When I wrote my last column, we were in the midst of a bad time. COVID cases in Minnesota were surging to their highest level during the pandemic, and the Electoral College vote had not yet quashed serious efforts to overturn the presidential election results. The daylight was dwindling, and the weather was cold.

Life feels much more hopeful now. The vaccinated future that beckoned like a fever-dream five months ago is becoming solid reality. As I write this, 56% of Minnesotans sixteen and older have received at least one COVID vaccine dose. Presidential transfer of power really happened. The Biden administration is committing the US to halving greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Derek Chauvin’s conviction offers hope and a spur onward in the fight to defend Black lives. The day of the verdict announcement, freshly-vaccinated Or Emet members carried our congregation’s banner at an interfaith vigil calling for justice for George Floyd.

The days are getting longer, and the grass and trees are turning green again. We see our hope mirrored in the springtime, awakening world.

Passover, the spring holiday, celebrates the rebirth of hope and joy. In the story we retell each year, liberation from slavery in Egypt is a rebirth that allows our ancestors to flourish. At the Or Emet Zoom Seder, I described how the Sefat Emet and other texts in rabbinic tradition connect Mitzraim (Egypt) with metzarim, narrow straits. Passover narrates a journey out of oppression and narrowness in Egypt into openness. I talked about how, over the week before the holiday, I watched my one-year-old daughter learn to squeeze between dining room chairs, making her own journey out of narrowness into openness. We have all been on a version of that journey over the last five months, moving out of narrow spaces into a widening world of possibility. We are getting unstuck.

Rabbi Sherwin Wine, Humanistic Judaism’s founder, expressed his philosophy of life in the following words, “Life without problems is a Utopian fantasy. It is divorced from the human condition... The meaningful life is not to get rid of problems. It is to live with them, confront them and sometimes win.”

Being unstuck — being free of problems — is not a permanent condition. But the last months have shown us our strength in navigating out of narrow straits. We can savor this springtime feeling of widening vistas while holding on to the knowledge of that strength. The coming summer will bring new challenges, but we are equipped to meet them. Like the Exodus story, finding our way back to openness is a drama that we can enact over and over again.
President’s Message
Passing the Baton
by Scott Chazdon

I’m pleased we’ve been able to keep our virtual door open during the pandemic.

Over the past year, we’ve accomplished quite a bit even as our ritual leader, Eva Cohen, nears completion of her rabbinic training.

We have:
• Presented excellent Shabbat and Sunday programs and tightened up our system for recording and uploading them to YouTube
• Conducted eleven oral history interviews so far with long-term members, funded by a $10,000 legacy grant through the Minnesota Historical Society
• Kept our Jewish Cultural School open, making the best of what we can do virtually
• Had a member create a meal train program and agree to lead our Caring Committee
• Started a post-b mitzvah youth club
• Begun planning for an adult b mitzvah program, starting in 2022

On a sad note, we marked the passing of our beloved co-founder, leader, and Madrikh, Harold Londer, with a meaningful memorial service on Zoom.

During the pandemic, our connections with each other have inevitably been diluted and distanced. We will have rebuilding to do. We haven’t been able to sing together or eat together, and this distance makes it easier to notice our differences rather than what we have in common. At our February Leadership Team meeting, we had a lively discussion about a new tagline recommended by a marketing firm to the Society for Humanistic Judaism: Meaningful Jewish community without God. Divisions arose among our members who are atheist and our members who are not.

I recently had a helpful conversation with Paul Golin, the executive director of the Society for Humanistic Judaism. He reinforced that these differences among our members are real and we have to keep working on inclusive messages about who we are. Nationally, the SHJ has finalized new Vision, Values, and Mission statements this year that I find very helpful and want to share (see article on page 8).

I hope that Or Emet can continue to excel in engaging us in reflection and action guided by this emphasis on human agency, Jewish cultural identity, community, inclusion, critical thinking and social justice.

It has been an honor to serve as president. As I pass the baton to the next leader, I will continue to enjoy being a member of this unique community and movement.
Jewish Cultural School Update
by Arty Dorman
Director of the Or Emet Jewish Cultural School

We are zooming in on the last Jewish Cultural School session of 2020-2021. The word “zoom” has rarely been more aptly used. Our entire school year has been on Zoom due to COVID-19. Gathering online has had benefits and disappointments. A few students shared what they liked and didn’t like about online JCS.

Rebekah, in JCS Littles Group for the first time this year, said, “I really like the little classes with just Peyton, Leela, me, and teacher Josh — it's a very calm group. I don't like the big class where it's all the people.” Lila, in the Juniors Group, liked not traveling to JCS and that parents were there to help. She didn’t like not seeing people and bringing her own supplies.

Other students liked being able to sleep later and at least one family was able to take part even while on vacation. As school director, I appreciated that attendance was excellent throughout the year.

From the b mitzvah prep group, Luc said, “I liked not having to get up early and go to Jewish school. But by not being there in person I was easily distracted. I felt a little bit isolated and I didn’t feel like I could make much of a connection/relationship with the kids or the teacher from the class. I didn’t like it.”

Luc certainly isn’t alone in feeling that online classes are not the same as being together. Still, we are grateful that technology has allowed us to meet and to continue learning during this challenging year.

As we plan for next year it is too soon to say if we can resume teaching in person. The possibility of outdoor classes in the fall is being considered. Stay tuned for announcements — and know that we will do our best to balance the best possible learning and socialization for students, including health and safety for all of us.

The limitations of Zoom have not kept us from having special celebrations this winter. At our Tu B’Shevat Seder, families put together their assortment of nuts, fruits, and juices. For Passover, classes worked with music specialist Sarah to learn the Four Questions and songs and the b mitzvah prep group prepared a Passover play. All were presented at Or Emet’s Passover Seder.

The Purim Carnival was the most fun. We started with students (and some adults) showing off costumes they donned to celebrate the holiday. Eva Cohen read the “The Queen Who Saved Her People” by Tilda Balsley. Instead of the usual request to mute speakers, all were encouraged to unmute and boo loudly every time the name Haman was read, resulting in delightful cacophony. Then we sang “Hag Purim” led by song-leader Sarah Berman-Young.

But what’s a carnival without games? Everyone divided into four Zoom breakout rooms, with a different game in each one. JCS teachers each hosted a game, rotating among all four rooms so every participant had a chance to play each game: Esther Says (a Purim twist on Simon Says), Tricky Book Balance, Scattergories, and Instant Costumes. And what’s a carnival game without prizes? After the carnival, a gift bag containing homemade hamantashen and other surprises was delivered to the home of every student who participated.

JCS student drawings

Rebekah’s matzah cover

Ilsa’s feeling of freedom after liberation from slavery

Ilana’s bonfire celebrates Lag B’Omer

For more information about Or Emet’s Jewish Cultural School, visit the School Blog on the Or Emet website oremet.org. Visitors are welcome to join JCS classes on Zoom. To arrange a visit, learn more about JCS, the Youth Program, and/or for JCS-related questions and issues, contact Arty Dorman at school-1@oremet.org.
HIAS “Welcome Congregation”
On March 5, Or Emet held a Refugee Shabbat service as part of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society’s (HIAS) Welcome Congregation program. SJ/SA committee members discussed the history and current status of our broken immigration and refugee system.

Initial reports and heart-warming stories from the border showed HIAS attorneys and San Diego Jewish Family Service staff processing asylum seekers after the Trump administration’s “send them back to Mexico policy.”

On May 3, in response to intense pressure, President Biden raised the refugee limit to 62,500 for the current FY. The Administration still must rebuild the resettlement infrastructure to ensure that it happens safely and quickly.

Local Legislation
The “driver’s licenses for all” bill is stalled in a MN House committee, despite support by Jewish organizations, legislators and business groups. The bill would allow undocumented immigrants to drive legally, obtain insurance, and travel to jobs that keep Minnesota’s economy strong. We will let you know if the situation changes and the bill needs our support.

Food and Personal Care Collections
The Or Emet Passover Food Drive (March 28) collected 365 pounds of food for St. Paul’s Neighborhood House. Thanks to households that served as collection sites: Alan & Sharon Miller, Shana Tanenbaum & Shauna Jurgemeyer, Dan Gladen & Naomi Rockler, Arty & Coleen Dorman. Neighborhood House appreciated our efforts with this note of gratitude, “Thanks to your support, fresh healthy food is accessible to immigrants, refugees, and low-income families…we are truly grateful.”

Or Emet members also donated several bags of personal care items (soap, shampoo, tooth brushes, socks…) to Listening House in St. Paul. Listening House is a daytime community center providing hospitality, practical assistance, and counsel to adults experiencing homelessness, poverty, or loneliness that comes from isolation.

Please note! Or Emet’s next food collection project is scheduled for Sunday, June 27 and will be directed to NorthPoint Health Service food pantry in North Minneapolis.

Pursuit for Justice: Chauvin guilty verdict
On April 20, Or Emet members — Barry Cohen, Arty Dorman, Allan Malkis, Jeff Pipes — joined nearly 2,000 people at George Floyd Square after the guilty verdicts for Derek Chauvin. The crowd, both celebratory and pensive, included other Jewish congregations, rabbis, and Jewish Community Action. As noted by the rally moderator after recitation of Kaddish by JCA organizer Enzi Tanner, “This is what unity looks like.”
The five months since my last update have passed quickly. Between rabbinic program coursework, acting as Or Emet’s ritual leader, and keeping up with my one-year-old daughter, life is busy!

As a rabbinical student at the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism (IISHJ), I have spent the last two semesters in course study focused on Second Temple Judaism, taught by Professor Gabriele Boccaccini of the University of Michigan. I am learning about the First Jewish-Roman War and the siege of Masada. The Second Temple period is fascinating. The theological diversity — and factionalism — that characterized Jewish life in this period in some ways parallels today’s diversity of Jewish movements and their conflicts.

I am also working on papers. In February I completed a translation and academic commentary on Qohelet 3, more commonly known as Ecclesiastes. This is the Bible chapter that begins with the famous line, “To everything, an appointed time, and a time for every matter under the heavens” (my translation). This paper fulfilled my final requirements for the Ancient Jewish History I-II course sequence. Several other papers are also in the works — stay tuned!

July and early August will be educationally jam-packed. I will be taking Rabbinic/Medieval Jewish History and Literature I-II, as well as Homiletics, writing effective sermons. I am excited to do more academic study of Talmud and to polish my ‘sermon’ writing skills! Or Emet’s ritual calendar has provided many opportunities to flex my ‘sermon’ writing muscles.

Some of the experiences that have been highlights for me include:

• Reworking our Tu B’Shevat Seder Haggadah to respond to climate change, and turning the Haggadah into an engaging PowerPoint designed for sharing on Zoom
• Enlisting b mitzvah student participation in January’s Shabbat service, and kvelling as Julius Sommer and family led us in song, Rei Dickson played meditation music on cello, and Neva Finestack led the Kiddush and HaMotzi blessings
• Moderating discussion during February’s excellent Shabbat program on promoting antiracism in public schools, and listening as youth and adult activists shared their experiences and learned from each other
• Collaborating with Social Justice/Social Action Committee members to organize Or Emet’s HIAS Refugee Shabbat
• Researching biblical, talmudic, and Freudian approaches to dream interpretation, and weaving this research into a commentary that I gave during the Shabbat service before Don Larsson’s terrific presentation on “Freud in Film”
• Leading Or Emet’s Passover Seder on Zoom for the second time, and drawing on experience from the previous year to improve
• Sharing my passion for the history of Ancient Israel through presenting on “Ancient Roots: Origins of the Israelite People and the Bible” with Allan Malkis during April’s Shabbat program

I am excited to continue as Or Emet’s ritual leader during the 2021-2022 program year, as widespread adult COVID vaccination allows return to some in-person activities. As we move toward full vaccine coverage — young children likely will not be vaccinated before early 2022 — I want us to explore options like holding services and events outdoors with masking to keep things safe and inclusive.

I am also excited to continue in my rabbinic program, working toward ordination in late 2022. As I get closer to completion, I need to carefully manage my time for completing papers, rabbinic internship, and thesis. Your continuing support as I juggle all this is much appreciated!

Editor’s note: In addition to being Or Emet’s ritual leader, Eva teaches the b mitzvah prep class, coaches candidates, and officiates at the b mitzvah services.
A CALL FOR ACTION!

The Nominations Committee will present the recommended slate noted below for election to Or Emet’s 2021-2022 Executive Committee. Additional candidates can be nominated from the floor during the election on June 6 at the Annual Meeting. The offices of president, vice-president, and treasurer are elected annually. Two at-large members of the Executive Committee serve two-year terms and are usually elected in alternate years. Both positions are open this year because Seth Binder, currently an at-large member, is becoming treasurer.

This year we need candidates for president, vice-president, treasurer, and at-large positions. The committee found that the recommended candidates have the necessary skills and interest to step into leadership positions. Happily they are willing to make the time to serve our community and to attend to matters that support Or Emet’s spiritual and intellectual life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slate of candidates</th>
<th>Nominations Committee Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President: Allan Malkis</td>
<td>Scott Chazdon</td>
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<td>Vice-President: Jeff Pipes</td>
<td>Allan Malkis</td>
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<td>Treasurer: Seth Binder</td>
<td>Richard Logan</td>
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<td>At-Large: Risa Cohen</td>
<td>Rachel Wexelbaum</td>
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<td>At Large: Tammy Bloom</td>
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Annual meeting-related events

Pre-Annual Meeting Havdalah on June 5

~~ Pre-Annual Meeting Havdalah ~~
Saturday | June 5 | Keller Regional Park in Maplewood
Gather at 6:30 pm | Havdalah service at 7:00 pm
Dessert and snacks provided | BYO beverage and chairs or blanket to sit on
Masks required
Outdoor games after Havdalah

Annual Meeting on June 6

OR EMET ANNUAL MEETING OFFICIAL NOTICE
Sunday, June 6, 2021 | 10:00 am – 12:00 noon
~ Final Jewish Cultural School session will meet concurrently with annual meeting ~

ANNUAL MEETING AND JCS — VIA ZOOM

Agenda includes:
— President and rabbinic candidate’s remarks
— JCS teacher recognition
— Overview of 2020-2021 accomplishments
— Financial report with 2021-2022 budget
— Volunteer recognition and recruitment
— Election of 2021-2022 officers and at-large executive committee members

~~~~~~~~~~~~
Zoom activities after conclusion of the meeting and JCS classes
For Humanistic Jews, a b mitzvah is a coming of age ceremony to acknowledge adolescence and a desire to become more responsible for their decisions and actions. It is also a way to connect to past generations of the Jewish people. With the latter in mind, Or Emet has decided to make b mitzvahs available for adult members. Or Emet’s Ritual Committee has the task to develop an adult b mitzvah program that will formally begin in the 2022-23 season.

In an informal survey of members attending our February Leadership Team meeting, five people expressed interest in participating in an adult b mitzvah program within the next one to five years.

We are also learning from the Oral History Project interviews of similar interest from some members who did not experience a bar/bat mitzvah in their youth. You may want to consider an adult b mitzvah too.

Why an adult b mitzvah? Here are some possible reasons:

• It is never too late for those who did not have a bar/bat mitzvah as an adolescent
• It is a way for those who have come to identify themselves as Jewish to engage in a formal program of study and ceremony
• It is a chance for those who may have had a traditional (deistic) bar/bat mitzvah as a youth to engage in something more personally meaningful that aligns with their Humanistic beliefs

Or Emet’s ritual committee contacted several congregations affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ) who have created adult b mitzvahs. Similar to the youth programs, candidates typically engage in readings and study — individually or as a group — followed by research into a particular subject of interest, and culminating in a ceremony acknowledging and celebrating this achievement. Using these examples and SHJ resource material, Eva Cohen, ritual leader and rabbinic candidate, and the ritual committee will craft our program.

If you are considering being part of the first adult b mitzvah cohort, and/or you would like to be part of designing and planning the adult b mitzvah educational and ritual ceremony, please contact Ritual Committee Chair Janet Mayer at oremetmayer@gmail.com.

Ritual Committee members: Eva Cohen, Sarah Berman-Young, Johanna Lester, Bruce Pomerantz

The pandemic continues to influence Or Emet’s 2021 b mitzvah planning

• Eliana Jurgemeyer’s b mitzvah will be streamed via Zoom on June 12, 2021.
  Eliana’s project focuses on the historical roots of antisemitism.
  Watch your inbox for more information about Eliana’s b mitzvah and the Zoom link.
• B mitzvah plans for other JCS students are uncertain at this time.
Vision Statement

As we work toward a future more embracing of human power for positive change and less reliant on religious dogma, Secular Humanistic Judaism provides community to explore and shape the evolving meaning of Jewish traditions through a nontheistic, inclusive worldview.

Values Statement

• **Human Agency:** People have the power to achieve global survival, happiness, and dignity using their own abilities; we need not await supernatural intervention. Ethics are determined by the consequences of each action toward the betterment of life, not by whether an authority or ancient text commands it.

• **Jewish Cultural Identity:** Judaism is the evolving, concurrent cultures of the Jewish people, with religion being just one facet. We draw strength from aspects of our history, rituals, achievements, literature, music, arts, food, humor, and wisdom tradition, and we view the Jewish story as testament to the continuing struggle for human dignity.

• **Community:** Coming together in times of celebration and loss improves lives by offering belonging, support, and meaning. We center nontheistic expressions of Judaism that elsewhere may be marginalized, providing uniquely secular and humanistic celebrations of Jewish holidays and lifecycle events reflecting our ethical core.

• **Inclusion:** With multiculturalism and diversity as guiding values, we celebrate our interfaith/intercultural, multiracial, LBGTQ+ family, as well as those with disabilities and all household configurations. We welcome as Jewish any person who chooses to identify with the culture and traditions of the Jewish people.

• **Critical Thinking:** We rely on science, evidence, reason, experimentation, empathy, creativity, and artistic expression to address Jewish and universal human questions and to help improve the world and ourselves. We are committed to passing these values on to present and future generations through education and by our example.

• **Social Justice:** We seek a future where the dignity and freedom of every human being is upheld. We must repair the world through community service and by advancing human rights, anti-racism, and the separation of church and state.

Mission Statement

The Society for Humanistic Judaism inspires, organizes, and advocates for secular individuals and congregations to celebrate Jewish identity and culture independent of supernatural authority and aligned with the values of Humanistic Judaism.
**Time to Stop Using “Judeo-Christian”**

by Allan Malkis

Or Emet recently agreed to sign on to the campaign by Jews for a Secular Democracy (JFASD) to stop using the phrase “Judeo-Christian” to describe America and American values. Here are the reasons for this campaign.

The term was used extensively in the Jewish community around World War II to emphasize common cause with the majority Christian community against Nazi and fascist outrages. Since then the term has been taken over by Christian factions wishing to emphasize the religious roots of American society and advocating for public policies that explicitly adopt conservative Christian religious and moral values.

JFASD explains the reasons for reframing the narrative.

- “Judeo-Christian” is not an inclusive phrase. It excludes the teachings and values of all other religions and the nonreligious, while implying the supremacy of Judaism and Christianity. That is not an accurate picture of today’s pluralistic American society.
- It is used to support a regressive social agenda. Those employing the phrase, predominately Christian nationalists, are seeking to enshrine into law one set of religious ideological beliefs over all Americans.
- It says our community’s name without us. Christian nationalists use “Judeo-Christian” to create a veneer of inclusivity and universality, despite having few Jewish supporters of their agenda. Some Jews may share a religious fundamentalist approach but for an overwhelming majority of American Jewry (80% or more), our Jewish tradition supports women’s rights, reproductive freedom, LGBTQ equality, science-based environmental policies, racial justice, and secular education in our schools. (See Pew Research Center study)
- Jews support the separation of church and state. Almost all utterances of the phrase “Judeo-Christian” are to endorse Christian-nationalist legislation or political policy, but American Jews overwhelmingly support the First Amendment right to a secular government that does not privilege one religion over others, or religion over no religion.

After considering these arguments and finding ourselves in agreement with them, the Executive Committee voted to join the campaign and sign on in Or Emet’s name.

For more information and resources on this topic, please check the Jews for a Secular Democracy website here.

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**Donations**

For use wherever needed
Carrie Dickson
Claire Press
Lisa Gardner-Springer
Janet Mayer and Paul Petzschke
Dave Zukor

In appreciation for Sharon Miller’s service as Or Emet’s treasurer for 12 years and for always pitching in to do whatever else was/is needed!
David and Margo Fox
David and Joan Barnett
Janet Mayer and Paul Petzschke
On Sunday, March 21, Or Emet presented a conversation about Helen Suzman. The theme was Suzman’s remarkable 36-year career in South Africa’s Parliament. She took on parts of apartheid’s far-reaching system every year — and all alone for 13 years. Suzman also visited black townships, resettlement areas, and imprisoned political detainees, including Nelson Mandela several times during his 27-year imprisonment.

Helen Suzman was an avowed secular Jew who proudly accepted the label “humanist,” even though Afrikaner Nationalists used it as a pejorative against her. Her speeches were case studies in evidence and reason. Her life motto was, “Go and see for yourself.” And, she reasoned correctly that apartheid would prove economically and demographically unsustainable.

Helen Suzman’s nephew Paul Suzman — born, raised, and educated in South Africa and now a civic-minded businessman in Seattle — graciously participated. Mr. Suzman knew his aunt well, even seeing her in action in parliament. Paul added so much that host Richard Logan set aside his PowerPoint to converse with him. Award-winning documentary filmmaker Justine Shapiro, online acquaintance of Richard, also participated. She too was born and raised in South Africa and has done film work there. Justine volunteered that, as a young person, Helen Suzman “was my first role model.”

Shortly before she died in 2009, the anti-apartheid legend who had bravely visited political prisoners was asked if she still saw old friends. Helen Suzman paused before answering, “Well — Nelson still comes to see me.” Thus closed a circle.

Her memory blesses millions.

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**Bigotry in Black and White**
by Alan Miller

I am old enough to have been alive during World War II, at a time when millions of Jews were targeted for extermination, and even millions more died in yet another war stoked by bigotry. As a youth living in Florida, I experienced my first episode of antisemitism, followed by more incidents several years later on Long Island. One might have thought that by then, since the war was over, people would have learned. They didn’t.

The prejudice and bigotry which have smoldered for eons just below the surface of society have a way of rearing their ugly heads and becoming more exposed periodically. It is no different with the African-American community, which has suffered and continues to suffer from bigotry and oppression, even in this "land of the free." Blacks have needlessly died over the decades, from slavery, from the lynchings of a century ago, from the well-documented strangulation of a year ago, to the needless shooting and killing of unarmed citizens today. If there is one redeeming virtue of cell phones, it is the ability to document these atrocities on video.

The latest group to be singled out are the Asian Americans, prejudice against them stoked particularly by an immoral and amoral man who denigrates everyone else from his southern bastion of hatred. It comes from a fear that "white supremacy" is being threatened, and is emboldened by his acolytes and media organs that share the same fears.

These people, who call themselves patriots, and whose history has evolved from the same immigrants they seek to bar from the nation, are ignorant of the recognition that we are all immigrants, except for the Native Americans whom we have treated so callously and ruthlessly while we appropriated their country.

Fifty years from now, with a much more integrated and tolerant next generation taking the reins of democracy, we can be a much stronger and tolerant nation. It can't come soon enough.

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**Helen Suzman: 2020-2021 Humanistic Jewish Role Model**
by Richard Logan

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**Caring Circle**

**WE ARE YOUR VILLAGE!**

Or Emet’s Caring Circle offers simple, practical short-term assistance and support to members in times of illness, loss, and crisis.

If you (or another member that you know of) could use support such as a meal train, please reach out to Shana Tanenbaum (612-310-1490 shana.tanenbaum@gmail.com).

**Caring Circle Committee:** Shana Tanenbaum, Eva Rose Cohen, Janet Mayer, Faith Oremland

Thanks to Eliana Jurgemeyer for the meal train illustration.

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**Member News**

**Sharon Miller**

In 2008 the nation was reeling during a recession, and Or Emet, with about 30 family members, found itself in need of a treasurer. The call went out; Sharon Miller volunteered, as she has done in so many areas: Passover Seder committee, holiday committees, Sunday and Sabbath Onegs, offering her home for annual Tashlich services, Leadership team, and wherever she could help.

Fast forward a dozen years and Sharon is concluding her service as treasurer, always a responsible guardian of the congregation's finances.

The job has become far more complex — now with over 60 families, there is payroll to control — for teachers, the School Director, an Administrative Assistant, a rabbi-in-training. And dealing with the IRS. More than she bargained for, but managed with grace. She also handles venue rentals, honoraria payments, donations, school tuition, and financial obligations with the Society of Humanistic Judaism.

Perhaps what Sharon considers most important is handling membership dues payments. When members fell on hard times, no one ever knew who benefited from deferred payment, or how she worked out individual plans.

Sharon insists on staying out of the limelight, and wants no personal attention, an unusual trait for a person who has been the co-producer of a cable-access television show for 23 years. Like all else, just another of her volunteer activities. Perhaps past President Janet Mayer puts it best when she says, "What I appreciate most about the essence of Sharon is her ability to make a personal connection with so many — whether making Or Emet deposits at the community bank, or in any of her person-to-person relationships."

As Sharon leaves the treasurer role, we are grateful for her service to Or Emet and send our best wishes for the road ahead.

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**Gwyn Leder** thanks everyone who provided support when she was hospitalized and recuperating from COVID. Gwyn also says, “Lenny did a great job” in his caregiver role.

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Flying out of town? Look for the work of Or Emet member and artist **Susan Weinberg** at: Thomas Reuters Airport Mall Gallery Terminal 1. This image is in the Passages show. The exhibition can be found [here](#) and is on exhibit through December 31, 2021.

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**Susan Weinberg’s** article, "Exploring Jewish Heritage Through Oral History and Fine Art" was published in *Hennepin History Magazine*. The article features stories and artwork found in her book, *We Spoke Jewish: A Legacy in Stories*. You can find the article at [Hennepin History Magazine](#).
Simchas and Tsuris (Joys and Concerns)

Scott and Ellen Chazdon’s daughters are celebrating milestones this spring. Hannah is graduating in May from Occidental College with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology. She plans to continue living and working in Los Angeles. In early June, Leah will be 16 and taking her driving exam.

Ben Drucker, a junior at Swarthmore College, and his co-researchers from a summer 2020 National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates project, had their research paper, “Box-ball systems and RSK tableaux,” accepted for presentation at the virtual International Conference Series on Formal Power Series and Algebraic Combinatorics, to be held in July. Ben, a violinist in the Swarthmore Orchestra, and his mom, Diane Walkoff, performed Florence Price’s “Juba,” with the orchestra.

Steve Drucker, a chemistry professor at UW-Eau Claire, was awarded a $334,554 grant from the National Science Foundation’s Research in Undergraduate Institutions (RUI) program for his three-year project, “RUI: Spectroscopic and Computational Studies of Cyclic Enone Molecules in Electronic Excited States.”

In April 2021, Rachel Wexelbaum started her new position as Institutional Education Supervisor at the St. Cloud Correctional Facility. Rachel will oversee the educational programming, including the library, in the St. Cloud Correctional Facility and make more higher education options available for incarcerated people in Minnesota.

Freyja Cohen, daughter of Eva Cohen and Jack Spencer, celebrated her first birthday on February 26.

Joy and Optimism: A sample of families reuniting after COVID-19 distance

Carol and Richard Logan, after being fully vaccinated, took the plunge and visited their son, his family, and finally met their seven-month-old granddaughter in California.

Carrie and Lewis Dickson’s sons hugged their chosen grandma. Carrie adds this was, “after more than a year and by the grace of Pfizer. Blessed are you science, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.”

Janet Mayer and Paul Petzschke spent an extended period in California. They relished the opportunity to be with family including their grandson. Paul also worked out on the golf course.

In Memoriam

Rev. Dr. Nancy Holden died on August 1, 2020. She made important contributions to Or Emet in the mid-2000s. Most significantly, Nancy professionalized and upgraded the early Jewish Cultural School and was the school’s first director. She also taught in the school, served in an administrative assistant role, and handled the web page.

Howard Schneider’s brother, Joel Schneider, died March 26 in California.

David Barnett’s brother, Mick Barnett, died March 27 in California.

Anne Handley's brother, Arvin Smith died on March 9.

May their memories be a blessing.
**Volunteer Activity Updates**

St. Stephen’s Human Services is still not accepting volunteers to prepare and serve meals to their shelter guests due to COVID-19. We look forward to resuming Or Emet’s well-established activity when outside volunteer group involvement becomes possible.

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**Pitching in at Second Harvest Heartland to Ease Hunger Has Partially Resumed**

Second Harvest IS accepting volunteer groups up to 20 if over age 18. Being limited to adults precludes family participation which had been a welcome aspect of this service activity prior to COVID-19 constraints. Since a group can be just a handful of adults, the Social Justice/Social Action Committee will look into possible dates for an Or Emet volunteer group. Volunteers can work at either the Brooklyn Center or the Maplewood facility.

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**Annual meeting-related events**

*Saturday | June 5*

**Pre-Annual Meeting outdoor Havdalah at Keller Regional Park** in Maplewood.
Gather at 6:30 pm | Havdalah service at 7:00 pm
Bring your own lawn chairs, snacks, and beverages. Additional information on page 6

*Sunday | June 6*

**Annual Meeting and Election of Officers via Zoom**
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
— additional information on page 6

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**Summer Food Shelf Collection | Sunday | June 27**

10:00 am - 2:00 pm | nonperishable food and personal care items | details including drop-off locations TBA
This collection will benefit NorthPoint Health Services Food Pantry in Minneapolis

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**Or Emet Book Club | July 29 | 6:30-8:00 pm | via Zoom**
The book is *He, She, and It* by Marge Piercy
If interested in participating, contact Scott Chazdon president@oremet.org

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**Saturday | August 7 | Havdalah | at Crosby Farm Regional Park in St. Paul**
Gather at 4:30 pm | service at 5:30 pm | dinner at about 6:00 pm | concludes with a campfire and s’mores

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**Or Emet’s previous programs — video recordings are available on YouTube**
A sample of available recordings includes most recent programs including:
- "Healing Justice and Transformative Organizing Through the Climate Crisis to Ecological Democracy,"  
  Sam Grant, January 16, 2021
- "The Indomitable Florence Finch," Robert Mrazek, January 24, 2021
- "The Jews of Uganda," Michal Moskow, February 21, 2021
- "National Refugee Shabbat," Michal Moskow, March 5, 2021
- "Freud in Film," Don Larsson, March 12, 2021
- "Helen Suzman, Humanistic Jewish Role Model," Richard Logan and Paul Suzman, March 21, 2021
- "Origins of the Israeliite People," Eva Cohen and Allan Malkis, April 9, 2021
- "Israel and Its Relationship with the Arab and Persian Worlds," Steve Lear, April 18, 2021

To receive links for these and other programs, email president@oremet.org. The links are unlisted so they need to be requested.
High Holiday Services (except Tashlich) are at the Sabes Jewish Community Center
~ if COVID-19 situation allows ~
4330 South Cedar Lake Rd, St. Louis Park

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>September 6</td>
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<td>Rosh Hashanah Tashlich Service and Potluck</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>September 7</td>
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<td><strong>Kol Nidre Service</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Yom Kippur Service</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Break-the-Fast Potluck</strong></td>
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