



# MA CHADASH! מה חדש!

What's New! The newsletter of Temple Shalom Synagogue Center, Auburn, Maine ק"ק היכל שלום

March 2025, Adar 5785

## PURIM!



**Friday, March 14th, 6:00 P.M., at Temple Shalom**

**Purim Pierogies, Wine and Hamantashen!**

***Brand-New Purim Song by Rebbetzin Lisa – Special Purim Game!***

***Interactive story of Purim told by Rebbetzin Lisa***

***Traditional readings from the Megillah Scroll by Rabbi Sruli***

***Purim Magic with Rabbi Sruli***

**Please bring canned or other non-perishable items to help feed the hungry  
(an important Purim Mitzvah!) Mishloach Manot Swap**



**Brunch and Presentation  
Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 A.M.**

**Catered Brunch followed by a presentation on International Law  
as it Relates to Israel and Gaza, by Colby College Professor, Ken Rodman**

## FROM THE RABBI



I am writing this on the day four coffins were returned to Israel from Gaza—two of them tiny coffins containing the remains of two heartbreakingly beautiful tiny children—plunging virtually the entire Jewish world, yet again, into deep sadness, despair and rage.

For the past year and a half, Jews, individually and collectively, have had to grapple with the morality of Israel's bloody war in Gaza. For some of us the answer comes easily—absolutely moral, say those who comfortably privilege Jewish life above all other lives; absolutely immoral, say others who routinely condemn the entire Zionist enterprise as a crime against humanity. But for most of us it's been a hellish time. We are

horrified by the murderous cruelty of Hamas (and others) directed against our people—a cruelty that appears to be enthusiastically supported by many, if not most, of the people in Gaza—and we support (sometimes robustly and sometimes hesitantly) whatever Israel determines it needs to do to ensure its survival and security. Yet the extent of the loss of so much Palestinian life and property weighs heavily upon our conscience as well.

In several weeks, we Jews will read the Megillah—the biblical book of Esther that we study each year on the holiday of Purim. Most of us are familiar with the exciting, “fun” details of the story—Vashti losing her head, Esther winning a beauty contest and becoming queen, Mordechai being led on a horse by the evil Haman, Esther inviting Haman and the King to back-to-back parties. But, basically, this is a story of a rabidly antisemitic minister who successfully persuades/bribes the ruler of the Persian Empire to annihilate the entirety of its Jewish population—men, women and children—but whose plan is foiled when the King ultimately sides with the Jews and permits them to eradicate their enemies. Which they do. Let's look at a few important verses from the Megillah.

*Accordingly, written instructions were dispatched by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, massacre, and exterminate all the Jews, young and old, children and women, on a single day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month—that is, the month of Adar—and to plunder their possessions. Esther 3:15*

*In the fortress Shushan the Jews killed a total of five hundred men... [and] the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the foe of the Jews. But they did not lay hands on the spoil. Esther 9:6-10*

*And the Jews in Shushan mustered again on the fourteenth day of Adar and slew three hundred men in Shushan; but they did not lay hands on the spoil. The rest of the Jews, those in the king's provinces, likewise mustered and fought for their lives. They disposed of their enemies, killing seventy-five thousand of their foes; but they did not lay hands on the spoil. Esther 9:15, 16*

It struck me that as a people we are deeply invested in the idea that in the story of Purim the Jews are the “good guys” and that Haman and his minions are the “bad guys.” A seemingly easy conclusion as obviously only really bad guys would seek to eradicate an entire nation—old and young—just because they are different. And good guys, just as obviously, are required to defend themselves and their families. Still, by the end of the story, it's the Jews who have become the killers—to the tune of over 75 thousand people. Are we still the good guys? Surely it is moral, and even a moral obligation, to kill those who are determined to kill you. Still, 75 thousand people?

(From the Rabbi continued next page)

(From the Rabbi continued)

In the phrases that I underlined in the above-quoted verses, the Megillah, I think, anticipates this question by emphasizing an important distinction between Haman and the Jews. Haman is unabashed about his intention to despoil the Jews of all their property after he and his minions slaughter them—reminiscent of Hitler’s Nazis who extracted every bit of wealth they could from the Jews (and others) that they murdered—even to the extent of removing the gold from the teeth of the still-warm bodies of their victims. On the other hand, the Jews, the Megillah tells us three times, were scrupulously careful not to take *anything* from the murderous mobs that they were forced to kill.

While a decision to kill others—even those who are determined to murder you—is never a morally easy one, it helps—a lot—to get rid of any conflicts of interest—such as a desire to come away with more money or more land. If you are trying to convince yourself (and others) that the brutal consequences of your actions are noble and morally justified, make darn sure not to materially benefit from the killings—in any way. In other words, to be laser certain that everything you are doing is only for your survival and security and not motivated by any interest in financial or expansionist gain, you need to resolutely resist deriving *any* benefit—financial or otherwise.

This, I believe, is the lesson from the Megillah that we need now.

Rabbi Sruli

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT



The outgoing U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, wrote a “parting prescription” for the nation. He said we could lift the mood of the nation by building community. He defines community as “a place where we have relationships, help each other, and where we find purpose in each other.” If we are invested in others, then their concerns become your concerns, and then maybe we can come together and advocate for solutions we can all benefit from.

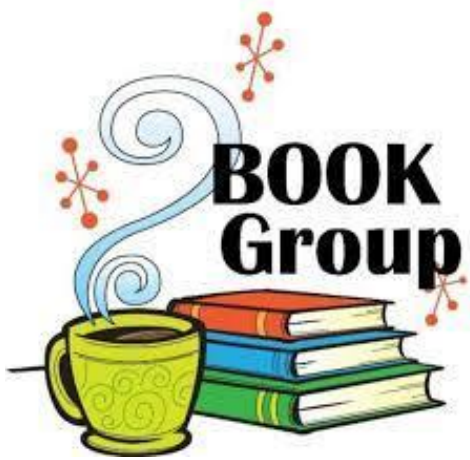
People find community in various places, but I definitely find my community at the Temple. You are the people I trust, the people I can turn to for answers, the people who have my back. You are my “other family” who keeps me from feeling lonely and isolated. You are the people I’m glad to spend time with, who bring a smile to my face. I try hard to be that person for you, too. I believe we need community to feel truly fulfilled in life.

I am so lucky.

Lesli Weiner  
President

WE ARE A  
COMMUNITY

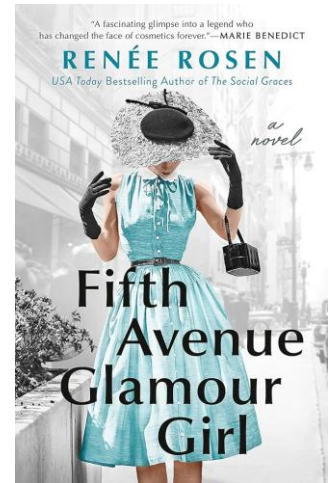
!!BOOK GROUP NEWS!!



*The only thing Jewish about Susan Orlean’s “The Orchid Thief” was that the thief himself was Jewish. Otherwise the book was a journalist’s passion for a good story and following the orchid gatherer into the swamps and mud and forests and bugs to find new specimens turned out to be quite exciting. Apparently, Marsha Auster, Karen Calloway and I were the only ones along for the adventure. Everything you always wanted to know about foraging for orchids can be found here.....TMI*

*Our next book, “Fifth Avenue Glamour Girl” by Renee Rosen, is a rags to riches story:*

***“It’s 1938, and a young woman selling face cream out of a New York City beauty parlor is determined to prove she can have it all. Her name is Estée Lauder, and she’s about to take the world by storm, in this dazzling new novel from the USA Today bestselling author of The Social Graces and Park Avenue Summer.***



*In New York City, you can disappear into the crowd. At least that’s what Gloria Downing desperately hopes as she tries to reinvent herself after a devastating family scandal. She’s ready for a total life makeover and a friend she can lean on—and into her path walks a young, idealistic woman named Estée. Their chance encounter will change Gloria’s life forever.*

*Estée dreams of success and becoming a household name like Elizabeth Arden, Helena Rubinstein, and Revlon. Before Gloria knows it, she is swept up in her new friend’s mission and while Estée rolls up her sleeves, Gloria begins to discover her own talents. After landing a job at Saks Fifth Avenue, New York’s finest luxury department store, Gloria finds her voice, which proves instrumental in opening doors for Estée’s insatiable ambitions.*

*But in a world unaccustomed to women with power, they’ll each have to pay the price that comes with daring to live life on their own terms and refusing to back down.”*

*We will meet via zoom on MONDAY, MARCH 10 at 4PM. I’m sure this story will grip more of you.....lesli*



**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO**

Deena & Jack Weinstein

March 8

#### #4. The Element of Luck: What Happened to Pincus and Helen? Unraveling Mysteries

"Memory is the key to redemption." — Elie Wiesel

Elie Wiesel spoke of remembering familial and communal history as a sacred obligation. In Jewish genealogy, memory and persistence are essential tools—yet sometimes, a bit of luck is what finally unlocks the past. One pattern I've noticed in genealogical research is that discoveries don't always come in a straight line. Often, a seemingly random fact emerges. You hold onto it—sometimes for years—until, suddenly, a new piece of information appears, allowing everything to fall into place. Decades ago, I recorded a cassette tape interview with my grandmother's sister, Bella. I had long forgotten about it until I listened again 20 years later. In it, she mentioned relatives in New York City named Helen and Pincus Kurzbard. That passing mention sparked a 20-year search. While combing through the Ellis Island database, I found a ship manifest listing Pincus, his wife Helen, and their young son, Irv. They had traveled from a displaced persons camp in Germany to New York in 1947. That discovery led to an obsession: *What had happened to them?* I emailed every Kurzbard contact I could find online, asking if they knew of Helen and Pincus. But after years with no response, I gave up and moved on. Then, five years later, an unexpected email arrived from Margie Kurzbard in Fairbanks, Alaska. She wrote that her husband Harvey's father was named Pincus Kurzbard and his wife was Helen. At first, they were cautious about my inquiry. But then I asked a key question: *What color was Helen's hair?* I knew from family lore that Helen had red hair. When Margie replied, "Red," the connection was clear. A DNA test later confirmed that we were close cousins. My newly discovered relatives were astounded. For over 60 years, they had believed that all their family had been lost in the Holocaust.

Reuniting with long-lost kin, after so many years of them thinking they were alone, was one of my greatest genealogical achievements.

Connecting families—through determination, the Internet, and a little bit of luck—is one great mitzvah of genealogical research.

Any questions? contact Labish ([askLabish@gmail.com](mailto:askLabish@gmail.com))

#### Practical Resources

For those searching for relatives through Ellis Island Passenger Lists, visit: <https://heritage.statueofliberty.org/>

Passenger List from Ellis Island database for Pincus, Helen and their son Icek (Feb 27, 1947)

Form 1-467-A ALIEN PASSENGER MANIFEST									
For Passengers Traveling to the United States under President's Directive of Dec. 22, 1945									
S/S. MARINE FLASHER Sailing from BROOKLYN On FEBRUARY 27th, 1947. Arriving at NEW YORK On _____ 19__									
NO.	FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME & MIDDLE INITIAL	AGE	SEX	MARITAL STATUS	NATIONALITY	WEIGHT	DESTINATION	REMARKS
1	Kramer	Karola L. G. B.	74	F	S	Polish	2096	1899 Bergen St. Brooklyn, N.Y.	W.S.C.
2	Krueger	Louise	75	F	D	German	21297	523 E. 85 St. New York, N.Y.	W.S.C.
3	Krueger	Ida	74	F	W	German	21322	Fair St. Germantown, Pa.	W.S.C.
4	Kryppow	Abraham	23	M	S	Undetermined	2970	247 S. Franklin St. Hoboken, N.J.	W.S.C.
5	Kuehne	Sophie	58	F	M	German	36	156 - 6th St. New York, N.Y.	W.S.C.
6	Kuehnel	Otto	65	M	M	German	21311	113 W. Elm St. Baltimore, Md.	W.S.C.
7	Kuehnel	Antonie	62	F	M	German	21312	113 W. Elm St. Baltimore, Md.	W.S.C.
8	Kuhlmann	Wilhelm	69	M	W	German	21492	6115-784th St. Elmhurst, L.I. NY	W.S.C.
9	Kunter	Michael	62	M	M	Tugoslavian	477	1619 Steward Ave. Youngstown, O.	W.S.C.
10	Kunter	Rosalie	59	F	M	Tugoslavian	478	1619 Steward Ave. Youngstown, O.	W.S.C.
11	Kuntze	Max	53	M	M	Undetermined	4376	1409 West Ave. New York, N.Y.	W.S.C.
12	Kuntze	Anna	45	F	M	Undetermined	4377	1409 West Ave. New York, N.Y.	W.S.C.
13	Kurobard	Pincus	33	M	M	Polish	2386	2386-84th St. Brooklyn, N.Y.	W.S.C.
14	Kurobard	Helen	27	F	M	Polish	2333	2386-84th St. Brooklyn, N.Y.	W.S.C.
15	Kurobard	Icek	3	M	S	Polish	2385	2386-84th St. Brooklyn, N.Y.	W.S.C.

Ma Chadash/What's New is published monthly by Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center. Temple Shalom is an independent congregation and a member of the Lewiston-Auburn Jewish Federation.

The mission of Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center is to foster a strong Jewish identity and an active Jewish Community.

Rabbi Sruli Dresdner

Office Manager Julie Waite

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## SPEEDY RECOVERY

We pray for refuah sh'leimah – the full and speedy recovery of **Valci Braga, Rachel Corvi, Lee Jay Feldman, Andrea Finn, Sara Graf, Robert Galumbeck, Isaak Gekhtin, Ariella Green, Sharon Hemond, Alison Jaeger, Suzan Katzir, Michael Kendall, Linda Koskela, Henry Lefkowitz, Lee Leveille, Carolyn Marshal, Bruce Meyer, Alice Richman, Sandy Traister**, and all others who are not well at this time. *We like to hear good news! Whenever you request that a name be put on this list, please let Temple Shalom know when it can be removed.*



*Wishing you a speedy and complete recovery.*

**Rabbi Sruli is always happy to speak with and meet with members or our Temple. Please call or text his cell phone at 914-980-9509 if you would like to speak with him or to arrange a time for a meeting. You can also call or leave a message at the Temple office and Rabbi Sruli will get back to you.**

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

Ihara Dutra	March 3
Helene Fakhery	6
Marsha Auster	7
Julia Isaacson	11
Sophie Steinberg	13
Adam Allen	14
Jack Weinstein	16
Joseph Zidle	18
Able Kaplan	19
Joy Zidle	23
Charlie Dresdner	27
Johnny Dresdner	27
Kenneth Goodman	28
Cassandra Jensen	28

## YAHREZEITEN

George Rosenberg	Mar. 1
Bert Bodenheimer	1
Philip Renard	2
David Danziger	3
Jean Brown	4
Estelle Pennamacoor	4
Annette Hertz	5
Saul Supovitz	7
Jacob Olstein	7
Hillel Passerman	9
Abe Tetenman	12
Milton Faiman	13
Jules Asher	15
Rabbi David Berent	15
Carl Supovitz	15
Reba Koss	16
Joseph Zidle	16
Shirley Goodman	18
Harold Shapiro	18
Mary Silverman	19
Benjamin Abromson	20
Marilyn I. Simonds	21
Mattis Kurzbart	23
Leonard Nemeth	24
Nathan Day	24
Betty N. Cohen	25
Carly Friedman	25
Rose Nussinow	25
Viola Kaufman	26
Poppy Traister	26
Irvin Tayman	28
Lillian Kutzen	29
Pearl Steinman	31
Lillian Zidle	31

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In appreciation

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To Juli White Smith in memory of her  
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