

ILLIANA NEWS



THE JEWISH COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF NORTHWEST INDIANA



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The Jewish Federation of Northwest Indiana expresses its sincere appreciation for these generous contributions:

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Chaim Cohen
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In honor of

Richard Waxman's 90th
Birthday
Rosalie Levinson's 75th
Birthday
William and Joann Braman's
Wedding Anniversary
Dr. Rebecca Galante
Retirement
Lipton Family
Richter Family



The View from the President's Chair

Just the other day, we passed the 6-month mark in the War between Israel and Hamas. Thousands have been killed or wounded and the hostages are still imprisoned by Hamas in various locations which may or may not be known to the Israelis. Together as the NWI Federation we pray for peace in the region along with the safe release for all the remaining hostages. We have continued to hope upon hope that there will be a successful and peaceful conclusion to this war begun by Hamas on October 7th.

On a topic that impacts all of us, Jews around the United States and in many countries of the world have dealt with an increasing amount of antisemitism. This cannot be tolerated as any form of racist or religious bigotry cannot be tolerated in this or any country. These acts, whether by words or actions, only lead to something that will develop a life of its own. In the United States we have seen the rapid growth of violence with the use of guns at parades, family gatherings, and even funerals.

Recently, the Indiana Legislature debated HB 1002, a bill that was authored by Rep. Chris Jeter, R-Fishers. The House version had

the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism to the bill, but left out language pointing to examples of antisemitism that the IHRA examples, along with the definition. The Senate version removed the IHRA definition, which created a great deal of consternation Jewish groups. When it reached a conference committee, the definition without the examples was placed back into it. It isn't everything that we wanted, but it is in my opinion a good step forward to removing antisemitism from schools and school corporations throughout the state. The Governor decided against signing this bill putting the law into effect for the state. He did provide a proclamation against antisemitism. Unfortunately, it won't stop antisemitism across the country and world, but it's a start here at home. I hope the legislature revisits the bill next term and puts in all of the IHRA definition and examples so there is no question about the intent of the legislation.

Back at home, the Jewish Federation continues to do excellent work reaching out to the community to honor the citizens of Israel under attack, support our excellent partnership in the

Galilee, raise needed fund for the Jewish Federation of North America, have workshops on Antisemitism by the American Jewish Council and Anti-Defamation League, with great support by all the NWI congregations. Special acknowledgment goes out to Miriam Marcus, Judy Katz, Rosalie Levinson, Emily Benedix, Vicky Odegaard, and the JFNWI staff for all their efforts to support and enhance our Galilee partnership, the people of Israel, and the Jewish population of NWI. Several of us had the opportunity to be at the discussion conducted by Carol Culberg on her recent trip and experiences in Israel. She conveyed great insights from the people she interacted with there.

Thanks to all of our new and current Board Members for their active participation on committees and activities in their congregations that enhance our Federation's impact on Northwest Indiana. I hope everyone has a wonderful Pesach with your families.



Mark B. Sperling, Ed.D.

President

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THE ILLIANA

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POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The deadline for Illiana articles, announcements, photos and advertising is June 7th, 2024 for the next issue. Articles must contain a byline that will be printed. Articles may be edited for length and are selected at the discretion of the editor. Submit articles via email to Samantha at samantha@federationonline.org.

CORRECTIONS

Please contact the Federation at (219) 301-0960 or Samantha at samantha@federationonline.org with any errors found in the Illiana. We aim for accuracy.

From the Executive Director's Desk

Where is the balance between that elusive judgment of being a "Good Jew" and recognizing our limitations as human beings? Although, I have yet to find one clear definition or example of what this elusive "Good Jew" looks like.

Is a "Good Jew" automatically a Zionist without question? Or are they critical of Israel and its policies, setting a higher standard for the people who are to be a light among nations? Does it mean combating antisemitism in any form, no matter how vague? Or does it prioritize individual freedoms over hateful comments and stereotypes? Should a "Good Jew" focus on their local community and be active in a synagogue regardless of their thoughts on state, federal, and international issues? It's worth noting that at the Jewish Federation, if you're Jewish, you have community, regardless of any of the above. You are welcome.

In the last two months, I have had two amazing experiences that have challenged my view of where these measurements fall. The first was a four-day intensive seminar in Chicago for Spertus Institute that was part of a Jewish Leadership Certificate, which I am in the process of earning. We began classes online and this was the first time the 7 of us were in one room. We all had different roles in different areas of the Jewish community, and a variety of levels of involvement with our communities outside our careers. I didn't know what to expect going in, but what I had coming out was invaluable. Even when discussing skills that weren't uniquely Jewish, I could feel the

presence of our Jewish identities guiding us. There were multiple times when we had our "ME TOO!" moment when discussing our challenges and found our connection was fed by our uniqueness. I also attribute the positive experience to the fact it was the first time in a while I have been among Jewish individuals since the war began when antisemitism and fear were not a leading subject.

The other experience, I must confess, I anticipated being a bit contentious as its sole focus was antisemitism. More specifically HB1002, state legislation addressing antisemitism in educational settings was bounced around the capital until being vetoed by the governor. The opposition to the bill was the inclusion of the working definition of antisemitism as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, a definition that is recognized by at least 35 states, and 43 countries, as well as most major Jewish organizations. For many, the problem with this definition is that it includes certain specific examples of criticism of Israel that could deter or challenge free speech. Over the years Jewish professionals have seen a terrifying lack of distinction between the Jewish people as a whole and the actions of Israel and its government, but the war against Hamas has caused rates of antisemitic incidents to skyrocket since Oct. 7th.

I was invited to join in a discussion with nine other Jewish individuals in the interest of understanding the challenges of HB1002. But even within the Jewish community, the view of

the war and Israel's actions hold varying levels of support, so although I was optimistic, I also prepared myself for heated discussion. What I discovered was multiple, well-educated Jewish individuals who all had information that others in the group didn't even know existed. Although I'm sad to share that we didn't solve all the world's problems, I felt like the uncertainty of my connection with these individuals had been silenced by the time I left.

What does any of this have to do with the concept of a "Good Jew" that I started with? Both groups had diversity, even within the Venn diagram of Jewish Identity. If we combined the groups, the only demographical of us could fall under, was being Jewish. The most Jewish aspect of the groups was the presence of intentional discussions. Tossing out all other aspects of our identities, the ability to have thoughtful, meaningful discussions with others is not only a genuinely Jewish trait but one that is foundational in our history and our future.

These discussions may not be comfortable. I can promise not all of them will be. But showing up in these spaces as a Jewish individual, in any form, and sharing that aspect of ourselves and what it means to be Jewish, is one of the greatest traits of a "Good Jew."



Emily Benedix

Executive Director

emily@federationonline.org

יום הזִכָּרון YOM HAZIKARON

**THURSDAY,
MAY 9TH AT 7 PM**

An evening to honor the fallen soldiers and victims of terror in Israel.

Location:

585 Progress Ave, Munster,
IN 46321

****Disclaimer: The ceremony will include sensitive content and is not suitable for young children.****

Please RSVP by 5/2/24 by calling the Federation at 219-301-0960 or visiting <https://shorturl.at/pvAB7>



The Jewish Federation
OF NORTHWEST INDIANA

Committee Update: *Jewish Cultural & Education Committee* **Resistance Amid Ruins: Heartbreaking and Heartfelt**

After the most devastating attack on the Jewish People since the Holocaust, I knew and felt that I had to visit Israel for several compelling reasons. Above all, I wanted to express my solidarity with the people of Israel, the world's only Jewish state. But I also wanted to do something to help, learn from the people face to face, and bring back what I learned.

So I jumped on the opportunity to join the Israel solidarity mission of the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning's Educational Travel division. Our group's 19 members came from across the U.S. along with Canada and Australia. During our intensive five-day mission we received frank briefings from the security officials, lent a helping hand as volunteers and met with journalists, scholars and people from varied walks of life, including from the minority Arab and Druze communities.

We arrived at a pivotal moment in Israel's history, to a nation still reeling from crisis. The Oct. 7 massacre claimed 1,200 lives of all ages, from infants to the

elderly, including Holocaust survivors. More than 130 hostages remain in Hamas' captivity, while terrorist forces dedicated to Israel's destruction and backed by Iran vow to repeat the slaughter. Some 200,000 citizens from Israel's south and north have been displaced from their homes because of the continued dangers posed by Hamas in Gaza and by Hezbollah in Lebanon. These evacuees do not know when they will return home. They are being housed in hotels and Airbnbs.

In Kfar Aza, a kibbutz where more than 60 residents were murdered and 18 were kidnapped on Oct. 7, we saw horrific scenes of destruction. Though I was staggered, I didn't avert my eyes, because Israel wants us to know the truth. We were there at the same time as a group of battle-hardened soldiers reciting prayers for the victims. The father of one soldier who had just weeks earlier fallen to battle came up to us and said how much our support meant to him. We were touched beyond words.

Our mission coincided with the 100th day of the war. We joined more than 100,000 people marching in Tel Aviv to bring the hostages back home. The hostages are on everyone's minds, their photos are displayed in countless places across the country.

For all the anguish the people of Israel feel, I was awed by their strength, courage and love of country. A longtime resident of Kfar Aza told us of his desire to rebuild. A young woman who survived the massacre at the Nova Music Festival, where nearly 300 people mostly in their teens or 20s had their lives cut short, led us on a tour of a large exhibit dedicated to their memory. "We will dance again," she said.

As volunteers, we packed clothes for displaced families. I thought of my own grandchildren, as I sorted shirts and pants for young boys. The woman heading this large effort confided that her work enables her to sleep nights.

"We must support each other always," she said.



A photo taken on the 100th day of war march in Tel Aviv. Photo credits: Carol Culberg

After the 5th day of Mission, I stayed on in Israel to visit with family. My cousin and husband have 2 sons, each with 3 children. Of their grandchildren, 4 of them have or are serving in the Israeli military. I was fortunate to have Shabbat dinner and Saturday night dinner with all the family. I visited their shelter to further understand the angst that they live through daily. Everyone is/ continues to be concerned about the ongoing attacks from the North. They are all prepared to do



A photo of a bombed kibbutz in Kfar Aza. Photo credit: Carol Culberg

whatever is necessary to maintain Israel's integrity while protecting Israel's right to exist in peace with her neighbors. I was visited on that Saturday afternoon by our former Shaliach, Maya Koren and her husband Tim Boer. They both

have siblings stationed in Gaza with the IDF. We had a lovely visit. To say everyone is "concerned" and "nervous" about their families and friends is an understatement.

The emergency is far from over. Hamas' brutal attack inflicted far-reaching psychological damage along with death and destruction. Yet pain, sorrow, and mourning do not begin to tell the whole story of Israel. I was moved by the heartwarming family feeling and the remarkable resilience we encountered wherever we went. In every conversation, people expressed their care for one another and their deep resolve that Oct. 7 must never happen again. You can feel the determination of the soldiers who are willing to give everything for their people and nation. Israel's army is composed of citizens soldiers. The war touches everyone.

The human face of Israel made the deepest impression on me.



Carol Culberg

JCEC Chair

Committee Update: Jewish Community Relations Committee

JCRC is tasked with promoting interfaith relations to strengthen communities and to eliminate antisemitism. Unfortunately, over the last few months we have had to respond to antisemitic incidents in local school corporations in the area. Emily and I have met with school superintendents to address this rising antisemitism. Our last program, which we co-sponsored with Rachel Saller, the leader of our NOAR and ATID groups, targeted this problem.

On February 4, leaders from the Anti-Defamation League presented a training program for our teens and their parents on how to respond to antisemitism in school. We learned about the numerous resources ADL provides



Left to right: Bill Hicks (Associate Education Director at ADL), Rachel Saller (Programming Coordinator), Trent Spoolstra (Associate Regional Director at ADL), and Emily Benedix (JFNWI Executive Director) gather for a photo after the ADL program.

and have already passed this information onto educators. We will be bringing ADL's Associate Education Director back to the Federation next summer to present a program for teachers on how to effectively teach about the Holocaust and antisemitism.

In addition, in January I spoke to over 160 8th graders and their teachers at the Benjamin Franklin Middle School in Valparaiso about my parents' survival of the Holocaust and the importance of combating all forms of hate and discrimination.



Rosalie Levinson

JCRC Chair

Committee Update: *Israel Awareness Committee*



Students from Gordon School in Akko, Israel enjoy meeting Masa B'Yachad students via Zoom for a "twinning" session.

In February, we held our first school "twinning" session (a live online interaction) between our religious school students at Masa B'Yachad and students of the same age at the Gordon School in Akko, Israel. The kids all had a chance to introduce themselves, discuss their favorite hobbies and sing a few songs together. Todah Rabah to Rabbi Gindlin for acting as our song leader. Although our religious school was on break over Purim, the Gordon School sent us a video of their Purim activities (and their very creative costumes) to share with our students. Next up is a twinning activity for Passover. We are very excited to kick off this new program to engage our religious school students in "real life" relationships with kids their age in Israel. A huge thanks to our Partnership Director Heidi Benish and our two school contacts Ricki and Zehavit for asking us to join this program.

Please join us for two very important, meaningful programs

in May. Check out the flyers and RSVP. On Thursday, May 9, 7 p.m. we will be hosting Yom Hazikaron which is Israel's national day of remembrance to commemorate all the soldiers and people who lost their lives during the struggle to defend the State of Israel. We will join our Israeli friends in mourning, also, the lives lost by terror. Sadly, this year's Yom Hazikaron is sadder than it has ever been due to the atrocities by Hamas terrorists on October 7 and the continuing rocket attacks by Hamas and now Hezbollah from Lebanon in the north.

Our annual Israel Solidarity Day will be held Sunday morning, May 19, starting with an Israeli breakfast. We will especially focus on our Partnership Western Galilee friends, including hearing from some of them. Everyone will have an opportunity to write notes to send to soldiers and displaced families.

Students from two of our local religious schools, Masa B'Yachad and Temple Israel Sunday School have been working on decorating paper butterflies. This project was created by college students at Western Galilee College in our partnership region in Israel to provide support and increase feelings of unity and hope among children both here and in Israel. The butterflies that our children create will be on display at Israel Solidarity Day.

We are also working on plans for soliciting donations for a couple emergency needs of our Partnership area in Akko and Matte Asher. A letter and flyer were sent out in late March. Our goal is \$30,000 to help purchase a portable bomb shelter and laptops for students who have not been able to attend their regular schools.



Judy Katz & Miriam Marcus

IAC Co-Chairs

Community Programming: *Friends of Federation*



Friends of Federation members raise a glass to celebrate the launch of FOF.



FOF members dress up to celebrate Purim.

Since the launch of Federation's newest group in January, we have had 118 members join Friends of Federation.

Every week, FOF offers our community members delicious, home cooked kosher meals as well as a wide variety of entertainment and programming.

FOF provides enjoyable socialization as well as opportunities to go out to eat at local restaurants, venture on monthly outings, and celebrate special holidays.

Check out the pictures above to see a sampling of our recent programs. The Friends of Federation group is constantly growing, and there are many exciting things planned for the remainder of the year!

Reach out to our office if you are interested in joining the fun at FOF!



Members of FOF smile big after a wonderful performance from Broadway and Cabaret singer Kym Frankovelgia.



Friends of Federation had an amazing time at the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures at University of Chicago in late March.



Lindsay Weiss

Multi-Generational
Programming Coordinator
lindsay@federationonline.org



COME JOIN US!

YOM HA'ATZMAUT/ISRAEL SOLIDARITY DAY 2024: HONORING AND SUPPORTING THE WESTERN GALILEE

Enjoy an authentic Israeli breakfast!

View an uplifting art exhibit coordinated between our community religious schools and Western Galilee College.

Listen to speakers from the Western Galilee discuss the region's resilience even amongst its current challenges.

Write letters of support to the IDF soldiers defending the Western Galilee and residents of the Western Galilee.

Participate in our fundraiser to support the purchase of a mobile bomb shelter and laptops for children unable to attend in-person school. Help us reach our goal of \$30,000. Donate now:

<https://shorturl.at/sOXZ6>

COST: \$5 PER PERSON - \$20 PER FAMILY

**SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024 | 10 AM
585 PROGRESS AVE, MUNSTER, IN
46321**

Please RSVP by **5/10/24** by calling the Federation at 219-301-0960 or visiting <https://shorturl.at/osA69>

What's Been Happening at the Federation



Noar + Atid volunteer at Fair Haven Rape Crisis Center and help assemble survival kits for individuals who have been sexually assaulted.



Friends of Federation enjoy high tea at Merrillville Tea Room for their first official outing.



PJ Library families celebrate Purim by making masks out of Challah.



Atid & PJ Our Way have a ball bowling together at Stardust.

"SOUPER" BOWL FUNDRAISER RECAP

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED IN OUR SOUPER BOWL FUNDRAISER! LOOK OUT FOR OUR NEXT FEDERATION FUNDRAISER!



WE RAISED OVER **\$350** FROM OUR SOUPER BOWL FUNDRAISER AND SOLD 60 QUARTS!

Keeping up with



K'Ton Ton

We continue to learn and grow here at K'Ton Ton. Our monthly family night was full of fun and laughter with magician Nate the Great. Parents and children filled the social hall to learn a few magic tricks!

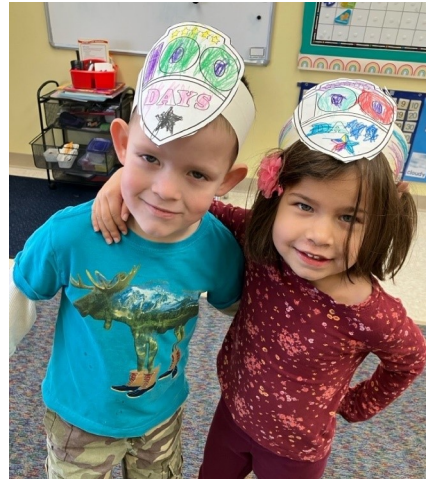


Students dig for bones at Bellaboo's.

The children enjoyed making Hamantaschen to eat during our Purim party. Rolling, cutting, filling and shaping Haman's hat! We had carnival with games, crafts and dance party to end the day. The students brought in items to share to create our own K'Ton Ton Mishloach Manot!



Two preschoolers shape their Hamantaschen in preparation for our Purim party.



Pre-K pals celebrate the 100th day of school at K'Ton Ton.

Our field trip to Bellaboo's Play and Discovery Center in Lake Station was a great time with friends. We created, played, and explored the outside. Worked together to find the buried dinosaur bones and racing to the top of the obstacle course.



A KTT student is excited to open her Mishloach Manot.



Masterpieces are made by our K'Ton Ton kids in the paint room at Bellaboo's.



K'Ton Ton classmates chase bubbles while dancing at our Purim Costume party in the Social Hall.



Bailey Hoffman

K'Ton Ton Director

bailey@federationonline.org

What's going on with



If your child is in high school and looking for a way to be involved with deciding what programs Noar + Atid does, have them apply for a board position.

Reach out to me for more information!



Rachel Saller

Programming Coordinator
rachel@federationonline.org



Noar Alumni got together for coffee at Sip in Highland to catch up.

SAVE THE DATE:
Last event of the school year!
Potluck Shabbat Dinner at
6:30pm
RSVP to Rachel at
rachel@federationonline.org



Noar + Atid listen intently to the Anti-Defamation League presentation on February 4th.



Noar member has a blast at Noar and PJ Our Way Bowling Night at Stardust.



Noar spend their Sunday showing off their pickleball skills at Pickle Time in Crown Point.

PJ Library®

For Hanukkah this year, we decided to offer Hanukkah School Kits to PJ Library Families with children in Kindergarten-3rd Grade. These school kits included dreidels and gelt for each person in the class and a book for the teacher, student, or parent to read to the class. The kids who participated really enjoyed sharing their Jewish traditions with their classrooms. The students in the classrooms also seemed to be very excited to learn about the holiday.

Aria chose to read *Meet the Latkes* to her class.

Aria is the only Jewish student in the third grade at Salk Elementary School in Merrillville.



ARIA YAKOVETZ

"It felt good to share it with my class, and read in front of the whole class. They were very interested, and they liked the book. And then I shared the dreidel game, and they loved that. It was really just a fun experience."



Josie, a PJ Library Kindergartner, enjoyed bringing in a Hanukkah book to read to her class.



I am excited to connect with more Jewish families in Northwest Indiana. Since my time as the PJ Library Professional in the Northwest Indiana region, we've experienced positive growth. However, there are still many Jewish families in Northwest Indiana who we are not reaching, presenting an opportunity for outreach. Your support in spreading awareness about the wonderful and free Jewish resources available is invaluable. Getting involved is easy—just reach out to me, and I'll provide you with PJ Library marketing materials to display in various family-friendly locations. Together, we can continue to cultivate and strengthen our Jewish community!



Rachel Saller
 Programming Coordinator
rachel@federationonline.org

Be on the lookout for a future mom's group! If you are interested in the mom's group, please reach out to me at rachel@federationonline.org!

Here are the different opportunities for Jewish youth in Northwest Indiana:

PJ LIBRARY

Ages 0-8

PJ OUR WAY

Ages 9-12

ATID

Grades

6th-8th

NOAR

Grades

9th-12th

If your child is interested in any of these groups and you are not getting information about events, please let me know.



A SPECIAL FOF OUTING

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Theatre at the Center
1040 Ridge Road in Munster



MAY 9, 2024 AT 11:15 AM

Cost: \$10 per person

Performance runtime: approximately 1 hour and 15 min

Info: Meet at Theatre at the Center, mention your group (Jewish Federation NWD) and ushers will seat you in our group's section

RSVP by 4/30/24 by calling 219-301-0960 or submitting a form at <https://shorturl.at/hmst1>

Your payment is your reservation.

Bring Jewish stories home

SUNSET HILL NATURE WALK

775 N MERIDIAN ROAD, VALPARAISO, IN 46383

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2024
AT 3:30 PM



RSVP BY **MAY 13TH** TO RACHEL SALLER AT
RACHEL@FEDERATIONONLINE.ORG



עתידינו
Atid + Noar

SHABBAT POTLUCK

MAY 17 • 6:30 pm

All dishes must be vegetarian and nut-free.

RSVP for the location!

RSVP by 5/10/24 to Rachel at rachel@federationonline.org

MYSTERY IN THE MANSION DEATH OF A GANGSTER

FOF TRIP TO JACOB HENRY MANSION
FOR LUNCH AND MURDER MYSTERY
SHOW - "DEATH OF A GANGSTER"



SPOTS ARE LIMITED!

COST:
MEMBERS: \$72
NONMEMBER: \$82



COST INCLUDES:
COACH BUS,
LUNCH AND
MURDER
MYSTERY
SHOW

MENU:
APRICOT
CHICKEN,
RICE,
STEAMED
VEGETABLES
& DESSERT

MAY 22, 2024 | BUS DEPARTS FROM FEDERATION

AT 9:30 AM

ESTIMATED RETURN TIME: 2:45 PM

Join the Dunn family for the mafia wedding of the century! This show will have you in stitches... especially if you're a snitch!

RSVP by 5/9/24 by calling the Federation at 219-301-0960 or visiting <https://tinyurl.com/4jns5w3b>.

Payment is your reservation.

Chabad of Northwest Indiana

Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov

As a child growing up in the city, I loved watching construction projects. I could stand for hours on a sidewalk, enamored by the equipment used to erect massive structures and by all the engineering details necessary to ensure that the integrity of the building is perfect, and of course up to code.

An important component of any construction project is the need to lift things up. Whether it's a crane lifting pallets of concrete and lumber stories up in the air, or even workers simply hoisting objects up on their shoulders. Without lifting and moving things, nothing gets done.

But here's the thing about lifting objects: the cranes or the forklifts, or even the workers, never grab the objects from the top; they always start from the bottom. If they attempted to lift the object from the top, they wouldn't get very far, because the dead weight at the bottom wouldn't budge. But when the lifting occurs at the bottom, when the focus is on the lowest part of the object, then the entire object can be easily lifted. So when something needs to be raised several stories up in the air, it is strapped from its underside before it can go up. Because when you lift from the bottom, you're actually lifting the entire object.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe often used this as a metaphor for ensuring the stability and integrity of the Jewish people. As the saying goes, you're only as strong as your weakest link. In order to ensure that the Jewish nation remains strong and that we continue to rise up above all our challenges, we need to be lifted from the bottom; we must focus on the weakest link — on those who others have neglected and forgotten, such as inmates in the prison system. It's easy to write them off as bottom dwellers and not deserving of our attention, or at least not as the

primary goal of our mission. Yet the Rebbe taught us exactly the opposite: The stability of the entire Jewish nation depends on those at the bottom. And when they are lifted, everyone rises up as well.

When the Torah instructs us to educate our children, specifically in the context of teaching them about our history starting from the exodus from Egypt, we are told not to wait until the child asks questions before we teach them. Sure, there will be wise children who ask all the good questions, and they certainly need to be addressed; but there will also always be those who don't even know what to ask.

If that sounds familiar, it's because you were paying attention at the Passover seder, where we mention the "four children" that attend the seder and who need to be educated.

Each of the four children is modeled after a different verse in the Torah instructing us to educate our kids. The child who "doesn't even know how to ask" is based on the verse telling us to inform our children about the exodus, without the provision that it be in answer to their question. But that child is given the most attention, because by lifting that child all the others are lifted too. If the focus is entirely on the wise child who asks good questions, or even the wicked child who asks derisive questions, the lowest of the four will be forgotten. Instead, by focusing primarily on that child, the other children will learn that while asking questions is important, and at the end of the day, having faith and doing what we're told is even greater.

When the Rebbe took over the leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch in 1951, he stated that there are three things a Jew must love, and we cannot love one of them without loving the other two: Love of G-d, love of Torah, and

love of your fellow Jew. This was the Rebbe's message throughout the forty years of his leadership, and it continues to be the message of Chabad to this day. You can't claim to love G-d and Torah without loving your fellow Jew.

And you can't be selective about which Jew you love; you have to love and care for every single Jewish man and woman, especially those that might be considered the "bottom," because all of Torah and all of Judaism depends on these special souls. So by lifting them and by allowing the flame of their souls to burn, we all become elevated, until we all experience the ultimate elevation, the coming of Moshiach — may it be in our times!



Temple Israel Valparaiso

Rabbi Shoshana Feferman

In anticipation of Passover, I would like to talk about getting rid of Chametz before the holiday begins.

Chametz is the ingredient that causes the dough to rise. Just before the Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites didn't have time to wait for the dough to rise before baking bread for the journey. For that historic reason we all stay away from any food and drinks made from wheat, barley, rye, oats, rice and legumes, which are forbidden on Passover because they are leavened, for the duration of the entire holiday.

Getting rid of chametz involves thorough cleaning and searching the entire house, including closets and even the pockets of clothes. However, there is a larger spiritual significance for this "spring cleaning".

By cleaning our house of chametz we are also nullifying the

"chametz" in our heart and burning it the day before. The Torah says that it can't even be seen in our possession!

It is interesting that Passover comes about 6 months after Yom Kippur during which we examine our behavior, our hearts, and our relationship with God and human beings, and try to become better people.

I guess once a year is not enough for self-examination, so 6 months later we get rid of "chametz" which symbolizes our ego. When we do that we recognize God for our good fortune in life and we thank God for the blessings of freedom He bestowed on us, which we remember every year.

My husband Bob and I wish you and yours a happy and meaningful Passover.



Children lead prayers during Erev Shabbat services with Rabbi Feferman.



Temple Israel Valparaiso members gather together for study and prayer.

Sinai Temple

Rabbi Fred Reeves

Sinai Temple Shabbat Services begin every Friday at 7:00 pm Central time.

Rabbi Fred Reeves continues to lead our Shabbat Service twice a month, in prayer and music and thought provoking Torah commentaries. Our dedicated lay leaders fill in on the 2-3 Fridays when Rabbi is not here.

Rabbi's Torah study takes place on Saturday mornings at 10 am following the Friday nights he is here to conduct our Shabbat Evening service. These Classes are engaging and educational and open to all interested in learning and widening their horizons.

Our Sisterhood sponsored Community First night Seder will be on Monday, April 22, at 5:30 pm.

On May 19 Sisterhood will host Musical Theatre Historian Charles Troy for a program on the Creation of "Fiddler on the Roof". How a Jewish Musical struck a responsive chord in virtually every country around the world. We will begin at noon with luncheon and the program to follow.

Please join Sisterhood for...

The Creation of Fiddler on the Roof

The stories of Yiddish writer Shalom Aleichem seemed an unlikely subject for a musical, and certainly of limited appeal. We'll see how genius director-choreographer Jerome Robbins guided his creative team to find universality in the material, and how they made a "Jewish musical" that struck a responsive chord in virtually every country in the world.

A Luncheon Program
May 19, 2024
12:00 Noon CST
\$12


Presentation to follow lunch

Reservations by Wednesday, May 15 are a must!

Sheila Ito: 219/871-0231
Lonna Temkin: 219/872-1597



Charles Troy, America's most acclaimed dramatic musical theatre historian, is a retired graphic designer and former theatre lyricist who has developed sixty multimedia presentations on musical theatre subjects. Nearly half of these presentations are programs on the stories behind many of the great musicals.



Charles lives in the Chicago area where he is very active. He has appeared multiple times at the York Theatre Company in New York City, at the Cole Porter Festival in his hometown of Peru, Indiana, and makes an annual winter tour of Florida. His website is www.charlestroy.com.

Temple Israel Valparaiso: Continued

Temple Israel of Valparaiso continues with the preparation of a full year of B'nai Mitzvahs with the children leading prayers during Erev Shabbat services with Rabbi Feferman. We are also focusing on those adults who never had the opportunity to have their B'nai Mitzvah to be able to have one.

There was fun at Hanukkah which also included wearing matching Hanukkah sweaters - yes on purpose - by Michelle Harris and Elisabeth Cohon. Fun at Purim with a carnival setting for the Sunday School children. The children love attending the Noar and PJ Library events. Thank you to Emily and Rachel for talking with our parents about all the various services there are for families.

One member whose son is an IDF Lone soldier was able to travel to see his son in Israel this February. There were members dealing with long illnesses who were able to return to Temple. Also returning are Saturday Hebrew for Prayers and Jewish life book study. Temple security and life saving training are ongoing so that no matter where we are, we are prepared to be helpful in an emergency. There will be speakers for Yom HaShoah on May 3rd and Yom Ha'atzmaut on May 14th.

The community outreach is progressing with leadership from local houses of worship and city officials coming to visit to get to know more about our congregation and Judaism.

Temple Beit Shalom

Rabbi Gidon Isaacs

It all begins with a “what” NOT a “why,” as you might remember. “*Mah nishtanah ha lailah ha zeh mi kol halailot?*” The Hebrew question mah does not mean “why?” it means “what?” So, it’s not “why is this night different from all other nights?” rather, we ask the question “what is different about this night from all other nights?” By asking this question, we are directed to pay attention what is different. The whole thing begins with noticing.

The question, *mah nishtanah*. . . , one of the most familiar texts of Judaism outside of the Bible and liturgy, is ancient. It has been put in the mouths of babes for over two millenia. This prominence, antiquity, and the tender age at which one asks this question all qualify “*mah nishtanah?*” “what is different?” as a bedrock principle of Judaism. Pay attention to the world around you, notice the changes, but it doesn’t end there...

Right after these questions in the Haggadah, we tell the story of the enslavement and eventual liberation from Egypt. Why do we tell it right after these questions? Because pointing out all the differences begs the question “why do we have these differences?” So the story we tell helps explain them. The immediate pivot from “what’s different?” to “why is it different?” shows that we only ask the first question in order to follow it up with the second one. That’s probably the reason that *mah nishtanah* came to be translated (or mistranslated) as “why is this night different...” it was simply a natural reflection of the fact that you wouldn’t ask “what’s

different” without following it up by asking “ok, so now WHY is it different?”

We do a disservice if we lose sight of the two distinct questions we ask by collapsing them into one; in doing so, we miss the insightful nature of the Haggadah’s teaching. At the most basic level the Haggadah teaches us that it’s not enough to just notice, we must also be curious about the differences that we see. This teaching rests on an unspoken assumption that is easily overlooked, namely that there is a reason for the differences the Four Questions points out. The assumption of a reason, an explanation, reflects a powerful and deeply Jewish worldview, that there is a deeper meaning behind everything that we do. Teaching this perspective is the true goal of this part of the seder.

While these questions, “what is different?” and “why are they different?” are asked by children, they are anything but childish. They remind us of these essential life questions which Judaism encourages us to ask on a daily basis. Are you paying attention to: your life? Your relationships? Your community? The list goes on. If you are not paying attention, why not? What’s keeping you from doing so? If you are pay attention, do you also ask why things are the way are? Do you feel satisfied with the answers you find? Do you take time to sit with them, in appreciation and gratitude or in dissatisfaction moving you to make change?

Hopefully this is all food for thought, not just for Passover but

all year long. It also gives you a taste of our upcoming congregational second-night Seder. We have compiled our own Haggadah filled with traditional and modern readings interspersed with your favorite Passover songs. It’s all geared towards creating an accessible and meaningful seder experience. I hope you’ll join us on Tuesday, April 23rd at 5:30 pm. **For further details, including cost, call our office at (219) 934-9600.** Wishing you a happy and sweet Passover!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

APRIL

- 23—Potluck Seder
- 28—Men’s Club Matzo Brei Breakfast

MAY

- 1— Illinois Journeys into Torah
- 8— Attitude of Gratitude Jay Rapoport Program
- 19— Sisterhood Closing Potluck and Recipe Swap Luncheon
- 31— Attitude of Gratitude Jay Rapoport Program

Congregation Beth Israel

Rabbi Cantor Mariana Gindlin

Sending warm thoughts and blessings as you gather at the Seder to celebrate with those you love.



CBI members have fun matching in "Yes Chef" aprons for the Purim Celebration.

UPCOMING EVENT

Pre-Passover Friday Night Dinner

Friday, April 19

6pm at CBI

We will need volunteers for setup, serving, and cleanup.



Temple Israel Miller

Rabbi Diane Tracht

On Purim, I was acutely aware of the tension between the joy of the holiday, and the grief held by individuals, our communities, and the Jewish people in spite of the holiday. I expect Passover to be no different. How do you celebrate when your mom just died? How do you celebrate liberation when hostages face yet another day in captivity? How do you invite all who are hungry to come and eat when hunger plagues millions?

At the same time, the holiday and the rituals are designed to help you feel connected and happy, and when you feel it, you get to feel it without guilt. The *seder*, that our people have observed for thousands of years, through every previous hardship and

struggle, tells us that we must, ourselves, feel like we were liberated from Egypt. We're supposed to taste redemption, even in our unredeemed world. When everything is too hard for too long, there is a temptation to give up. These tastes of redemption, of freedom, of a healed world, can keep us oriented to the good that is possible, even when it feels impossible. Hug your friends, even though there are some friends who are no longer around to hug. Enjoy the charoset, even though it's not the same as your bubbe's. Dream up what "Next year in Jerusalem" could look like, smell like, feel like, and then do whatever is in your power to make that world possible.

Individually and communally, may we make space for the bitter herbs and the sweet wine alike. May we find strength in the story of a people that found salvation when they least expected it. Wishing you a meaningful, mindful Passover.





The Jewish Federation OF NORTHWEST INDIANA

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JFNWI PROGRAMMING

K'TON TON

SINAI TEMPLE

TEMPLE BEIT SHALOM

JEWISH HOLIDAYS

TEMPLE ISRAEL MILLER

CBI

CHABAD OF NWI

TEMPLE ISRAEL VALPO

April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 1pm: Coffee & Connections	2 1pm: Grief Relief	3 12pm: FOF Lunch (MHS Speech Team)	4	5 11am: Chair Yoga 1pm: Torah Class 2:15pm: Fit with Fed	6 Elizabeth Graves Bat Mitzvah
7 2pm: NIOT - Repairing the World Program at IUN 7pm: Screening of "Israel Swings for Gold"	8 1pm: Coffee & Connections 7pm: Book Club—The Wolf Hunt	9 1pm: Grief Relief	10 12pm: FOF Lunch (Passover Seder)	11	12 11am: Chair Yoga 1pm: Torah Class 2:15pm: Fit with Fed	13
14 11:30am: Artist Talk Program with brunch 1pm: Women's Sisterhood Seder	15	16 1pm: Grief Relief 6pm: Crafts with Pat	17 12pm: FOF Out to Lunch (The Wheel Family Restaurant)	18	19 1pm: Torah Class 2:15pm: Fit with Fed 6:30pm: Passover style Seder	20
21 12:30-2:30pm: Passover To-Go Meal Pick Up	22 JFNWI OFFICE CLOSES AT 3PM Passover Eve	23 NO SCHOOL Passover (Day 1)	24 NO SCHOOL Passover (Day 2)	25 Passover (Day 3)	26 11am: Chair Yoga 1pm: Torah Class Passover (Day 4)	27 Passover (Day 5)
28 Passover (Day 6)	29 NO SCHOOL	30 NO SCHOOL Passover (Day 8)				

May 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 12pm: FOF Lunch (White Elephant)	2	3 11am: Chair Yoga 1pm: Torah Class	4 Sarah Menolias Bat Mitzvah
5 9:30am: Meditation Program	6 1pm: Coffee & Connections Yom HaShoah	7 1pm: Grief Relief	8 12pm: FOF Lunch (Raffle Baskets)	9 11:15am: FOF Outing—Beauty and the Beast 7pm: Yom HaziKaron Program	10 11am: Chair Yoga 1pm: Torah Class	11
12 Mother's Day	13 1pm: Coffee & Connections Yom HaZikaron	14 1pm: Grief Relief Yom Ha'Atzmaut	15 12pm: FOF Lunch (Arthur Murray Dancers)	16 Last Day 3:30pm: PJ Library & PJ Our Way Nature Walk	17 1pm: Torah Class 6:30pm: Noar Shabbat Dinner	18 Eryn Raphael Bat Mitzvah
19 10am: Yom Ha'Atzmaut & Israel Solidarity Day Event 3pm: Pre-K Graduation 1pm: Sisterhood Closing Bake & Take Potluck	20 1pm: Coffee & Connections	21 1pm: Grief Relief	22 9:30am: FOF Outing—Mystery in the Mansion 7pm: Board Meeting	23	24 11am: Chair Yoga 1pm: Torah Class	25
26 Jewish Historical Society Speaking Event at 2pm Lag BaOmer	27 Itai Bachar Bar Mitzvah Memorial Day	28	29	30	31 11am: Chair Yoga 1pm: Torah Class	

2024 PROGRAM YEAR

OFFICE CLOSED DAYS (PAID HOLIDAYS)

APRIL 23 & 24, 2024- PASSOVER
APRIL 29 & 30, 2024- PASSOVER
MAY 27, 2024- MEMORIAL DAY
JUNE 12 & 13, 2024- SHAVOUT
JULY 4, 2024- INDEPENDENCE DAY
SEPTEMBER 2, 2024- LABOR DAY
OCTOBER 3 & 4, 2024- ROSH HASHANAH
OCTOBER 17 & 18, 2024- SUKKOT
OCTOBER 24 & 25, 2024- SHEMINI ATZERET &
SIMCHAT TORAH
NOVEMBER 27, 2024 (OFFICE CLOSSES At 12 PM)
NOVEMBER 28, 2024- THANKSGIVING
DECEMBER 25, 2024- CHRISTMAS DAY (LEGAL
HOLIDAY OBSERVED)
JANUARY 1, 2025- NEW YEAR'S DAY

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

MAY 6, 2024- YOM HASHOAH
MAY 9, 2024- YOM HA'ZIKARON
MAY 16, 2024- K'TON TON LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
MAY 19, 2024- K'TON TON GRADUATION
MAY 26, 2024- LAG BA'OMER
JUNE 17, 2024- JCY CAMP BEGINS
COMMUNITY PICNIC: JUNE 30, 2024
JULY 26, 2024- JCY CAMP ENDS
AUGUST 13, 2024- TISHA B'AV
**ANNUAL CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF: SEPTEMBER 22,
2024**
OCTOBER 12, 2024- YOM KIPPUR
NOVEMBER 3, 2024- DAYLIGHT SAVINGS ENDS (FALL
BACK 1 HOUR)
ANNUAL MEETING: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024

BOARD MEETINGS 2024 Tentative

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024
WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2024
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2024
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024





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Northwest Indiana has built a strong Partnership with communities in the Western Galilee region. Community members visit each other to share ideas about art, economy environment, music, and more.

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