

FROM RABBI ZEMEL

FINDING OUR VOICE IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

DEAR FRIENDS,

Let us pause for a moment as summer is upon us to look back over our Micah year and revel in the special time it has been.

The High Holy Days were barely over when we held a stimulating discussion on “The Jewish Voice in the Public Square.” Rabbi Larry Hoffman, anthropologist Riv-Ellen Prell,

and two Micah members—Richard Harwood, a community innovator, and Valerie Strauss, a journalist—showed us that the Jewish voice has to be more than a strong moral force. Our collective voice must be strong and articulate. It must embrace diversity and respectful dissent. And it must be a model for compromise in the name of the public good.

It is the lesson that Brown University scholar Michael Satlow underscores when he writes that in encountering ancient Jewish texts, one comes to realize that “the Rabbis offer the possibility of seeing truth in a proposition and its opposite, with everything in between...”

Our year included a bevy of top-notch guest speakers, including Rabbis David Saperstein, Eric Yoffie, and Esther Lederman; the ACLU’s Daniel Mach; authors Leon Kass and Jonathan Weisman, and columnist Bari Weiss. After any one of these names we could say, “Dayenu!”

Resettling a family from Afghanistan through our Sukkat Shalom initiative was an example of Temple Micah at its very best. The generosity shown by the entire congregation, combined with the devotion of a large group of Sukkat Shalom leaders, enabled our community to help

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A Congregation of Doers Finds Helping Benefits Themselves As Well

BY FRAN DAUTH

NICK BROOKE, a chef at the Wolfgang Puck restaurant at the Newseum, does some free catering at Temple Micah.

Leesa Klepper, a busy mother of two young girls, spends hours with the Afghan family Temple Micah is helping adjust to life in America.

Stuart Brown, an investment portfolio manager, plays the flute in the pickup band at Friday night services once a month.

Lynn Rothberg, a retired teacher, volunteers for jobs few enjoy: scrubbing pots after countless Temple Micah events.

Those four and hundreds of other volunteers are the energy behind much of what makes Temple Micah hum. They do it, they say, because it is a way to express what it means to be Jewish, because it is a way to meet other Temple



Cecelia Weinheimer and Kate Kiggins

Micah members or to be a part of a meaningful community.

Or as Martha Adler, a volunteer extraordinaire, puts it: “We are a

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Micah Gave Landau Time to ‘Discover’ Rabbi She Is Today

BY FRAN DAUTH

FROM A RAUCOUS chorus of “Susan, looks like we’re losin’ ” to the sublime rendition of Yihyu L’ratzon to the combined voices of the youth and adult choir, music played a big part in Temple Micah’s Rabbi Susan Landau Appreciation Service on May 4th.

Music, the date of May 4th, and even the reason Rabbi Landau, who has served as assistant rabbi at Micah for the past three years, is leaving, were all

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- 7** Meet Temple Micah bookkeeper, Rhiannon Walsh, who seeks balance in life as much as in the books.

"Every person shall sit under
his grapevine or fig tree with
no one to make him afraid."
MICAH, CHAPTER 4, VERSE 4

Vine

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TEMPLE MICAH EXEMPLIFIES THE STRENGTH OF 'WE'

BY MARCIA FINE SILCOX

Do you do the crossword puzzle? At the stroke of 10 p.m. the New York Times puzzle appears on my phone app. This week there was a fun puzzle whose answer at 55 Across was No Man Is An



Island. The supporting solutions were all men's names containing an island (Bret Easton Ellis, or Cuba Gooding Jr.) It was a fun solve, and easy since it was a Tuesday puzzle. And despite the maybe trite phrase, it was a reminder of how important WE are.

Once, a friend mentioned to me that she hated when an organization she belonged to continually asked for donations to this or that initiative. Sure that can be annoying, but I told her that I actually liked those requests. Because I thought that my small donation was being replicated by other like-minded people many other times, and hopefully making a difference. In addition, it validates our common concerns and unites us.

Temple Micah epitomizes how strong WE can be. When stories about immigration bans featuring caustic rhetoric about foreigners were on the front page, Micah members found a way to respond, by creating Sukkat Shalom. At the congregational level, not directed by the board or the pulpit, they formed committees, secured authorizations, researched options and raised the funds to bring a family from Afghanistan to the U.S. There were opportunities for engagement at all levels, and for all skills. Beyond helping the family settle in our community, the Sukkat Shalom effort created new Micah communities, and continues to show what a powerful small group (WE) can be.

We also have ongoing efforts by groups whose tasks are performed so smoothly that you may not even know they are going on. For example, it's April, but there have already been meetings by the dedicated congregants who make sure that we seamlessly move our worship during the

High Holy days. There are the congregant-managed Lunch & Learn programs, with nationally known speakers and a beloved menu of soups. There are Micah Cooks who cater events and donate the proceeds back to the Temple. No one person could manage any of these programs. They are lay-conceived and lay-led testaments to the power of WE.

The Micah board also exemplifies how a small group of people working toward a common goal can have a big impact. Together as a whole, and in committees, we ponder the role of a synagogue in contemporary life, and the role of Micah in our lives. It takes all of us to keep the building running, find the dollars needed, and satisfy the needs of over 600 families. We use our professional skills, but also bring together our opinions, energy, passion, and desire to create something bigger than the small fragments suggest we could construct.

If you went to the March to End Gun Violence, you felt the power of WE. If you look at the sign on Micah's doorstep, "WE STAND AGAINST HATE" you see the power of WE. If you gather to make sandwiches for hungry neighbors at Mazon Micah on Sundays, you taste the kindness of WE. When you join the walk for Micah House, or donate some of those 15,000 pieces of underwear, you are part of the WE that supports and respects those with greater needs than our own.

Sometimes I need help on the crossword. My son Cal also uses my app from the West Coast. He knows the rap artists (Dr Dre and Nas are common). Husband Clark gets the sports questions (team that plays at AT&T Park). Daughter Sasha can be counted on for the art answers (Erte, Arp, Dali). That's how WE do it.

I hope you'll take some time to reach into the many opportunities that Micah provides, to be part of our WE, and to gain some clues into solving this life's puzzles.

(Editor's Note to puzzle solvers: A long ago New York Times Sunday puzzle featured puns involving Mideast geography. Clue: Donne's mistake? Answer: Oman is an island.)

The Feast

THE HAMENTASCHEN AND ICE CREAM EDITION

BY ALEXANDRA WISOTSKY

When I first spoke to Rabbi Landau, I assumed that she would give me all of her favorite ice cream recipes. Instead, she surprised me with her family's favorite cookie recipe.

Rabbi Landau's great-grandfather, Samuel Beckman, owned a bakery in Philadelphia. Her great-grandmother, known as Grandma Beck, who also worked at the bakery, created a cookie recipe for a variation of Philadelphia Curbstone Cookies, a basic dough that can be used for many different things. For Rabbi Landau's family, it is the base for hamentaschen.

The cookies "taste like childhood to me," Rabbi Landau said. These cookies are so good, that Rabbi Landau's grandfather, who grew up helping in the bakery and who despite having been on low-carb diet, made an annual exception for these hamentaschen.

The dough "is easy to make and hard to mess up, and it holds its shape. If you pinch the corners, especially with the expert touch of my mother, it will never come undone," she said. I asked if she had the expert touch. "Most of the time," she admitted.

Whether or not she bakes

them herself, she is assured of some of these hamentaschen every year, since her mother will send some to her, wrapped in bubble wrap. Her favorite classic hamentaschen fillings are poppy seed and apricot, but she has also become partial to some of the more creative fillings used by Next Dor this year, particularly the salted caramel and the lemon curd with raspberry.

Lest you think we did not talk about her widely admired ice cream, she did tell me that even as a toddler, she would get out of bed and eat ice cream with her babysitters. She is always surprised when people have only one kind of ice cream in their freezer, and started making her own when she received a cookbook from her favorite ice cream shop in Brooklyn, Ample Hills Creamery. (Try the Sweet Cream.)

When Rabbi Zemel and Jodi Enda interviewed her three years ago, they asked to meet over ice cream – in February. That sealed the deal.



Rebecca and Samuel Beckman

In the interest of helping you out, dear readers, I test all of the recipes sent to me before completing my article (it's a tough job, but someone has to do it). These cookies taste exactly like a cookie should taste, not too sweet with a hit of orange and vanilla. They would also make great sandwich cookies, with some jam in the middle.

GRANDMA BECK COOKIES

- ¾ cup oil
- 3 eggs
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- Flour (approximately 4 to 5 cups plus some to roll out the dough)

Makes 4 to 5 dozen cookies

Time to prepare: 20 minutes

Time to bake: 20 minutes

Step 1: Preheat oven to 350F. Mix together all ingredients except for flour. Add 4–5 cups of flour until the dough is no longer sticky. If you add too much, the dough starts to flake.

Step 2: Roll out dough on a floured surface to ¼ inch. Cut into circles with a glass or round cookie cutter to desired size. Place cookies on an ungreased baking sheet.

Step 3: Bake until golden, approximately 20 minutes. When done they should hold together when picked up and be golden on the bottom. Cool completely on a wire rack.

If making hamentaschen, roll out the dough a little thinner and cut into circles with a glass or cookie cutter. Add a small dollop of your favorite filling. Fold the sides to make a triangle and be sure to pinch the corners so they stay closed during baking. Bake as in Step 3.



Members of Temple Micah Next Dor make hamentaschen, using Grandma Beck's cookie dough as the base.

UPCOMING SPEAKER EVENTS

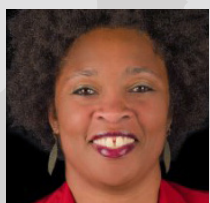
Temple Micah features two monthly lecture series—on Sundays and Wednesdays. For more details, go to templemicah.org.

Our Sunday Speaker Series is on its regular summer hiatus.

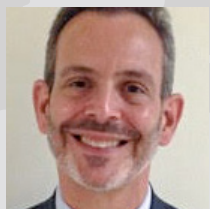
LUNCH & LEARN

Wednesdays from noon to 2 pm

A monthly program sponsored by the Aging Together Team. Reserve online at templemicah.org. Contact Cecelia Weinheimer via email, lunchandlearn@templemicah.org, or call the temple office, 202-342-9175, for details.



June 13 – Yolanda Savage-Narva on “Operation Understanding DC.” Savage-Narva is executive director of OUDC. She will discuss the organization’s mission to build a generation of African American and Jewish youth leaders who promote respect, understanding, and cooperation while working to eradicate racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination. Savage-Narva has years of social justice experience leading national and local public health programs focusing on health equity, health disparities, and social determinants of health.



July 11 – Douglas Grob on “Understanding China.” Grob is a senior vice president at Albright Stonebridge Group, a global business strategy firm, where he advises clients on strategy and operational initiatives in China and other parts of the Asia-Pacific region. Prior to joining ASG, he has served as a senior advisor on East Asia in the State Department, staff director of the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, and on the faculty of University of Maryland.

Upcoming: Tom Green on Aug. 8, Judge Richard Ringell on Sept. 12, and Stan Shulman on Oct. 10.



Members of the Temple Micah adult choir, volunteers all, sing at B'nai Mitzvah and High Holy Days services.

LESSONS FROM LANDAU

ANOTHER 'JEWISH' WAY TO VOLUNTEER:
BECOMING A PEN PAL TO A DC INMATE

BY RABBI SUSAN LANDAU

I have piles and boxes of letters exchanged with pen pals from the past 20 years. I have a shelf just for stationery in my home. I savor the feeling of holding a note in my hands—one that another person has taken the time to write in her own hand. Sometimes I seem to be among the only of my peers who still buys postage stamps regularly. But I have always believed in the power of letter writing.

This is one of the reasons I was particularly moved when I heard about the Interfaith Action for Human Rights' new pen pal project this past year, which has set me up with a kind of pen pal I have never had before: someone in prison.

IAHR is a locally based nonprofit which, in its own words, seeks to "strengthen bridges among regional faith communities to counter racism and

religious bigotry and to work to redress pervasive injustice in our criminal justice system."

IAHR's executive director, Rabbi Chuck Feinberg, previously devoted 42 years of his career to the congregational rabbinate, spending some of that time at our DC neighbor, Adas Israel. The prison pen pals program is one of the newer initiatives Rabbi Feinberg has begun at IAHR, and it is thanks to him that seven Micah members (myself included) have had the opportunity to get acquainted with new pen pals.

Most incarcerated DC residents are sent to prisons that are so far from home that family and friends cannot visit. This is unfortunate on so many levels, not the least of which is it exposes one of the major problems with our prison system. Prisoners who

lose connection with loved ones during their incarceration are more likely to commit crimes after they are released. This pen pal program exists as one of IAHR's many antidotes to the system's brokenness. It also serves to bring together like-minded volunteers from all faiths, and bring letter-writers ultimately into the fold of activists working with the organization on these issues.

I really appreciate the interfaith aspect of this project, but I am also struck by how very Jewish it is. As I have corresponded with my pen pal and learned a little more about him, I have been struck by how different his life is from mine, in nearly every way. And yet. I decided that I can look at it as if we have absolutely nothing in common, or as if we have everything in common.

We are two human beings who wish to create a connection where there previously was none. We believe in the power of letter writing, and in the joy of holding a note in our hands, written just for us. I choose to remember that all human beings are created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in God's image, and I choose to see the spark of divinity in my pen pal.

Temple Israel, a large Reform congregation in Boston, published a haggadah supplement this past Passover. In it, they suggested adding a pinecone to the seder plate



to call prisoners to mind. The pamphlet offers,

"We 'pass over' pine cones every day. Inside each of these pine cones is among the most precious of all nuts—the pine nut. Most of us pass more pine nuts in a single day than one could count in a year. Yet, they remain hidden, unseen. Moreover, they're nearly impossible to extract with our own hands. The pine cone 'imprisons' its seeds, and only hard work on the part of nature compels it to open up. The cones of Fire Pines, for instance, are glued shut by resin, and only a raging fire can force the cone to release its seeds. Thus these seeds, the glorious pine nuts all around us, remain "out of sight, out of mind."

Passover has passed, but prisoners are far from "out of sight, out of mind" for the more than one hundred volunteer pen pals from the DC area have been making connections with incarcerated individuals far from home. (To get a sense of how geographically spread out this population is, you can see a map on the IAHR website with markers for all of the prisons where our pen pals are living—from Pennsylvania to Arizona!)

It's easy to get involved, and I encourage you to do so. IAHR runs monthly orientation webinars for volunteers to get acquainted with the program and ask questions. After attending a training session volunteers are asked to correspond with their pen pal at least once a month for a year. Check out www.interfaithactionhr.org to learn when the next orientation will take place!

Book Fair Featured Something for All Ages



Inside, authors signed copies of their books; outside, young book lovers romped while older ones lined up at food and ice cream trucks.

Landau FROM PAGE 1 ►

on display at the service as was the congregation's regard for her.

Music is there because Rabbi Landau's voice has been a hallmark of Micah services. In his remarks Rabbi Zemel recalled how impressed he and former Micah Board President Jodi Enda were when they first interviewed Rabbi Landau for the position of assistant rabbi. But it was after she joined the staff that they first heard her sing. He said after that service he and Enda had the same thought: "All that and she has that voice."

May 4th because Star Wars aficionados like Rabbi Landau know it as Star Wars Day. "You know, it's May, the 4th be with you," she told the congregation.

Also on display was the reason Rabbi Landau is leaving. Rabbi Danny Moss, former youth director at Temple Micah, now assistant rabbi at Temple Israel in Westport, CT, joined her in singing Yihyu L'ratzon. Their wedding is set for this fall.

In her remarks, Rabbi Landau turned to the week's Torah portion, Behar, which describes an agricultural sabbatical year, in which there could be no planting, sowing, pruning or even reaping of the after growth of the harvest.

"Now I have vague notions of planting and sowing, but the concept of after growth fascinates me," she said. "I haven't been able to get that notion of after growth out of my mind. I am so very grateful for many of the lessons I will be taking with me from my time here.

"But I am equally aware that there were seeds

dropped I haven't yet noticed, and I will continue to learn from their after growth, which will likewise bloom without my conscious effort.

"These seeds will continue to provide me with invaluable knowledge and insight for a long time to come. I have been aware of this all along, but it's been clearer now. I will in many ways be taking this congregation with me when I leave."

Rabbi Zemel talked of Rabbi Landau's "serenity, of her ability to know how to wait, to know the right time to speak;" how she became part of the very "fabric of our community."

In an earlier interview Rabbi Landau talked about how much she enjoyed working with Rabbis Zemel and Beraha. She cited the High Holy Days session called "Ask a Rabbi" in which the three of them sat together to answer questions. "How we talked to each other, that dynamic has been special from the beginning. They truly let me find my own voice while collaborating intimately and discussing things candidly."

After she moves to Connecticut, Rabbi Landau will begin a chaplain residency program at Bridgeport Hospital.

In her remarks at the service, Rabbi Landau told the congregation: "I came to you newly ordained, but you made me a rabbi – not by telling me the kind of rabbi you needed me to be, but by giving me the time to discover the rabbi I am.

"You loved me and you let me love you, and you also gave me space. You let me into your lives, and you



shaped mine. You enveloped me with your messiness, your soul, and I will always carry these formative experiences with me."

The "Rabbi Susan Landau Appreciation Service," however, was not her last at Temple Micah. She was back the next morning to officiate at a bar mitzvah and again on Sunday at the People of the Book Fair. Her successor, Rabbi Stephanie Crawley, will take up her post as assistant rabbi on July 1.

At the close of her remarks on May 4th, Rabbi Landau, remarked: "While I'm here for a few more

weeks still, I relish the chance to quote the wise old Obi-Wan and say, Goodbye, old friend, and may the fourth be with you."

It was after that an unlikely choir comprised of Rabbi Zemel, Rabbi Beraha, Cantor Meryl Weiner, Music Director Teddy Klaus, Micah Educator Lesley Levin and Community Coordinator Rachel Carlson belted out the wacky ballad "Susan, looks like we're losin'."

It included this verse:
Susan, looks like you're choosin'
Rabbi Danny Moss
It's definitely our loss. ♦

A Balancing Act That Benefits Micah

BY FRAN DAUTH

HERE ARE SOME of the questions people ask Rhiannon Walsh, the Temple Micah bookkeeper, or would ask if they weren't wary of being rude:

Was she named because of the Stevie Nicks-Fleetwood Mac song? Or more pointedly, what kind of name is Rhiannon?

No, she wasn't named for the song.

The answer is that Rhiannon is an ancient Welsh name thought to mean "great queen." Her father, who feels strongly enough about his Welsh heritage that he has the family Walsh crest tattooed on his back, always wanted a daughter named Rhiannon.

Moreover, neither her father nor her mother was

a fan of Stevie Nicks, who wrote the song recorded by Fleetwood Mac in 1975. But Rhiannon Walsh, born 16 years after the song's debut, is a huge fan of Stevie Nicks.

Okay next question. How did someone from a Pennsylvania Dutch-Welsh-Irish family come to be the bookkeeper at a Reform synagogue in Washington, DC?

Actually, her family in West Chester, PA, was more surprised she had become a bookkeeper than they were that she was working for a synagogue, Rhiannon says.

Rhiannon, 27, had gone straight from high school in West Chester to the Aveda Institute in Minneapolis to study cosmetology. She was there for 18 months before the cold weather drove her

back to Pennsylvania. She worked as a hairdresser in Philadelphia, but eventually, found salons were not for her because "I'm not so good at selling shampoo."

About the time she began thinking she needed to reinvent herself, her then partner began showing her how to do bookkeeping. Rhiannon, who was "not good at math at all" in high school, loved it.

"I took to it right away. There is an incredible satisfaction in balancing numbers. When I see that zero, come up, it's like I won a video game," she explained.

After a move to the DC metro area and a stint as a bookkeeper for an artisan friend, she looked for a way to do both freelance hairdressing and bookkeeping.



She still wanted to practice her craft but in a way that helped clients learn what they could do for themselves. That meant freelance hair cutting and part time bookkeeping.

Rhiannon joined Temple Micah as a part-time bookkeeper four years ago.

Now she works a 30-hour week at Temple Micah, spending some hours at the synagogue nearly every weekday.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 ►

Rabbi's Message FROM PAGE 1 ►

a refugee family navigate the trials and hurdles of moving to a new country.

Invariably, when I think of Sukkat Shalom, I think of Micah House and our community's continued sponsorship of a group home for formerly homeless women. We have maintained this effort for 28 years, and it is a tribute to all of those who have served on the Micah House board and to our community's ongoing generosity. The people involved in these efforts should receive more thanks and greater recognition than we provide. Let these thanks be an attempt to amend that shortcoming.

As I think about the past year, I inevitably think about the very purpose of the synagogue, a recurring theme for me in these days. As you hopefully have heard me say,

I believe Temple Micah is here to enable us—individually and collectively—to engage in the human project.

I believe that an essential Jewish teaching is that being human is a project. We are blessed with the gift of self-awareness, which spurs us to search for and create meaning in our lives.

One way in which synagogues engage the human project is by responding to the call of being caring communities, places where we not only support each other in our own times of need but also reach out beyond our walls to care for the world. We at Micah do this through Sukkat Shalom and Micah House and many more endeavors than I can list.

The human project is not only about helping others. I believe a synagogue also should aspire to be a community of

profundity, one that provides us with the kind of deep wisdom that impacts us with an intensity that informs the way we choose to live or even the next book we read. Our speakers, I hope, offer such wisdom and inspire that kind of search within us. This, too, is the human project in action.

In our era, I believe that the synagogue must be a place where we advocate and defend the principles of American democracy. I believe that we are called to be moral and respectful spaces that explore the path toward the right and the good, where we seek, as Satlow writes, to find truth "in both a proposition and its opposite, with everything in between."

This is how we grow in our humanity, how we advance the human project, how we bring our best selves into the public square.

Summer becomes more precious to me with each passing year. With summer upon us, we have long days and longer reading lists. This summer, after I finish my annual Daniel Silva page-turner, I will tackle:

- "Searching for Stars on an Island in Maine" by Alan Lightman
 - "Leading a Worthy Life: Finding Meaning in Modern Times" by Leon R. Kass
 - "We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy" by Ta-Nehisi Coates
 - "The Zionist Ideas: Visions for the Jewish Homeland—Then, Now, Tomorrow" edited by Gil Troy
 - "The Fragile Dialogue: New Voices of Liberal Zionism" edited by Stanley M. Davids and Lawrence A. Englander
- Happy summer!
Shalom,
Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel

TZEDAKAH

BUILDING IMPROVEMENT FUND

IN HONOR OF
Margaret and Jeff Grotte's grandson,
George Sylvan, by Mary Dempster

ENDOWMENT FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Irene Chait and Nettie
Rogers, by Marilyn Paul
Bezalel Herschkovitz, by
Brenda Levenson

GENERAL FUND

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IN HONOR OF
The birth of Mary Beth Schiffman
and David Tochen's granddaughter,
Joanna Brynn Clerman, by Kate
Kiggins and Jared Blum

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Berger, by Joan Feld
David Goldberg, by Nancy Raskin
Ruth Gruenberg, by Mark Gruenberg
Marty Obrand, by Lorri Manasse
and Russ Mishelhoff
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and Stan Soloway
Steven M. Stein, by Kevin Stein
Ann Weiner, by Marlyn
and Milton Socolar
Jean Wentworth, by Debbie and
Jim Roumell

INNOVATION FUND

IN HONOR OF
The birth of Alexander Eli Fraser,
son of Elisabeth and Robert
Fraser and grandson of Diana
and Robert Seasonwein, by
Diana and Robert Seasonwein

Rabbi Susan Landau, by Nancy Raskin
Elizabeth Poliner, by Martha
and David Adler

IN MEMORY OF
Belle Chernak, by Beverly
and Harlan Sherwat
Bruce and Sidney Landfield,
by Susan Landfield
Pearl Obrand, by Lorri Manasse
and Russell Misheloff
Martha Webster, by David
and Martha Adler

LEARNING FUND

IN HONOR OF
In appreciation of Rabbi Landau, by
Nicholas Brooke and Lisa Gordon
Hannah Zapruder becoming
Bat Mitzvah, by Beverly
and Harlan Sherwat

IN MEMORY OF
Ellen Passel, by Jeff Passel

MICAH HOUSE

IN HONOR OF
Ann Sablosky, by Beverly
and Harlan Sherwat

IN MEMORY OF
Sidney Closter, by Betsi
and Harold Closter

MUSIC AND WORSHIP FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Fred Sugarman, by Carole Sugarman

RABBI BERAHA'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

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IN HONOR OF
The naming of Grace Correa, by
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IN MEMORY OF
Milton Booth, by Elka and Sid Booth

RABBI LANDAU'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Nancy and Kenneth Kirsch

IN HONOR OF
Rabbi Landau for all her support
these past many months,
by Aaron N. Kaufman

IN MEMORY OF
Sylvia Pessa Waldner,
by David Waldner

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN HONOR OF
In thanks to everyone at Temple
Micah, by Dennis Ward
The wedding of Lynda Mulhauser
and Richard Pierce, by Lynda
Mulhauser and Richard Pierce
Gail Povar and Larry Bachorik
on the birth of their grandson
Simon Alexander, by Larry
Cooley and Marina Fanning

IN MEMORY OF
Ben Appel, by Harriette Kinberg
Elbert Evans Ward, by Dennis Ward
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Stephen Weisman

SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND

IN HONOR OF
The birth of Simon Alexander
Bachorik, by David and Barbara Diskin
Hineni, by Diana and
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IN MEMORY OF
Sarah Blumenfeld, by
Norman Blumenfeld
Sylvia B. Lang, by Patricia Kent
Myron Poliner, by Elka
and Sidney Booth

Robert Salzberg, by Ellen
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SUKKAT SHALOM

Marlyn and Milton Socolar

THE RABBI DANIEL GOLDMAN ZEMEL FUND FOR ISRAEL

Mary Beth Schiffman
and David Tochen

IN HONOR OF
Lisa Saks, for extraordinary
kindness, by Jacqueline Simon

IN MEMORY OF
Shlomo Haim Bardin, by
David Jonas Bardin
Jeanne Dillon, by Richard Lehmann
Myron Poliner, by Michelle Sender
Eileen Simon, by Lisa Saks
and Lawrence Lynn

*This list reflects donations
received March 20–May 15, 2018.
Every effort has been made to
ensure its accuracy, but if there
are any errors or omissions
please accept our apologies.
For corrections or clarifications,
please contact Rhiannon Walsh
in the temple office. Thank you.*

Rhiannon FROM PAGE 7 ►

As for wondering what it is like to do the bookkeeping at a synagogue when you're not Jewish? Rhiannon has an answer for that.

"It was incredibly easy to come up to speed when everyone was so excited to explain when there was something I didn't understand. People have been welcoming and kind. This may be the first office job I have loved."

It's hard not to notice that when Rhiannon talks about Micah policies, such as being flexible about dues if there is a hardship, she refers to "our" policy and what "we" do. When she says the dues system "works fairly well," she doesn't say "for Temple

Micah." She says "for us."

She gets excited talking about ways "we" might update systems to allow electronic dues paying. She said she has been talking to professionals at other synagogues, including Micah Office Administrator Jeannelle D'Isa's wife Nicole, who is the bookkeeper at Temple Emanuel in Kensington, about what they are doing to modernize their bookkeeping systems.

Rhiannon's apartment in Alexandria is filled with plants to satisfy her need to garden. She traces her love of gardening to the fact that her parents met when each was working at Burpee Seeds outside of Philadelphia.

And, yes, she still "does hair," including that of most of the Micah staff. In

fact, she has so many clients, she is facing a bookkeeper challenge: how to balance her two passions.

Her own hair is currently gray, not because being at Micah has aged her, but because she colored her naturally blonde hair gray, a currently trendy look for young women.

A while back Rhiannon's hair was blue, which was a "hilariously" bad dye job in her opinion. Her brother, a 25-year-old artist in Philadelphia, cuts his own hair, she said. She and her brother also have the Walsh family crest (think of a swan and an arrow) tattooed on their backs.

One last question to be answered:

No, Rhiannon does not balance her own checkbook, reassuring all of us who rely on our bank apps to keep track. ♦

B'NAI MITZVAH



ZOE GLANTZ

MAY 5 / 20 IYYAR

PARENTS: Eric Glantz and Jessica Nassau
TORAH PORTION: Behar

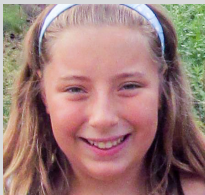
INDEPENDENT PROJECT: For her project, Zoe has become a vegetarian. She was very inspired by her Torah portion, which was, in part, about agricultural practices and giving the land a rest.



GABRIEL (GABE) ALEXANDER

JUNE 9 / 26 SIVAN

PARENTS: Jane and Chuck Alexander
TORAH PORTION: Sh'lach

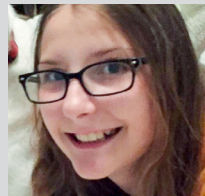


DIANA SUBAK

MAY 26 / 12 SIVAN

PARENT: Susan Subak
TORAH PORTION: Naso

INDEPENDENT PROJECT: Diana is taking kayaking trips along the Potomac River and fishing plastic debris out of the water with her lacrosse stick. She's also learning about the town of Třebíč in the Czech Republic, the only Jewish neighborhood outside of Israel to be named a UNESCO World Heritage site.



ANASTASIA (ANA) SCHNEIDER

JUNE 16 / 3 TAMMUZ

PARENTS: Rhona Campbell and David Schneider

TORAH PORTION: Korach

INDEPENDENT PROJECT: Ana is reading family histories and adding the next chapters by interviewing her grandparents.



EDIE CAREY

JUNE 2 / 19 SIVAN

PARENTS: Kevin Carey and Sara Sklaroff
TORAH PORTION: Beha'alotekha

Did you know?

Librarian Rebecca Mazur reports the Micah library now has a copy of “(((Semitism)))”: Being Jewish in America in the Age of Trump” by Jonathan Weisman, a deputy editor in the Washington bureau of the New York Times and a member of Temple Micah.

Also in the library is CNN anchor and Micah member Jake Tapper’s political novel “The Hellfire Club.” Set in the 1950s, his debut novel has what the New York Times called “some unsettling parallels to today’s political climate.”

The library also has acquired a copy of “Life? or Theatre” a selection of 450 autobiographical gouaches by Charlotte Salomon, a German-Jewish artist who was killed at Auschwitz in 1943.

CONDOLENCES

The Temple Micah community extends its deepest condolences to:

LEESA KLEPPER, on the passing of her grandmother, Sylvia Jacobson

JACKIE HARWOOD, on the passing of her mother, Martha Webster

PAUL PARRY, on the passing of his mother, Marjorie Parry

JONATHAN POLLOCK, on the passing of his mother, Trudy Pollock

CAROL SUGARMAN, on the passing of her mother, Louise Sugarman

THE MICAH COMMUNITY, on the loss of Rabbi Robert Baruch, who served as Temple Micah’s rabbi from 1978–1983

May their memories be for a blessing.

MAZAL TOV!

Rebekah, Ian, and Ronah Douglas, on the birth of their son and brother, Folan Bane Douglas

Ellen Nakashima, on receiving the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting

Mary Beth Schiffman and David Tochen, on the birth of their granddaughter, Joanna Brynn Clerman

Janet Gordon, on the birth of her grandson, Daniel Meir Ben-Ari

Congregation FROM PAGE 1 ►

congregation of doers. We find meaning in what we do.”

For Geri Nielsen, volunteering was a way to really become a part of the synagogue she had joined.

“For the first years after I joined, I felt like a stealth member. I knew very few people and very few knew me,” says Nielsen. “Then in 1995 I saw a note that if we had no place to celebrate first Seder, to call the office and a place would be found.”

She was invited to the home of Roberta and Mort Goren and had a wonderful time. At the time the Gorens were organizing the oneg after Rosh Hashanah, so she volunteered to help. And so began Nielsen’s years of volunteering.

Now she volunteers with Lunch & Learn, Micah Cooks, Hineni, and inputs data for the Micah web calendar.

Lunch & Learn, a monthly speakers’ series, “epitomizes volunteering at its best,” says Barbara Diskin, another veteran volunteer. Some 20 people come together every second Wednesday of the month to make sure the programs, which usually attract audiences of more than 50, run smoothly. They set up, they cook, and they cleanup.

Why? Diskin, who for years ran the Micah library, said the value is the connection to others. “When you come to services, you come as part of a community,” she said.

Her words echo those of Rabbi Zemel: “This is part of the very essence of covenant and what we call covenantal community where everyone does his or her part. No Jewish community can thrive without those who live their lives in this way.”

A recent example of this is Sukkat Shalom, the name given to the Temple Micah project to provide assistance to an Afghan refugee family of five that relocated to our area. Volunteers were needed to work on myriad tasks such as finding housing, clothing, furniture, transportation, and employment.

Adler, one of the Sukkat Shalom leaders, noted that many of the 40 to 50 volunteers who signed up to help are

relatively new members of Micah. At one of the first organizing meetings she said, Rabbi Esther Lederman, a former assistant rabbi at Micah, remarked, “Wow. This is amazing, Martha. I don’t know any of these people.”

One of those volunteers is Leesa Klepper. She, her husband Mario Mancuso and their daughters, now 10 and 11, came to Temple Micah in 2016. Soon after, she got involved in Sukkat Shalom.



Mark Weinheimer and Larry Rothman cook for a bat mitzvah.

She volunteered, she said, for three reasons.

“As a new member, I was looking for an opportunity to participate more actively in the community; we had been interested in and looking for opportunities to help refugees even before Sukkat Shalom formed; and my husband and I wanted to volunteer our time in a meaningful way to include our young children, and would be an opportunity to both teach them and demonstrate our values, Jewish and American, including a commitment to diversity and human dignity.”

Plus, she added, her family’s friendship with the Afghan family “has been a gift to us. They are smart, courageous, funny, and inspiring and getting to know them has enriched our lives,” she said.

Another Sukkat Shalom volunteer, Yael Traum, also was drawn to the

project because of her concern for “the precarious status of immigrants and refugees” after the 2016 election.

“As a child of holocaust survivors, I grew up hearing my parents’ stories about leaving their homelands and building new lives in a strange country,” she said.

“Being part of Sukkat Shalom and working closely with our Afghan refugee family has been more meaningful than I could have ever imagined. I find their determination, resilience and infectious personalities truly inspiring.”

Brooke, the chef who volunteers with Micah Cooks, said he became “involved in Jewish culture” when he began attending services with his fiancé Lisa Gordon.

“When I was studying for my conversion it was important for me to surround myself and listen and learn from people of the synagogue. I did this by getting involved with Micah Cooks.”

Here is his explanation of why he helps at Micah Cooks after being in a kitchen all week: “Micah Cooks is a great group of people who come from all walks of life with different personalities; it’s a small family of the synagogue giving back.”

Adrienne Umansky has led Micah Cooks, which provides a consistent source of revenue by catering gourmet meals, for the past 23 years. She notes that in one six-week period Micah Cooks fed 600 people.

Micah’s Annual Auction, led by Alex Wisotsky, is another activity that exists (and brings in considerable revenue) because of volunteers. Forty people took part in this 42nd annual auction, including “middle schoolers and some of their parents, high schoolers, who could earn community service hours, baby boomers, empty nesters, and septuagenarians with lots of energy,” according to Micah Development Consultant Sue Alpern-Fisch.

They set up and decorated the room, greeted guests, sold raffle tickets, handled bid sheets, tallied winning bids, handed out gift certificates, took photographs, worked with caterers, vendors, and musicians. And, of course, cleaned

BERAHA'S BLACKBOARD

AN ARGUMENT FOR SYNAGOGUES IN THE AGE OF CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS

BY RABBI JOSH BERAHA

Recently, I found myself at Barstons Child's Play on Connecticut Avenue, purchasing a book called "Captain Underpants." My six-year-old son loves the Captain Underpants book series. And the movie, too. I lucked out of seeing it in the theater but Nani came home with less than rave reviews. But if you, or a child in your life, (or your inner child, maybe?), are roused by conspicuous bathroom humor and superheroes, stop what you are doing and check it out.

On the other hand, if jokes about certain bodily functions don't elicit from you a wide grinning smile—Warning: Stay far, far away. As I paid for the book I joked to the cashier "classic work of literature, no?" To which he replied, quickly, and not at all in jest, "It just might be. Only history can judge."

I know my son's interest in potty humor is appropriate for his age. He's a kindergartener, after all, and I'm at least glad he has a sense of humor. His bubbling laugh

is contagious, even when it is in response to the mention of Professor Pee-Pee Diarrheastein Poopypants, Esq. (Yes, that's the name of a character in the series. See what I mean?) Of course, one day my son will mature, as will his ideas about comedy—or not. Either way, I am quite sure, "Captain Underpants" will not define him. As he grows he will expand his literary circle to include works that speak to a higher self, a moral self. So I'm not too worried about his love of the vulgar just yet.

But how does one ensure his or her children are not poisoned by the deep well of ludicrous, low-brow culture that seems so wide spread in our age? Amidst a culture in which we increasingly see the disappearance of boundaries between our animalistic urges and civil life, where does decency enter the conversation, or moral virtues? (Not to mention a reverence for actual literature.)

Please don't think of me as a snob. I believe there should be a balance between high-

brow culture and whatever genre one would consider "Captain Underpants." Never, ever do I wish to banish this book even as some schools have tried. I simply wish to learn how to infuse my son's life, my daughters' lives, the life of my family, and society in general with principled virtues and holy language—with a sense of that which is beyond. I am not all that concerned about the potty humor. But I am concerned about what seems like a society no longer tied to decent social mores that serve a common purpose. A higher purpose.

I am taken by philosopher Roger Scruton's new book "On Human Nature" in which he writes, "To develop fully as persons... we need the virtues that transfer our motives from the animal to the personal center of our being—the virtues that put us in charge of our passions. These virtues are not available outside a tightly woven social context."

In other words, we are thinking beings but we are also animal beings who are only able to move beyond the desires of the physical self through practices that point to a higher moral standard.

And herein lies the argument for the flourishing of vibrant, profound synagogue communities in the age of "Captain Underpants" run amok: The habits of Jewish living are exactly the type of virtues that allow us to be reflective, and therefore control our desires and the language we use to talk about them.

The rabbis understood that we are first and foremost animal beings. Jewish prayer asks not that we deny our



physicality, but rather that we celebrate it. In our daily morning prayers, we read, "Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the world, who formed humans with wisdom and created a system of ducts and conduits in them. It is well known before Your Throne of glory that if one of these should burst or one of these get blocked, it would be impossible to survive and stand before You. Blessed are You, Adonai, who heals all creatures, doing wonders."

Directly following this blessing, we read the blessing for the study of Torah, "Blessed are You, Adonai our god, Ruler of the world, who sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to engage in words of Torah."

The rabbis got it. Beyond our corporeality is Torah, our symbol for the virtues that enable us to exist as intentional thinking beings. And clinging to Torah creates a tightly woven social context in which we can be virtuous humans, together.

Accordingly, maybe what I should say to my son is, read on, read on, Son! Continue to find delight in talking toilets and Poopageddon! But as you grow, do not forsake the virtues that have been passed down through the generations. Establish for yourself a social context in which you can enjoy all manner of humor—because you should never take yourself too seriously—but see that the beauty of life is the interweaving of carnality and meaning.



SUKKOT IN SPRING: Fifteen members of the Micah community did some carpentry work and painted the home of Carolyn Green in NE DC as part of this annual tradition. Pictured are Roberta Goren and Shelley Grossman with Ms. Green and her family.

Congregation FROM PAGE 10 ►

up after the auction was over.

Susan Landfield has helped with the auction every year since she joined Temple Micah in 2012. She, like the others, said she likes “doing something useful” and volunteering helps her meet other members.

Alpern-Fisch stressed that while the auction raises significant funds, it is “a fun, *hamish* evening that brings together a wonderful crew of dedicated and

enthusiastic volunteers who make it all possible.”

One of those dedicated volunteers is Lynn Rothberg. “I often volunteer to clean up after a Micah dinner or Lunch & Learn or the auction because I know it is a job many do not like to do.

“I don’t mind the mess and find it a pleasure to work with fellow hearty souls as we scrub pots, put things away, and slowly restore order.”

Nearly 100 volunteers are on Hineni’s call list. The service group,

led by Evelyn Sahr, provides comfort and solace to Micah members who are ailing. The list, organized by zip code, allows Hineni to find volunteers to provide help to members who live in their neighborhood.

While it may seem at times that volunteering at Micah means solely setting up tables, the scope and variety is nearly endless, such as the music at services that comes from volunteers.

Musicians, says Music Director Teddy Klaus, “model prayer for the congregation.” More than 30 volunteer musicians comprise the adult choir that sings at B’nai Mitzvah and High Holy Day services, and the pickup band that plays once a month at Kabbalat Shabbat Services.

Stuart Brown plays flute in the pickup band. “I love feeling a part of the harmony of prayer,” he said, mentioning his fellow musicians, Cantor Meryl Weiner, Rabbi Landau, and Director Klaus.

The sense of service that many feel may have been best expressed by Lynn Rothberg, who said:

“Always in the midst of the clean-up, I find myself looking around and smile and feel good to be there helping out.” ♦



These volunteers, part of Micah Cooks, cater special events to raise funds for Temple Micah.



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