



Agudas Achim Newsletter

May 2022

E-mail: agudasachim@hvc.rr.com or Telephone (845) 439-3600

Save the date

May 6, 2022

7:00 PM Social Time with your beverage of choice

7:15 PM Sharp – Levin Music will start

7:30 PM Services

RABBI'S MESSAGE

1. Here we are again in that week between Holocaust Memorial Day, marking that Kingdom of Darkness between 1933 and 1945, and the day celebrating the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948. The terror and horror of the first, gives way to the hope and the promise of the second. They are together, the two most profound experiences in modern Jewish history.

Lately, since the beginning of the Russian attack on Ukraine, I've been thinking a lot of the one and a half million of our people who were slaughtered in the Ukraine during what was called the Holocaust of bullets at the beginning of WWII. I've seen as have you the millions of refugees pouring in terror into the welcoming countries to the west and south of their homeland. I've seen as have you the victims of genocide left behind by the withdrawing Russian criminals. We have been part of a worldwide effort to assist not only the refugees, but our government and its Allies are providing military supplies to assist the Ukrainians. It is our responsibility as Jews and as human beings, to do so now, and in the future.

Yet during this time, it's as if I've been aware of the looming spirit of our people, as if standing now as witness to all that had occurred. I first felt the presence of these "witnesses" in the opening week of the war when Russian missiles destroyed a television tower a suburb of Kyiv called Babi Yar. TV reports finally focused on a large menorah in a grassy clearing near the damaged tower. The cement candelabra was erected by Jewish contributions from around the world. The grassy clearing was originally a huge rocky gully. The Jewish community of Kyiv was told that they would be relocated for their own safety. Each was told to bring a suitcase and one object of value from their homes.

They were told that they would be marched out of Kyiv to awaiting transport. Thirty-three thousand were so gathered. After a few miles, their suitcases were taken away. Another stop, and their valuable items from home were taken away. Deep pits had been dug at the gap called Babi Yahir (grandma's crag.) At the last stop the Jews were told to take off their clothes (these would be warehoused and sent back to Germany) Then the SS killing battalions pushed the Jews, men, women and children, to the edges of the pits and murder them. 33 thousand, miraculously there were 29 survivors who fell or fainted into the pit, and later dug their way out. This scene was repeated all over Ukrainian in towns and villages until 1.5 million of our people were slaughtered there.

And the world looked away. Ordinary citizens, good people looked away, though unhappily so citizens came to watch the slaughter as entertainment. There are mass graves throughout the country, where grass has now covered the killing pits. And yet, I've been thinking, more and more, that two and three generations later, people whose ancestors ignored the plight of Jews in the Holocaust, have learned a lesson in history and refuse to look away today. They will not look away from the invasion of Ukrainian and her refugees. No, it is not a reason for our people to have been ignominiously slaughtered. There is no rationale or reason other than evil can triumph when good people look away, and fail to oppose it.

So, it will be on May 5th on Yom Ha atzmaut, Israel Independence Day, that the spirit of those who perished in that Kingdom of Darkness, the Six Million, was prevalent in 1948, and in all of the wars that followed to preserve the Jewish State. And so,

somehow, they speak to us still. Silently, they urge us to maintain our houses of worship and our institutions. They urge us to help forge the Jewish identity of our children and grandchildren. They urge us to make contributions of our money, and our effort to support all that sustains the Jewish People today. What are you going to do to help? Yes, we'll continue to support the many funds that support refugees, and those in the Ukraine. We listen to those silent voices from Babi Yar and other places. As they said at Mt Sinai in the wilderness, "Let us listen, and let us do." We shall not look on in silence.

2. Chevre,

On Shabbat, May 5th and 6th we will conduct what's referred to as a hybrid service. Many congregations have come back from Covid this way. On my doctor's advice, I will continue to conduct services on Zoom in May and will be seen in the Sanctuary via a screen. We have done this earlier at Max Blumenthal's Bar Mitzvah service. However, the addition is that The Levin's will be singing from the synagogue. (With proper social distancing.) therefore, services will be in person or on Zoom.

For Sasha Fairman's Bat Mitzvah on Shabbat, Sasha and I will conduct the service, as we have done throughout Covid, but Sasha and her family and guests will be in the Sanctuary at the Torah along with Tobi Innerfield, our educational director at her side. Richie Chiger, our b'nai mitzvah tutor will also join us on Zoom. As always members of the congregation are invited to join the Bat Mitzvah in person, or on Zoom.

While vaccinations and boosters are encouraged, there will be no checking of credentials at the door. However, congregants and guests are asked to wear masks, as we ride through what we pray will be a continued diminution of the pandemic.

I am so grateful to our President, Judy Siegel, for arranging for all of the components necessary for this hybrid service, and for guiding us through these testing times. I look forward to be able to join you in real time, soon.

Love
Rabbi Fred Pomerantz

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Anyone that has visited Livingston Manor in the last 5 years will tell you that they are startled by the change. Shops, restaurants, breweries, visitors.... it's quite a transformation. And through the change, Agudas Achim is still holding 'steady as she goes.' That has everything to do with each person reading this article and many, many others. Those of you reading this are both part of the foundation and part of the future. For more than 100 years the Jews of Livingston Manor have provided a fabric that is wound through the history of our congregation, and I believe that is the source of the spirit and strength of Agudas Achim. It's a concern that there are fewer and fewer of us that know what that history is.

Marc Switko's family was an integral part of that foundation. The Switko family ran Sand Lake House in Shandalee. Cousin Alan Fishman ran Central Pharmacy with his Uncle Sam Colin and before him, his father Jack ran the pharmacy. Lillian Fishman, Helen Switko, Alan, Jack and Sam were all active members of Agudas Achim throughout their lives. Sadly, a few weeks ago we announced Marc's passing at 56 years of age. Social media was flooded with tributes to him; "acclaimed drummer, gong musician, friend, teacher", "Marc blessed so many through his love of art, vibrational healing and his ability to hold space." Marc was not an observant Jew or an active member of Agudas Achim but, his roots are with us and we grieve for the family wishing them sincere condolences as they struggle with their loss.

The Switko/Fishman history in Livingston Manor is quickly fading from memory. Similarly, the names and stories of others that helped build our community like the Schwartzs, the Weiners, the Adlers, the Nelsons, the Brooks, the Sorkins, and so many other families in Livingston Manor are told by just a handful of people that live here now. When we leave those names and stories will leave with us.

Do you want to help us preserve this history? Do you have a story to share now? Some knowledge or memories of these and other Livingston Manor families? Please send me an email and share your piece(s) of history. Send the request on to family and friends. Be a part of preserving our history for the future.

L' Shalom,

Judy Siegel, President
Jsiegel523@gmail.com
845-798-0783

SECURITY

As we prepare to open for live services in May we are faced with the need for some 21st Century measures. The dilemma is how to provide safety while maintaining our open-door policy and the spirit that makes Agudas Achim so special. With that balance in mind; we have installed more secure doors, cameras and upgraded our alarms. Like most congregations today we will have a professional armed guard during services and we are in regular communication with the NYS Police and the Sheriff's department regarding our operating schedule. It can't be stressed enough that we have no direct cause for concern. Both police agencies have reassured us that such is the case. However, it's important that we do everything we can to provide a secure environment so that all those in attendance feel safe.

COVID PROTOCOLS

Covid concerns change regularly and the necessary protocols need to change with them. While not required, we ask that those attending services in person be considerate of those that have health concerns and be vaccinated. As a consideration to those attending, we will require that everyone wear a mask during services. NOTE: Due to ongoing covid concerns the decision regarding live attendance of Rabbi Pomerantz and our Cantorial Duo will remain fluid.

HOPEful INFORMATION

During the Pandemic Hope Blecher moved to Liberty as a year-round resident and we are fortunate that that she has joined us at Agudas Achim. Hope contributes regularly through her blog to the Time of Israel and Hadassah. She shares that blog with us as well! You can access her article at <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/how-a-teachers-decision-sparks-debate/>

Message from the Levins:

As the flowers in our yard struggle against bitter temperatures, winds and rain, Spring still strives making its slow, but sure, way. Similarly, we continue to see the courage of the people in the Ukraine, hear the rising voices of peace from our own nation and become more aware of the capacity of the human spirit to overcome oppression. Every voice is needed.

Our friend, Susan Katz, was inspired to produce a documentary about the daring human angels who rescued 600 children from a kindergarten in Amsterdam during WWII. The documentary trailer is narrated by author, Mitch Albom and we were honored to be asked to contribute to the instrumental soundtrack. You can learn more and see the trailer at <https://angelsofamsterdamfilm.com/> The continued effort to keep these stories alive are more important than ever.

Within our own community, this is brought home to us by our coming together for the first time since the pandemic began. We are fortunate to be celebrating with a Bat Mitzvah and singing the songs of both Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom HaShoah. This truly signifies the dynamic we are living with this Spring of 2022. We hope you will join us, celebrating rites of passage and strengthening these important stories and voices. Whether online or in house, we will be raising the roof and sing out loud so they can be heard. See you soon. With love, Ira and Julia

Jewish Education News

About a week after Passover ends, we enter the Hebrew month of Iyyar. It is in Iyyar that we have 3 separate days of commemoration and celebration of Israel. At the end of the Passover Seder we say in unison, *L'Shanah Haba'ah Bi Yerushalayim*, Next Year in Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the capital of Israel has been in existence for over 3000 years. I remember in 1996 the year we celebrated Jerusalem's 3000th anniversary receiving a sheet of souvenir stamps, which I still have, with each of the gates in the center portion of the sheet in beautiful color. Circling those is an illustration of Jerusalem printed all in gold. The sheet itself is strikingly beautiful. Yet that is only a flat image. When I was in Israel, I stood at a distance, and looked at the sun setting over Jerusalem as it illuminated the city, as the rays of the sun reflected from the Jerusalem stone from which most buildings were made. The city itself was glowing gold. If you have been to Israel, you know, you understand. It is breathtaking. It is no wonder that Jerusalem is called "Jerusalem of Gold". Israel celebrates Jerusalem Day, *Yom Yerushalayim* on 28 Iyyar. Earlier in the month, 3 Iyyar is *Yom HaZikaron*, the Day of Remembrance. This is Israel's Memorial Day, it the day of national remembrance in Israel to commemorate all the soldiers and people who lost their lives during the struggle to defend the State of Israel. Twice a day, once at 8 pm when the day begins, and again at 11 am, a siren sounds for 60 seconds. As soon as the siren is heard, Israeli citizens stop whatever they're doing, wherever they are, and stand for the duration of the siren to honor those they've lost. People driving on highways stop their cars in the middle of the road to get out and stand in remembrance.

As *Yom HaZikaron* ends, *Yom HaAtzma'ut*, Israel's Independence Day begins. We go in a moment from a solemn day of mourning to a day of joy and celebration. On 4 Iyyar the whole country and Jews around the world celebrate the formation of the State of Israel. This ancient country will be 74 years old this May.

Students in the Hebrew School will be winding down their classes, with their last official day on May 24th. Families will be celebrating Israel and the holiday of Shavuot with 2 in-person programs. (More on Shavuot in the June Bulletin.)

Please join us at Temple or by zoom for our 2 upcoming B'nai Mitzvah. Sasha Fairman will become at Bat Mitzvah on Shabbat, May 7th, and Harlan Kuckelman will become a Bar Mitzvah on Shabbat, June 4th. We are very proud of them. Mazel Tov to them and to their entire extended families.

Shalom u'Verachah ~ Peace and Blessings

Tobi Innerfield, Director of Education

Happy Birthday

Shirley Schwartz 5/3

Vinny Simkin 5/11

Jack Strassman 5/12

Judith Levine 5/14

Michelle Ordynans 5/14

Jeremy Gorelick 5/15

Ron Hirshon 5/17

Patrice Held 5/18

Hannah Nadeau 5/25

Barbara Schmitt 5/26

Mike Uretsky 5/28



Our May 7th Bat Mitzvah: Sasha Fairman

Our apologies for leaving Sasha's picture out of the April Newsletter.

Sasha is so excited to be celebrating her Bat Mitzvah at Agudas Achim. She is the daughter of members Samantha and Tom Fairman. Sasha is so grateful her immediate family and friends are flying or driving in to celebrate with her. For her Bat Mitzvah project, Sasha and her friend, Miller made different candles and are selling them to raise money for the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum. Sasha enjoys rock climbing, doing aerial silks and learning Jiu Jitsu. Sasha loves playing video games, piano, and hanging out with friends and her cousins!



Our June 4th Bar Mitzvah: Harlan Kuckelman

Harlan Kuckelman is 13 years old and lives in Brooklyn, with his father, Sol, and mother, Linda, and his sister, Wren (9yrs old), and brother, Niels (7 yrs old). Harlan is finishing up his 8th grade and final year at the Hannah Senesh Community Day School in Brooklyn. Next year, he will be attending high school at Brooklyn Friends.

He enjoys playing Warhammer, tennis, basketball and is in a youth acting ensemble called Tada! in the NY City. He is looking forward to his Bar Mitzvah in June at Agudas Achim and celebrating with friends and family.

UPCOMING SHABBAT SERVICES

May 6, 2022	Gather at 7:00 (Music 7:15 pm Sharp - Levins begin welcoming the Sabbath) LIVE SERVICES beginning at 7:30 PM A zoom link will be provided for anyone that cannot or prefers not to attend in person. HINT: it is the same every month
May 7, 2022	Bat Mitzvah of Sasha Fairman
June 3, 2022	Gather at 7:00 (Music 7:15 pm Sharp - Levins begin welcoming the Sabbath) LIVE SERVICES beginning at 7:30 PM A zoom link will be provided for anyone that cannot or prefers not to attend in person. HINT: it is the same every month
June 4, 2022	Bar Mitzvah of Harlan Kuckelman

CONGREGATIONAL UPDATES

- Sprucing up; Put it on your calendar...we'll be having a garden work bee on **June 12th at 1 PM**. Bring some gardening gloves and tools and join the fun!
- We'll be hosting a table at the Livingston Manor Trout Parade
- Spring opening: though we had hoped to open our doors 'live' in April, the decision was made to push that opening back one month. Join us May 6th for the first time we open our doors since December of 2019! We will have a virtual service as well.
- We're reaching out...we will have a table at the **June 11th Trout Parade** so that we can introduce Congregation Agudas Achim to the community. If you would like to join us and be part of the outreach, drop us a note at virtualshabbat@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to those of you that have become members or maintained your membership this year. We have a number of new members and most members have renewed. Every one of you is valued and treasured.

DONATIONS

Our in-person contact (and thus our fundraising efforts) is limited. Our philosophy has always been to maintain low dues and keep an open-door policy so that anyone can join us in person when available or now virtually. But that philosophy depends on generous donations from people like you. Please consider donating to Congregation Agudas Achim ... no amount is too large or too small! You can donate and designate it to one of the following:

Building fund
Cemetery fund
Endowment fund
Mailing costs
Mitzvah fund
Tzedakah fund

or consider making a donation in honor or memory of a friend, a loved one or someone you care about with a lasting memorial donation by purchasing an honorary:

Chair \$36
Rosh Hashanah Prayer Book \$36
Yom Kippur Prayer Book \$36

BEST WAY TO DONATE:

By Check: mail to PO Box 714, Livingston Manor, NY 12758

By Credit Card website (congregationagudasachim.org) and click donate now

WANT TO BE INVOLVED ?

Are you interested in becoming involved in the direction of Agudas Achim? We really don't ask too much of your time but anything you want to give will be appreciated. Just let us know! Send me an email or text or write to virtualshabbat@gmail.com We would love to hear from you.

Thank you for your donation

Larry & Carolyn Richman

Building fund

Dan & Linda Berkowicz
Sheila Skolnik

Cemetery fund

Shirley & Neil Schwartz

In memory of Shirley Newman

Allan Fisher & Andrea Newman

New window

Dan & Linda Berkowicz

Rosh Shashanah Prayer Book
In memory of Howard White

Steve & Suzanne White