

May 1 - June 30, 2025 | 3 Iyar - 4 Tammuz, 5785

KJCC Community Passover Seder – Pages 22-23 Joel S. Cohen Fellowship Award – Page 24 Jewish Portugal – Pages 28-31



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	vices are every Fr Names denote ser licized names are	vice leaders		1 <u>MAY</u>	2 Ken Atlas & Art Itkin Jeff & Cheryl Margulies	3 Trash Derby 9 a.m. Levine home
4 Sisterhood Meeting 10 a.m. Hebrew Studies 12 p.m.	5	6	7	8	9 Judy Starr & Gloria Avner Roy & Elizabeth Pollack	10
11 Mother's Day	12	13	14	15	16 Lag - B'Omer Donna Bolton & Jane Friedman <i>Sisterhood</i>	17
18 KJCC Board Meeting 10 a.m. on Zoom	19	20	21	22	23 Rivka Rizzo-Trent Rivka Rizzo-Trent	24
25	26 Memorial Day Jerusalem Day	27	28 Rosh Chodesh Sivan	29 Sisterhood Book Club 12:30 p.m.	30 Shavuot Dairy Dinner 6 p.m. Erica Lieberman Garrett & Gloria Avner Gloria Avner & Joyce Peckman	31
1 JUN Sisterhood Meeting 10 a.m.	2 Shavuot	3 Shavuot	4	5	6 Michael & Sean Kaufman & Joyce Peckman Roy & Elizabeth Pollack & Donna Bolton	7
8 KJCC Board Meeting 10 a.m. on Zoom	9	10	11	12	13 Rivka Rizzo-Trent Gloria Avner & Jane Friedman	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 Steve Jacobs & Tyler Cope Shanti & Craig Cope	21 Tyler Cope Bar Mitzvah 10 a.m.
22	23	24	25	26 Rosh Chodesh Tammuz	27 Randy Klein-Gross & Shari Carlquist Stuart & Lauren Sax	28
29	30		1	Happy S	Shavuot	

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CHAI-LIGHTS is the bimonthly publication of the Keys Jewish Community Center *chailights@keysjewishcenter.com*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Ken Atlas

A swe push through the second month of spring, we have been through a plethora of special events such as Purim and Passover.

I know I must sound like a broken record, but I must say, these events have gotten better and better with each vear. At Purim we all had a chance to be loud and make noise at the mention of a certain person's name. The funny thing is, we couldn't agree how to pronounce it. But one of the things I love about our community center is there isn't just one correct way to do things. And I'll let the pastrami speak for itself. I was happy to see that we were able to add corned beef as well this year.

Although Passover being on a Saturday this year, meant that I would have to do an extra drive to the Keys, it also



ensured that I would be able to attend. Last year, unfortunately my job did not allow me to be there in time for the Seder. Special thanks to sisterhood, and our hired helpers for making the Seder and dinner so special again. I also wish a special thanks to Susan Gordon who put the event together from the ritual side, and made packets assigning the different roles to each of us who attended.

With such wonderful events and such wonderful friends and family in attendance, even bitter herbs, couldn't get us down.

Finally, it was wonderful to end singing songs with Randy and Joe, including old melodies that I used to sing with my grandparents. \diamond



WHAT'S UP AT KJCC

MAY & JUNE 2025

Friday, May 2	7:30 Shabbat Service - Led by Ken Atlas and Art Itkin
Saturday, May 3	9 a.m. Trash Derby - Levine home. Contact Randy Klein-Gross
Sunday, May 4	10 a.m. Sisterhood Meeting
Friday, May 9	7:30 Shabbat Service Led by Judy Starr and Gloria Avner
Friday, May 16	7:30 p.m. Shabbat Service Led by Donna Bolton & Jane Friedman
Sunday, May 18	10 a.m. KJCC Board meets on Zoom
Friday, May 23	7:30 p.m. Shabbat Service Led by Rivka Rizzo-Trent
Thursday, May 29	12:30 p.m. Sisterhood Book Club at the Home of Carol Rose
Friday, May 30	6 p.m. Shavuot Dairy Dinner 7:30 p.m. Shabbat & Yizkor Service Led by Erica Lieberman Garrett & Gloria Avner
Sunday, June 1	10 a.m. Sisterhood Meeting
Friday, June 6	7:30 p.m. Shabbat Service Led by Michael & Sean Kaufman & Joyce Peckman
Sunday, June 8	10 a.m. KJCC Board Meeting on Zoom
Friday, June 13	7:30 p.m. Shabbat Service Led by Rivka Rizzo-Trent
Friday, June 20	7:30 p.m. Shabbat Service Led by Steve Jacobs & Tyler Cope
Saturday, June 21	10 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Tyler Cope

Friday, June 27 7:30 p.m. Shabbat Service Led by Randy Klein-Gross & Shari Carlquist

Shabbat Service Leaders

May 2Ken Atlas and Art Itkin	June 6 Michael Kaufman & Joyce Peckman
May 9 Judy Starr & Gloria Avner	June 13Rivka Rizzo-Trent
May 16Donna Bolton & Jane Friedman	June 20Steve Jacobs
May 23Rivka Rizzo-Tent	June 27Randy Klein-Gross & Shari Carlquist
May 30Erica Lieberman Garrett & Gloria Avner	July 4Joe Shabathai

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Sisterhood Book Club

We meet the last Thursday of each month at 12:30 to discuss a book, always bringing a little of ourselves into the talk. Often the books have lewish content, but not always, as is the case with the books for May and June. "Sipsworth" by Simon Van Booy is a guick read about a sad, guirky old woman who finds an unusual reason to live. It is a beautifully rendered blend of reality and fable that should delight anyone who has ever loved a pet. (NY Journal of Books). Joyce Maynard's "The Bird Hotel", our June choice, is based on the author's experience of living in a Mayan village. It received 4.3 stars from 'Goodreads", which calls it "a stunningly beautiful novel that touches upon themes of grief, survival, kindness and found family." May will probably be our last hosted meeting until the fall, but we continue on Zoom, Contact Linda Pollack at Lindap4000@vmail.com for details and to be added to email list.

Oneg Shabbat

Our Oneg Shabbats are epic. No simple juice and cookies after Friday services at Congregation Ohr HaYam. Thanks to Jane Friedman and other volunteers, we have freshly baked home-made challah and salads from vegetables grown in our own garden, along with delicious sweets, coffee and cold drinks. You can sponsor an oneg Shabbat for only \$72 (four times chai). This is a wonderful way to memorialize or celebrate life events, and it is a true blessing. Contact Joyce Peckman at 732-447-5225 or *joycepeckman@gmail*.

Our Artists are Showing

We are rich with talent. Every other month we get to see Jan Hartz's beautifully rendered photograph of our building on the front cover of Chai-Lights. Soon we will see other photos of hers on our interior walls. Mickey Frankel will have an exhibit here too, of her paintings on canvas and on China. Meanwhile, many of our artists are showing in the community. Beth Kaminstein has garden pottery showing at The Banyan Tree, Medina Roy. Barbara Bernstein and Oran Hesterman have ceramic work on display at Our Place in Paradise, where Jan also has photos and Gloria Avner currently has a show in its main room through mid May. John David Hawver has a glorious show on now through May at Key Largo Library. Don't miss it. Six decades of remarkable work is showing.

May	Years
14th	Alan & Chely Markowitz
21st	Marshall & Myra Kaplan 53
June	
1st	Joel Bernard & Joan Stark 39
8th	Stephan & Jane Friedman 29
12th	William & Donna Bolton 32
12th	Steven & Jan Hartz 49
19th	Richard & Mindy Agler 49
21st	Alan L. Beth & Candace J. Stanlake
23rd	Stuart & Lauren Sax
28th	Wes & Rita Conklin
29th	Oran Hesterman & Lucinda Kurtz
29th	Jerry & Betty Small

ONGOING PROJECTS AND MITZVAH PROGRAMS OF KJCC

CEMETERY INFORMATION: If you wish to plan for the very distant future, you can reserve space at the Kendall Mt. Nebo Cemetery in the KJCC section. Call Joyce Peckman, 732-447-5225.

CHAI-LIGHTS MITZVAH: Place a greeting or notice in Chai-Lights. Call Gloria Avner, 305-619-0216, to make your donation.

CHAI-LIGHTS ADVERTISEMENT: Your business ad will appear in every issue of Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 305-587-7429, or email *lindap4000@ymail.com* for rates.

GIFT SHOP: We have lovely items for all holidays and for every day enjoyment. If you have a special request, call Susan Gordon, 305-766-3585.

MEDITATION GARDEN: Have you visited our beautiful garden? Contact Shari Carlquist, 305–962–0000 or *shari@directflowers.biz* to reserve an orchid, bench, brick or tree plaque for posterity.

ONEG SHABBAT/DINNER SPONSOR: An oneg costs only \$72; a dinner is \$360. To schedule your special date with Sisterhood, call Joyce Peckman, 732-447-5225.

CARING KEHILAH/SUNSHINE COMMITTEE: If you know of any member who should receive a get well, congratulations or condolence card from the KJCC, call Loni Padden, 305-772-2584, or email <u>dr.padden@yahoo.com</u> or Barbara Knowles, 305-772-0503.

TREE OF LIFE LEAVES, SANCTUARY SEAT PLATES, YARTZEIT MEMORIAL PLAQUES: Send your desired inscription to Linda Pollack at *lindap4000@ymail.com*.

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

HOW CERTAIN CONTRIBUTIONS TO KJCC CAN INSTANTLY BECOME PERMANENT, LIVING MEMORIALS

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

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

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

CONTRIBUTIONS TO KJCC

We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who support the Keys Jewish Community Center by remembering and honoring friends and loved ones through generous contributions. When you make a donation, please specify the names to be honored and the recipient fund if one is desired.

MARCH & APRIL 2025

Yahrzeit	In Honor/Memory of
Robert Temkin	Phillip Temkin
Larry & Dorothy Wolfe	Martha Greenberg
Mimi & Richard Bentolila	Fred Schuessler Virginia Schuessler
Linda Pollack	Joel Pollack
Pam Friedman	Sheila Steinberg
Joan Wohl	Dr. Milton A. Wohl
Arthur Plutzer	Ann Plutzer
Nadine Thompson	Larry Ira Frankel Herbert Frankel
Marshal & Myra Kaplan	Monroe & Gertrude Kaplan
Stuart Sax	Sam Sax
Conoral Donations	

General Donations

Mimi & Richard Bentolila Anniversary & Mimi's Birthday
Thomas & Patricia Patti Memory of Bob Epstein
Rabbi Ed Rosenthal/ Repair the SeaKJCC Fellowship
Arthur PlutzerMemory of Jeffrey Pollack
Medina Roy Tree for Shari Carlquist
Shelly Cohen Memory of Bob Epstein
Steve and Jan Hartz Memory of Jeff Pollack
Beth HorowitzFor a Happy Passover

— SISTERHOOD DONATIONS —

Oneg Donations

Nettie and Jules Seder	Anniversary
Barb & Richard Knowles	.Richard & Eve's Birthday
Linda Pollack	Memory of Joel Pollack
Jane Friedman	Her 60th Birthday

Susan Gordon	Her Birthday
Shari Carlquist	Honoring Joyce, her excellent Hebrew Teacher
Jan Price	Hamantaschen Workshop

— DINNER SPONSORSHIPS —

Ken Atlas..... Purim & Pastrami Dinner

— TIKKUN OLAM DONATIONS —

Michael and Lorena Kaufman Adam and Judy Starr Tonya & Ken Salomon Linda Perloff & Dr. Sam Goldberg Orlando Quesada **Barney** Coltman Michelle & Robert Diener Rosemary Ciotti Joel Bernard & Joan Stark Nadine Thompson & Miriam Frankel Mimi & Richard Bentolila Susan Gordon Shari Carlquist Erica Lieberman Garrett

Tikkun Olam Raffle Donations

Gloria Avner Shari Carlquist Miriam Frankel Joyce Peckman I oni Padden Linda Pollack Randy Klein Gross Nadine Thompson

In Memoriam – May 2025

Sylvia Agler by Richard Agler & Mindy Agler Barbara Linda Hayes by Jane Friedman

Carol Steinberg by Richard Agler & Mindy Agler **Fred Klimpl** by Michael Klimpl Robert W. Singer

Lilyan Sax

by Stuart Sax & Lauren Sax

by Mary Lee Singer

Cantor Alex Chapin

by Steven Smith & Barbara Smith

Roos Boudewijns by Roos-Mary Benowitz **Diane Topping** by Marla Koche

Carlos CartagenaMoby Maria Cartagenaby Eric

Morris Kornbloom by Erica Lieberman Garrett

Rose Wainer by Lei Steinberg

Becky Kanowsky by Wes Conklin & Rita Conklin Max Margulies by Jeff Margulies & Cheryl Margulies

Sam Wainer by Lei Steinberg

Sam Hitzig by Wes Conklin & Rita Conklin

Joseph Huppert by Craig Cope & Shanti Cope

Alex Perl by Gerri Emkey & Frank Emkey

Gertrude Weisberg by Gerri Emkey & Frank Emkey Brian Sheridan by Carol Rose

Maryann Sandusky by Frank Rose

> **Rene Rose** by Frank Rose

Mrs. Trudy Roth by Joel Roth & Mary Roth Susan Cimkowski by Stephen Steinbock & Rosemary Barefoot

Phillip Temkin by Robert Temkin

Martha Greenberg by Larry Wolfe & Dorothy Wolfe

In Memoriam – June 2025

David Gitin by Gloria Avner

Virginia Schuessler by Richard Bentolila & Mimi Bentolila

Rose Roazen by Sylvia Berman

Samuel Segal by Paul Bernstein & Barbara Bernstein

Leo Blitzer by Murray Blitzer & Bev Strumor-Blitzer

Louis R. Coltman by Barnet O. Coltman

Bea Ginsberg by Bernard Ginsberg

Sara Pittler Kurtz by Oran Hesterman & Lucinda Kurtz

Andrew Hutchison by Susan Horn & Dot Brooking

Samuel Horn by Susan Horn & Dot Brooking

Judith Rita Kaminstein by Beth Kaminstein

Max Tuchman by Marshall Kaplan & Myra Kaplan Celestina Bravo-Mendez by Michael S. Kaufman & Lorena I. Kaufman

Emilia Mendez by Michael S. Kaufman & Lorena I. Kaufman

Lucy Kaufman by Michael S. Kaufman & Lorena I. Kaufman

Ruth Rosen by Michael S. Kaufman & Lorena I. Kaufman

Jacob Maxwell Klimpl by Michael Klimpl

> Arthur Klimpl by Michael Klimpl

Harvey Taub by Erica Lieberman Garrett

Leo Wolynetz by Erica Lieberman Garrett

Fred Doellefeld by Jeff Margulies & Cheryl Margulies

Marshall Berkson by Barry Neumann & Ellen Ecker

> Leslie Peckman by Joyce Peckman

> **Bernard Plutzer** by Arthur Plutzer

Irving Plutzer by Arthur Plutzer

Jean Shaw by Frank Rose

Milton Lang by Frank Rose

Mickey Beitscher by Carol Rose

> Morris Rose by Frank Rose

Carl Roy by Medina Roy

Moshe Sages by Joni Sages & Robert Dandrea

Jan Finer by Stuart Sax & Lauren Sax

> Wally Steinberg by Lei Steinberg

Candi Steinbock by Stephen Steinbock & Rosemary Barefoot

Leonard Tobin by Andrew M. Tobin

> Mark White by Susan White

Rose Fine by Larry Wolfe & Dorothy Wolfe

Happy Birthday!

May

мау	
1st	Cheryl Margulies
	Barney Coltman
4th	Laura Leigh Tallent
7th	Murray Rapoport
7th	Skyler Bella Strasser
11th	Richard Agler
12th	Madelyn Ruby Pollack
12th	Nyan Feder
13th	Rose Marie Casey
14th	Bernie Ginsberg
14th	John Temkin
14th	Medina Roy
23rd	Jenny Margulies
23rd	Jules Seder
	Nettie Seder
24th	Mimi Bentolila
25th	Matthew Birnbaum
27th	Alan Beth
28th	Laura Duman
28th	Mary Roth
29th	Robin Forman
31st	Judy Starr
31st	Wes Conklin
lune	
	Barbara Osder
	Myra Kaplan
•	

3rd	
3rd	Elanor Forbes
3rd	
5th	Dorothy Wolfe
5th	Sam Weis
5th	Tonya Salomon
6th	Donna Bolton
6th	Nancy Kluger
6th	Suzanne Gilson
7th	Carrie Smith
7th	Joan P. Wohl
9th	Renee Brodie
12th	Mark Avner
13th	Jeff Miller
14th	.Rochelle Hollander
15th	William Bolton
20th	Harvey Klein
21st	Aaron Quesada
21st	Nancy Hershoff
23rd	Steve Levine
24th	Delaney Rohde
24th	Sandy Traugott
25thJake B	enjamin Markowitz
26th	Arthur Plutzer
27th	Frank Emkey
30th	Bob Friedman
30th	
30th	Tyler Cope
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ONEG SPONSORS

May 2	Jeff & Cheryl Margulies • Celebrating Cheryl's Birthday
May 9	Roy & Elizabeth Pollack • Celebrating Madelyn's Birthday
May 16	Sisterhood
May 23	Rivka Rizzo-Trent • Honoring Emanuel Raul Rizzo
May 30	Gloria Avner & Joyce Peckman • Shavuot Dinner
June 6	Roy & Elizabeth Pollack • Celebrating Elizabeth's Birthday
	Donna Bolton • Celebrating Donna's Birthday
June 13	Gloria Avner • Celebrating Mark Avner's Birthday
	Jane Friedman • Celebrating Jane & Steve's 29th Anniversary
June 20	Shanti & Craig Cope • Celebrating the Bar Mitzvah of Tyler Cope
June 27	Stuart & Lauren Sax • Celebrating Their 51st Anniversary

8 Chai-Lights • March 1 - April 30, 2025

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WORLD JEWISH REPORT Medina Roy

Borai Pri HaGafen....1,000 Years ago

Imagine sitting at a Friday night Shabbat dinner table during the time of Ghengis Khan's reign with a kiddish cup being passed around. Well, that same rare remnant of the Silk Road – the ancient Asian trading route traveled by Marco Polo that was home to vibrant Jewish communities – could be yours! According to Sotheby's, it is the oldest known Jewish artifact from the Middle Ages and will be up for auction in New York City on October 29th.

The cup is dated to the 11th or 12th century, when the Jews of Europe faced mass expulsion, exiles and massacres (plus repeated looting by the pure and noble knights as they crossed Europe) during the Crusades. It is inscribed in both Hebrew and Arabic with the name of its Jewish owner, "Simcha son of Salman." The Arabic inscriptions on the cup include a series of blessings for Simcha. They would have been used for the blessing over wine at Shabbat meals.

Sharon Liberman Mint, Sotheby's international senior Judaica specialist, said, "The cup is an extraordinary rare record of the existence and importance of Jewish communities in Central Asia in the Middles Ages, and of their cultural and artistic exchanges with the surrounding Islamic world. Bearing inscriptions in both Hebrew and Arabic, the cup was not only used to sanctify Jewish ritual, but also embodied a shared artistic language across faiths, and its survival for nearly a millennium is truly remarkable." She added, "No other medieval Judaica artifact of this early date is known to exist."

Last fall, Sotheby's auctioned off a 1,500-yearold stone inscription of the Ten Commandments. It sold for more than \$5 million to an anonymous buyer, who said it will be donated to an Israeli institution.

The kiddush cup has an estimated value of between \$3 to \$5 million. Dubbed the "Cup of Joy," (note the name of the original owner), it went on display at Sotheby's in London from April 25th through the 29th. (*www.jpost.com*, 4-6-25)

Operation Benjamin

Jewish U.S. Army Private Davis Moser has spent more than 100 years buried with a cross on his grave. Now, the fallen soldier is resting in peace with a Star of David on his headstone thanks to Operation Benjamin, an organization devoted to preserving the memories of American–Jewish servicemen and women who made the ultimate sacrifice defending our nation during World Wars I and II. Their mission is "to identify Jewish soldiers at American military cemeteries all over the world who were mistakenly buried under Latin crosses and replace the headstone with a Star of David."

Pvt. Moser was buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, DC in 1920 after dving of influenza while fighting in Germany in 1918. Moser's story is not a unique one. According to Rabbi Shalom Lamm, Operation Benjamin's co-founder and chief historian, hundreds of American soldiers have been buried under an incorrect headstone. "We think the total number of errors that we'll find between World War I and World War II is about 900," Lamm estimated. "The question really is why are they (the headstone mistakes) so rare? If you think about it, let's just take World War II, for example: 5,000 Americans are killed in battle every month. You have these terrible battlefields. And there's no computers... Many Jews didn't want to be identified as Jews," Lamm said. "Either they were afraid of being captured - certainly in World War II. But in World War I, there was plenty of antisemitism...We have a sense, I think, of paying a long overdue debt to these men," Rabbi Lamm said. (www.ins.org, 4-8-25)



A Memorable New Tourist Site

The Nova Music Festival near Kibbutz Re'im, close to the Gaza border (about 60 miles south of Tel Aviv), where some 361 people - mostly young adults - were murdered on October 7th, 2023 by Hamas, has become one of the most visited tourist destinations in Israel. According to the Jewish National Fund (JNF), on average, over 200,000 people per month visited the site over the last 6 months (and I was one of them). If that pace is sustained, the site would put Nova on track to draw more visitors per year than the Dead Sea or Tel Aviv's Anu - Museum of the Jewish People (Anu means "we" or "us"), which highlights the Jewish diaspora. (The Anu Museum has been totally renovated and was previously called the Museum of the Jewish People. Those of us who went to Israel with Rabbi Agler in 2013 spent an afternoon there).

JNF spent over \$1 million on expanding a parking lot, building bathrooms and adding memorial signage for the benefit of visitors. The site features rows and rows – appearing to be endless – of the victim's photos attached to posts in the field where the festival took place. "This place is not just a memory of what was – it is a living testament to the resilience, unity and sorrow of Israeli society as a whole," Ifat Ovadia-Liski, JNF's chairwoman, said in a statement announcing the tourism numbers.

Other sites that were ravaged during the October 7th attack, which left some 1,200 people dead and more than 250 kidnapped and taken hostage, also attract many visitors to ensure that the horrors of the attack are not forgotten and to become an "Eternal Witness." One such place is known as the "Tkuma Car Wall" near *Moshav Tkuma* in the Gaza periphery. Here, a pile of some 1,600 burned cars – many riddled with bullet holes – have been gathered and made into the shape of a huge wall. Behind each vehicle is a story about families – children, parents, adults – who were at the Nova Festival or the surrounding areas of the Gaza envelope.

Visitors to the memorial sites find a personal connection to the location of the single largest massacre of the barbaric attack by Hamas. (*www. jta.org*, 3-25-25)

She Made the List

Noa Argamani, who was kidnapped by Hamas ter-

rorists on October 7th, 2023 and rescued after 9 months in captivity in a daring daylight operation by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), made it into Time Magazine's list of "100 Most Influential People of 2025." Her name was submitted by former U.S. Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff, Jewish husband to former Vice President Kamala Harris. "The video of Noa Argamani on Oct. 7, 2023, is forever seared in my soul," Emhoff said. "She was joyfully dancing with so many others at the Nova music festival when Hamas launched its brutal terrorist attack. As she was kidnapped into Gaza on a motorcycle, her harrowing expression became a symbol of the pain and trauma Jews worldwide, myself included, continue to feel," Emhoff added. He said that her partner, Avinatan Or (at the time of this writing) is still being held captive in Gaza. Emhoff also noted her "extraordinary courage and humanity in speaking out for the plight of the hostages who remain in captivity...Noa's advocacy has illuminated Hamas's extreme brutality, but more importantly, her bravery has embodied Jewish resilience and strength even in the worst moments. She is living proof to the world that, despite everything, 'we will dance again.'"

Argamani posted to X that she is "grateful that this recognition continues to shine a light on the hostage crisis and the horrific attacks of October 7th. It's a powerful reminder of the urgent need to keep speaking out. I'm especially humbled to serve as a voice for the hostages who remain in captivity – those who can't speak for themselves."

There are still 59 hostages held in Gaza, with only 24 of them believed to be alive. Since her rescue, Argamani has publicly advocated for the release of the remaining hostages. Last year, she accompanied Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on his trip to Washington, DC and in February, Argamani addressed the United Nations Security Council. She also met with United States President Donald Trump along with seven other former hostages in the Oval Office in March.

Here is a list of other Jewish individuals who are included in Time Magazine's "100 Most Influential People:"

-Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League

-Dario Amodei, CEO of Anthropic, an Al startup. -Adrien Brody, actor who has earned two Oscars for best actor for his portrayals of Holocaust survivors.

-Bobbi Brown, Cosmetics doyenne who advocated for natural beauty, including her "Jewish" nose.

-Larry Fink, co-founder, chairman and CEO of the investment firm BlackRock.

-Wendy Freedman, Canadian-American astronomer for her discoveries in measuring the universe.

-Rashida Jones, actress, writer, producer and filmmaker. (Jones is the daughter of Jewish actress Peggy Lipton and music mogul Quincy Jones.)

-Alex Karp, co-founder and CEO of Palantir, a data-analytics firm that works with the United States defense and intelligence agencies.

-Josh Koskoff, lawyer who represents families of those who have died due to gun violence in schools.

-Howard Lutnik, Secretary of Commerce for the Trump administration.

-Lorne Michaels, creator of "Saturday Night Live." (He was born Abraham Lipowitz.)

-Scarlett Johansson, actress.

-Miranda July, screenwriter and author. Her father adopted the surname Grossinger, July's original last name, in homage to the Jewish Catskills resort in upstate New York.

-Claudia Sheinbaum, current president of Mexico. She is the first female and first Jewish president of the country.

-Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook and CEO of Meta, its parent company. (*www.timesofisrael.com*, 4-16-25)

In Memoriam

-David Sassoon, royal dress designer who designed over 70 outfits for the late Princess Diana, died recently. He was 92. He was a former co-director of the couture house Belville Sassoon.

Born in London to Iraqi Sephardi Jewish parents, he co-led Belville Sassoon for over 50 years alongside his creative partner Belinda Bellville. He made a name for himself by dressing the British royal family for decades, creating some of Diana's most iconic looks, including the going-away dress after her 1981 wedding to Prince Charles.

According to "Women's Wear Daily" magazine, Sassoon's designs contributed to what made Princess Diana into a "global style icon." His designs were influenced in part by his Jewish heritage. "Jewish traditions played an enormous part in the clothes I designed," Sassoon said in 2023 after his designs were featured in an exhibition at the Museum of London Docklands celebrating Jewish Londoners responsible for shaping global style.

Sassoon stopped designing in the 2000s and retired in 2012. (www.forward.com, 4-11-25)

-Rose Girone, who we reported on in the March/April issue of Chai-Lights, who celebrated her 113th birthday on January 13th and was believed to be the oldest living Holocaust survivor, died on February 24th. (*www.thejc.com*, 2-25-25)

Did You Know...

-According to a recent study by the Pew Research Center, among Americans raised Jewish, 17 percent now describe themselves as religiously unaffiliated. Two percent now identify as Christian while one percent now identify as Muslim. An additional four percent identified with another religion or did not reply to the survey. The study surveyed "religious switching" around the world. It found that significant percentages of people raised in religious homes in the United States and internationally are now religiously unaffiliated, with smaller numbers having converted to another religion. The survey also found that 14 percent of Jewish adults in the U.S. converted into the religion. Of that, half were raised as Christians while most others grew up religiously unaffiliated.

In contrast to these U.S. findings, the survey data from Israel found that 100 percent of those raised Jewish remained Jewish as adults, with only one percent of the adult Jewish population having converted. All Israelis raised Muslim still identify as Muslim as adults.

In a separate survey, Pew found that more than one in five Israeli Jews had switched between Jewish religious sectors, either going from secular to religious Zionist, for example, or traditional to hareidi Orthodox. (*www.jta.org*, 3-26-25) \$





KJCC SISTERHOOD BOOK CLUB



May 29, 2025 *Sipsworth* by Simon Van Booy June 26, 2025 *The Bird Hotel* by Joyce Maynard



A story about an elderly widow who returns to her childhood village in England after living abroad for decades. She begins an unlikely relationship with a mouse! and finds a new reason to live and a renewed sense of purpose.



Irene is in her twenties when she flees San Francisco and eventually arrives empty-handed in the Central American village of La Esperanza. There, she checks into La Llorona, a decaying lakefront hotel at the base of a volcano. And there she stays, for the next several decades, restoring and running the hotel.

We will always Zoom and usually meet in person as well. An invitation to join the Zoom session will be sent prior to each meeting. QUESTIONS/INPUT: CONTACT LINDA @ 305-587-7429 LINDAP4000@YMAIL.COM VINNESDAY OF EACA LIVE AT 12:15 ZOOM AT 12:30

Let us know if you would like to host a meeting and/or review a book.

Winds of freedom blow, Footprints vanish in hot sands. Journey unchained!

his would have been the 20th anniversary of our Women's Seder, but for a variety of reasons, we have collectively decided to rest, refocus, and renew our energies for next vear. However, in the continuing tradition of Tikun Olam, we have sent out a letter to all members requesting generous donations for our four charities: the Talia Agler Girls Shelter, located in Kenya, and supporting women and children; the Wesley House, in the Florida Keys, promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and local families; the Women's Amutot Initiative in Israel, in partnership with the Greater Miami lewish Federation: and the KICC Tikkun Olam, supporting the needs in our shul. As Jews, one our aims is to repair the world one life at a time in whatever way we are able. It is not too late to donate, and we thank you in

advance for your generous contributions to our charities. Donations can be made online at KeysJewishCenter.com, scan the Venmo code here, or mail a check to KJCC Sisterhood, PO Box 116, Tavernier, FL 33070



The KJCC Family Seder Dinner happened on the first night of Passover, the seder itself was beautifully led by Joe Shabathai & Ken Atlas, with a round robin participation from everyone. The catered food was delicious and of course, the service was excellent with Mary & Stella in the kitchen. Kathy Shabathai's chopped liver kept us from gnawing on Gloria's beautiful calligraphy place cards before dinner and Barbara Knowles spent a fortune providing everyone with hard boiled eggs. Donna Bolton's fresh grated horseradish cleared our sinuses and super Jane's chocolate matzo bark made our taste buds dance! I'm going to dream about Luz Levine's chocolate cake with raspberries until next year. To All who attended and to all who labored to make this event a memorable one. thank you and many blessings!!!

The Purim & Pastrami Deli Night with a raffle for our charities was highly successful! We honored tradition by reading Megillat Esther, the story of

SISTERHOOD REPORT Loni Padden



Purim, then we celebrated with a festive pot luck meal and pranced around in our costumes. We extend our gratitude to Ken Atlas for sponsoring the deli night and providing lots of delicious pastrami. The raffle for the Tikkun Olam fund was successful, with contributions of art, jewelry, and time from our members. Thank you everyone!

Up and coming...help us celebrate the giving of the Torah at the KJCC on Friday May 30 at 6pm. Our 49 days of counting the Omer are over and we are having a dairy Shavuot potluck dinner followed by Shabbat and Yizkor service at 7:30pm Please contact me at 305-772-2584 or email <u>dr.padden@</u> <u>yahoo.com</u> to coordinate your dairy or veggie dish.

The Sisterhood Book Club led by Linda Pollack meets every 3rd Thursday of the month usually live and on zoom to nosh & discuss the latest book. May's meeting will be hosted by Linda Pollack at her home. Any new members who wish to be added to the book club announcement mailing list, please contact Linda at <u>Lindap4000@ymail.</u> *com.*

We always need Oneg sponsorships during the quieter summer months, if you would like to honor a loved one or share a celebration, please contact Joyce at *joycepeckman@gmail.com* or 732-447-5225. Oneg sponsorship is \$72 and a dinner sponsorship is \$320. A big thank you to all our many sponsors, whose generous donations help pay for the challah, wine, coffee, soda, cake & paper goods.

We invite all current and new ladies to join us for our next meeting at the KJCC on Sunday, May 4th at 10:00 AM. This will be a special planning meeting to formalize dates on the calendar for the upcoming season. Ladies, mark your calendar and bring your best ideas as always. All of you have so much to contribute, and I am excited to hear your thoughts. We will meet in person with refreshments and via Zoom to plot and plan our upcoming activities! \diamond

KEYS JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER Congregation Ohr HaYam



Join the KJCC Team in the I.Care Trash Derby



TRASH DERBY

We will be taking boats out to El Radabob Key -We will meet at the Levine's house, 506 Sound Drive, MM 103 Oceanside, Saturday, May 3, 2025, 9 am - 12 noon. Participants should wear water shoes and bring drinks.

Teens can earn Community Service hours for school. RSVP to Randy Klein-Gross at

Razzklein@gmail.com or 310-702-7276 to let her know you are coming.

Festival & Award Ceremony

On Sunday, May 4th, there will be a FREE family-friendly festival at Founders Park in Islamorada, FL, from 12 pm - 6 pm. The festival is open to the public and will include an award ceremony, raffles, silent auction, games and activities, food, music and vendors.

For further information: https://www.icaretrashderby.com/participantinfo

The Last Passover by Judy Starr

There was something in the air the night before, an awareness of danger blowing across their world. Two of her older sisters were up late talking with their father about what they would do if they ever heard the ominous dawn knock at the door; my mother, much younger, couldn't help but overhear them. Whatever they had hoped to do, whatever they may have planned, came to nothing after that knock actually came at the dawn of April 16, 1944. Passover had just ended, and there was little if any food left in the house for them to share on the journey they were about to embark upon to a place that would have made Egypt during the years of our enslavement look like a resort.

My mother and her family lived in the town of Yasina, not far from the peaks of the Carpathian mountains, at the eastern end of what was then Czechoslovakia. Today their homestead lies in the western end of Ukraine; where their home stood there is now a supermarket. Or so I have been told. Perhaps one day I'll visit, see if I can find people who still remember hearing the family name, though, given the world situation, maybe not so soon. Other than what's in the archives, there seems to be little there left from which to learn.

Passover: the holiday of freedom. A second liberation for those who survived the Shoah. My parents married and ventured to America, settling in a good neighborhood in the Bronx, where the uncle who sponsored my parents was able to get them an apartment through the good graces of a member of his shul. In that, we were very lucky. The school calendar gave all the Jewish two days off to celebrate the holiday. Family would get together – one seder in my parents' house, the other in the home of relatives. And the food: different and special. Always matzoh ball soup, and of course the seder plate and the food items on it that symbolized our years of oppression and our time of liberation.

It was the story, of course, and the need to tell it over and over every year that made the Seder as important as it was. The Seder evening reaffirmed our family relationship and our identity, but the specific purpose was to re-tell the story that should not be forgotten. Once upon a time we were slaves, and this is the story of the freedom we obtained and how it came about. There was a time when I would ask the four questions, and then that time passed to our children, and now it's up to them to pass it on to the next generation. But the questions deserve an answer, and the story deserves to be remembered. Passover holds meaning to all Jews, and speaks to many others who understand the meaning of freedom and what it takes to gain and preserve it.

Too many in my family - too many in too many families - died in the Nazi slave camps or on the relentless labor marches. I think that those who survived the war wanted to honor their freedom, and that those in my family were grateful that they were here, in the United States of America, free of the time and place of the long pogrom, now in a land much freer than so many others. I can only imagine the memories of their lost loved ones that were engraved into their memories, including those of the Passover seders that they had once shared together.

Once, in her later years, my mother confided to me that she hated the holiday. Of course, this surprised me, because family was always important to her and Passover was always a time for family to get together. I think in part it was the preparations, although they were much lighter when she lived alone, may have been more burdensome than she would let on. But I think, more so, it was the fact that the world where she had grown up was to vanish with that last Passover, along with so many whom she silently carried in her heart.

I wonder what she'd say if I could ask her.



Lashon Shelí

By Libby Peckman

Lashon Sheli

עם ישראל חי.

שׁלַוֹם.

It was the first word I learned. Back in elementary school, where I sat cross-legged on a scratchy carpet, tracing ¬-× with stubby fingers, chanting vowels like spells, like magic, like I was learning the language of my ancestors,

לשָּׂון הקַדשֵׁ–lashon hakodesh–

the holy tongue.

They told me this was my inheritance. A language to cherish, to hold close, to pass down like a birthright. But they never told me that one day I would say these words not with joy, but with grief.

Now, אברית sits heavy in my mouth. Now, I whisper words over and over, like if I say them enough, I can make them real.

שׁלִוֹם, שֹׁלָוֹם, שֹׁלָוֹם.

Shalom, shalom, shalom. Peace, peace, peace. But the word feels like smoke, slipping through my fingers, vanishing before it can take shape. Am Yisrael chai. I say it like a prayer, but lately, I wonder if it's a plea.

Because this land—

eretz sheli—ארֶץ שֹׁלָי

is cracked from the weight of history, from the weight of every name etched into stone too soon.

Because I see the headlines, I see the marches, I see voices rising for justice, for freedom, for humanity except when it's my people.

I was taught

צדֶק תרִדְרֹ –tzedek, tzedek tirdof

justice, justice you shall pursue but where is the justice when my people are slaughtered and the world turns away?

So I say the words again. The ones I learned as a child, the ones that feel like home even when home feels uncertain.

אנֵי אוֹהבֶתָּ אתֶ האָרָץ הוַאֹת.

I do not ask for war.

לא נקמה—lo nekama

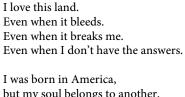
I do not ask for revenge. I do not ask for anything but this—

תנְוּ לעְמַיָּ לחִיְוֹת.

T'nu l'ami l'hiyot. Let my people live. Let us grieve without guilt. Let us exist without question.

And maybe one day, the words I repeat won't be pleas, won't be prayers, won't be reminders that I still have to fight.

Maybe one day, שׁלִוֹם will be more than just a word.



Ani ohevet et ha'aretz hazot.

but my soul belongs to another. They call me Libby, but in אעברית, I am --ליבי, J am --ליבי my heart. A name that beats with the rhythm of a land I ache for.

eretz sheli—ארץ שלי

my land. A land of prayers and protests, of history and heartbreak, of survival, survival, survival.







FRIDAY, MAY 30, 2025, 6:00 P.M.

SHAVUOT



Counting of the Omer is ending. We celebrate the giving of the Torah. JOIN US at the KJCC for a

Shavuot Dairy Potluck Dinner Celebration.



Contact Loni Padden at dr.padden@yahoo.com or 305-772-2584 to RSVP and coordinate your veggie or dairy dish.

Shabbat and Yizkor Service will follow at 7:30 P.M. Sponsored by Joyce Peckman and Gloria Avner

No charge for dinner

PHOTO GALLERY



Nadine's daughter Sara Thompson graduates training and becomes a certified National Park Service Ranger.

So many ways to say Happy Birthday Susan Gordon and Linda Pollack. The birthday girls, Susan and Linda, with challah maker Jane Friedman and newly returned recoveree Donna Bolton.







Happy Birthday Susan.

Preparing for Passover. Working hard after Hebrew class, Rivka shows a freshly cleaned refrigerator, assisted in the job by Joyce. Thank you, ladies!





Jan Price gave a terrific classical music concert (and pot luck dinner at her lovely home in April and weren't we delighted!! Thank you so much Jan, for sharing your artistry with us.





We were enthralled.



Jules did some sweet playing of his own to round out the night.





Some of us created second Seders with multiple family generations.



It may look like we only eat sweets but there is a salad there and a fabulous baby bok choy curry totally loaded with produce from our own organic garden (thanks again to Harry and Jane Friedman, Rivka Rizzo Trent and Jan Price). Medina Roy led a beautiful Yom Ha Shoah service (with Gloria Avner) after her return from Israel.







-2025 Joel S. Cohen Fellowshíp Award-



Presented to STEVE & JAN HARTZ

For years of dedication to KJCC, with creativity, intelligence, leadership, and willingness to take on difficult tasks, all with grace and generosity in the face of life's trials, We give our highest honor with appreciation and love.

> PESACH April, 2025 Nisan, 5785

For 36 years, KJCC has recognized how much its existence depends on the hardworking devotion of volunteers over a period of years by presenting an annual award to deserving recipients. The award is KJCC's highest honor. It was named for our Synagogue's founder and is voted on by past recipients only. We congratulate Steve and Jan and say thank you again for your many contributions. Here is a list of the company you join.

Joel S. Cohen Fellowship Award Recipients:

Steve &Jan Hartz 2025 · Ken Atlas 2024 · Donna Bolton 2023 · Erica Lieberman Garrett 2022 · Jane Friedman 2020 Richard Agler 2019 · Medina Roy 2018 · Jules & Nettie Seder 2017 · Joyce Peckman 2016 · Bernard P. Ginsberg 2015 Yardena Kamely 2014 · Stuart & Lauren Sax 2013 · Sam Vinicur 2012 · Gloria Avner 2011 · Rene Rose 2010 Steve & Carol Steinbock 2009 · Marc Bloom 2008 · Alan Beth 2007 · Susan Gordon 2006 · Muriel & George Swartz 2005 Joan Boruszak 2004 · James M. Boruszak 2003 · Linda & Joel Pollack 2002 · Suzanne & Jerry Tabasky 2001 Barbara & Marvin Galanty 2000 · Barbara & Bob Epstein 1999 · Bob Faeges 1998 · Steve Smith 1997 Beatrice E. Graham 1996 · Marty Graham 1995 · Myron Rubin 1994 · Pauline & Al Roller 1993 Sara Cohen 1992 · Irv Stein 1991 · Cathy Kaplan 1990 · Joel S. Cohen 1989



MIRIAM'S WELL

by Lucinda Kurtz

We trudge through barren desert parched and thirsty covered with dust and scorching sand stay close to Miriam as she walks with steady step leading us who falter yet follow wait for revelation of rippling waters that spring forth as song miraculously each evening feminine, flowing, fluid.

We taste the sweet, cool liquid gift from sacred marriage of Shechinah and Holy One Above tears of tribulation travel to clouds rain down life-giving sustenance a cycle of holy water that heals and helps us walk forward bestowing strength and courage.

On this new moon of lyar, we still vibrate with thundering hooves of horses pursuing us across the plains. Only Miriam's Well, rolling along with our tribe, calms our fear calls us back from despair connects us to Source.



From the Committee for Israel The Anti-Hamas Protests in Gaza



by Seth Mandel

This article appeared in the March 28 online edition of Commentary magazine and is reprinted with their kind permission. We hope that you find it of interest. <u>www.</u> <u>commentary.org/seth-mandel/the-antihamas-protests-in-gaza</u>

Palestinians in Gaza are learning the hard way that they have no greater enemy on the world stage than Western anti-Zionists.

Well, maybe Qatar. Let's call it a tie. Yesterday, a 32-year-old Palestinian named Ibrahim went food shopping in downtown Beit Lahiya, in northern Gaza and happened upon a remarkable scene: Hundreds of Gazans were marching in protest against Hamas. So he joined them. The protesters' message to Hamas was simple: Get out of Gaza and don't come back.

The *New York Times* reports with an adorable earnestness: "Gazans, at least publicly, tend to blame Israel for much of the death, destruction and hunger the war has brought. But at least some hold Hamas responsible, as well, for starting the conflict by leading the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, abducting 251 people to Gaza and continuing to fight rather than giving up its power in exchange for a cease-fire."

Hard as it may be to believe, it's true: Gazans have not have been fully honest in public. There's a reason for that. To take just one example, Amin Abed was nearly beaten to death with hammers for criticizing Hamas. Abed was saved by bystanders, so presumably the intention was to finish him off. During the cease-fire, Hamas members bragged about executing "collaborators" and filmed themselves shooting civilians.

Which is what makes yesterday's protests all the more significant. To protest Hamas in public is to take one's life in one's hands. That is especially true because the protests were bound to be filmed, in order to get the message out to the world. The reason the world needs to hear that message is that Westerners have been Hamas's willing propaganda tools. The protests on campus are not "pro-Palestinian," they are pro-Hamas—and the people of Gaza are Hamas's victims. Which means the anti-Zionist protest movement around the world objectively sides against the victims and civilians in Gaza.

It is true what they say: Western leftists are willing to fight Israel down to the last Palestinian. Comfortable activists in Morningside Heights call for "resistance" because they do not assign any value to the lives of lews or Arabs. Israelis or Palestinians. They also fool themselves into believing things that Gazans cannot afford to-that, for example, Israel wantonly destroys residential buildings because it enjoys doing so. In reality, Gazans know Hamas builds entrances to terror tunnels in civilian homes because it has been done *in their homes*. It is not the IDF that hides bombs in stuffed animals in Palestinian children's bedrooms along with a camera to know when to detonate that terror teddy. Gazans know their homes would still be standing if it weren't for Hamas; it's really that simple.

Which is why Gazans are saying the exact same thing the Israeli government and the U.S. government have been saying. In the words of one man from Beit Lahiya: "Without Hamas going away, the next war will only be a matter of time."

Left unsaid is the key point: Even Gazans know that it isn't Israel's desire for war but Hamas's. If Palestinians in Gaza don't fall for the moral equivalence between Hamas and Israel, what excuse do Americans have?

The answer is none. No one, anywhere, has any excuse to even attempt to equate Hamas and Israel. And the instant that a Palestinian in Gaza has the slightest opening to be honest, they say so plainly. Israel's existence does not necessitate war; Hamas's does.

There were also complaints about al Jazeera, the Qatari propaganda station, at the protests. Qatar sponsors Hamas and dresses terrorists in press vests and makes it nearly impossible to distinguish Hamas from anyone else. Gazans don't appreciate that, and they don't appreciate the lies spread around the world from al Jazeera's platform. Those lies, after all, condemn everyday Gazans to death. (Perhaps Steve Witkoff can talk to his friends the Qataris, whom he has lavished with praise for their supposed desire for peace.)

Anyone who claims to bemoan the tragic condition of Gaza yet supports Hamas's continue existence is contributing to, and compounding, Palestinian misery in the Gaza Strip. This is a rare point of agreement between Israelis and Palestinians. The connection between Hamas and the devastating war in Gaza is the same as the connection between gravity and falling objects. The difference is that in the case of Hamas, the problem can be solved. ♦

Jewish Portugal

By Joyce Peckman

n March, Yardena Kamely and I joined the Melton's School of Adult Jewish Learning's inaugural women's retreat to Portugal – a country where ancient stones, medieval streets, and quiet corners still hold the echoes of Jewish life lived in secret. But we did not go only to see. We went to remember, to reclaim, and to listen for the voices of women whose stories have long been buried beneath fear, silence, and survival.

At the heart of our journey were the crypto-Jewish women of the Inquisition era, women who kept the embers of Judaism alive in secret. Stripped of the right to live openly as Jews, they became guardians of ritual in the most courageous and creative ways. Behind locked doors and shuttered windows, they honored Shabbat, whispered blessings, lit candles in cellars, baked matzah with dirt to disguise it, and found ways to observe Pesach, kashrut, and even lifecycle rituals while under constant threat. For centuries, to be a Jew in Portugal meant to live with the ever-present fear of exposure, and still, they carried memory not as a choice, but as a sacred duty.

Each day of our retreat, as we gathered in sacred circle, we delved into these stories, not



Our tour guide Sandra at Explorers monument, showing where children were exiled

only as history, but as spiritual inheritance. Through texts, discussion, music, and reflection, we met the women who lit



the way in darkness.

Their devotion was not loud; it was quiet, deliberate, fierce. Their rituals were not grand; they were humble acts of resistance. And yet, their choices shaped the survival of Judaism in places where it was meant to disappear.

With Pesach just behind us, their stories resonate even more deeply. The Exodus narrative tells of our people's journey from slavery to freedom, from silence to song. But what happens when the sea does not part? What does redemption look like when it comes slowly, over generations, in secret, in fragments? For the women whose whispers we heard through stone streets and ancient doorways, redemption was not immediate, it was hidden, guiet, and fiercely preserved. They didn't just remember, resist, and believe, they kept Judaism alive. Against all odds, in the darkest of times, the women of Portugal held fast to our faith, safeguarded our rituals, and made it possible for us to walk freely in the light. Their legacy is not only one of survival, but also one of triumph. And we carry it forward with reverence and gratitude. (From Andrea Gardenhour, Melton School)

We began our journey in Lisbon, a beautiful city largely rebuilt in grand European style after the

Belem tower - Sailors' first and last view of Lisbon

1755 earthquake. Our hotel was around the corner from where the Office of the Inquisition had tortured and condemned so many to death by fire. Just across the square is the Cathedral where the lews were forcibly baptized in 1496, and where in 1506 a chance remark by a "New Christian" in the church led to a city-wide massacre where 500-4.000 "New Christians" lost their lives. Sandra, our tour guide, emotion-



Belem Explorers monument

ally pointed out that ironically, both places were destroyed by fire during the earthquake. The National Theatre stands on the grounds where Offices of the Inquisition burned to the ground. The Cathedral still stands, its marble pillars singed and broken from the flames. The Portuguese Inquisition, which began in 1536, was not formally terminated until 1821. We walked down towards the shore to Alfama, the old city district with its twisting narrow streets that had been home to a thriving Jewish community before 1496

and now features restaurants and tourist shops.

Sinagoga Shaarei Tikva was begun in 1902 to serve Sephardic traders from Morocco and Gibraltar. The beautiful main entrance faced an internal yard, since Portuguese law did not allow non-Catholic places of worship to face the roads. The walls of the small courtyard are covered with stone plaques, one of which honored the Portuguese diplomat Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who during WW2 defied the orders of Salazar's regime by issuing thousands of visas to those fleeing the Nazis. Now he is recognized as a national hero (I even saw his name on the tail of a plane at the Lisbon airport.) but his heroism cost him his job and livelihood, plunging his family into a life of poverty.

The next day we continued in the rain to the Monument to the Discoveries. On one side are depicted Henry the Navigator, Vasco DaGama and other famous explorers. On the other side are those who made their voyages possible, including Abraham Zacuto, whose navigation tables and astrolabe were used by Vasco Da Gama. Jews were involved in all aspects of the explorations, from financing sailing fleets to discoveries in mathematics, medicine, astronomy and cartography. In front of the Monument is a stone map, where our

tour guide pointed out the island of Sao Tome, off the coast of Africa. In 1493, King Jao ordered 700 Jewish children to be taken from their parents to settle this newly discovered island. None survived.

Traveling north, we went to the lovely little town of Tomar, where in 1442 a small community of Jewish craftsmen, merchants and physicians was given permission to build a place of worship in the Jewish quarter. It was closed in 1496 after



Abraham Zakuto Synagogue in Tomar

Shaare Tikva Lisbon



a prison, then a barn, a grocery warehouse and storage room. In 1923 Samuel Schwarz, a Polish-Portuguese mining engineer and historian,

came upon the storage room that had been found earlier by archeologists, and immediately noticed its unusual architecture, with four ornate pillars connected to twelve arches, which he realized represented the matriarchs and tribes of Israel. Schwarz purchased and restored the tiny Abraham Zacuto Synagogue, then donated it to the government to be used as a museum. With a small ark, it is used for prayer only on special occasions.

Our group sat on the simple benches and learned about the list of "lewish practices" that Old Christians were told to look out for among their "New Christian" neighbors. Any of the following could be reported to the Inquisitors: Cleaning and bringing out fresh linen or clean



the forced conversion and/ or expulsion of all Jews, decreed by King Manuel 1. It became

clothes on Friday afternoon; lighting new candles on Friday before sunset; fasting on the Day of Atonement; abstaining from work on Saturday; reciting certain prayers when washing hands or before eating; praying facing east while standing instead of sitting; abstaining from eating certain animals or fish: when kneading bread-throwing a small piece of dough into the fire; celebrating the eighth day following the birth of a boy; in church, avoiding looking at the cross or not fully kneeling. Similar lists

were periodically published and distributed over the three hundred years that the Inquisition was in effect. We considered how these people risked their lives for actions that we as 21st Century Jews may not even think about.

Porto, or Oporto, is a lovely mid-sized northern city located on the Douro River where it meets the Atlantic. Our first stop was at the home of Cantor Linda Kates, a recent expat from California who had been a dear friend of Cantor Debbie



Yardena in the Lisbon Synagogue

Friedman. Linda and her husband managed to squeeze all 32 of us (including guides) plus a few of their friends into their home, where they fed us wine and cheese and told us about HaMakom, the progressive Jewish community that they are growing in Porto. They began meeting one Friday a month in people's homes, now in church basements or community centers. A small core group has managed to get HaMakom incorporated and recognized by the state, so they are about to open a bank account

and are looking for a permanent location. They recently obtained a Czech Torah, which is kept in the cantor's home. Most of their members are English speaking, but a number of Portuquese have visited them, wanting to learn about their possible Jewish heritage. Although Porto is home to the magnificent Kadoorie Synogogue (which we visited the next day). these conversos felt more comfortable in a relaxed, progressive setting.



The next day, Friday, we visit-

Porto - Khadoorie synagogue

ed the large, gorgeous art deco style Kadoorie Synagogue. It was funded by wealthy Sephardim from around the world in the hopes of attracting the hidden conversos of Portugal, but the "New Christians" who have buried lewish roots have been Catholic for many generations, and most are uncomfortable with orthodox lewish laws and



Havdalah at final banguet in Porto

welcomed Jews fleeing Europe, and is well used by over 500 members from over 30 countries.

Friday night dinner was a catered kosher buffet in our hotel, where we were joined by Cantor Linda and two friends. On Saturday morning the three of them arrived at our meeting room bringing the Torah and a guitar, and we had a lovely Shabbat service complete with three group aliyas. Some of women in our group had ancestors who had fled the Iberian Peninsula hundreds of years ago, and now they were back, lifting their voices in melodious Hebrew prayer. The emotion was palpable. Our late afternoon retreat session helped all of us to dig deep into ourselves and our roots.

Did you know that according to the Talmud, Havdalah can be said as late as Monday? At our Sunday night farewell banguet in a restaurant overlooking the Douro River Bridge, we were again joined by Cantor Linda Kates and her friends. The Havdallah service was very meaningful, as we were indeed saying farewell to a special time. ♦

Línda Perloff 305-394-2616 Linda@LPerloff.com





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