**

**A** We have our own Bloomberg Terminal that gives us access to every major firm's opinions and allows us to do a very in-depth analysis of equities and fixed income products. Our business is fun and we enjoy it!

**Q Do you have a personal or professional motto?**

**A** Strive to be better than we were yesterday and not as good as we'll be tomorrow.

**Q What is your biggest success to date?**

**A** From David: Marrying a wonderful woman, Jeanie, and having three great children, Adam, Amy Leigh and Alan.

To reach The Abelson Group at Morgan Stanley, call 727.773.4626

## ASSASSINATION

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

These assassinations once were the stuff of major headlines and books – like *Operation Damocles*, which in the early 1960s targeted German scientists who were developing missiles for Egypt. Now such killings merit an article, if that, and a cursory mention on a Wikipedia page.

“Every day in the Middle East there are hundreds of explosions and settling of scores,” Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman told Israel's Channel 2 after Asbar's killing. “Every time they try to place the blame on us. So we won't take this too seriously.”

This is likely, in part, because the volume has increased.

Ronen Bergman, the Israeli reporter who last year wrote an exhaustive history of Israel's assassinations titled *Rise and Kill First*, and who co-wrote the *Times* scoop on Asbar, has reported that before 2000, Israel carried out 500 such operations since its founding. Since then, there have been more than 1,800. Israel, Bergman wrote in his book, “has assassinated more people than any other country in the Western world” in the postwar period.

Scott Lasensky, a former senior adviser on Israel to the Obama administration, said the acceleration after 2000 was due in part to the intensity and bloodiness of attacks on Israeli civilians of the second intifada launched in 2000, as well as the George W. Bush administration's pivot to targeted assassinations after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001.

Whereas before “there had been some public discussion about whether they could backfire, across the national security community and in the broader public, the debate ended,” said Lasensky, now a visiting scholar at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies. “Because it co-

incided with America's post-9/11 campaign, it gave Israelis even less reason to question.”

Which raises the question: Do the assassinations work? That, in turn, raises another question: What is the purpose of the assassination?

### The ticking bomb

Bergman's book comes from an injunction in the Talmud that he repeatedly heard cited by the former officials he interviewed: “If someone comes to kill you, rise up and kill him first.” If the death of a figure would keep others alive, it is a no-brainer, according to this rationale: He must die.

Asbar could be in that category. According to the *Times* report, he was a critical actor in developing precision-guided missiles that could reach deep into Israel and in stabilizing rocket fuel. With Syria's Assad regime and its allies – Iran and its allied Lebanese militia, Hezbollah – emerging triumphant in that country's civil war, Israel suspected that it would be the only logical target for such firepower.

A famous ticking bomb assassination was Imad Mughniyeh in Syria in 2008, believed to be a CIA-Mossad effort. The Bush administration blamed Mughniyeh, the Hezbollah chief of operations, for attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq.

Another was Yahya Ayyash, “The Engineer,” the Hamas designer of a rash of bombs that devastated Israel in the mid-1990s. His head was blown off when he answered a cellphone call in Gaza City.

### Be nervous, be very nervous

Strategic killings keep the enemy off-balance – likely the key factor informing those of four Iranian nuclear scientists in the early part of this decade.

Jonathan Schanzer, the vice president of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, said the killings not only deprived Iran of its knowledge base, it made the Iranian security establishment expend resources on protecting its scientists.

“It forced the Iranians to engage in greater operational security, holding scientists in underground undisclosed facilities because of the fear they would lose their brain trust,” he said.

The same likely is now true of Syria's rocket makers.

“They will be more paranoid,” Schanzer said. “That's what counterterrorism is, encumbering the enemy, not necessarily defeating the enemy.”

### Revenge

Some of the alleged Israeli killings have seemed gratuitous.

Bergman chronicles the late Is-

raeli defense minister and prime minister Ariel Sharon's obsession with killing Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, at times contemplating operations that would have killed large numbers of civilians and qualified as war crimes. (Younger officers thwarted the plans.) Arafat managed to escape multiple bombings – often by minutes – and even a bizarre “Manchurian Candidate”-style bid to hypnotize a Palestinian into killing him. (The Palestinian pretended to be under hypnosis, then promptly turned himself in to Arafat's people.)

Bergman, who hints in a *New York Times Magazine* excerpt of his book that Sharon may have ultimately succeeded in poisoning Arafat in 2004, said Sharon was simply furious that a man behind the killing of Israeli civilians should keep breathing.

“He took to heart every casualty of every terror attack, Bergman quoted the late Mossad chief Meir Dagan as saying of Sharon. “There were some things that he simply could not let pass.”

Revenge likely also was a factor in the case of Ahmed Yassin, the Hamas founder and cleric killed in an airstrike in March 2004. Yassin was Hamas spiritual leader, given to vile justifications of the murder of Israelis, but he was not involved in its operations.

### Does the plan work?

Sometimes it backfires. The attempts on Arafat fed his legend and lent him stature among Palestinians. Israeli commandos in 1988 killed Khalil al-Wazir, also known as Abu Jihad, in Tunis in 1988. Abu Jihad, Arafat's second-in-command, also was among the Palestinian leaders seeking accommodation with Israel. The killing did nothing to stop the first intifada. Israeli leaders believed that Abu Jihad was directing its violence, but it was a homegrown affair.

Other times, when a critical actor is killed, it appears to have results. The 1996 assassination of Ayyash, “The Engineer,” was followed by a rash of bus bombings believed to have been planned before his death – and then several years of relative quiet.

Schanzer said the policy may work in conjunction with an overall strategy. The campaign against Iran's nuclear scientists, he said, was coupled with cyber warfare that for a time crippled Iran's uranium enrichment and tough sanctions that slowed its nuclear program.

“Israelis have always used targeted assassination as not the only means but as one element of a broader strategy,” he said.

## TASHLICH

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

“Reverse Tashlich will bring members of the Jewish community together for a day of *tikkun olam* (repair the world), or *Tikkun HaYam*™ (Repair the Sea), Suncoast Hillels' new Jewish marine conservation initiative. It will give us all a chance to do this very meaningful work for the benefit of the marine environment and the entire Tampa Bay community,” said Rabbi Ed Rosenthal, Suncoast Hillel's executive director. “I am thrilled that so many of our Bay Area congregations and community members will share in this spiritual and important program.”

Reverse Tashlich is the brainchild of the scuba diving enthusiasts' Scubi Jew club at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg. Two years ago, the students organized a Reverse Tashlich on campus. After that experience, the students wanted to make it a bigger program with a broader reach, so the decision was made to bring the pro-

gram to the community-at-large.

The inaugural community-wide Reverse Tashlich was planned during last year's High Holiday season, but Hurricane Irma forced its cancellation.

During this year's event, each team of volunteers will be assigned a waterfront area in Hillsborough or Pinellas Counties to be cleaned during one of two shift choices, either 9 a.m. to noon or 1 to 4 p.m. Participants are asked to wear closed-toe shoes, comfortable clothing and adequate sun protection. Community service hours will be available for student participants.

All required materials will be provided by Keep Pinellas Beautiful and Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful, which are partnering with Hillels of the Florida Suncoast.

Everyone is welcome to lend a hand. To join the effort, contact one of the participating congregations or Hillels of the Florida Suncoast at (813) 899-2788.

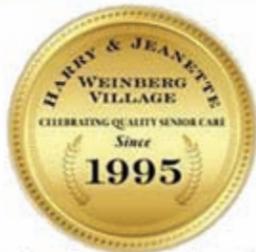
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Photo by Yonatan Sindel/Flash90

The site where a mortar shell from Gaza hit an apartment building and cars in the southern Israeli city of Sderot, near the border with Gaza, on Aug. 9.

## Southern Israeli cities try to get back to normal

(JTA) – Following the most fierce exchange of fire between Israel and Gaza militants since 2014, Southern Israeli towns near the border tried to resume normalcy as a de facto cease-fire went into effect.

On Friday, Aug. 10, the municipalities of Netivot and Sderot, as well as smaller towns near the Gaza Strip, did not renew emergency regulations that had been in place for most of the week. The regulations prevented holding any gatherings outside sheltered areas, including summer camp activities, as well as public transportation. A nearby annual hot air balloon fest had to be cancelled.

The resumption of activity – including by the Ashkelon-Sderot line of the Israel Railways – followed the de-facto cease-fire that started Thursday night, Aug. 9, the Israel Broadcasting Corp. reported.

More than 150 rockets hit southern Israel during flare up with Israel reporting 11 wounded, but no fatalities, along with some building damage.

The Israeli Air Force struck back, hitting more than 150 targets across the Gaza Strip, including military training camps, weapons caches and terrorists themselves. Three Palestinians were killed, according to Hamas, including a pregnant mother and her toddler.

Israel reported 11 wounded on its side.

The cease-fire with Hamas was reached with Egyptian mediation, according to Al Jazeera.

An Israeli official denied that Israel had engaged in any talks on a cease-fire, telling the Israel Broadcasting Corp. that Israel has a longstanding policy of striking in Gaza only in retaliation to strikes on Israel.

The whole thing might have been started by a mistake.

On Tuesday morning, Aug. 7, Israeli troops on the Gaza border detected Hamas fire in their direction. They responded in kind, killing two Hamas military officials. That triggered Hamas to retaliate by firing rockets.

The Hamas gunfire apparently had not been meant for Israeli soldiers. It was, according to Hamas, part of a naval commando exercise in the presence of senior Hamas officials in Gaza.

Prior to that, Israel and Hamas were actually in indirect talks to establish a long-term truce on the border. The truce would see Hamas attacks against Israel end in exchange for Israel easing the blockade and allowing more goods in and out of Gaza. Two Israelis and the bodies of two dead soldiers held by Hamas would be exchanged for Palestinian prisoners.

## Missouri Republican who said ‘Hitler was right’ wins primary

(JTA) – A Missouri Republican who has made anti-Semitic and other bigoted statements handily won a primary for the state’s House of Representatives.

Steve West, who promotes anti-Semitic conspiracy theories on a radio show he hosts, defeated three other candidates Tuesday, Aug. 7, in the bid for a seat representing Clay County, northeast of Kansas City. He won with 49.5 percent of the vote; the second-place finisher had 24.4 percent.

“Looking back in history, unfortunately, Hitler was right about what was taking place in Germany. And who was behind it,” West said on KCXL radio in January 2017, the *Kansas City Star* reported Aug. 9.

He has spoken of “Jewish cabals” that are “harvesting baby parts” from Planned Parenthood, abuse children and control the Republican Party.

West also has a YouTube channel on which he has made homophobic, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and racist statements, according to the *Star*.

West will face Democratic incumbent Jon Carpenter in November.

The Missouri Republican Party denounced West’s “shocking and

vile” comments. “West’s abhorrent rhetoric has absolutely no place in the Missouri Republican Party or anywhere. We wholeheartedly condemn his comments,” the party told the *Star*.

Reached by the *Star*, West said his comments were taken out of context, but went on to criticize both Judaism and Islam. “Jewish people can be beautiful people, but there’s ideologies associated with that that I don’t agree with,” he said. “Jews today are a remnant of the tribe of Judah that rejected Christ.”

The local chapter of the Anti-

Defamation League said it was not sure why West’s comments had not been publicized earlier.

“I’m trying to get a sense of why he flew under the radar, and I’m not sure I have a great answer,” said Karen Aroesty, who directs ADL in Missouri, Southern Illinois and Eastern Kansas.

West’s campaign platform does not mention Jews, but contains a section titled “Islam is a Problem for America” and says that “most parents don’t want their children receiving (sic) alternative sex ed, or having to deal with or be around the LGBT clubs.”

# Back to Shul

## at Congregation Beth Shalom

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## Sukkot luncheon to honor Holocaust survivors

A Sukkot luncheon for Holocaust survivors and their spouses from Pinellas, Hillsborough and Pasco counties will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 26 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Menorah Manor, 255 59th St. N., St. Petersburg.

There is no charge for the luncheon and all survivors and their guests are invited, no matter what sort of definition they use for the term survivor and regardless of any agency affiliation.

Music for the luncheon will be provided by Clearwater Jazz Holiday Foundation.

The event is sponsored by Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Communi-

ty Services with funding provided by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

Gulf Coast JFCS supports Holocaust survivors in a variety of ways including in home care, light cleaning services, transportation, emergency financial assistance, restitution assistance, and social events.

Those who would like to attend should RSVP by Sept. 14 to Gulf Coast JFCS Holocaust Survivor Case Manager Assistant Kerri Brennan at (727) 479-1811 or kerri.brennan@gcjfcs.org. Transportation may be arranged if required.



Campers from Tampa, St. Pete and Palm Harbor Stand on line for Kona ices after a long day of Maccabiah races and other fun activities.



Kids play a get-to-know-you game at the start of the intercamp meeting.

## 3-camp meet-up

It was a noisy, happy day when three Camp Gan Israel camps from Tampa, Palm Harbor and St. Petersburg united for the first intercamp get together at the Chabad Center of Greater St. Petersburg. About 60 campers enjoyed a full day's activities including Maccabiah games and a bubble show. The groups easily melded as if they were life-long friends. Camp Gan Israel is sponsored by the Chabad Lubavitch movement.

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Portraits from the exhibit "Miki Kratsman, People I Met," 2010-2017.

## Photo exhibit of Palestinians by Israeli to open at USF

An exhibit featuring thousands of photographs of anonymous Palestinians titled *Miki Kratsman: People I Met*, will be on display at the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum, from Aug. 20 through Dec. 8, and the award-winning photographer will be at USF for several events on Aug. 30 and 31.

For three decades, Kratsman, an Israeli photo journalist, has been

one of the leading chroniclers of life in Palestinian territories. His photographs – many of them taken for the Israeli newspapers *Hadashot* and *Haaretz* – uncover personal stories and Israel's military impact in the West Bank and Gaza.

While trying to answer the question – What happened to the people in the photographs? – Kratsman amassed a vast archive of more than 9,000 portraits of Palestinians, which he first uploaded onto a dedicated Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/kratsman.people.i.met/>) in 2011.

The USF Contemporary Art Museum will display the artist's growing portrait archive, together with identifying commentary that, in some cases, serves as a literal proof of life – or death. *People I Met* continues the museum's tradition of presenting challenging artwork with social content.

The exhibition also includes works from several other contemporary projects. These include photographic selections from Kratsman's *Bedouin Archive* and his *Displaced* series, and table-top "panoramas" of "unrecognized" Arab villages the Israeli government has slated for demolition. The 2017 video titled *70 Meters... White T-shirt* condenses a year of shooting in the Palestinian village of Nabi Sahli.

Kratsman was born in 1959 in Argentina and immigrated to Israel in 1971. From 1993 to 2012 his photographs appeared regularly in the newspaper *Haaretz*. From 2006 to 2014 he served as director of the Photography Department of Bezalel Academy of Arts, Jerusalem, where he continues to teach and lecture. Kratsman is the fifth recipient of the Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography, awarded by Harvard University's Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology.

Since 2004, he has been the

chairman of the board of Breaking the Silence, a controversial organization of veteran Israeli combatants that collects testimonies from soldiers about their service in the Palestinian territories. Critics, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, say misinforms international audiences about the military and its activities. Last month, a new Israeli law barred the group from appearing at schools or speaking to students.

In 2011, he was the first photographer to win Israel's Emet Prize for Science, Art and Culture, which includes a portion of a \$1 million prize. Due to the political nature of his photographs, he said he was surprised when he won the Emet Prize, but is also proud to have won it.

In conjunction with the exhibit, the museum will present a conversation between Kratsman and the museum's curator-at-large Christian Viveros-Fauné, a New York-based art critic, on Thursday, Aug. 30 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Oxford Exchange, 420 Kennedy Blvd., Tampa. Admission is \$5 and those interested should RSVP to <https://oxfordexchange.ticketspice.com/art-conversation-miki-kratsman-0830>. Kratsman will be signing the book *The Resolution of the Suspect* (Photographs by Miki Kratsman, Text by Ariella Azoulay), following the talk. The \$5 ticket can be applied to the purchase of a book.

Kratsman and Viveros-Faune will also have a conversation about the *People I Met* exhibit on Friday, Aug. 31 from 6-7 p.m. at the museum's concert hall. Following the talk there will be a reception for Kratsman at the museum from 7-9 that evening. The museum is located at 3821 USF Holly Drive.

Other events related to the exhibit will be held in October. For more information, visit [cam.usf.edu](http://cam.usf.edu) or call (813) 974-4133.

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# High Holiday Service Schedules

Received as of press time:

## PINELLAS COUNTY

### Orthodox

#### CHABAD OF CLEARWATER

Services at Tabacinic Chabad Center  
2280 Belleair Road, Clearwater  
(727) 265-2770

#### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, Sept. 9

Evening service, 7:30 p.m.  
**ROSH HASHANAH – 1<sup>st</sup> Day**

Monday, Sept. 10

Morning service, 9:30 a.m.  
Children's program, 10:30 a.m.  
Shofar sounding, 11:30 a.m.  
Mincha and Tashlich, 7 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 2<sup>ND</sup> Day

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Morning service, 9:30 a.m.  
Children's program, 10:30 a.m.  
Shofar sounding, 11:30 a.m.

#### EREV YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Kol Nidre, 7:30 p.m.

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, Sept. 19

Morning service, 10 a.m.  
Children's program, 11 a.m.  
Yizkor, 12:30 p.m.  
Mincha and Ne'ilah, 6 p.m.  
Final Shofar, 8:06 p.m.  
Break-the-Fast buffet, 8:15 p.m.

#### CHABAD JEWISH CENTER OF GREATER ST. PETERSBURG

4010 Park St. N. St. Petersburg  
(727) 344-4900

#### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, Sept. 9

Evening service, 7 p.m.  
Followed by dinner (RSVP required)  
7:30 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 1<sup>st</sup> Day

Monday, Sept. 10

Morning service, 9 a.m.  
C Kids, 9:30 a.m.  
Shofar sounding, 10:45 a.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 2<sup>ND</sup> Day

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Morning service, 9 a.m.  
C Kids, 9:30 a.m.  
Shofar sounding, 10:45 a.m.

#### EREV YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Kol Nidre, 7:30 p.m.

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, Sept. 19

Morning service, 9 a.m.  
C Kids, 9:30 a.m.  
Yizkor, 11:15 a.m.  
Mincha 6 p.m.  
Ne'ilah, 7 p.m.  
Break-the-Fast buffet, 8:06 p.m.

### Conservative

#### CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM

1325 S. Belcher Rd., Clearwater  
(727) 531-1418

#### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, Sept. 9

Evening service, 7:30 p.m.  
**ROSH HASHANAH – 1<sup>st</sup> Day**

Monday, Sept. 10

Morning service, 8:30 a.m.  
Tashlich, 6 p.m.  
(at Eagle Lake Park)

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 2<sup>ND</sup> Day

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Morning service, 8:30 a.m.

#### EREV YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Kol Nidre, 7 p.m.

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, Sept. 19

Morning service, 9 a.m.  
Mincha, 5:30 p.m.  
Ne'ilah, 7 p.m.  
Final Shofar & Ma'ariv, 8:06 p.m.

#### CONG. B'NAI ISRAEL

300 – 58<sup>th</sup> St. N. St. Petersburg  
(727) 381-4900

#### SELICHOT

Saturday, Sept. 1

Pre-Selichot program, 8:45 p.m.  
Selichot, 10:30 p.m.

#### CEMETERY SERVICES

Sunday, Sept. 2

Chapel Hill, 10:30 a.m.  
Royal Palm Cemetery, 11:30 a.m.

#### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, Sept. 9

Evening service, 7:30 p.m.  
**ROSH HASHANAH – 1<sup>st</sup> Day**

Monday, Sept. 10

Morning service, 9:30 a.m.  
Shofar, 10:15 a.m.

Jr. Cong. & Young Families service (after Shofar)

Tashlich, 7 p.m.

(at Lake Pasadena)

Mincha, Maariv, 7:30 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 2<sup>ND</sup> Day

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Morning service, 9:30 a.m.  
Shofar, 10:15 a.m.

Jr. Cong. & Young Families service (after Shofar)

Mincha, Maariv, 7:30 p.m.

#### EREV YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Kol Nidre, 7 p.m.

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, Sept. 19

Morning service, 9:30 a.m.  
Jr. Cong. & Young Families service, 10:30 a.m.

Yizkor, 1 p.m.

Mincha, 5:45 p.m.

Ne'ilah, 6:45 p.m.

Final Shofar, approx., 8:15 p.m.

Break-the-Fast snacks to follow

#### CONG. BETH SHOLOM

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#### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, Sept. 9

Evening service, 7:15 p.m.  
**ROSH HASHANAH – 1<sup>st</sup> Day**

Monday, Sept. 10

Morning service, 9:30 a.m.  
Tashlich 2:15 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 2<sup>ND</sup> Day

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Morning service, 9:30 a.m.

#### EREV YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Kol Nidre, 7:15 p.m.

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, Sept. 19

Morning service, 9:30 a.m.  
Yizkor, 11 a.m.

Services resume, 4 p.m.

Ne'ilah, 5 p.m.

Break-the-Fast at conclusion

### Reform

#### TEMPLE AHAVAT SHALOM

1575 Curlew Road, Palm Harbor  
(727) 785-8811

#### SELICHOT

Saturday, Sept. 1

Selichot service and film, 8 p.m.

#### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, Sept. 9

Evening service, 8 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 1<sup>st</sup> Day

Monday, Sept. 10

Morning service, 10 a.m.

Youth services,

(grade 3 +), 11 a.m.

(tot-2<sup>nd</sup> grade), 3 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 2<sup>ND</sup> Day

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Morning service, 10 a.m.

#### CEMETERY SERVICES

Sunday, Sept. 16

Sylvan Abbey, 3 p.m.

Curlew Hills, 4 p.m.

#### EREV YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Kol Nidre, 7:30 p.m.

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, Sept. 19

Morning service, 10 a.m.

Youth services,

(grade 3 +), 11 a.m.

(tot-2<sup>nd</sup> grade), 1:30 p.m.

Yizkor, 4:30 p.m.

Ne'ilah, 5:30 p.m.

Break-the-Fast, 6:30 p.m.

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#### SELICHOT

Saturday, Sept. 1

Dinner around town, 6 p.m.

Service, 8:30 p.m.

Dessert & Program, 9:15 p.m.

#### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, Sept. 9

Evening service, 8 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 1<sup>st</sup> Day

Monday, Sept. 10

Tot family service, 9 a.m.

Morning service, 10:15 a.m.

#### Saturday, Sept. 15

Tashlich, picnic & Havdalah, 6 p.m.

(on the beach)

#### CEMETERY SERVICES

Sunday, Sept. 16

Sylvan Abbey, 10 a.m.

Curlew Hills, 11 a.m.

#### EREV YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Kol Nidre, 8 p.m.

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, Sept. 19

Tot family service, 9 a.m.

Morning service, 10:15 a.m.

Afternoon service, 4:15 p.m.

(includes Yizkor, Ne'ilah)

Break-the-Fast

#### TEMPLE BETH-EL

400 S. Pasadena Ave., St. Petersburg  
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#### SELICHOT

Saturday, Sept. 1

Program & Service, 7 p.m.

#### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, Sept. 9

Evening service, 7:30 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 1<sup>st</sup> Day

Monday, Sept. 10

Service for kids, 9:30 a.m.

Morning service, 10 a.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 2<sup>ND</sup> Day

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Morning service, 10 a.m.

#### Friday, Sept. 14

Shabbat & Tashlich, 6:30 p.m.

(Ale & the Witch)

#### CEMETERY SERVICES

Sunday, Sept. 16

Chapel Hill, 9:30 a.m.

Royal Palm, 10:30 a.m.

#### EREV YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Kol Nidre, 7:30 p.m.

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, Sept. 19

Family service, 9:30 a.m.

Morning service, 10 a.m.

Yizkor, 12:30 p.m.

Ne'ilah, 6 p.m.

Break-the-Fast, 7 p.m.

## Pasco County

### Orthodox

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10733 Maple Creek Drive,  
Suite 101, Trinity  
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#### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, Sept. 9

Evening service, 7 p.m.  
Community Dinner to follow,  
RSVP required

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 1<sup>st</sup> Day

Monday, Sept. 10

Morning service, 10 a.m.  
Shofar sounding, 11:30 a.m.

Tashlich, 6 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 2<sup>ND</sup> Day

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Morning service, 10 a.m.  
Shofar sounding, 11:30 a.m.

#### EREV YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Kol Nidre, 7:15 p.m.

#### YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, Sept. 19

Morning service, 10 a.m.

Yizkor, noon

Afternoon service, 6 p.m.

Ne'ilah, 6:45 p.m.

Break-the-Fast, 8:05 p.m.

### Conservative

#### BETH TEFILLAH/JCC OF WEST PASCO

9841 Scenic Drive, Port Richey  
(727) 847-3814

#### SELICHOT

Saturday, Sept. 1

Refreshments, 7:30 p.m.

Selichot, 8:15 p.m.

#### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, Sept. 9

Evening service, 6:30 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 1<sup>st</sup> Day

Monday, Sept. 10

Morning service, 9:30 a.m.

Tashlich, 3:30 p.m.

Mincha, 7 p.m.

Maariv, 7:30 p.m.

#### ROSH HASHANAH – 2<sup>nd</sup> Day

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Morning service, 9:30 a.m.

#### CEMETERY SERVICES

# The Western Wall 'spit out a stone,' and some see a message from above

By **MARCY OSTER**  
JTA news service

JERUSALEM — The heavy stone that fell out of the Western Wall and came crashing down on a platform set aside for egalitarian prayer has been removed for examination and restoration, but the conversation about the reason for its sudden sky dive — including hints of divine intervention — keeps on going.

The stone fell on July 23, hours after the area had been full of worshippers visiting the wall for Tisha b'Av, 25 hours of intense mourning for the destruction of the two Holy Temples in Jerusalem. The Western Wall was an external retaining wall for the Second Temple, which was razed by the Romans in 70 C.E.

A lone worshipper was praying at the site, known as the Ezrat Yisrael near Robinson's Arch at the southern end of the wall, when the stone fell. Daniella Goldberg, 79, was not injured, though she was shaken up a bit. And she seemed to be dressed in the garb of an Orthodox worshipper: Every strand of hair covered, long sleeves, a long skirt and stockings in the summer heat. She said she prays regularly at the site — removed from the iconic plaza that fronts the Wall — and told Israeli television that she would try not to let the incident "distract" from her prayers.

Israeli archaeologist Zachi Dvira almost immediately said the 2,000-year-old wall was badly in need of restoration, and that its massive limestone blocks had to be reinforced.

But some saw theology, not erosion, at play in the near disaster. Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch, the rabbi of the Western Wall, called for public "soul searching" in the wake of an incident he saw as "unusual and most rare."

"The fact that this powerful incident happened a day after the 9th of Av fast, in which we mourned the destruction of our temples, raises questions which the human soul is too small to contain, and requires soul-searching," he said.

Rabinovitch did not point fingers — unlike the deputy mayor of Jerusalem, Dov Kalmanovich. At first, Kalmanovich said, "We must not explain and interpret natural phenomena as signs from heaven, as the ways of the Creator are hidden." Then he did a 180, blaming the activists who want women and non-Orthodox Jews to be able to pray as they wish at the Orthodox-controlled Wall.

"The falling of one of the Western Wall stones, so close to Tisha b'Av, and exactly at the location of the controversial prayer area, should be a red light for us all," he said. "I suggest that Reform leaders, Women of the Wall and the other quarrel-mongers examine themselves, and not the Wall."

Kalmanovich, who — interesting side

point — was the first person attacked in the first intifada in 1987, is not the only person to feel this way. A quick perusal of several religious and mainstream news websites showed similar sentiments from rabbis and laypeople.

Alden Solovy, an author and teacher who supports efforts by Reform Jews to pray as they wish at the Western Wall, took a different tack.

"On Tisha b'Av, God revealed a deep love of Reform Jews," he wrote in a blog post. "With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, God held back a stone from falling from the southern Western Wall onto liberal Jews worshipping below. The stone was, indeed, destined to fall — as it did on Monday — but God held the stone back until no one would be hurt."

Solovy noted that had the stone fallen on Saturday night, when hundreds of worshippers and visitors were standing near that part of the Wall, "the results could have been catastrophic."

"Clearly, God held back the stone to save some beloved Children of Israel," he wrote.

A facetious tweet by Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg, an author in Brookline, MA, subtly suggested that the Israeli government and the people that put them there could be

at fault. The stone fell after a week in which Israeli lawmakers passed a controversial nation-state bill, as well as a law that denies surrogacy rights to same-sex couples.

"They say the Temple was destroyed by free-flowing hatred," Rabbi Ruttenberg wrote. "The day after (or day of? Not sure when this happened) Tisha b'Av during a time when Israel's been passing bills that are racist, homophobic, and anti-democratic, the Western Wall spit out a stone."

She immediately clarified: "OK, all, my theology doesn't actually include a God who finds parking spaces or gives cancer or makes the right team win. Pretty sure it's up to us to do the work to care for one another down here. I am officially labeling this a facetious tweet because some people can't get subtlety."

The entire expanse of the wall will now be inspected for other loose rocks, as archaeologists discuss the best way to prevent another such incident. Religious leaders reportedly also will be consulted — not on the causes of the falling stones but on the spiri-



Photo by Hadas Parush/Flash90

A crane works to remove a large chunk of stone dislodged from the Western Wall in Jerusalem at the mixed-gender prayer

tual sensibilities that must be taken into account during preservation work.

The award for the best response should probably go to the archaeologist Meir Ben-Dov, one of the original excavators of the Robinson's Arch area. In an interview with *The Times of Israel*, he made it clear how little significance he attached to the stone's plummet to earth.

"So a rock fell — so what!" Ben-Dov said. "The State of Israel hasn't ended, the Messiah won't come because of this."

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## COMMUNITY SERVICES

**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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# 5 tips for making cute, family cards for Rosh HaShanah

By STACEY ILYSE  
Kveller via JTA

Growing up, I remember getting cards in the mail for Rosh HaShanah. They were always the normal, generic, Hallmark Happy New Year-type card.

Nowadays, people are much more tech savvy and can create really fun cards that reflect and show off who they are and their adorable kids and family. If you want to give your Rosh HaShanah cards a personal touch this year, here are five tips, plus a few resources, for creating and producing the picture perfect photo card.

## 1. Style of photo

It's nice to have a photo of the whole family on a card, which is harder to do when you don't have someone else taking the photo. If you have the luxury of having professional photos done, great. Not only will you be able to cherish the images you have taken, but you can also use them for many different purposes besides a holiday card.

I like the non-traditional type of image, the one that really shows off who the family is and what everyone's personality is like, but at the same time allows you to see their faces and captures everyone in that moment of time.

There is nothing written in stone that says you must have a full family photo for a holiday card. Many parents like to just show off their kids. Taking a photo of just the kids is pretty common. This is also great if you don't have the time, money or desire to get professional family photos taken, since you can act as photographer. You can do a combination of things for a card. You could take one photo of each child alone, which is generally easier to photograph, or do a shot of your kids together. But remember, they do not have to be facing the camera. People appreciate the candid, true-to-life moments.

## 2. Where to go

Make it fun. Maybe take the kids to the beach, a playground they love, go on a picnic. Or maybe play with imagery: Rosh HaShanah is known for its apples and honey, that's how kids remember it, so perhaps take a shot of a child with a big apple.

## 3. What to wear

Don't be all matchy-matchy; just work on coor-

inating. People look best, and are generally more comfortable, when you allow them to wear the clothes that reflect who they are. If your daughter only wants to be a princess or your son Batman, then maybe that is how you have to photograph them. I would take a happy kid in a costume over a grumpy one all dressed up any day. Also, yes, a baby might not yet know who they are, but I know that my daughter wears the clothes that reflect me. I am not a white button down and jeans kinda gal, so neither is she. Make their outfits fun, festive and nice, but true to them.

## 4. Let there be light

Do not take photos during midday (noon to 3 p.m.) unless it is overcast. Then you are in the clear (ironically enough). Overcast days – or what is called “open shade” – are the best light. Look for spots that have large blocks of shadow, like that of a large building. Stick your little one in the shadow and shoot.

Don't shoot under a tree unless its leaves are thick enough to create a solid block, otherwise you will get spotted light all over them in the images. If you are shooting indoors, shoot during the daytime and use natural light – most likely it will be from a window. Lastly, remember if you are trying to capture someone's face and expression, you will want them to be facing the window light, not with their back to the light.

## 5. Online resources

There are some resources for making already designed cards, where all you need to do is upload your image and tweak your text. Check out sites like Minted.com, TinyPrints.com and even Shutterfly and Snapfish.

For sites where you can design the entire card from scratch, check out Uprinting.com or Vistaprint.com. However, these sites usually require larger quantities of cards to be purchased.

Now that you have some ideas swirling around in your head, some inspiration to get you going, tips on how to take a nice photo, and resources to get them printed, go for it.

(Stacey Ilyse is a photographer and blogger.)

## Welcome to the world...

Noah Lewis Friedman, 7 lbs. 14 oz, born on April 24 to Yona and Jeremy Friedman, of Atlanta. Proud great grandparents are Jerry and Joan Benstock of Belleair, and proud grandparents are Margot and Michael Benstock of Seminole and Teresa and Ross Friedman of Atlanta.

\* \* \*

Madison Dobkin, born on Aug. 6 to Kelley and Brian Dobkin of Seminole. Madison joins big sister, Emma. Proud grandparents are Ruth Dobkin of Seminole and Harris Dobkin of Tampa.

## Five times Chai...

Relatives from New York, Illinois, Rhode Island, Georgia, and Florida came together with local friends July 3 to celebrate and honor Ellen Bernstein of South Pasadena on her 90th Birthday. The highlights of the week were Ellen presenting her second Haftorah on Shabbat, followed by a kiddush luncheon



in her honor, and a birthday brunch at the synagogue where so many family simchas have been celebrated. Also, on July 9, Ellen was featured as Bay New 9's *Everyday Heroes* as a long-time volunteer at the Florida Holocaust Museum where she shares her story of growing up in Germany as the Nazis rose to power before her family fled in 1938.

Ellen was certainly kvelling as she was surrounded by her children Jay and Karen Kauffman of Seminole, grandchildren Joe and Erika Kauffman from New Jersey, Sam and Becca Kauffman from Orlando, Shoshanah and Joel Blaiss from Atlanta, and Ben and Ciara Kauffman from Tampa and her nine great-grandchildren.



Ellen Bernstein surrounded by her great-grandchildren: (L-R) Front row, Sharon Kauffman, 8; Rachel Kauffman, 11; Talia Blaiss, 7; Noam Blaiss, 3. Back row: Trippe Kauffman, 8; Emma Kauffman, 5; Ellen holding Jacob Kauffman, 8 months; Reuben Blaiss, 5, and Elias Blaiss, 8.

# Obituaries

**JACK ABRAMS**, 101, of Largo, formerly of Newport, RI, died Aug. 1. Born in Fall River, MA. He was a graduate of Rogers High School, a Mason and a Shriner and the oldest living member of Touro Synagogue. A U.S. Navy veteran of World War II, he served in the submarine service. After the war he and his late wife, Pearl, resumed management of the family butcher shop, The Square Deal Meat Market in Newport. He was a resident of Cypress Palms in Largo where he celebrated his 100 and 101<sup>st</sup> birthdays. Survivors include his daughter and son-in-law Joyce and Dr. Harold Seder, St. Petersburg; son and daughter-in-law Richard and Joan Abrams, Bristol, RI; two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. The family suggests memorials to Touro Synagogue in Newport or Congregation B'nai Israel in St. Petersburg. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

**ELAINE (FELDMAN) HERZ**, 88, of St. Petersburg, died July 19. Survivors include her children, Dr. Gordon Herz (Dr. Elaine Klein), Rabbi Leah Herz, and Barbara Herz; sister, Diane Feldman (Joseph); and three grandchildren. The family suggests memorials to Menorah Manor. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

**ROBERT STOLLER**, 71, of Clearwater, died July 19. A native of Queens, NY, he attended Brooklyn Technical High School where he was a member of the swim team. After receiving his MBA, he had a long, successful career in New York leading companies responsible for the manufacture of medical products and computer chips. He was an adjunct professor at SUNY Binghamton and published articles in his field. He enjoyed outdoor activities including skiing, tennis, roller blad-

ing, mountain biking, swimming and ice skating. He was on the JCC board and vice president of his temple in New York. He was president of the Brotherhood at Congregation Beth Shalom in Clearwater. Survivors include his wife Carol; and children, Adam and Lauren. The family suggests memorials be made to Congregation Beth Shalom. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

## Jewish Press obituary policy

OBITUARIES are published as a public service at no charge in the *Jewish Press of Pinellas County* based on information supplied by the family to the funeral home. However, the information contained in the free obituary is at the discretion of the Jewish Press.

# A Sacred Trust

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Michael, Mandi, David, Pati and Steven Gross

We hope you will find our calendar, inserted in this Jewish Press, helpful throughout the New Year!

L'Shana Tovah!

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## Organizations

### JWI

**Meet and greet:** The Clearwater chapter of Jewish Women International will hold a social for new and prospective members on Tuesday, Aug. 28 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of a JWI member. For information on the location of the meeting, to find out more about JWI and to RSVP, contact **Anne deMarlor** at (727) 517-9197 or at [ademarlo@tampabayrr.com](mailto:ademarlo@tampabayrr.com).

### Genealogical Society

**Enhancing the family tree:** The Jewish Genealogical Society of Tampa Bay will host guest speakers **Jo Anne Spatz De Vargas** and **Marty Lazar** of Vu Documentaries on Sunday, Sept. 16 at 2 p.m. as they discuss "How Video Can Enhance a Family Tree." The meeting will be held at Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services; 14041 Icot Blvd., Clearwater. A pre-session social with refreshments and library access begins at 1:30 p.m. Those attending will learn about personal documentaries with videos that help you share your family story. De Vargas is a market research interviewer and video storyteller. Lazar is a multi-media, technology and audio/video professional. Everyone is invited.

For more information, call **Bruce Hadburg** at (727) 796-7981.

### Hadassah

**Musical meeting:** Pianist **Mike Warner** will perform at the next meeting of the North Pinellas Chapter of Hadassah on Monday, Aug. 20, at 11:30 a.m. at Temple Ahavat Shalom, 1575 Curlew Road, Palm Harbor. There will be a pot luck lunch. RSVPs are required. Call **Janice Caine** at (727) 726-3735 or **Betty Slavney** at (727) 446-5895 to RSVP and to be assigned a dish to bring.

**Membership brunch:** The Lylah Chapter of Hadassah will celebrate current Hadassah mem-

bers and invite others to join the organization at a brunch on Sunday, Aug. 26 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Dunedin Fine Arts Center, 1143 Michigan Blvd., Dunedin. The cost is \$25 per person. For RSVP information contact **Cheryl Schwartz** at [cschwartz@ramapo.edu](mailto:cschwartz@ramapo.edu) or call (551) 265-2745. Multiple Hadassah membership levels are available from \$36 for an annual membership to \$250 for a life membership. Guests who sign up for membership at the brunch will receive a special gift.

**Games, lunch & fun-raiser:** The St. Petersburg Chapter of Hadassah is putting the "fun" in fundraiser with the annual Game Day "Fun-raiser." There will be mah jongg, board games to entertain along with lunch. The event will take place on Thursday, Aug. 30, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at O'Bistro's, 6661 Central Ave., St. Petersburg. Your \$20 donation includes lunch with a choice of sandwiches, salads, and wraps plus cookies for dessert. Bring your favorite game and a donation for the Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services food pantry. RSVP by Aug. 27, to **Sheryl Feinman** at [sherlnan@tampabayrr.com](mailto:sherlnan@tampabayrr.com) or (727) 422-2221.

### Young Adults

**Cocktails by the pool:** The #Gather group will meet on Wednesday, Aug. 29 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. for a poolside party with cocktails at the Mezrah Family Aquatics Center at the Glazer JCC, 522 N. Howard Ave., Tampa. There will be cocktails and hors d'oeuvres by the pool plus icebreakers, pool deck games, prizes and more. This event is free to JCC members and \$5 for guests. RSVP by Friday, Aug. 24 and receive one free drink ticket.

#Gather, sponsored by the Tampa JCCs, offers a mix of social and interactive activities for those in their 20s, 30s and 40s of all

faiths and backgrounds. For more information or to RSVP for any #Gather event, visit: [www.bryanglazerfamilyjcc.com/gather](http://www.bryanglazerfamilyjcc.com/gather) or contact **Lisa Robbins** at [lisa.robbins@jewishtampa.com](mailto:lisa.robbins@jewishtampa.com) or (813) 769-4723.

**Torah on Tap:** Young professionals, Gen X, Gen Y and millennials – singles and couples – are invited to **Rabbi Michael Torop's** monthly Torah on Tap event on Wednesday, Sept. 5 at 6 p.m. at the Pour Taproom, 225 Second Ave. N., St. Petersburg. Torah on Tap is a monthly invitation to have a drink or a nosh and let a little Torah flow from the tap in wide-ranging conversations with the rabbi. This event is sponsored by Temple Beth-El, but open to all.

For more information, email **Rabbi Torop** at [rabbitorop@templebeth-el.com](mailto:rabbitorop@templebeth-el.com).

### 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 Aug. 20, the topic is "Market Yourself Through Business-Networking Cards." The Aug. 27 topic is "What is Emotional Intelligence and How Does it Impact Your Career?"

**Job-search aids:** A Success workshop to aid with job-search skills will be held on Thursday, Aug. 23 from 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. The topic is "Preparing for Your Interview." The workshops are free for Job-Links program participants; \$15 for guests. Reservations required. To RSVP, call (813) 344-0200, email [RSVP@TBJL.org](mailto: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.

## B'nai Mitzvah

### Nigel Ian Greenberg

Nigel Ian Greenberg, son of Joyce S. Liu and David Greenberg of St. Petersburg, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, Aug. 18 at Temple Beth-El in St. Petersburg.

Nigel is entering the eighth grade at The Center for Gifted Studies at Thurgood Marshall Fundamental Middle School. He plays trumpet in the school jazz band and is also learning to play drums. Nigel enjoys cooking, playing games, solving Rubik's cubes, wrangling hamsters and telling jokes. For his mitzvah project Nigel organized a toy drive to collect action figures and dolls to donate to the children at CASA.

Nigel's parents will host a luncheon at Temple Beth-El on Saturday, Aug. 18.

Special guests will include family and friends from California, Georgia, Washington D.C. and the East Coast.



### Gracie Jane Joslyn

Gracie Jane Joslyn daughter of Jayme and Ty Joslyn of St. Petersburg, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, Aug. 25 at Temple Beth-El in St. Petersburg.

Gracie is a seventh-grade honor roll student at Thurgood Marshall Fundamental Middle School. A member of the temple's youth group, Gracie is the Junior BEEFY representative for Temple Beth-El. Her hobbies focus on learning about various animals and how to care for them. She has a large collection of animals she cares for which include tortoises, chickens, fish and a dog. For her mitzvah project Gracie rescued and rehomed a neglected red foot tortoise.

Jayme and Ty Joslyn will host a celebration at the Sirata Beach Resort on Saturday evening, Aug. 25.

Special guests will include family and friends from Plantation, Boynton Beach, Maryland, South Carolina, California, New Jersey and Atlanta.



### Andrew David Siegel

Andrew David Siegel, son of Rick and Sarah Siegel of Seminole, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, Aug. 25 at Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater.

A seventh-grade student at Seminole Middle School, Andrew is in the gifted program. He enjoys the robotics club, playing ice hockey, fishing, kayaking and most outdoor things.

Rick and Sarah Siegel will host a celebration on Saturday, Aug. 25.

Special guests will include grandparents Judith Karman and Christine and Rick Siegel Sr., along with aunts and uncles Kelly and Richard Karman and Jennifer and Dan Dettloff.



## How an Orthodox cantor snagged a role on 'Orange Is the New Black'

By **JOSEFIN DOLSTEN**  
JTA news service

NEW YORK – Cantor Philip Sherman gives me a call after having finished two circumcisions before noon on Tuesday. That's a light day, he explains. On Thursday, he will perform circumcisions for four baby boys; on Friday, he'll do five.



Cantor Philip Sherman

Sherman, 62, is a mohel (in fact he was featured as one of "America's Top Mohels" in a 2014 JTA article) and has performed more than 20,000 circumcisions, both for Jewish and non-Jewish families. But in between performing multiple circumcisions a day and serving as associate cantor at Congregation Shearith Israel in New York – also known as the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue – he has another gig: actor.

Most recently, the Orthodox cantor, who lives in White Plains, NY, appeared in the Netflix hit series *Orange is the New Black*, about a women's prison. Though the role was small – he played a judge presiding over a trial involving one of the prisoners – Sherman

says it was his favorite to date.

"The really amazing thing about that is that it's a real part in a real show, where I'm not playing a rabbi or cantor or some Jewish guy," he told JTA in a phone interview.

Sherman has appeared in about 15 other roles in commercials, TV series and movies, playing a religious Jew in most of them.

He played a rabbi in a 1999 commercial with Whoopi Goldberg for Flooz.com, a now defunct digital currency, and a mohel in the 2011 comedy *Our Idiot Brother*, where his appearance was cut from the final movie but made it into the extra materials on DVD. Sherman has also been featured as an expert on *Storage Wars*, a reality show where the contents of unpaid storage lockers are auctioned off.

Sherman's *Orange* scene lasts about a minute and a half, but was shot approximately a dozen times, and Sherman had to come in another time to re-record some of his lines. Sherman said he later received a call asking him to come back to the series in a recurring role, but he was not able to make the filming date because he was traveling in Israel at the time.

Sherman thinks the outfit he wore to his audition may have helped him snag the part. He came in his black robe from Congregation Shearith Israel, which resembles those worn by justices on the U.S. Supreme Court.

"When you have an audition, if you have the stuff to help make you look the part, you bring it and you wear it, so that's the idea," he said.

Though the cantor belonged to theater groups in high school and college, he never studied acting. His acting career launched by chance in 1987, when the Philip Morris tobacco company decided to feature a shot of Shearith Israel in a commercial celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights. Sherman mentioned to the producers that the music they had planned to feature in the background during that shot featured an Ashkenazi, not Sephardi, melody and therefore was not representative of the synagogue's culture. They ended up asking him to record a more appropriate song to play during the shot.

"A few months later, checks started to come in," he said. "Apparently they put in my little voice, the thing that I did, and it was a 26-week nationwide commercial, which back then was like hitting the lottery."

The voice appearance earned him a spot in the Screen Actors Guild, now known as SAG-AFTRA, and from there he hired an agent who helped him land further roles.

"Over the years it's been a lot of fun," Sherman said. "It's just one thing that I get to do, and you get to meet all sorts of interesting people."



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# BIRTHRIGHT

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

status of the territory or encompass the variety of ways Israelis see it.

Soon after the bus argument, several participants on that Birthright trip staged a walk-off from the tour and visited Palestinian areas. It was one of three such walk-offs conducted in recent weeks – all organized by IfNotNow – to protest what the group calls Birthright’s silence on Israel’s occupation.

The walk-offs have sparked a debate over whether Birthright – a popular 10-day free tour to Israel for young Jews – has a responsibility to grapple with Israel’s control of the West Bank. Some 40,000 young Jews, mostly from North America, go on Birthright every year. For some it is their first exposure to the country.

But Birthright tour guides say the debate is unnecessary. While acknowledging that they speak from an Israeli perspective, the guides said they make an effort to represent a range of opinions on the tour – including Palestinian views – and are happy to answer any questions.

“In general, what tour guides are taught is that it’s not about us,” said Daniel Rubenstein, an immigrant to Israel from Texas who is about to lead his fourth Birthright trip. “As educators, it’s our job to teach what the various players in this region, in this conflict and in this shared society, are saying, and for us to articulate the basic vision of Zionism as well as Palestinian national identity.”

In addition to completing Israel’s two-year certification course for tour guides, most Birthright guides must complete a three-week course run by Birthright. Guides said the course focuses on how to engage groups in discussion, how to make Israel’s history and nature come alive, and how to relate to a North American audience.

But the guides said the Birthright training course was light on politics. It instructs guides to represent a range of perspectives, they said, but doesn’t provide a list of Israeli talking points on contentious issues like the status of Palestinian refugees or the security barrier. Green scoffed at the idea that right-

wing donors to Birthright, like casino mogul Sheldon Adelson, dictate how they conduct their tours.

“They don’t have a lot of control over what guides say in the field,” Green said regarding Birthright. “They’re trusting the guides to execute their vision. It’s not like Birthright says ‘do this’ and the guide parrots something.”

“In the Birthright training we were encouraged to represent different points of view. So this idea that Adelson is dictating how we talk about the conflict is bonkers.”

The guides acknowledged that their tours are inevitably given from an Israeli perspective. One of Birthright’s explicit goals is to strengthen American Jews’ connection to the country, along with the Jewish identity of participants. And most if not all of the guides are either native-born Israelis or Diaspora Jews who chose to make their lives in Israel.

“Personally, I’m going to value and weigh some perspectives differently than others,” said Rubenstein, who worked at the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC in Washington, D.C., before becoming a guide after moving to Israel. “I’m an Israeli by choice, so I’m not Wikipedia-neutral, but people are looking to engage with me because of who I am. I strive to represent different perspectives and make sure all voices are heard.”

The tour’s itinerary is transparently geared toward giving participants an appreciation of Israel’s natural, historical and cultural attractions. All trips must visit a series of sites, from the beachfront metropolis of Tel Aviv to the Western Wall in Jerusalem’s Old City to Masada, the ancient hilltop fortress where a group of Jewish rebels held out against an invading Roman army before committing mass suicide.

Groups will also visit the City of David, a Jewish archaeological site and community in a Palestinian neighborhood in eastern Jerusalem, over Israel’s pre-1967 border. Palestinians condemn the site’s presence as an illegal settlement.

All groups receive a lecture on geopolitics from an Israeli expert. Meeting Palestinians, and seeing Palestinian life, is not part of the itinerary. Optional programs that take place immediately following the trip offer Birth-



Birthright guide Daniel Rubenstein

right participants the opportunity to see Palestinian society.

“Part of tour education is that you’re educating about the things you see in front of you,” said a Birthright guide who asked to remain anonymous for fear of professional repercussions. “If the route of your trip didn’t take the road next to the Israeli [security] barrier, you’re not going to start a discussion about the Israeli barrier.”

The guide said he presents Palestinian viewpoints, but that “it’s clearly not a comprehensive exposure to Palestinian views if you’re not meeting a Palestinian.”

IfNotNow activists, unsurprisingly, take a far less generous view of the tours’ approach.

Rebecca Oliver, one of the participants who walked off the bus shown in the viral video, said their guide did willingly answer their questions and discuss the conflict with them. But she said Palestinians were mentioned only when she and other participants asked about them. And she said the guide did not present a spectrum of Israeli views on sensitive issues.

In the video, the guide does not appear to attempt to be evenhanded when discussing the West Bank. He inaccurately claims that Israel sees the West Bank as part of the country (While Israel controls the West Bank to varying degrees, it has not annexed

the territory and treats it differently, in legal terms, than its recognized territory.). He also claimed that Israel does not demarcate the West Bank on its maps, which is true of some maps but not all.

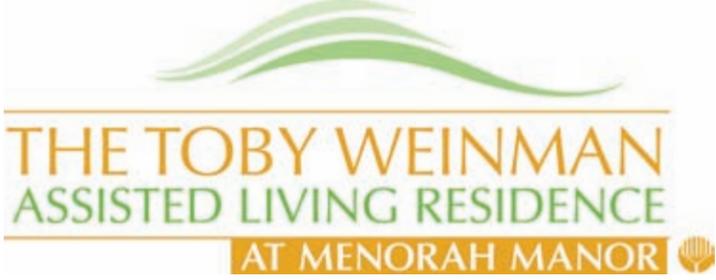
“They provide a really, really biased version of what Israel is and what that education is, and in doing so, they are upholding the Israeli government and the military occupation in Palestine,” Oliver told JTA. “They either provide misinformation or biased information without clarifying that it’s biased, or omit it.”

Tour guides chafed at the suggestion that discussing the conflict should be more of a focus. They said that not all participants are interested in a political debate. And they appreciate that the trip’s focus is on Jewish identity.

“When IfNotNow says, ‘Oh, Birthright doesn’t present the full picture of the Palestinian occupation,’ well OK, but that’s not the purpose of this trip,” said an American Jewish communal official who has organized and co-led many Birthright trips, but who didn’t want to be named without approval from Birthright. “The point of the trip is not to learn all of every single aspect of the occupation. It’s to learn about Judaism and Jewish heritage and make friends and have a good time.”

Plus, the official added, if Birthright is seeking to drive American Jews politically rightward, it’s doing a bad job. American Jews tend to hold markedly more liberal views on the conflict than their Israeli counterparts.

“I’m sure the Israeli government gives money [to Birthright] because they have whatever their goals are,” the official said. “I’m not sure how much that translates to a micro level. If their goal is to transform a generation of Jews into Likud supporters, they’ve clearly failed.”



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## Sons of late music promoter to speak during weekend of museum exhibit opening

Two events are planned for the opening weekend of the Florida Holocaust Museum's exhibit "Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution."

The exhibit, opening Saturday, Aug. 18, explores the extraordinary life of renowned music promoter Bill Graham (1931- 1991) who helped launch and promote the careers of countless rock & roll artists from Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, the Doors and the Rolling Stones.

The exhibit also traces the indomitable spirit of Graham and how his experience as a refugee fleeing the Nazis fueled a lifelong passion and advocacy for justice. He conceived rock & roll as a powerful force for supporting humanitarian causes and was instrumental in the production of milestone benefit concerts such as Live Aid (1985) and Human Rights Now! (1988).

The exhibit, which runs through Feb. 10, features 400 pieces of memorabilia, including photographs of the musicians Graham promoted plus some of their guitars and onstage costumes, archival concert footage, historical and video interviews, psychedelic art and several original Fillmore concert posters.

On opening day there will be a reception at 6:30 p.m. including wine, hors d'oeuvres and a chance to celebrate the exhibit opening with Graham's family and friends. This program will feature a panel discussion with those who knew him well, with additional insight about the exhibition and how it came together.

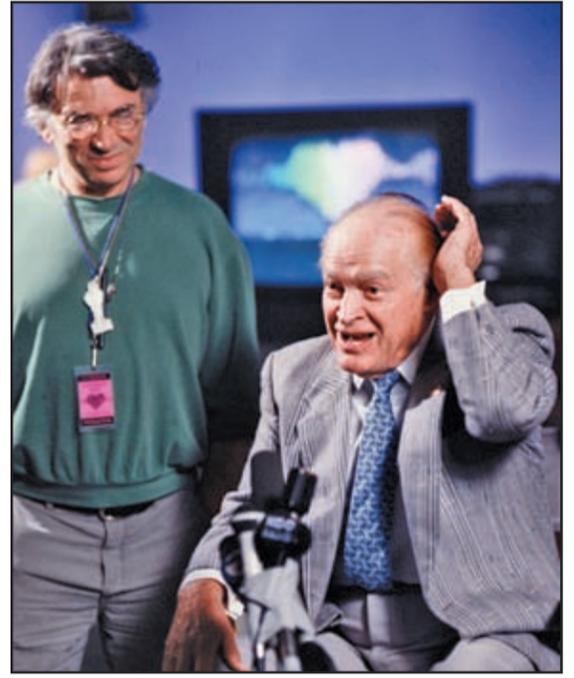


Photo by Ken Friedman  
Bill Graham and Bob Hope make a radio appeal during the earthquake rock-a-thon on Nov. 26, 1989 in San Francisco.

On Sunday, Aug. 19 at 2 p.m. there will be a panel discussion with Graham's sons, Alex and David Graham. This program, titled "Legacy and Remembrance" will explore how life lessons that are conveyed by parents and grandparents have profound effect. When those patriarchs and matriarchs endured the Holocaust, those lessons and their legacy have special resonance. A local second-generation family member of a Holocaust survivor will share experiences with the Graham brothers on lessons learned from parents and grandparents.

Bill Graham and the youngest of his five sisters were placed in an orphanage in Berlin by their mother in an effort to save him. The orphanage had an agreement to send the children to France in exchange of Jewish children for Christian children. Later, after France fell to Germany, he and his sister were spirited out of the country. Graham would up in the U.S. but his sister dies during a journey to escape Nazis. Graham's mother died in Auschwitz.

Named one of the best museum shows of 2017 by the Chicago Tribune, the exhibition was organized and circulated by the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, in association with the Bill Graham Memorial Foundation, and made possible by the support of Alex Graham, David Graham, and Danny Scher.

The cost to attend each of the opening weekend programs is \$9 per person for general admission and/or free for Museum members. To attend, call (727) 820-0100, ext. 301 to reserve your space. RSVPs are required.

The museum is located at 55 Fifth St. S., St. Petersburg.

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# Bar & Bat Mitzvah

## PLANNING GUIDE

**Jewish Press**  
 Jewish Press of Pinellas County  
 & Jewish Press of Tampa



Christine Nicole Photography

Melinda Linsky receives her tallit from great grandfather Frank Rosenblatt.

STORY - PAGE 7



Robin Hendershot Photography

Dayna Schreiber on the bima at Congregation Schaarai Zedek.

STORY - PAGE 8

# Blown Away



Robin Reiss Photography

Naomi Rappaport looks through the Star of David sculpture at Kol Ami.

STORY PAGE 3

## Irma wrecks havoc on B'not Mitzvah plans

Nearly a year ago Tampa Bay area residents were warily watching Hurricane Irma's projected track and debating whether to flee or hunker down. But four families also fretted how the massive storm would impact their daughter's Bat Mitzvahs.

Each had a different, memorable tale to tell.

Three of the families lived in Level A mandatory evacuation zones. The fourth family also opted to take shelter elsewhere.

Two of the families fled to Atlanta and wound up beneficiaries of hospitality extended by strangers whose daughters had met the Tampa Bat Mitzvah girls at Jewish summer camps. One family fled to relatives in the Daytona area where they had trouble finding an open restaurant, and another family rode out the storm a few miles away with friends, losing power at the hosts' home while never losing power at their own.

Remarkably, one girl actually had her Bat Mitzvah on schedule, though before a sparse audience at her synagogue. Later that afternoon, instead of getting ready for the planned beach-themed party, the family, including four grandparents and a great grandmother, plus two dogs, piled into two vehicles and drove to Atlanta.

In all cases, as is common when the chips are down, synagogue staffers, friends, party venue operators and vendors, with one exception, were both helpful and flexible in assisting to reschedule the services and parties.

In the end, the four girls excelled during their services and regrets over the party plans Irma spoiled were forgotten when their delayed celebrations took place.

Their stories are inside.

– Bob Fryer



Ashlyn Goldstein with her family and Rabbi Michael Torop at Temple Beth-El.

STORY PAGE 11

# Coming-of-Age With Timeless Elegance

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# Tears, then poise, then a dash to Atlanta

By BOB FRYER  
Jewish Press

As Hurricane Irma skirted Cuba, many Floridians were on edge, waiting for its long-anticipated turn to the north and wondering which region of the state would get hit hardest. It was already one of the most powerful hurricanes on record and had left a deadly trail through islands in the Caribbean.

Even longtime residents who were veterans of hurricanes figured this was the big one and thousands clogged the roads as they fled the state. Ultimately, despite widespread power outages, many downed trees and flooding, once it swept up the state and petered out, most—especially in the Tampa Bay area—felt we had dodged a bullet.

For Naomi Rappaport, however, when Irma’s path was still a coin flip on Saturday morning, Sept. 9, the storm had her in tears as she fretted over who would and would not show up for her Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Kol Ami in north Tampa.

Naomi was one of four girls in the Tampa Bay area who had scheduled Bat Mitzvahs that day at various synagogues. Naomi’s was the only Bat Mitzvah service that did not get postponed.

She had already done well leading the Friday evening service—although attendance was down a bit as some folks were making hurricane preparations. But on Saturday morning all of it began to sink in and the tears flowed. It did not help that she kept getting texts from friends saying they weren’t going to make it.

On top of that, Naomi was still dealing with the news she got the day before that her party would have to be postponed indefinitely because the venue shut down for the hurricane. Not to mention the usual anxiety of a Bat Mitzvah: how she would do during the service.

Soon after her the tears and fears welled up, Naomi more than got it all together. By the time the service started Naomi recited her Torah portion like a champ and everything went smoothly, said her mom, Jody. “She had such poise that you could not believe that before the service, she had been hysterically crying.”

Because many had either already headed out of harm’s way or were in the process of securing their homes, attendance at the service was low.

Jody and Yoav Rappaport weren’t taking any chances either. Right after the afternoon luncheon at the synagogue, the family—two kids, the parents, four grandparents, one great grandmother and two dogs—piled into the family van and another vehicle and caravanned to Atlanta.

Because Naomi was active on social media and posted information about the planned flight north, Vanessa Leibowitz, the mother of a girl Naomi had become friends with at Camp Ramah Darom in north Georgia, called Jody. Vanessa and her husband Adam, who have three kids and a dog, insisted the Rappaport family—dogs included—stay at their home, even though only Naomi and the Leibowitz’s daughter had ever met.

Naomi’s grandparents, Leslie and Reva Pearlstein, and great-grandmother, Dr. Patricia Cottrille, stayed at a hotel, but the rest of the



Photos by Robin Reiss Photography

Naomi Rappaport, front row center, surrounded by Camp Ramah friends who came to her rescheduled Bat Mitzvah Party, after the original date was canceled due to the threat of Hurricane Irma.

bunch, including Jody’s father-in-law from Tel Aviv, Dan Rapaport, and mother-in-law from Arizona, Yudit Gottlieb, stayed at the hosts’ home.

The Southern hospitality after the Rappaports’ 12-hour trek to Atlanta could not have been more gracious. Jody said the kids, dogs and adults all got along well and their hosts took the whole group out to dinner the next night. “They showered us with love,” Jody said, adding that they still stay in touch.

Because Irma, downgraded to a tropical storm, was headed for Atlanta, the Rappaports helped their hosts secure lawn furniture and prepare for gusty winds. Then they decided Irma was diminished enough that it was time to drive home. They had to pull off the road once near Macon to ride out heavy winds and rain, but made it home safely and were pleased that there was no damage and they still had power.

### New party date picked

The Rappaports were fortunate enough to reschedule Naomi’s Bat Mitzvah party for Oct. 20. The same morning of the party, Naomi again got to lead the morning Shabbat service and included a new Torah portion she learned for that date.

Jody’s mother-in-law was able to make it back to Tampa for the party, but her father-in-law in Tel Aviv could not make a return.

Some people who planned to attend the original party were unable to make the Oct. 20 party. However, some who had scheduling conflicts for the original date were able to make it to the rescheduled party, including Camp Ramah friends.

On the original date for her Bat Mitzvah, two Camp Ramah boys were having their Bar Mitzvahs, so Naomi did not invite any Camp Ramah boys so they would not be conflicted about which invitation to accept. But with the new party date, she invited boys and girls she knew at camp and about 20 of them, from Chattanooga, Atlanta, Jacksonville, Orlando and South Florida, showed up.

In addition to the extra campers at the party, there was one other change of note. When a vendor asked if they wanted to offer any specialty drinks for adults at the party, Jody said, “Yes, make Hurricanes.”

There was a beach theme for the party, including a large size cardboard scene showing a muscle-bound guy and a curvy girl in a bikini—with holes cut out where

kids could put their faces for photos. Jody and her husband made that and all the other decorations, including a display for the candle lighting ceremony and the table centerpieces. There were colorful handmade flip-flop designs that served as seating cards for the adults and purchased miniature surfboard picture frames that served as seating cards for the kids. They did not use a party planner, instead relying on Pinterest for décor ideas. Jody’s husband, Yoav, even made a large sign with arrows on it showing directions to famous beaches (each table was designated as a particular beach).

“The only thing we did not decorate was the candy table, which was done by a group of our closest friends,” Jody said.

### Advice for others

Asked if she had advice for other parents who may have their plans suddenly upended, for whatever reason, she said it is ok to be disappointed if a change in plans means



Above, Two friends pick up Naomi Rappaport at the end of her Bat Mitzvah party.

With a beach theme, these flip-flop place cards directed adults to their table.

folks who were originally going to attend, can’t show up—as in the case of families who had to make their own hurricane preparations as Irma was approaching—but it is also important to understand why they bowed out and to not be offended by it. She said Irma was “a big punch” to roll with, but ultimately, that is what you have to do—roll with the punches.

Jody added that the change of plans, the turmoil, were challenges that helped Naomi grow from and she wound up better off for the experience, and the fact that so many

camper friends made such an effort to get to her party “made Naomi feel loved and cared for.”

That being said, Jody has already given Naomi one piece of advice for the future: Do not get married during hurricane season.

Jody said Naomi was “a hurricane baby,” recalling that in 2004, when four hurricanes swept through Florida, Jody and her brand new daughter were released from the hospital a day before Hurricane Frances hit, coming home just as their house was being boarded up for the storm.

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# Fireworks, posh venue, a little magic give Bat Mitzvah party 'wow' factor

By BOB FRYER  
Jewish Press

**M**adeline Goldish knew years in advance that she wanted her daughter Aurora's Bat Mitzvah party to be one the guests would never forget.

"And it was," Goldish said, explaining that she pulled out all the stops for the gala held on the 28th floor of a Beach Drive condominium tower in downtown St. Petersburg with a great view of the Tampa Bay.

"I wanted a New York City party for my daughter. I wanted it to have a wow factor. I wanted it to be a night to remember, and it was," she said.

The key to success, Goldish explained, was finding the right party planner, for what she had in mind. The person she chose, "got it" right away, Goldish said, adding that the planner was good at implementing her vision and the choices she made about the celebration.

When asked to describe a New York party, Goldish said it had to be an over-the-top sort of affair that would leave folks talking about it long after the event. As an example she told of a New York City hotel owner who turned the massive ballroom into "Superman's Ice Palace" for his son's Bar Mitzvah – including hiring a company that came in from Colorado and created stalagmite and stalactite decorations to make it look authentic. "That is the only party I can think of that topped Aurora's," she said.

In addition to lavish decorations to make one area a "magic garden" for the kids and another area a "secret garden" for adults, Goldish said the "wow factor" for the party was a 12-minute professional fireworks spectacular. The party guests watched the fireworks from the balcony.

Since the mass shootings of fans attending a country music concert in Las Vegas happened not too long before Aurora's party, and the Tampa Bay Rowdies were having a



Photos by Maddock Photographers

An elaborately designed tree supports golden candles for the candle-lighting ceremony at Aurora Goldish's party.

soccer match in the stadium near the condo on the same night, Goldish took extra pains not to rattle nerves. She worried that if soccer fans were not alerted to the sounds of the fireworks they might panic. So, she negotiated with the Rowdies, agreeing to hold the fireworks show during halftime for the game – with fans alerted to the show – and in turn the Rowdies posted Aurora's name and a congratulatory message on its big screen display.

The dress for the event was not black tie, but still dressy, Goldish said. "It was cocktail and party dresses for the girls and women," she said.

To turn the kids' room into a magic garden, a company from Orlando used black lights of different hues and white curtains to create just the right lighting to transform the room. It also featured a white fabricated tree that picked up the blacklight colors.

The kids and adults had separate, elaborately designed entrances. The kids each got gold keys with Aurora's name on them and they passed through golden gates to the magic garden. The secret garden entrance was an elaborate archway of foliage.

There was a band for the adults and a DJ for the kids. In total there were about 180 guests,

75 of them children.

Though things started out with kids and adults in separate rooms, in time some adults began sneaking off to the kids room to mingle and to play on a giant foosball table. The band supplanted the DJ music for the hora, playing a special tune for the event.

There were acrobatic bartenders in the adults' and kids' rooms, juggling items as they mixed drinks (non-alcoholic for the kids) in both rooms. In the magic garden, there were also television sets that displayed photos of Aurora throughout her childhood.

The "secret" garden for the adults' room was decorated with greenery and flowers featuring a tree covered in roses, again brought in and set up by the decorating company. "Everything was decorated to death," she said.

As takeaway gifts, adult guests received large boxes of chocolates with the Star of David printed on top, filled with truffles and

chocolate bark. The children received LED drinking cups, bracelets, glasses and a bucket of Dylan's Candies, a boutique candymaker with outlets in New York, LA, Chicago and Miami.

Having the party planner helped relieve stress and gave her a better opportunity to enjoy the event, she said, but commented it was still a whirlwind weekend.

The day after the Bat Mitzvah service and party, Goldish, her boyfriend and Aurora flew to New York and then Tel Aviv to catch up with Temple Beth-El's Rabbi Michael Torop who had left a day earlier to lead a two-week group tour of Israel.



Aurora Goldish and friends pose at the entrance to the Secret Garden at her party.



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Partygoers watch fireworks from the 28th floor balcony of a condo tower in downtown St. Petersburg. The fireworks were to celebrate Aurora Goldish's Bat Mitzvah.

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# St. Pete girl plants seeds for future generations

An acacia tree seedling nestles in a plastic container. Hannah Davis had to purchase acacia seeds from Australia put them in boiling water to get them to open.



Photos courtesy of Davis family

By BOB FRYER  
Jewish Press

Not only do Hannah Davis' local roots run deep – she is a fifth generation resident of St. Petersburg – but the products of her Bat Mitzvah project are also firmly rooted in Florida soil.

When Hannah, daughter of Shane and Gerald Davis, began thinking of Bat Mitzvah project ideas, around age 10, her first idea was to pick up trash on the beach. At the time her family lived in St. Pete Beach and Hannah was a nature lover who wanted a clean beach and to help protect seabirds.

As they discussed ideas more, Shane suggested to Hannah that her mitzvah project should be something she carried with her through life. Eventually, Hannah settled on a tree-growing project.

With her project in mind, she hoped to have her Bat Mitzvah in conjunction with Tu B'Shevat, commonly referred to as the Birthday of Trees or Jewish Arbor Day, but learned that date conflicted with Temple Beth-El's annual arts show. Then she asked Rabbi Michael Torop if there were any Torah portions involving trees and he said there was one that referenced the acacia tree (sometimes called a mimosa tree) as a precious wood that was collected for the building of a tabernacle. So, Hannah decided to grow acacia trees, even though they are thorny and not as much of a nesting spot for birds as she had hoped.

## Project starts off in hot water

Davis said Hannah loves challenges and growing acacia trees was no easy project. Acacia seeds can sit dormant for thousands of years and they are slow growing trees, but Hannah stuck with it.

Hannah started by ordering the acacia seeds from Australia, then had to sandpaper the seeds and place them in a bowl full of boiling water to get the seeds to open. Then the seeds were placed in petri dishes, wrapped in wet paper towels that she spritzed with water.

When they were about 6 inches tall and in small containers, the seedlings were set outside – a move that proved disastrous.

"It was like a salad bar for creatures of the night. Fifty of them were eaten," Davis said. From that lesson learned, subsequent seedlings were kept inside until after the stage where they attracted whatever destroyed the first batch of them.

For her next attempt, she decided to supplement the new crop of acacias with live oaks, laurel oaks, bald cypress, maples and some olives trees. Other than the olive trees, these are pretty easy to grow. That assured



Hannah Davis chose a floral print dress and parasol for an outdoor luncheon in her back yard.

years has participated with her family in the annual Audubon Society Bird Count. She was delighted when she learned her Bat Mitzvah date would fall on the same day as the bird count.

Following her Bat Mitzvah service and in keeping with the Hannah's love of nature, a garden luncheon was held in the backyard of the Davis's St. Petersburg home. Standing next to some the larger trees she grew (smaller seedlings were nestled in tea cups with moss around them and used as table centerpieces), Hannah spoke about her mitzvah project and made an appeal for people to help enlarge the database of bird sightings.

Because the Bat Mitzvah was in the winter, Hannah kept the seedlings and young trees until the spring growing season began, then they were delivered to Boyd Hill.

Shane described the afternoon party as a "working luncheon" for Hannah. "I wanted her to understand how to entertain like an adult and told her, 'You deal with it at the luncheon and at night just have fun.' She had a receiving line and greeted everyone at lunch."

"She got a lot out of it," Shane said of Hannah's mitzvah project and her Bat Mitzvah experience.

"I gave her parameters [for the weekend of festivities] and she worked within them and made some exceptionally good choices and owned it – and that is what I wanted her to do."

## The family tree

Hannah became the third generation of her family to celebrate a B'nai Mitzvah at Temple Beth-El – the temple her maternal great grandparents, Edward and Evelyn Goldman, helped found in 1929. (Her ancestors on her father's side – the Max Davis side of the family – were more involved in Congregation B'nai Israel, the Conservative congregation in St.

Petersburg founded in 1923.) At one point, Max Davis and Edward Goldman had stores side by side on Central Avenue and participated in minyan together in the storage room of Davis' store. Max Davis moved to the area with seven daughters and through them, Hannah's family is connected to many longtime Jewish families in the community.

Many relatives attended the afternoon garden party, with the number of attendees tilted more to adults than children, but the reverse was true for the backyard evening party, where lights were hung from trees, 20 tables and a dance floor were set up and a DJ played tunes. Decorations to match the home's awnings, and a catered meal, rounded out the party.

In reference to Hannah's project and the bat mitzvah party, Davis said, "I wanted to have a more wholesome meaningful experience for her and not something flashy. I think it is an important message to send to this generation and it is nice to keep them grounded."



Hannah is hoisted in her chair during her Bat Mitzvah party in her back yard. Bright lights were strung to illuminate the party area.

that if another disaster occurred with the acacias, she would still have something to show for her labors.

Shane noted that one attraction to growing olive trees is that before oranges were a commercial crop, Florida pioneers grew olive trees for cash. Given the family roots – Hannah's paternal great-great grandfather, Samuel Davis, settled in Key West in the 1800s and her great grandfather Max Davis moved from Key West to St. Petersburg in the early 1900s – growing olive trees seemed like a meaningful choice.

There wound up being three rounds of plantings with some successes and some failures, but by the time her Bat Mitzvah rolled around, Hannah had more than 20 trees that she donated to the city and that are now growing at the Boyd Hill Nature Preserve.

One reason her bat mitzvah project appealed to Hannah is because trees provide habitat for birds, and she is very much a bird lover. From a young age she became a member of the Audubon Society and for



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# One big blow, then another, make for memorable Bat Mitzvah

By BOB FRYER  
Jewish Press

Getting her bat mitzvah service and party postponed because of Hurricane Irma was a headache for Melinda Linsky of Tampa, but getting a concussion days before the rescheduled service and party – well, that was an even bigger headache.

There is nothing like seeing double the night before your Bat Mitzvah – but more about that later.

Like three other Tampa Bay area families whose daughters were to have their Bat Mitzvahs on Saturday, Sept. 9, 2017, the Linskys kept a wary eye on the projected track of Irma, hoping the spaghetti models would show it shifting away from Florida so Melinda could go ahead with her Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Schaarai Zedek and her party at a venue not too far away.

Several days before the scheduled bat mitzvah, officials announced they were closing Hillsborough County schools for the rest of the week. That's when Melinda's parents, Sam and Stacie, made the decision to postpone the service and party. Notifications were made via phone calls, emails and texts to let guests know of their decision.

Because the family home is in a Level A evacuation zone, they knew if they stayed in Tampa they would likely be ordered to leave their home. So, on Thursday of that week, the family – both parents and three children – caught one of the last flights out of Tampa before the airport closed. They stayed in a hotel in Atlanta until the storm passed.

## Sleepover silver lining

Melinda had been a camper at Camp Barney Medintz, a Jewish summer camp in Cleveland, GA, for five years before her bat mitzvah. On the day when Melinda had originally expected to have her Bat Mitzvah, instead she wound up at a sleepover with five other Camp Barney friends. Thanks to social media, two other camp girls whose families had fled from Savannah, GA, and three other camp friends who lived in Atlanta got together at one of their homes. That, Stacie said, "was a real silver lining" helping ease Melinda's disappointment.

The Linskys returned to Tampa on the Tuesday after Irma swept through and found trees and power lines down in their neighborhood. They stayed in a hotel that night, then stayed at Sam's brother's townhouse the next day.

Once back in Tampa they learned the temple and party venue were undamaged and were able to reschedule Melinda's Bat Mitzvah and her party for the very next Saturday – Sept. 16. That evening was Selichot, not normally available for holding a Bat Mitzvah, but Stacie said Rabbi Richard Birnholz allowed it, due to extenuating circumstances.

The rabbi also announced during the service that he was not requiring Melinda to learn and read new Torah and Haftarah portions even though they did not match the portions for the date of the rescheduled service, Stacie said.

The rabbi and the staff were extremely helpful in working with the family through all the changes in plans, she said, with their focus on ensuring it was a good experience for Melinda.

## A bonk on the head

On Wednesday, Sept. 13, just as

folks were receiving notice of the quickly rescheduled service and party, Melinda went to school at Berkeley Prep, where she is a member of the girls' volleyball team. During a practice that day she was struck on the head by a volleyball and suffered a concussion – the only sports injury she has ever had.

Initially, both she and her parents were concerned that the Bat Mitzvah might have to be postponed again.

Her doctor put her in concussion protocol, telling her parents to put her in a dark room for 48 hours and keep her still. During that time Melinda and her parents fretted she might not be able to go on with her Bat Mitzvah, but held off on canceling it.

They did get permission from Rabbi Birnholz for her to skip her plans to lead the Friday night service – a good thing because she was still seeing double that evening and could not read.

The next morning Melinda went to the temple early to see if she could read. By that time her double vision was gone, but she still had a bit of a headache, Stacie said, so the temple staff dimmed the lights in the synagogue during the service.

"Her performance was perfect. She did not make a single mistake," Stacie said, adding that she was "happy Melinda had memorized everything before."

Her party, including luncheon, was held after the service and because Melinda's eyes were still sensitive to light, she wore sunglasses and no flash photos were allowed.

## Everybody gets shades

Because Melinda was in sunglasses and Stacie did not want her daughter to feel conspicuous, Stacie went shopping to find enough sunglasses for all the kids attending the party. "We hit every dollar store in Tampa," she said.

The original plan was to hold the party in a ballroom at the venue, but when it had to be quickly rescheduled, the ballroom was booked. The new plan was to convert a

gymnasium at the venue into a spot for the party. Then they got a call that those renting the ballroom had backed out, so Melinda got to have her party right where she had envisioned it for months.

With the date for the service and party only getting pushed back by a week, many out-of-towners who had planned to come on Sept. 9 could not re-book their flights so soon without paying extra fees, so quite a few of those folks did not make it to the Sept. 16 events.

Originally about 280 people were expected for the service and party, but after the storm about 180 turned out for both events. One thing Stacie was grateful for was that Melinda's great-grandparents, ages 95 and 92, were able to take part in the service. "That was very special," she said.

There was music at the party "and we were nervous about it" due to the lingering effects of the concussion, Stacie said. Melinda managed to be there for most of the party, but eventually had to leave as her headache worsened.

And in acknowledgement of Irma's role in the events, the signature adult drink for the party was – what else – hurricanes.

There were a couple of glitches caused by the postponement. The photographer booked for the original date could not make it, but found a substitute who did a good job, Stacie said. A transportation company was to provide trolley service from the temple to the party venue for guests, but could not accommodate new date and would not offer a deposit refund. Another company was hired to



Photo by Christine Nicole Photography

Special cups were designed for Melinda Linsky's Bat Mitzvah party, with the original Sept. 9, 2017 date on them. Hurricane Irma forced the family to move the party and service to Sept. 16.



Melinda Linsky had to wear sunglasses and stay in dimly lit rooms after she suffered a concussion days before her rescheduled Bat Mitzvah service. She is shown at her temple prior to her service.

provide buses for transportation.

Stacie said not only was the synagogue staff very easy to work with, but the party planner she hired was also well worth it, taking care of details once new decisions were made.

She said in hindsight everything worked out well. Folks seemed to enjoy both the service and party and Melinda will have plenty of good memories to tell friends about for years to come.

## Roll with the punches

Despite all the unforeseen mishaps, Stacie said she is looking forward to the Bar Mitzvahs of her two sons. "Melinda was our first. I am so happy with all the craziness that happened that I loved every minute of it and get to do it two more times."

While it is not common for hurricanes to force postponements of B'nai Mitzvahs, sometimes events beyond one's control can mess with the best laid plans. Stacie's advice for parents planning their child's event: "Number one, hire a planner if you can. We would make the major decisions and she implemented a lot of changes for us. That helped a lot."

It also helps to remember what is important. The concussion was nerve wracking, Stacie said, but added, "In a way it put things in perspective. We just had to see what would happen and things worked out. ... My daughter told me, 'Just

remember what it is all about and that your family and close friends are going to be there, so it does not matter how big the party is or if the food is perfect.'"

Staying positive also helps. At one point Melinda seemed down and asked, "why is all this happening to me?"

After the service and party were over, Stacie told her, "Everything that could go wrong, did go wrong and you overcame it. Look what you accomplished. Use that self-confidence as you go forward in life."

## More Melinda mitzvahs

About three months after Melinda's Bat Mitzvah and party, 15 Linsky family members traveled to Israel. Melinda held a "twinning" ceremony at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem.

Because so many children were murdered during the Holocaust, many never living long enough to have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, Yad Vashem holds twinning ceremonies with modern day children celebrating B'nai Mitzvah. The children tour the museum and conduct a ceremony in memory of their "twin," a Holocaust child victim who shares something in common – same birthday or name or something else – with the Bar or Bat Mitzvah child.

In addition, Melinda had another Bat Mitzvah service at Masada.

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# Bat Mitzvah service juggled from evening to morning when Irma intrudes

By **BOB FRYER**  
Jewish Press

Children and their parents often spend months, if not years, planning a bar or bat mitzvah, and for parents Adrian and Pattie Schreiber and their daughter Dayna, some of that planning was washed away by Hurricane Irma.

Dayna's original Havdalah Bat Mitzvah service was to be held at Congregation Schaarai Zedek in south Tampa on Saturday evening, Sept. 9, with a party immediately following. However, with Irma threatening and the Schreiber home in an evacuation A zone – the first area subject to mandatory evacuation – the decision to postpone the service was made several days ahead of time.

"Rabbi [Richard] Birnholz helped us decide it would be best to postpone," said Pattie.

The fact that some of Dayna's friends were making their own evacuation plans helped her accept the change in plans.

Like three other Tampa Bay area families whose daughters had bat mitzvahs planned for Sept. 9, texts, phone calls and emails were used to alert those who were planning to attend of the postponement. Pattie said both she and her husband helped with the notifications and it took a couple of hours to reach everyone.

Luckily, the synagogue and party venue were both able to reschedule the event for Oct. 14, but instead of Dayna conducting a Havdalah (evening) service, it was changed to a morning service. She was not required to learn a new Torah and Haftarah portions, but she did have to learn some new prayers.

"I was already somewhat familiar with the new prayers, but had not practiced them before," Dayna said.

When an evacuation order was issued for their area on Thursday, Sept. 7, the family drove to Adrian's father's home in Daytona.

By the time they arrived there Pattie said Dayna was "very disappointed" and it was "kind of a sad night" due to anxiety about the storm and the postponement. She recalled that the family de-

ecided to go out to eat that first night to brighten the mood, but had to drive around for awhile before finally finding an open restaurant.

They delayed their return home for a bit while waiting for street flooding in south Tampa and debris on some roads to be cleaned up, returning the Tuesday after the hurricane passed through.

For the second time around, the family emailed invitations instead of using formal printed and mailed invitations as they had originally.

Dayna said she was a little anxious before the service, but calmed herself and then was ok. Her mom said Dayna was flawless during the service, not missing a thing, including the new prayers.

"I enjoyed the morning service better and the lighting was better," Dayna said. Picking out her favorite memory for the service and party was hard, she said, "because they were both great. There were so many memories, it is hard to choose."

One highlight, she said, was that for the new date, even more of her camp friends were able to attend.

The change of dates did mean some folks who originally said they could come, including friends from Kentucky she looked forward to seeing, had other plans on the new date and could not make it.

However, subtracting those who had to cancel and those added because the date changed, the total number for those at the service and party remained pretty much what was originally expected.

When the Havdalah service was planned, it was to be followed right away by the party, so buses were lined up for transporting folks from the temple to the party venue. When the service changed to a morning event, Pattie said they added a luncheon after the service and no longer needed the bus service, as guests had time to go home before the party that night. This also allowed a special treat for Dayna. Pattie arranged for her to get her hair styled between the two events.

The vendors who could fit the new date into their schedules did so. In the case of the DJ, he had another



Photo by Robin Hendershot.

Dayna Schreiber hugs the Schreiber family dog, a mini schnauzer named Sparkie which she brought to her Bat Mitzvah party. Dayna's party theme combined her love of New York City and dogs.

event booked, but provided another DJ from the same company and Pattie said the new person did a great job. The videographer was not available for the new date, so they just did without.

Otherwise, the party went off as planned – just 6 weeks later.

Because Dayna loves New York City and dogs, the theme for her party was a mashup of the two. The décor included the New York skyline projected on walls and the three food stations were patterned after Dayna's three favorite places to eat in New York, a Chinese restaurant, a Jewish deli and an Italian pizza place. She took logos from all three places and added her name to them, along with Hebrew lettering. She also loves a yogurt place at Bloomingdales and the colors associated with this, along with the font used for Bloomingdale's logo, in her original invitations. Meanwhile, she had tables designated for various dog breeds and had cutouts and photos of dogs throughout the party venue. She even brought her dog, Sparkie, the family's schnauzer, to her party.

One of the things that really stood out for Pattie is that "the rabbis and synagogue staff were just wonderful. They gave fantastic support and were really helpful and there for us with all the adjustments and changes. ... You know, in difficult times, having the Jewish community makes it good."

Pattie added, "The vendors were very understanding and

those we wound up not using gave back deposits without objection."

Pattie's advice to others who may find themselves in a similar situation on how to cope with a sudden change in plans: "Initially, I was anxious just like Dayna was, to figure out what to do and dealing with the uncertainty of not knowing if the hurricane was coming or not. But I would say, ask for advice; ask for help from those who have been through situations like this before."

Not only were folks at the temple helpful, but the special events manager at the party venue also stepped up to the challenge. The woman had dealt with last-minute cancellations before and jumped into action to contact Pattie's other vendors and to coordinate the change in plans. Her actions eased the burden on Pattie, which she said was a big help, because Pattie was also worrying about a medical issue her dad was dealing with at the time.

"My only other advice is to let people know it all does really work out in the end. It may not be what you planned it to be, but it will be OK," Pattie said. "The service is the most important thing anyway, and once your child has worked on the hard part, preparing for the service, then you just have to remember that part will go right, so don't worry. I told my daughter in my speech to her, because of what happened, she will have a story to tell about her Bat Mitzvah for the rest of her life."

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## BAR/BAT MITZVAH BUDGET CHECKLIST

### INVITATIONS

Save the Date card  
Main invitation  
Lining for outer envelopes  
Response cards  
Reception cards  
Directions/hotel information  
Stamps for invitations, response cards and thank yous (check weight and size of envelope for correct postage)  
Calligraphy for envelopes  
Extra envelopes  
Thank you notes

### FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICE

Bima flowers and oneq for congregation Friday night (Check with the synagogue office for procedures)  
Shabbat dinner for out-of-town guests

### SATURDAY SERVICE

Programs for service  
Candy to throw at conclusion of Haftarah (if permitted)  
Challah  
Wine/grape juice  
Kiddush luncheon  
Imprinted napkins  
Decorations/flowers

### RECEPTION

Room rental  
Photographer  
Videographer  
Cocktail hour entertainment (piano player, magician, etc.)  
Hors d'ouvres  
Challah  
Candles for candlelighting  
Sign-in board

### DJ/Band/Entertainment

Entrees  
Liquor/wine/mixers  
Bar/Bat Mitzvah cake  
Dessert  
Centerpieces  
Flowers/balloons/decorations  
Table linens  
Favors  
Place cards  
Imprinted napkins  
Prizes for kids  
Extra waiters/bartenders  
Gratuities for waiters/ bartenders/ banquet manager

### MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Tallit  
Tallit bag  
Tallit clip

Kippah for Bar Mitzvah/ headcovering for Bat Mitzvah  
Clip for kippah  
Kippot for guests  
Dress/Suit for Bar/Bat Mitzvah child for Friday night and Saturday services  
Dress/Suit for party  
Shoes for Bar/Bat Mitzvah child.  
Photograph(s) of child for sign-in board/book newspaper, bulletin announcement.

### FOR OUT-OF-TOWN GUESTS

Hospitality baskets  
Maps to event sites  
Transportation, such as chartered bus or trolley  
Sunday brunch

- Compiled by the Jewish Press staff

# No-glitz party just the ticket for Bar Mitzvah boy

By RACHEL MINETTI  
Jewish Press

**E**laborate entrances, fun music, kitschy party favors, and photogenic table settings are some of the first things that come to mind when one thinks of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah party.

For the Bar Mitzvah boy or Bat Mitzvah girl, the weekend's festivities are all about them – their accomplishments and coming of age into the Jewish world. Whether attendees fly in from around the country or are just a 30-minute drive away, family and friends come together for the celebration of the teen.

Not every child, however, likes having the spotlight shining directly on them. For some, a weekend filled with incessant doting and reading their Torah portion to a sea of congregants is overwhelming or unappealing – and that's okay.

The celebration does not have to be an extravaganza with hundreds of people in order for it to be meaningful and a good



Friends enjoy the touch tank during Jacob Garbett's Bar Mitzvah party after an overnight sleepover at the aquarium.



Jacob and his friends huddled in their sleeping bags at the Florida Aquarium. They stayed up until 2 a.m. talking and giggling.

time. The Garbett family of Riverview wanted to take a different approach that would celebrate their son in a way that he would enjoy the most.

"My son isn't really big into being the center of attention," said Lea Garbett, Jacob's mother. "He didn't want a traditional party. He would not have been happy with the DJ and the music and dancing. That's just totally not him at all."

The Garbett family looked into some alternative options that would still do something to entertain the guests and celebrate Jacob. They started off with a computer search for non-traditional Bar and Bat Mitzvah

party ideas and for unique venues around the Tampa area that hosted birthday parties.

The Florida Aquarium had just what they needed. "It was something interesting that still had entertainment for the kids; some place my son and his friends could just hang out and talk," Lea said. "It combined everything – something for them to do and something fun for a whole bunch of different ages at the same time."

Fifty of Jacob's friends and cousins arrived at the aquarium at 7 p.m., with festivities beginning at 7:30. The agenda included a behind-the-scenes tour of the facility, arts and crafts activities, and a sleepover in the

shark room. "It was great because there was built-in entertainment," Lea Garbett said.

While the teens were exploring the aquarium, Jacob's grandparents, Seymour and Marjorie Levine, hosted out-of-town relatives at a restaurant in Brandon. Since Jacob's parents were chaperoning the sleepover, they had worked with the restaurant beforehand to set everything up and arrange a selected menu so that all the grandparents had to do was show up.

On Sunday morning, the aquarium put on a dive show and opened up the touch tank for the kids after a night of talking and giggling until 2 in the morning.



Photo by Beth Kelly Photography

The Reich family leads Havdallah at Avi Reich's Bar Mitzvah party. From left are Avi's dad Cary, mom Karen, Avi and sisters Yael and Ariel.

# Original song adds personal touch to meaningful memory

By RACHEL MINETTI  
Jewish Press

**W**hen dad is a song and jingle writer, getting an original song at your Bar Mitzvah is part of the deal.

Cary Reich created and sang an original song at each of his three children's Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.

On Saturday, April 14, Cary sang some of his original melodies to prayers at his youngest son Avi's Bar Mitzvah. At the party on Saturday night, he performed his original song, *Avi B-Davi* for his son. Cary works for a company that creates jungles for radio and television ads.

"I don't know how or why it came to me, but he's into traditional jazz, so I wrote kind of a swing tune, called *Avi Badabadavi*, which is one of our nicknames for him," Reich said. "I started out saying 'the boy of a million, I mean the man of a million talents.' It's just a little original song about him."

Along with the original music written and performed by Avi's father, other members of the Reich family also participated in Avi's Bar Mitzvah service. Avi's older sisters, Yael and Ariel, and his mom, Karen, read from the Torah.

Avi's sisters also wrote a personal song for him and sang it at the party.

"Oh our dreams take us far away from home, but our hearts are here with you," Yael

and Ariel sang. "We can't wait till you're living your dreams too, and we conquer all the world the two of us and you."

One other special aspect of Avi's Bar Mitzvah: After 41 years at Congregation B'nai Israel, Avi was Rabbi Jacob Luski's last Bar Mitzvah.

"We were honored that Avi was Rabbi Luski's last B'nai Mitzvah," Reich said. "We went out and found a photo of his first B'nai Mitzvah. It was actually two girls and they were cousins, and we presented a plaque with both their picture and Avi's picture with him."

While Avi's Bar Mitzvah was Rabbi Luski's last, Avi also celebrated a first for the congregation's new rabbi, Rabbi Philip Weintraub. At the synagogue there is a program called the Golden Kippah, which encourages youths to continue reading from the Torah after their B'nai Mitzvah. In order to earn the Golden Kippah, a teen has to read five new Torah portions. Avi received his on Rabbi Weintraub's first weekend.

Avi's Bar Mitzvah wasn't the only thing that cemented his personal relationship with Judaism. After returning from Camp Ramah Darom last summer, he was motivated to wear a kippah every day, regardless of how it would come across at school.

"To this day, he wears a kippah every day," Cary said. "He spoke about that in his speech. He said it makes him feel closer to God. He felt that it was important to him."

## Tips for thank you notes

After the Bar/Bat Mitzvah comes the task perhaps most dreaded: thank you notes.

### Why are they necessary?

Ask a member of the older generation and the answer you get will probably be simple: Manners.

And, news flash, emails or a quick shout out, "Thanks for the present," won't do. Nor will typed notes or ones done on a computer.

It's a rule. Thank you cards are supposed to be handwritten no matter how bad your handwriting is. That way the receiver knows you wrote it.

### Some tips to make it easier:

- Address the giver by name: "Dear Uncle Harvey....."
- Be direct. No "I am writing to..."
- Instead say "Thank you for..." and be specific. Then say something nice about

the present and how you will use it.

- Exception – money. Never refer to money directly. No "Thank you for the \$50." Instead say "Thank you for your generosity (or kindness)" and add how you will use the gift. Express attitudes like "It was great seeing you," "I'm glad that you were able to come..." or, if you don't really know the person, say something like "Thank you for coming," "Thank you for sharing in my ..."
- Even if you didn't like the gift, try to find something positive to say.
- Repeat your gratitude. "Thanks again for (name of the gift)."
- Wrap it up with a closing you are comfortable with: "Love," "Yours truly," "Sincerely"..., sign it and you are done.  
*P.S. Write the "Thank You" as soon as possible.*



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## BAR/BAT MITZVAH PLANNING CALENDAR

### 1-4 years in advance

- Begin to meet educational requirements.
- Set date and begin gathering information to decide format.

### 9 to 12 months in advance

- Determine budget.
- Plan tentative guest list.
- Select theme.
- Select and reserve site for main reception.
- Interview and contract with professionals including party planner, caterer, photographer, florist and entertainment.
- Meet with synagogue staff to discuss bar/bat mitzvah policies.

### 6 to 9 months in advance

- Reserve facilities for such functions as Shabbat eve dinner and Sunday brunch.
- Select and order invitations; thank you notes.
- Select caterer for oneg and kiddush
- Reserve hotel accommodations for out-of-town guests, especially if your event is "in season."
- Complete guest list and collect addresses.

### 4 to 6 months in advance

- Send "Save The Date" cards.
- Order any imprinted items, like yarmulkes, napkins.
- Recontact caterer, restaurant or hotel with approximate number of guests.
- Make menu selections.
- Make a list of clothing needs.
- Order flowers/decorations for synagogue, reception.

### 2 to 3 months in advance

- Help with child's speech.
- Purchase religious items such as yarmulke and tallit.
- Have photograph(s) taken for sign-in board/book, synagogue bulletin, newspaper.
- Finalize bakery order such as challah for kiddush and bar/bat mitzvah cake.

### 6-8 weeks in advance

- Mail and address invitations. You may want to send to out-of-towners earlier.
- Send announcement to the synagogue bulletin.

### 4 weeks in advance

- Finalize hotel reservations and plan hospitality baskets for out-of-town guests.
- Determine transportation arrangements as needed.
- Send announcement and photo to the *Jewish Press*.
- Finalize arrangements with rabbi, i.e. aliyot honors.
- Complete candle lighting or other reception presentation.

### 2 weeks in advance

- Draw up seating plan.
- Make place cards.

### Final week

- Have final consultation with caterer, florist, photographer, entertainment and confirm schedules.
- Confirm head count/floor plan with caterer.
- Deliver items, i.e. yarmulke and programs to synagogue.
- Deliver hospitality baskets to the hotel.
- Rehearsal at the synagogue.
- Relax and enjoy!

## Throwing a big Broadway bash

By RACHEL MINETTI  
Jewish Press

With the explosion of the Broadway musical *Hamilton*, and the continued popularity of shows such as *Wicked*, it's easy to see why a Broadway themed Bar or Bat Mitzvah party is a fun, enjoyable choice for everyone.

For Lauren Alexander of Tampa, choosing "Lauren's Broadway Bash" was easy. With a passion for musical theater, Lauren chose the theme two years prior to her Bat Mitzvah.

The same went for Brilee Gold of Land O' Lakes. As a Broadway enthusiast and thespian, a Broadway themed Bat Mitzvah party was a given long before her Bat Mitzvah last December.

But that's where the similarities ended. Each girl chose to carry out the theme differently.

Lauren arrived at her party by way of a red carpet with an entrance video playing on big screens. Throughout the party, guests could pose for pictures on the red carpet and "experience" life as a star.

At the entrance to Lauren's party stood a black door with silver stars and her name written in cursive. With a silver marker, guests were encouraged to fill in the blank space on the door with messages to Lauren.

The room at Lauren's party was dotted with street signs and cardboard cutouts of famous Broadway actors and actresses. The walls were lit up with projections of Playbills of *The Lion King*, *Spring Awakening*, *Memphis* and many more.

Lauren tied her theme into her service project, bringing her love of singing and acting to school theater departments that need funding. Lauren raised money for Rosie's Theater Kids, a non-profit organization started by comedian Rosie O'Donnell. It provides acting, singing, and dancing training for students at public schools in New York City.

For her party, Brilee ditched the typical red, gold, and black color scheme of Broadway and went with hot pink and sequins instead.

The Gold family went with a specialty boutique linen rental company to create the offbeat table settings. All the tables were designed in hot pink and black and white polka-dot satin and taffeta, with sequin table runners.

Brilee's guests picked up their table assignments at the "will call" booth. Instead of table numbers, each table was assigned a different Broadway musical, such as *Waitress*, *Seussical the Musical*, and *Dear Evan Hanson*. (And, of course, *Hamilton* and *Wicked*).

"We selected 16 of my daughter's favorite Broadway musicals and had the Playbills blown up and cased in black frames," Brilee's mom, Brandy, said. "They were lined with light bulbs to make it look like a Broadway dressing room mirror and the stands were decked out in black sparkle paint."

You can't have Broadway without its context – the bustling streets New York City.

In order to create that New York ambience, the walls of Brilee's party were lit up with images of Times Square using colored gel filters, which makes the images pop with

bright colors.

Brilee's mom also collected street lights and street signs with the names of famous streets in New York City and placed them around the room to give the guests the feel of walking through Times Square.

Besides the Bat Mitzvah girl, a marvelous, three-tiered cake was a centerpiece of Brilee's party. The cake was decorated with Playbills, sparkly stars, and a black New York skyline wrapped around the hot pink icing. Along with the cake was a candy buffet for the kids, a table lined with colorful sweets and bags for the guests to take home.



Photo by Calvin Roe Photography

Brilee Gold sits in front of a mirror signed by friends and family with light bulbs around the frame to give it the appearance of a backstage dressing room.



Photo by Calvin Roe Photography

Colorful images of Times Square were projected onto the walls to give guests the illusion of being in New York City.



Photo by Ryan Joseph Photography

Lauren's "dressing room" door waiting to be signed by friends and family at her Bat Mitzvah party.



Photo by Ryan Joseph Photography

The "red carpet" entrance to Lauren Alexander's Broadway Bash with cutout paparazzi and flashing lights.

# Mom gets by with help from friends after Irma upstages Bat Mitzvah

By BOB FRYER  
Jewish Press

It is tough enough for a Jewish mom to plan her daughter's Bat Mitzvah, but add Hurricane Irma to the mix – forcing postponements of both the service and party – then factor in that the mom is not Jewish, and things could have gone off the rails.

But they didn't for mom Jenn Goldstein or her daughter Ashlyn. Sure, as expected anytime plans have to change for any reason, it took more work and maybe a little more anxiety, but in the end, both the service and party went off without a hitch and Ashlyn has lots of good memories, even though her tallit and an engraved gift from her synagogue, Temple Beth-El in St. Petersburg, have the wrong (original) date inscribed on them instead of the date the service happened.

Just like three other Tampa Bay area families, Ashlyn's Bat Mitzvah was originally planned for Sept. 9, 2017. But as Hurricane Irma headed this way, both the temple and party venue announced a few days before Irma arrived that they were closing until the storm passed.

Like the other parents, emails, phone calls and texts went out to inform people of the postponement, but "because we have a pretty small family with not a lot of relatives living far away," Jenn said, nobody had to cancel flights. "I think most everyone who was coming was within a one or two-hour drive," she added.

The Goldsteins live near Treasure Island in a Level A evacuation zone and had to leave their home under a mandatory evacuation order, but rather than leave the Bay area, they stayed with friends a few miles away and rode out the hurricane there.

They watched how their own home was weathering the storm through a security camera until the power went out at the friends' home. Later, when they returned to their home, they discovered it, unlike many other homes in Pinellas County, never lost power. There was also no damage to their home.

Very quickly after Irma was gone they were able to reschedule Ashlyn's Bat Mitzvah service for the following Saturday, Sept. 16, but were unable to reschedule the party until a Friday night, Oct. 20.

Though a few folks who planned to come to the service and party on Sept. 9 could not make the service or party on the new dates, some other folks who had conflicts with the original date were able to attend on the new dates, so the numbers were only slightly less than originally expected.

"We kept same venue and same florist and DJ as originally scheduled," Jenn said, adding that they never planned on a photographer for the party, but did not miss having one.

There were large television screens around the room at the party that were programmed to show photos of Ashlyn throughout her childhood. Then guests were invited to use an app called Ever-snap that allowed them to take pictures as the party was going on and show them on the television screens. Jenn said at the end of the party she was able to get a file that saved all the photos folks took with the app.

The DJ was very good at his craft and kept the kids entertained throughout the evening, Jenn said. The party, from 6-11 p.m. included a sit down dinner for adults and a separate buffet "with kid-friendly food" for the

younger ones, she said.

There was a tropical theme for the party and kids got to take home giant tropical looking lollipops that were part of centerpieces at the tables.

Jenn said Ashlyn was very hands-on in planning the party, using Pinterest to make decorations and to make props for a photo booth she created for kids to use their cell phones to take photos.

"Everything went perfectly," Jenn said of both the service and party.

Asked for advice to other parents planning a Bat Mitzvah, Jenn admitted that for a while "I was a frazzled mess."

"I am not Jewish, though both of our kids are being raised Jewish. Knowing what the rules were and following them took some learning, so my advice to others is be flexible," she said. "Our synagogue is very welcoming of mixed families, so there was nothing too surprising I had to deal with. It was pretty easy and plenty of people at the temple were willing to help explain."



Bat Mitzvah girl Ashlyn Goldstein, left, poses inside a Mazel Tov frame with friend Tennyley Comparetto.



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*“I was a professional singer for weddings and Bar/Bat Mitzvahs at every top catering hall and hotel in New York City for many years. As a guest at many affairs held at Feather Sound Country Club, I have been amazed at the beauty of the facility, the exceptional service and outstanding quality of the food.”*

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