

*Rabbi's Column - TuB'Shvat*

**Your New President's First Address!**

*Chinese New Year - Shabbat Style*

*Vegan Cheese - Cringe or Binge?*

**So Many Events!**

# FJCC NEWSLETTER

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## *January 2022 is TuB'Shvat month!*

"Tu" is a pronunciation of the Hebrew letters for the number 15, and it falls in the Hebrew month of "Shvat," which parallels January and/or February. We celebrate Tu BeShvat joyously. We have a seder and eat tasty foods. But, 2,000 years ago, in Israel, Tu BeShvat was a tax day. The Torah established that the land was a gift from God and that we are tenants on God's land. So, every year we showed our gratitude by paying taxes from the produce for the land to the Temple in Jerusalem.

For different seasonal products, there were different dates established as the tax, of fiscal, year. The Rabbis

called all these dates Rosh HaShanah, "New Years," and there were four of them. The one in the winter is Tu B'Shvat, the New Year for Trees. This date was originally just a date for the end of the tax year for fruit trees. There were no rituals associated with it. However, trees and their fruits were very important and symbolic to the Rabbis. The mystics of Safed enhanced this holiday with a special meal, a Tu B'Shvat Seder. Twentieth century Zionist educators made it a tree planting holiday to help redeem the land.

Tree-planting teaches delayed gratification and the important role of human effort in bringing about redemption, rather than waiting for the sudden appearance of a

messiah. Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, who lived in Jerusalem when the Romans were sacking it, said: "If you have a sapling in your hand and are told, 'Look, the Messiah is here!' You should first plant the sapling and only then go out to welcome the Messiah."

What an amazing notion: the world is at the point of ultimate redemption, but first..., plant that sapling! What more important lesson can we learn for our lives today. As Noam Zion writes in "Seder Tu B'Shvat," Tu B'Shvat is the type of holiday each generation is invited to add its own ripples and wrinkles. Let us add ours, and re-commit to God's command to be good tenants of the earth on which we live.

### **It is my pleasure to introduce the congregation to the newly-elected Executive Board:**

**President - Sharon Rednor**

**1st Vice President - Jonathan Nemeth**

**2nd Vice President - Bruce Kamich**

**3rd Vice President - Kim Muller**

**Treasurer - Jonathan Weitz**

**Secretary - Nadine Milecofsky**

**Immediate Past President - Bruce Moskovitz**

I thank all our Board of Trustee members and Executive Committee members for serving, for supporting my presidency and inspiring me, and for bringing passion, intellect, and experience to their service. These two years have been exhausting, yet challenging, particularly with the decisions to assure the health of our community and for keeping our congregants engaged. Sharon Rednor will be a superb leader given her consistent devotion to making the FJCC and warm and welcoming space and her extensive involvement in nearly every program of the FJCC. Please join me in wishing her strength and wisdom over the coming year.

I also thank our dedicated leadership and staff. I am grateful for the close relationship and assistance from Rabbi Cohen; I couldn't ask for a better partner. Thank you Deborah Kesselhaut for your responsiveness to our members and me. Thank you Karen Walsh, our Hebrew School teachers, and the Nursery School staff for your commitment to our children, for your resiliency and your flexibility.

*Bruce Moskovitz*  
Immediate Past President

## President's Letter

Happy 2022! With the turn of the secular year, comes a newly elected FJCC Board of Trustees. Thank you to our outgoing President, Bruce Moskovitz, who led the FJCC valiantly through the maze of difficult issues related to Covid. Congratulations to our new third Vice President, Kim Muller and the entire 2022 Board. I greatly appreciate your continued commitment to the FJCC and look forward to an engaging year ahead.

As the new President, I'll take this opportunity to introduce myself to those who do not know me, and reintroduce myself to those I have had the pleasure of knowing over the past 23 years. Here goes my attempt to sum up my life in 200 words.

I grew up in Allentown PA with my parents, two sisters and a sweet dog. We attended an Orthodox shul where I was a reluctant Hebrew school student until we joined a Reform temple with welcoming, friendly kids. As a family, we were constantly traveling and visiting friends. So, by the time I finished high school we had been many places -- DC, the Wisconsin Dells, Disney, the Grand Canyon, Mexico, Canada, Yugoslavia, and Israel to name just a few. After studying in New York, working in Chicago, and attending graduate school in Philadelphia, the Federation hired me to develop community programs in Israel, so I was on the move again. My community in Israel was a warm, social environment so in a very short time I made hundreds of friends and I learned basic conversational Hebrew. Unfortunately, after a year in Israel, my father became terminally ill and I moved back to the US to be near him in his final few months.

Professionally, I am trained in public health. I started out teaching at Temple University and moved on to working as an infectious disease epidemiologist. Finally, I found the right fit planning HIV/AIDS prevention programs throughout New Jersey. I took a long break while I raised my children, and a few years ago started working for the US Census Bureau.

My husband, Austin, and I live in Readington and we have three 20-something children, Marjorie, Matthew and Ethan. As many of you know, I had a daughter, Miriam, who died as an infant. We moved here and joined the FJCC in 1998. Shortly after, my children were enrolled at the FJCC Nursery School and Hebrew School. I am reluctant to speak for them, but I'd guess that some of their fondest memories are of the activities they shared with their FJCC friends.

Now that I am a newly crowned "empty nester," I look forward to leading the FJCC Board. It will be a group effort, but I am hoping we can move through the tunnel of Covid seclusion and return to vibrant services and engaging in-person activities. One of my highest priorities is enhancing the warm FJCC environment and encouraging meaningful relationships between our members, while learning, exploring spiritually and having fun. The idea is expressed so well in "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupery.

"Goodbye," said the fox. "Here is my secret. It's quite simple: One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes. . . . It's the time that you spent on your rose that makes your rose so important. . . . People have forgotten this truth," the fox said, "But you mustn't forget it. You become responsible for what you've tamed. You're responsible for your rose. . . ."

I am just a text or phone call away. I'd love to hear from you!

**Sharon Rednor**

*FJCC President*

**JANUARY 28TH  
6:00 PM**

**CHINESE NEW  
YEAR SHABBAT  
STYLE!**

Register By  
January 18th

\$18/ Family

Chinese Style  
Shabbat Dinner

Vegetarian Option  
by Request

Hay and Vav Classes will lead  
Services at 7:30 PM

This event is  
supported by a  
grant from the  
Jewish Federation  
of Somerset,  
Hunterdon and  
Warren Counties

Register After  
January 18th

\$25/ Family

**REGISTER NOW**



(BEFORE  
JANUARY  
18TH)!

## HEBREW SCHOOL

JANUARY WILL BE A BUSY MONTH IN HEBREW SCHOOL. WE START THE MONTH OFF WITH ZOOM SHABBAT AND END THE WITH THE HAY AND VAV CLASS SERVICE. IN BETWEEN THERE WILL BE AN ONLINE HEBREW SCHOOL HAVDALAH AND A FAMILY-CONGREGATION ZOOM TU B'SHEVAT.

IN DECEMBER WE COMPLETED OUR WINTER COAT DRIVE. THE STUDENTS COLLECTED TZEDAKAH FOR THE FIRST FEW MONTHS OF HEBREW SCHOOL AND PURCHASED EIGHT NEW WINTER COATS THAT WERE DONATED TO UNITED WAY. WHEN WE RETURN IN JANUARY, WE WILL START OUR ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE. INSTEAD OF BRINGING MONEY TO FILL OUT TZEDAKAH BOXES, THE STUDENTS WILL BRING NONPERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS. OUR GOAL IS TO COLLECT 360 ITEMS BETWEEN JANUARY 5<sup>TH</sup> AND MARCH 20<sup>TH</sup>.

# Contributions

## Building Fund

- Marsha & Zelic Gerstein
  - Linda & Jerrold Atlas - in memory of Calvin Kanter, beloved brother of Linda Atlas
  - in honor of Sharon & Kenneth Brooks
  - in honor of Dr. & Mrs. Ken Blankstein
  - in honor of Jeffrey & Robin Alexander
  - in honor of Alissa & James Fox



## Family Promise Fund

- Leslie Reid-Green - in honor of Bella Solomon
- Jonathan & Pamela Nemeth - in memory of Harriet & Marvin Nemeth
- Alexa Parliyan - The Or Chadash Reform Congregation would like to support the FJCC during their hosting week of Family Promise, Dec 19-26
- Cathie & Arthur Wetstein - in honor of Dr. Bruce Moskowitz: "Thanks for your hard work for the shul."

## General Fund

- Yvonne Magala - in honor of the FJCC
- Suzanne & Frederick Rothstein - in memory of Sue's mother, Lillian Volowitz; Rick's mother, Mildred Rothstein Cohen; and Sue's grandfather, Morris Triber
- Nancy Shatkin - in honor of Laurence Shatkin: "Greatly loved and missed by Nancy, Lydia, Jaidev and Rahm."

## Hebrew School Fund

- Barbara & Mitch Clarin - in memory of Linda Goldstein, beloved mother of Andrea and wife of Richard

## Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

- Linda & Jerrold Atlas
  - in memory of Calvin Canter, beloved brother of Linda
  - in memory of Dr. Richard Chapman, beloved husband of Amimi Chapman
- Dale & Brian Sperling
  - Rabbi Cohen! In appreciation of time and care spent getting the Sperlings their mikvahs.
  - in memory of Linda Goldstein. We are sorry for your loss and wish you much comfort as you mourn. Brian & Dale.
- Liz & Howard Spinowitz - in memory of Linda Goldstein, beloved mother of Andrea and wife of Richard; may her memory be for a blessing.



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*Our goal is to open the gift shops on Sundays -*  
*click here to help us!* 



## Vegan Cheese

### Cringe or Binge?

If you're vegan, or paleo or dairy-intolerant, you want to keep kosher and have the sensation of a "cheeseburger" without breaking kashrut...or you just stay away from dairy, you may have been tempted to try vegan cheese. Any walk through the "healthy" section of a grocery store might find you standing in front of a mega selection of dairy alternatives. There are the various cheeses made from nut milks (cashew or soy, for example), but there are also cheeses made from hemp, oats, and rice, as well as others.

So what's a non-dairy eater to do? First, you can try your own taste test with some of these readily available brands found at groceries in the area:

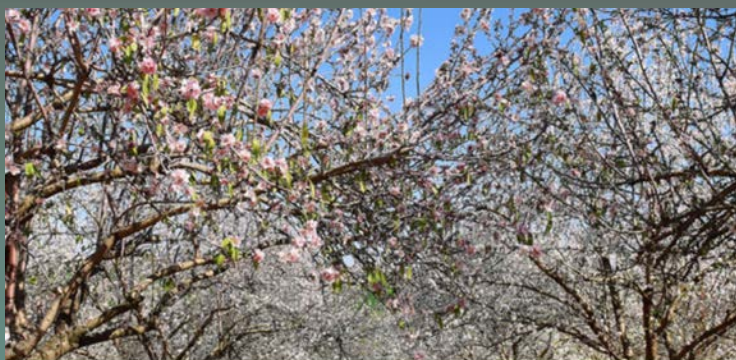
- Chao (sold at Wegmans, packaged as a block or sliced)
- Go Veggie! (sold at ShopRite and Wegmans; cream cheese and shredded versions)
- Miyoko's (sold at Wegmans; variety of various flavors and preparations, including cream cheese and sliced)
- Violife (sold at various grocery stores; comes in sliced, block and shredded cheeses in various flavors)

OR - you can let someone do the work for you...like, [Women's Health magazine](#), which taste-tested 80 vegan cheese brands and concluded which were the best 15!

So the verdict is this: If it were 2010, vegan cheese might be a decision based on strict diets or religious orthodoxy, because back then the alternatives were, well, maybe one brand (Daiya comes to mind). Now, vegan cheese has come a long way. Competition and a desire for healthier living has increased the alternative and health-minded choices that are available to us, and that means their competition is now actual cheese. So, if you haven't given vegan cheese a try before, check it out and write to the editor to let us know what you think! Happy sampling!







## TU B'SHEVAT SEDER

ON ZOOM  
SUNDAY, JANUARY 16TH AT 10:30 AM

We will send you a Tu B'Shevat handout,  
shopping list and zoom link the first week in  
January

CENTER  
SERIES

## Storytelling Shabbat Fri, Jan 14



### Share A Memory or Anecdote

Stories should be between 3-5 minutes



Contact **Mona Shapiro** by Jan 2  
monajudith@aol.com



## Havdalah & Klezmer

Saturday  
February 26  
After Shabbat

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SERIES

Saturday, January 29

## Shabbat Lunch & Learn

featuring our very own

### Bruce Moskovitz, MD

So you want to be a guinea pig?

Clinical trials:  
from the laboratory to marketed drugs



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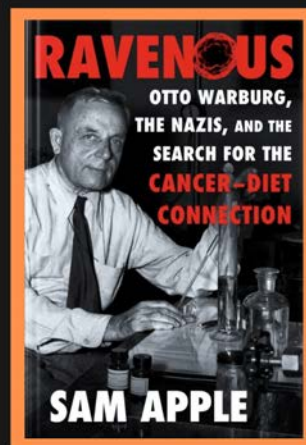


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Author

## Sam Apple

Sunday, Feb 27  
12 Noon



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*with*  
**Rabbi Cohen**



**Thursdays**  
**11:00-12:30**  
**Begins Sept. 30**



## BIRTHDAYS

		12 Scott Byne Lois Gross		25 Evelyn Stern
		12 Audrey Riche Dena Scibilia		28 Julie Cass Deborah Ort Lydia Shatkin
1 Jacob Rudolph		14 Tina Martoccia		28 Maria Shepard Nathan Treinish
2 Jeffrey Gold		16 Jack Daniels Jason Holley		30 Chloe Stein
3 Ariel Hylton		17 Katelynn Jampel		31 Rita Lefkow
4 Samuel Freed Kenneth Stern		18 Laurie Rapkin		
5 Elle Martoccia		19 Julianne Gallina		
7 Arnold Kushnick		21 Kenneth Brooks Suzanne Rothen		
8 Nathaniel Silberman		22 Zelic Gerstein		
9 Melonie Ezra		24 Sarah Frank Larry Hilzer Loren Hurwitz Abbey Mondshein		
10 Stacey Gould				
11 Mr. Ronald Ort Victoria Wolf				
12 Barbara Batt				

## ANNIVERSARIES

Daniel Wasserman  
18  
Tina & Scott Martoccia

## YAHREZEITS

2 Max Wortman	9 Mrvin Nemeth Naida Wetstein	17 Norma Benimoff Maxine Blau	25 Murray Benimoff Alan Blankstein Martin Pavelich
3 Michael Berk Hyman david Friedman	11 Max Lerner Bernard Volowitz	19 Janice Luelling Sye Weinstein	26 Sanford Friedman George Jaconbson
4 Celia Levine	14 Florence Again Frank Kelly	21 Sidney Elsttein	27 Fannie Hayfer
5 Ruth Lee Wolfson	14 Juliette Wolf	22 Mary Large Ida Linsenbaum Bernice Simmons	28 Sally Eisinger Stein
7 Joseph Stern	15 Betty Hurwitz	23 Luba Frieman Joseph Hilzer	29 Samuel Gersh
8 David Lipsitz	16 Sarah Jaconbson Meyer Rosenberg	24 Beverly Kogan	31 Rosalin Zackowitz
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