



# The Voice of West Clarkstown Jewish Center

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Jan./Feb. 2024

Tevet, Shevat, Adar 5784

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## 2024 Jan/Feb Newsletter

### Rabbi's Message

I write this today on Day 82 of the taking of hostages into Gaza. It's a terrible way to mark time, but I feel that we cannot stop counting until they are released. Meanwhile, this horrible but, unfortunately, necessary war between Israel and Hamas goes on. Last night I listened to Donniel Hartman (head of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem) talk about the war. He was quite distraught and emotional, and as clear-thinking as ever. He was being interviewed by a couple of U.S. rabbis, who were struggling with what to say to the teens in their congregation, who, like the rest of us, are bombarded with news stories about civilians dying in Gaza. He had some wise words.

First, he reminded us that all human beings are made in the image of God. That all of us have a right to life, liberty, happiness. And it is not in spite of this but because of this that we have a right to fight the war in Gaza, and that we must continue until Hamas cannot go on with business as usual. Israelis need to know they are safe. Stopping the war now would mean that Hamas, at any time, could come back and terrorize Israel. It is the correct use of our power that we use it for protection, for self-defense. He also said that Israeli soldiers are trained to try to minimize harm to civilians. It is not within his expertise to say whether there

are more things Israel could be doing to minimize harm to Palestinian civilians. And it is difficult to have a conversation about this when there is so much anger and hurt and mourning. It is difficult to have it in Israel, and it is difficult to have it here, because we U.S. Jews are feeling unsafe and we are also hurt, angry and in mourning. But this conversation will be important to have. Because if Judaism and Israel are to remain important not only to the generations that grew up or were young adults in the aftermath of the Holocaust - if Judaism is to remain important also to the Millennials and Gens X, Y, and Z - it will need to be on the basis of the values that Judaism teaches. And we don't currently do a very good job of teaching our kids why they should be proud to be Jewish - that it is Jewish values that teach that all of us are made in the image of God, that we should not do to others what we do not want them to do to us, that justice and righteousness are the cornerstone of Jewish belief. And justice and righteousness would say that both peoples have a right to live, each in their own nation, safely without fear of attack - to live freely, to pursue happiness. Right now, I know this is hard to hear. Jodi Rudoren, editor of the Forward quoted an Israeli rabbi friend of hers as saying, "I'm ashamed at how my heart has shrunk." But the other thing that we Jews do, is we never give up hope.

The Israeli national anthem "Hatikva" (the Hope), says "our hope - our two-thousand-year hope will not be lost - to be a free people in our own land". And we are. And so we must continue to hope that there is a way that two peoples can learn to live side by side. May it come to pass speedily and in our time. Amen.

Wishing you and your families a happy and healthy and peaceful 2024.

*Rabbi Jill*

### Ask Our Rabbi - Jan/Feb 2024

**Q:** How does Judaism understand Heaven and Hell?

**A:** This is a hard question to answer briefly because there are many different visions in Jewish literature that describe our ideas concerning the afterlife. A friend of mine wrote a book reviewing Jewish views of the afterlife - and it is 500 pages long! In Biblical times, there was not really an idea of Heaven and Hell. After death, one went to an underground place called Sheol, where one stayed until it was time for God to restore souls to bodies and then everyone would rise again, here on earth (see Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones).

Later on, an idea of Heaven and Hell began to form. Rather than Hell, there was Gehinnom - a place of purification. After death, each body went through a purification process, which could take up to a year.

(When we say Mourner's Kaddish after a death, we help people emerge from this purification process). Purification involves fire, and so, in a way, Gehinnom was Hell-like. However, everyone - except the most evil people - emerged from Gehinnom ready for Heaven. Heaven - also called Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden) is described as a wonderful place, where one would live in joy and beauty, working one's way through seven heavens, each a little bit closer to God. (When we

recite the El ha-Rahamim prayer we pray for the souls of our loved ones to rest in Gan Eden.)

## Donations

### Yahrzeits

Herb & Lori Goldstein in memory of his mother Diane Goldstein

David Levine in memory of his mother Mollie Levine

Fred & Michele Finkelberg in memory of his wife and her mother Felice Finkelberg, and His mother and her grandmother Anna Finkelberg,

Stan & Susan Alpert in memory of her father Norman Goldberg,

Steve & Sheila Paris in memory of his father Sigmund Paris and her father Sam Pearlmutter and also her aunt Julie Migden

Al Tabin & Susan Ravner in memory of Estell Ravner

Sharon Zall in memory of her father David Zall

Ruth Geneslaw in memory of her mother Esther Weinberg

Dianne Klein in memory of her grandmother Eva Klein

Philip & Joyce Ress in memory of his father Monroe Ress

## Sisterhood News

Shalom Rav,

With cautious optimism we held our first meeting starting with the Sisterhood annual Paid-up Brunch which took place at WCJC on Nov. 19. Although it was a small group, we enjoyed lively conversation while eating bagels & lox and fruit salad.

Thanks to Susan Ravner for bringing the fruit salad.

Barbara came up with the idea of "Minyanaire tee shirts". Sounds exciting & unique. Starting the meeting was a reading of "Peace-Shalom" from the old Siddur read by Susan R. It comprised several psalms of peace. Peace, with a capital P in any language is sadly needed at this time in Israel. We hope and pray for an everlasting peace.

It was so nice to be together in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

We look forward to you becoming a member of Sisterhood. You can include additional family members. It is not too late. Dues are \$36,00. Send all checks to:

Fran Boxer  
6 Cygnet Road  
Congers, NY 10920

Our members for this year so far are: Sheila & mother, Helen Pearlmutter, mother-in-law, Roma Paris, sister, Rita Weissman, and aunt, Julia Migden, Fran B., Susan A., Susan R., Ruth, Stephanie, Emma Plotkin ( for her grandmother, Sylvia Plotkin), Linda, Marilyn, Barbara, Lil

I personally thank you for joining our group. We are just one branch of WCJC. We also help in fiscal matters.

I will continue to inform you of future events by email and announcements from the bimah. Nothing is planned right now.

Wishing the Tessels & Scherzers a great & warm time in Florida.

L'het'ra'ot,

**Sheila Paris**

## Men's Club News

We are entering the new secular year of 2024. I hope this year will bring more events and interaction amongst our members. This includes having social events at our synagogue.

For now, our Mexican train game event is on hold until early May of this year.

At this time, we have several of our members away in Florida for the cold weather months.

The Men's Club and I urge everyone to try and attend at least one full week-end of Shabbat services each month in order to make a minyan.

Fraternally,

**Steve Paris**

### **\*\* INFORMATION \*\***

Congregation Sons of Israel (CSI) in Nyack has a Cemetery in Blauvelt.....

Lovely, Peaceful, Small, Easy to Visit -

**Temple Israel Memorial Park**

(there's even a separate section for Jews with a non-Jewish spouse).

Plots are available. For information contact CSI Cemetery Chair

Larry Kintisch 845-353-

0885 [LKint@verizon.net](mailto:LKint@verizon.net)

## January Birthdays

Cynthia Coram	Jan. 1
Lori Goldstein	Jan. 2
Robin Garlock	Jan. 3
Herb Goldstein	Jan. 12
Stan Alpert	Jan. 15
Eric Tessel	Jan. 17
Jack Zinn	Jan. 18
Harriet Moskowitz	Jan 27

## January Anniversaries

Marilyn & David Tessel Jan. 19

## January Yahrzeits

Martha Littman	Jan. 1
Frances Wolkowitz	Jan. 1
Helen Pearlmutter	Jan. 2
Nathan Deutchman	Jan. 3
Morris Tessel	Jan. 4
Morris Manashaw	Jan. 4
Irving Wittlin	Jan. 7
Sidney Davis	Jan. 7
Morris Israel Bloom	Jan. 8
Rose Littman	Jan. 8
Samuel Davis	Jan. 9
Bernard Sachs	Jan. 11
Morris Steinhol	Jan. 12
Mac Snow	Jan. 13

Cecile Bloomfeld	Jan. 15
David Feingold	Jan. 15
Bertha Wiltchek Libien	Jan. 17
Jack Jacobs	Jan. 19
Max Binenfeld	Jan. 20
Sidney Weinstein	Jan. 22
Sidney Haber	Jan. 23
Bernard Talmas	Jan. 25
William Littman	Jan. 26
David Kitain	Jan. 27
Doris Davis	Jan. 28
Mary Schneider	Jan. 28
Martin Finkelstein	Jan. 28
David Wechman	Jan. 29
Elias Horn	Jan. 29
Betty Lee Stein	Jan. 29

## February Birthdays

Daniel Seltzer	Feb. 8
Jennifer Benson	Feb. 9
Michele Finkelberg	Feb. 12
Rose Perlmutter	Feb. 15
Sandra Seltzer	Feb. 27

## Feb. Yahrzeits

Estelle Greener	Feb. 1
Gil Zinn	Feb. 1
Sol Goldstein	Feb. 5
Samuel Zussman	Feb. 6
Yetta Schomberg	Feb. 6
Theodore Grabel	Feb. 8
Richard Breslaw	Feb. 10
Joseph Kaplan	Feb. 11
Sam Rosenblum	Feb. 11
George Feigenbaum	Feb. 13
Esther Cytrin	Feb. 14
Frank Migden	Feb. 14
Edward Adolph Cohen	Feb. 18
Etta Berg	Feb. 19
Jacob Zinn	Feb. 19
Stella Giskin	Feb. 19
Frances Goldberg	Feb. 19
Florence Adler	Feb. 20
George Nerenberg	Feb. 21
Arthur Schiffman	Feb. 26
Miriam Feurstein	Feb. 27
Gertrude Breslaw	Feb. 28
Shlomo ben Shimon	Feb. 29

## Help WCJC by Selling on E-Bay

Barbara & Julie Shair have access to an E-Bay website. Items can be sold here. Please donate jewelry...costume, gold, silver, single earrings or parts of a piece are acceptable. Small antique items can be listed. You can bring items to Harriet in the office Tues. or Thurs. 10:00 A.M. to 12:00. The funds will support our Kiddishes.

Call: **Barbara Shair 845-354-7223**

Remember before you throw away we use e-bay.

## Sunshine Cards

### In Sympathy

**from** -Fred & Michele Finkelberg - **to** -  
Lori Bernstein & Family - In memory of  
Randy Bernstein.

Reminder: You can find information about service times, synagogue activities, copies of our newsletter and more at our synagogue website: [westclarkstownjc.org](http://westclarkstownjc.org)