

Ezra-Habonim, the Niles Township Jewish Congregation
SISTERHOOD CORNER—January, 2024

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From the President's Desk...

As we prepare to leave behind the year 2023 and look forward to entering 2024, we invite you to join some travel opportunities in the spring with Women's League and the Central Great Lakes Region (CGLR)!

Learn about the Jewish fight for Civil Rights and the leaders who helped shape the movement. How did it help create fundamental changes in this country? Join Women's League as we learn about the brave freedom fighters and tour significant civil rights sites in Georgia and Alabama. This unique opportunity will take place from March 11-13, 2024.

Grab your sunglasses and join others from the CGLR for our spring conference which will take place in Cincinnati, Ohio from April 7-9. "Beyond the Eclipse" will feature unique workshops such as exploring the power within the duet of music and prayer. Learn how to craft beautiful Shabbat candles and delve into the Jewish traditions surrounding the moon! Examine the many facets of domestic violence. The above are just some of the activities that will be held there. Please contact either of us for more information on either or both of the above.

We look forward to having you all join us for our winter programs which will be held only on Zoom. Our January Zoom will be presented by Helene Herman, a well-known lecturer for lifelong learning programs in universities throughout Florida. This presentation will be "The Ancient and Modern Kingdom of Morocco, a 'Mecca' for Jews". On February 7th, local author Susan Van Dusen will join us (on Zoom) for a conversation on her newest book—*Poisoned Passover*.

We wish you all a wonderful beginning to 2024, filled with good health, much happiness and enriching experiences.

L'Shalom, Judy Frank and Diane Rosenfeld

News and Notes...

Be a media mogul! A \$5 contribution makes you a sponsor of our Sisterhood Bulletin.

Please mail your contributions to:
Judy Arkin c/o EHNTJC Sisterhood
4500 Dempster Street • Skokie, IL 60076

Our Media Moguls this month are:

Esther Berman,

Joan Cook

(in honor of grandson

Andrew Russell Kaplan's birthday),

Carol Friedlander

(in honor of the birth of great-grandson

Jordan Nathan Kripke),

Fran Givertz

(in honor of my family and friends),

Miriam Goldberger,

Mickey Gordon

(in honor of my children, grandchildren

and great-grandchildren),

Bobbie Levin, Dori Marks,

Esther Manewith

(in honor of our grandchildren),

Ada Rabinowitz and Judi Stein

DATES TO REMEMBER...

by Judy Arkin - Programming V.P.

Wednesday, January 10th at 1:00 p.m. (ZOOM)

Helene Herman presents

**"The Ancient and Modern Kingdom of Morocco –
a 'Mecca' for Jews".**

Wednesday, January 31st at 10:30 a.m. (ZOOM)

(DATE CHANGE) Sisterhood Book Club

Wednesday, February 7th at 1:00 p.m. (ZOOM)

**Susan Van Dusen will discuss her newest book—
Poisoned Passover.....see enclosed flyer**

**A BIG WELCOME to our new
Sisterhood Member:
Belle Holman**

Our Sisterhood is an affiliate of



WE WISH new YOU A HAPPY



*You can't be brave if you've only had
wonderful things happen to you...*

Mary Tyler Moore

Good and Welfare...

- **Condolences** to Bobbie Levin on the passing of her husband, Dr. Stuart Levin.
- **Condolences** to Jackie Lauwasser on the passing of her son-in-law, Josh Little.

Sisterhood Judaica Gift Shop

by Ada Rabinowitz - Ways & Means V.P.

Please check out the gift shop with our new merchandise including interesting sweatshirts and jean jackets for the cold winter months.

Call Judy Frank at (847)530-4572 with any questions.

Remember, supporting our Sisterhood supports our Synagogue.

Our next BOOK CLUB will be on Wednesday, January 31st at 10:30 a.m. on ZOOM to discuss "Signal Fires" by Dani Shapiro

Returning to the form that launched her career, the author writes a riveting, deeply felt novel that examines the ties that bind families together – and the secrets that can break them apart. This work of haunting beauty should provide us with an opportunity for an engaging discussion!

Our third book club discussion will give us a Sephardi perspective on the immigrant experience. Join us on **ZOOM on March 20th at 10:30 a.m.** when we will discuss **"Kantika: A Novel"** by Elizabeth Graver.

Kantika—"song" in Ladino—is a remarkable, lyrical work that conjures and embellishes the journey of the author's grandmother Rebecca from Istanbul to Barcelona, Havana to New York. It is a beautiful work of historical fiction that tells the epic tale of a modern Sephardic family with sensitivity and cultural responsibility. Exploring identity, place and exile, it recovers a vanishing history, animates a rich range of characters, and is an inspiring mediation on the tenacity of women.

Carol Gottlieb and Dolly Zavell
Book Club Chairs

Education Corner:

"Tu B'Shvat and Our World"

by Dr. Susan Boldrey

On Pesach, we ask, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" This year – 2023 / 5784 –we are reflecting upon why **THIS** Tu B'Shvat is different from all other Tu B'Shvats...Sadly, we know the answers; they are like daggers in our hearts and in our land. After all, Tu B'Shvat is the Jewish new year for trees.

We've learned that we, like trees, are nurtured by our deep roots as far back as Sarah and Abraham. We reach up to heavens; we stand firmly on the ground; we produce fruits...Israel's rainy season begins with Sukkot. It takes four months of rain to saturate the soil and nurture trees to produce fruits. In Genesis, we know that G-d planted fruit-bearing trees before any other creations. In the Talmud, we learn that parents used to plant trees when babies were born: a cedar for girls and a pine for boys. These trees represented hope for their children to plant roots, grow and blossom.

Tu B'Shvat is January 24-25, 2024 which corresponds to the 15th day of Shvat. Knowing that the national tree of Israel is the olive tree, we add to Tu B'Shvat's celebration seven species: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, dates and olive oil. Jews can celebrate with a "seder" to capitalize upon the impact of trees in Judaism. Tu B'Shvat's message for us and for future generations remains an echo of my father's comment that planting trees is an act of faith. He said, "I won't see the fruits, but I plant trees for the future generations." Each tree that bears fruit offers us shade and offers a niche for birds, insects and more. Each tree or grove of trees is the result of someone who thought of us and of the future. These thoughts join together with the natural reseeding of trees around the world. *"Etz Chaim!"*

This year, as the long days of war color our thoughts and hopes, Tu B'Shvat's preparation and harvests are different. Young and not-so-young people, who aren't on the front lines or in a Magen David Adom rescue service, have begun harvesting thousands of fruits and vegetables since "Black Shabbat" on October 7, 2023. Since Simchas Torah 5784, we've seen them on farms, in fields, and in barns milking cows. In a sense, celebrating the earth is exactly what Tu B'Shvat is all about! This has become an environmental holiday: an ecological awareness day.

Planting trees in Israel has been a major campaign of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) since 1901. More than 260,000,000 trees have been planted in Israel. Many of us remember the blue JNF box in which we donated our hopeful coins. We all hoped to actually see our trees in Eretz Medinat Yisrael some day! We still cling to that hope: *"Ha Tikvah" v' Shalom.*

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