



Message from Rabbi Donni: A High Holiday Message



On June 23, 2018, twelve boys and their coach went to explore a cave in northern Thailand after their soccer practice. When the team failed to arrive at a birthday party later, their families went to the caves, found them flooded and the boys missing. The parents immediately alerted emergency services and the drama began.

For almost three weeks the world was riveted, as thousands of volunteers from many countries came to help the rescue efforts. I recently watched *Thirteen Lives*, the latest film on this event. Although I had heard of the rescue, I did not know the details. Against daunting odds, including monsoon rains, lowered oxygen in the caves and the 5-6 hours it would take each way to scuba dive out, the boys and their coach were all rescued and survived.

In the film, the divers from the British Cave Rescue team had to convince the Thai officials to let them take the lead.

The humility, the need to compromise and the courage that they all displayed, was inspiring.

In the United States, because of our politically polarized climate and the way news is covered, we rarely focus on people working together creatively to solve a daunting problem.

With the only goal – to save the kids and their coach – the divers and other volunteers had to think out of the box and take risks. They put egos aside and listened to each other’s worries and concerns.

The story was heartening, reminding us it is possible to execute a miraculous plan.

Can you imagine reading an uplifting story like this in your news feed today?

How often do you find yourself muttering, *enough with this negative news, isn’t there an inspiring story to be found?*

I have been a news junkie my whole life and even now get two daily papers and the *NY Times* on Sunday. I can’t get enough. For months however, I have been trying to cut back on listening to broadcasts and

reading the news in print. Overwhelmed by how bleak and chaotic the world seems to be, I know that keeping up with the latest events is harming my emotional well-being, increasing cynicism and a sense of futility.

Though I was trying to cut back, in July, while suffering from a cold on vacation and needing something to do while in the hotel room, I read an intriguing headline in the *Washington Post*. “I stopped reading the News,” it said, “Is the problem me – or the product.”

This was exactly how I was feeling!

Written by author and journalist Amanda Ripley, she confessed saying, *“I have a secret. I kept it hidden. It felt unprofessional, vaguely shameful. It wasn’t who I wanted to be. But here it is: I’ve been actively avoiding the news for a long time.”*

She used to love news, and worked in the field for 20 years. Even before COVID, something changed. The alarm over our climate, racism, inflation, and other topics now felt too depressing. “I was marinating in despair.” Ripley wrote.

Her therapist told her to stop consuming the news-cast. Slowly she started to confide with colleagues and found out there were many others who also disliked the product. In fact, the United States has one of the highest news-avoidance rates in the world. Why? The answer given: US news is repetitive and despairing, often of dubious credibility and it leaves people feeling powerless.

Krista Tippett, NPR radio host of “On Being” explained: *I don’t actually think we are equipped physiologically or mentally to be delivered catastrophic and confusing news and pictures, 24/7.”*

Ripley wondered how it could be different. She interviewed among others, physicians, behavior scientists and psychologists who were treating patients for “headline stress disorder.” A real diagnosis.

What she found out is a powerful message for the High Holidays!

In Temple this year, we take the time to have an honest look at ourselves. We are beginning the journey of TESHUVAH.

(Continued on page 2)

Treasurer’s Report by Iza Celewicz

Thank you to all the "early birds" who have already submitted their membership renewals for 2023/24! I'd like to encourage the rest of you to send yours, soon, please.

(Continued from page 1)

Though translated as REPENTANCE, the Hebrew expression is about returning to one's true self. *Teshuvah* – Return, is finding the core of goodness and courage which resides within each of us, a spark we must and can recover.

My friends, the world we live in does not encourage TESHUVAH.

Ripley's article does present THREE ingredients missing from our current news coverage. These ingredients are exactly what we need to do during the High Holidays.

The **first** ingredient is HOPE.

We need hope to even get up in the morning. Hope can lead to better health, decreased chronic pain and more. Hope gives you something to believe in, helps you find purpose in possibilities.

We need hope to do TESHUVAH, to find our way to the goodness of our souls. I found HOPE in the Cave Rescue which brought out the best in human nature.

The **second** ingredient that we need for Rosh Hashanah is AGENCY.

We can do something, small or large, to make a difference. With agency we convert anger into action, and frustration into a vision for incremental change.

Here at MCJC we are doing social action activities. Working as a community, we encourage each other to overcome apathy and see what we can do together to make a difference.

The **third** ingredient for Rosh Hashanah is DIGNITY.

Ripley wants to see journalists invite viewers to talk to each other, with civility, and tell stories like the cave rescue, where individuals work together to solve urgent challenges. With dignity we see the worth and value of each person.

Change and progress come when hearts are opened with hope, agency and dignity.

When God decided to create beings in God's image, the angels in heaven protested. They feared the consequences of entrusting something so pure to a creature, like humans, who would be susceptible to corruption. They resolved to steal the divine image.

But where to hide it?

On the top of a mountain?

No. People would eventually scale the summit and discover it.

In the depths of the sea?

No. Individuals would eventually plumb the depths and find it.

So, they hid it where no one would ever look: in the hearts of human beings. And that's where it remains to this day.

Teshuvah, doing the work of Rosh Hashanah, creates an opportunity to rediscover the Divine spark which lies hidden in our hearts.

"The purpose of life, Leo Rosten wrote, "is not to be happy at all.

- It is to be useful,
- To be honorable.
- It is to be compassionate.
- It is to matter,
- To have it make a difference that you lived."

Our hearts and souls cry out for change! We want to do Teshuvah, to come home to a place of caring and love.

We have the Divine image in our hearts and Hope in an evolving future. It is not in our nature to give up! We have Agency. We have Dignity.

Do not despair!

Shanah Tovah! A healthy, meaningful and important new year to us all!

Help Wanted for September 10 Litter Pickup

Special thanks to MCJC's social action/community service committee members Bruce Weiss and Linda Hansen for picking up litter along Ridgefield Road between Country Club Road and U.S. Route 14 as part of MCJC's participation in the McHenry County Department of Transportation "Adopt-A-Highway" Program. The duo also picked up litter along the U.S. Route 14 bike trail between Ridgefield Road and Lucas Road (McHenry County College) as part of MCJC participation in the McHenry County Conservation District's "Adopt-A-Trail" Program. One five gallon can of litter was picked up along each of the two routes. The work time took a little over one and a half hours. The next MCJC "Adopt-A-Highway" and "Adopt-A-Trail" litter pick up work session is scheduled for 9:30 am on Sunday September 10th. Kindly contact MCJC social action/community service chairperson Bruce Weiss at woodstock-bruce@hotmail.com or 815-33-2721 if you are able to help out on September 10th.

MCJC to Hold "Share the Warmth" Coat Drive

MCJC's Annual "Share The Warmth" Winter Clothing Drive will take place during the months of September and October. Receptacles will be placed in the MCJC building vestibule to receive winter coats & jackets, mittens & gloves, blankets, sweaters, and boots. The winter clothing items collected will be given to the Woodstock Area Community Ministry for distribution to local people in need.



Religious School News

by Davina Kelly



At the end of August, our little religious school began with its annual Opening Day program. Students and families were welcomed back. Paula Eskoz introduced the plan for the year, and Ilene Kaye led the students in song. Then Davina Kelly led the students in a special lesson about acts of loving kindness, and the differences between that and Mitzvot. The morning wrapped up with fun games and a delicious hot dog lunch furnished by our maintenance men.

This year's calendar is set, and we have a fun, educational curriculum in place. We are collaborating with CKI to hopefully plan a few joint Sunday programs. This proved to be very successful last year during Simchat Torah and Tu B'Shevat. Also, we have some creative holiday programs in the works, and hope for the return of our art specialists! We all look forward to an engaging year with your children!

MCJC to Participate in Hunger Walk

On Sunday, Oct. 1, MCJC will join four local area faith congregations and participate in the 2023 McHenry County CROP Hunger Walk. This community service project is a partnership undertaking of the MCJC social action community service committee and the MCJC religious education faculty. The Walk will begin at 2:00 pm at the Cary United Methodist Church, located at 500 N. First Street in Cary. The Walk route is a one-mile distance, and participants are encouraged to carry a milk gallon container filled with some water to simulate what people in impoverished countries have to do each day to obtain drinking water.

The goal of the 2023 McHenry County CROP Hunger Walk is to raise money to help alleviate hunger both locally and worldwide, one step at a time. Twenty-five percent of the money raised by the Walk will

go to designated local food pantries. Seventy-five percent of the proceeds raised will be used by CWS CROP to help empower people in third world countries to meet their own food needs by establishing local agricultural training programs, by providing seeds/livestock/farm tools, and by helping to build wells and irrigation systems.



If you would like to become a member of the 2023 MCJC CROP Hunger Walk Team, please contact either Davina Kelly at school@mcjconline.org or 847-659-8285, or Bruce Weiss at woodstock-bruce@hotmail.com or 815-338-2721. Participation in this community service project involves not only walking the one-mile route the day of the event, but also includes raising money by obtaining donation pledges from people that you know such as friends, relatives, neighbors, teachers and work colleagues.

MCJC 5784 "Corners of Our Fields" Food/Personal Care Items Drive



This year during the high holidays, MCJC will once again be holding a "Corners of Our Fields" Food/Personal Care Items Drive. The food and personal care items collected will be donated to the Woodstock Food Pantry and the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. The collection period will extend from Rosh Hashanah (September 15th) to Simchat Torah (October 7th). Please deposit your donations of food and personal care items on the "Corner of Our Fields" table in the MCJC front hallway. Your kind support of this community service project will be greatly appreciated by those in our local community who are in need.

The top items that are needed:

Peanut butter, ground coffee, macaroni & cheese, canned tuna & chicken, soups (not tomato), canned fruits, canned vegetables (not beans), condiments, cereal, pasta sauces & pasta noodles (especially white pasta), boxed dinners, laundry care items, diapers (size 4,5,6), syrup, pancake mix, toilet paper, paper towels, shampoo, tooth brushes, tooth paste, soap, deodorants, feminine hygiene products, gallon size storage bags.

Habitat for Humanity

It's been a quiet summer for Habitat for Humanity of McHenry County. We helped the county build the Riverwalk Stores in downtown McHenry. The stores are small one-room buildings that will be rented out to local businesses and craftspeople for 9 months of the year intending to promote these businesses.

We are finally starting work on a pair of new houses on Hillside Drive in McHenry now that the foundations have been poured. Volunteers are encouraged to sign up on the web-site or call the office at (815) 759-9002.

If you have any questions you can contact me, Howard Frank, at howard.gail.frank@gmail.com.

MCJC High Holiday News

MCJC is holding the full slate of High Holiday services this year, starting with Erev Rosh Hashanah services on Friday, September 15. The services will be led by Rabbi Donni Aaron with support from Cantor Diane Weil, Rabbi Maralee Gordon, Ilene Kaye, Muriel Pick, and many others. Members and guests are welcome to attend the services, though we ask guests to consider making a donation to MCJC. Those wishing to submit names for the Rosh HaShanah card or the Yizkor booklet, or to register for the Break-the-Fast, can use this link (please act quickly!): Order Form- <https://forms.gle/w7yyNLzgCVyS7tsw6>
Donations to MCJC through a High Holiday Tzedakah Pledge are welcome. To donate, or for more information, go to this link: Pledge Form- <https://forms.gle/nW7NNuSKNNgy49cC6>

MCJC High Holy Days

Erev Rosh Hashanah September 15 6:30 PM
Rosh Hashanah Day 1 September 16 9:00 AM
Rosh Hashanah Day 2 September 17 9:00 AM

Taschlich September 17 will be after services approximately 2:00 PM at **Veteran Acres Park**, 431 Walkup Road in Crystal Lake

Erev Yom Kippur (Kol Nidre) September 24 6:30 PM
Yom Kippur September 25 9:00 AM
Mincha Service September 25 4:00 PM
Neilah Service September 25 5:30 PM
Break-the-Fast September 25 7:30 PM

Sukkot September 30 9:30 AM
Simchat Torah- Information coming soon!

Security at MCJC – Dale Morton

Security remains a top priority at MCJC. The Board recently approved several measures to address the safety concerns of our congregants. Hopefully these improvements will help bring everyone some peace of mind.

Security Camera Upgrade: We have approved the installation of a new security camera system and upgraded internet capability. Some years ago, we worked with our contractor, X-Tech, to install U-verse internet capability and ethernet cables to the MCJC office, computer lab, Principal's office, sanctuary, and internet café. The upgrade will place three new night vision cameras at the front door, back door, and parking lot. Cameras can be monitored on a screen outside the office. We will also have the capability of monitoring 27/7 online. X-Tech has pledged to install everything before the High Holidays. You might wonder why we aren't simply installing Ring cameras, but as many of you know, our building walls and floors are very dense which limits wireless transmission. That is why we ran cable from the downstairs U-verse box to various rooms

within the building.

Internet Upgrade: Our Wi-Fi routers are 10 years old. The installation of new routers will help to support our security system while also improving our bandwidth.

High Holiday Security: The Board has also approved the hiring of off-duty Sheriff's Deputies to be at MCJC for all High Holiday services.

Security Response Plan: Finally, we will be working with an outside security firm to update our "active shooter" plan first devised after Sandy Hook. Following the Pittsburgh Tree of Life shootings, the maintenance committee installed deadbolts on every door at MCJC to basically "wall off" sections of our building in the event of a security breach. The new plan can be shared with anyone interested.

We know of no specific threats against MCJC and feel warmly accepted by the broader community. However, given the increase in antisemitic threats across the country and globe, we would be remiss if we did not take steps to reassure our congregants and guests that they have a safe sanctuary in which to gather and worship.

Birthdays

Happy Anniversary!



Yahrzeits

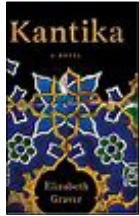
i	Ira Edward Berman	16 Elul	Sept. 2	Evelyn Morris	13 Tishrei	Sept. 28
	Roselle Goldman	17 Elul	Sept. 3	Anne Silverstein	13 Tishrei	Sept. 28
	Daniel Weisz	18 Elul	Sept. 4	Maxwell Greenfield	14 Tishrei	Sept. 29
	Joseph Silverstein	18 Elul	Sept. 4	Harold Landey	15 Tishrei	Sept. 30
	Howard Kaye	19 Elul	Sept. 5	Edna Goldberg	16 Tishrei	Oct. 1
	Nathan Fishman	22 Elul	Sept. 8	William Laube	20 Tishrei	Oct. 5
	Amy Grace Green	25 Elul	Sept. 11	Ethel Crohn	21 Tishrei	Oct. 6
	Jodi Cohen	28 Elul	Sept. 14	Ruth Bailenson	23 Tishrei	Oct. 8
	Gussie Greenberg	29 Elul	Sept. 15	Julius Kaplan	3 Cheshvan	Oct. 18
	Alan Finger	4 Tishrei	Sept. 19	Vivian Frank	7 Cheshvan	Oct. 22
	Maurice Mayber	5 Tishrei	Sept. 20	Samuel Schneiderman	9 Cheshvan	Oct. 24
	Selma Pickoff	6 Tishrei	Sept. 21	Rebecca Levy	12 Cheshvan	Oct. 27
	Lily Cohen	8 Tishrei	Sept. 23			

MCJC Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations

Isabel and Mark Schiffer to the General Fund

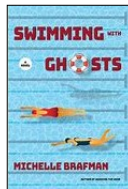
MCJC Book Club Makes Initial Picks

The MCJC Book Club, which meets approximately every other month and is open to all, has decided on its first two selections for the fall. The group is led by professional book club facilitator Rachel Kamin, director of Lifelong Learning at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El.



On Thursday, Oct. 12, at 7 pm, the MCJC Book Club will start its series with a discussion of *Kantika*. The novel is a dazzling Sephardic multigenerational saga that moves from Istanbul to Barcelona, Havana, and New York, exploring displacement, endurance, and family as home. For the first time, post-pandemic, the Book Club will meet in person at MCJC, though participants will have the option of joining the discussion via Zoom. In addition, The Jewish Women's Archives is hosting an online event with Elizabeth Graver, the author of *Kantika*, on Thursday, September 21 at 7:00 p.m. You can also meet her in-person on Sunday, October 22 at 10:30 am at the Chicago Loop Synagogue and at 2:30 pm at Congregation Etz Chaim in Lombard.

On Thursday, Dec. 7, MCJC's Book Club will discuss *Swimming with Ghosts*, a novel about family addiction and dysfunction. Rachel will also host the book's author Michelle Braffman, on Saturday, November 18 at NSS Beth El in Highland Park. Zoom links for both discussions will be made available on MCJC's website.



MCJC Knows How to 'Have Fun Together'!

Special thanks to Howard & Gail Frank, Paula & Norm Eskoz, Muriel Pick, Gale Harris & Deb Glaubke, and Bruce & Marian Weiss for supporting MCJC's first "Let's Have Fun Together" program of the 2023-24 year on July 16 when they gathered for the Folk Festival Program on the Woodstock Square. The weather was great,



the fellowship was wonderful, and the musical performances were outstanding. Folk artists from Illinois, Tennessee, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Georgia performed a wide variety of folk musical styles.

In late August, MCJC members brought chairs and a picnic dinner to enjoy the Wonder Lake Ski Show at Wonder Lake Center Beach. They enjoyed fellowship while picnicking and watching a free one-hour water ski show that featured all the fantastic stunts that are performed at big name water ski shows such as Cypress Garden in Winter Haven, Florida.



Thanks to Bruce Weiss for organizing the "Let's Have Fun Together" events, and watch your announcements and the MCJC website for future gatherings.

MCJC Volunteers Help at Food Pantry

Volunteers from the MCJC community worked alongside volunteers from St. Ann's Episcopal Church, Resurrection Catholic Church, and Grace Lutheran Church and helped out at the Woodstock Drive-Thru Food pantries of June 19th and July 24th. Special thanks to the MCJC community members Charles Mages, Muriel Pick, Lizz & John Dewey, Ilisa & Max Parrish, and Rabbi Maralee Gordon for helping out on June 19th. And big thanks to MCJC community members Paula Eskoz, Muriel Pick, Donny Kohnke, Lizz & John Dewey, and Rabbi Maralee Gordon for helping out on July 24th. Two hundred twenty-one families received boxes of food on June 19th, and two hundred forty-two families received boxes of food on July 24th. The Woodstock Drive-Thru Food Pantry is a joint community service project of the McHenry County Faith Leaders Food Collaborative and the Northern Illinois Food Bank and is located in the parking lot across the street from Woodstock High School at 501 W. South Street in Woodstock. The mobile food pantry is open from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm the first and third Monday of each month. MCJC has been asked to help provide volunteers on Monday, September 25th. If you are able to help, please contact MCJC social action community service chairperson Bruce Weiss by email at woodstockbruce@hotmail.com or by phone at 815-338-2721.



Honorable Menschen

MCJC was well represented at the McHenry County Fair this summer with two Best of Show winners.



Max Parrish took home a blue ribbon in the Junior Photography division for an evocative sunrise photo of a local nature preserve.



Dale Morton won first place/best of show for his ceramic sheep. He correctly predicted that entering a sheep might appeal to the County Fair judges.

SEPTEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
						<i>Ira Berman</i>
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Roselle Goldman</i>	<i>Daniel Weisz</i> <i>Joseph Silverstein</i>	<i>Howard Kaye</i>	7:00 p.m. Ritual Meeting		6:30 p.m. Welcome Back Service Beit Café (coffeehouse)	8:00 p.m. Selicot @ CKI
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9:30 a.m. Adopt a Trail Adopt a Highway 9:45 a.m. Religious School	3:00 p.m. Woodstock Drive-Thru Food Pantry			<i>Jodi Cohen</i>	6:30 p.m. Erev Rosh HaShanah Services	9:00 a.m. Rosh HaSanah Day 1 Services 2:00 p.m. Tashlich at Veteran Acres Park
					22	23
17	18	19	20	21	22	
9:00 a.m. Rosh HaShanah Day 2 Services		<i>Alan Finger</i>	<i>Maurice Mayber</i>	<i>Selma Pickoff</i>	<i>Gussie Greenberg</i>	<i>Lily Cohen</i>
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
6:30 p.m. Erev Yom Kippur/ Kol Nidre Services	9:00 a.m. Yom Kippur Services 4:00 p.m. Mincha Service 5:30 p.m. Neilah Service 7:30 p.m. Break-the-Fast			<i>Evelyn Morris</i> <i>Anne Silverstein</i>	<i>Maxwell Greenfield</i>	9:30 a.m. Sukkot Services <i>Harold Landey</i>

OCTOBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <u>9:45 a.m.</u> Religious School <u>2:00 p.m.</u> McHenry County Crop Walk	2	3	4	5 <i>William Laube</i>	6 <i>Ethel Crohn</i>	7
8 <u>9:45 a.m.</u> Religious School <i>Ruth Bailenson</i>	9 <u>3:00 p.m.</u> Woodstock Drive- Thru Food Pantry	10	11	12	13	14 <u>9:30 a.m.</u> Shabbat Morning Service
15 <u>9:45 a.m.</u> Religious School	16	17	18 <i>Julius Kaplan</i>	19	20	21
22 <i>Vivian Frank</i>	23	24 <i>Samuel Schneiderman</i>	25	26	27 <u>6:30 p.m.</u> Kabbalat Shabbat	28
29	30	31				

To place a yearly ad
 please contact MCJC
 at office@mcjconline.org.
 The cost for one year is
 \$125.



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*Connections...to our heritage,
to each other, to the future*

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Congregation**

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MCJC Connections...

...is a bi-monthly publication of the McHenry County Jewish Congregation (MCJC) which was established in February 1979. MCJC is a community synagogue that serves Jews of all backgrounds. MCJC is located at 8617 Ridgefield Road, Crystal Lake, IL 60012; phone 815-455-1810, email: office@mcjconline.org. If you have any story ideas you would like to see mentioned in the newsletter, please phone MCJC or e-mail Judy Lewis at office@mcjconline.org. **All copy must be received by the 1st of the month prior to publication for consideration in the next newsletter.**

Thanks to All Those Who Serve MCJC

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Rabbi

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Candle Lighting Times

Sept. 1	7:09 p.m.
Sept. 8	6:57 p.m.
Sept. 15	6:45 p.m.
Sept. 22	6:33 p.m.
Sept. 29	6:21 p.m.
Oct. 6	6:09 p.m.
Oct. 13	5:57 p.m.
Oct. 20	5:46 p.m.
Oct. 27	5:36 p.m.