Tevet - Shevat, 5781
January 2021
Tu BiShvat
Cliff Eisenberg

For businessman, civic leader, and native El Pasoan Cliff Eisenberg, it was only natural that he become involved with Jewish life and organizations in the city of his birth. His father was President of Congregation B’nai Zion, as well as of its Men’s Club, while his mother was President of the congregation’s Sisterhood. Cliff even met his wife, Martha, also a native of El Paso, at the El Paso JCC. Their first date was at a Break-the-Fast Dance while he was on break from college, and it was love at first sight - though Cliff does believe that it was easier to meet people then since there were more young Jewish people in El Paso at that time.

Cliff was supposed to go to law school after college, but instead decided to return home to work with his father at American Finance & Investment Co., Inc. The company, started by Cliff’s grandfather with a group of local investors, and family, has seen four generations of family involved in the business, with Cliff’s son, Ernest, now heading the company.

Like his parents, Cliff has become heavily involved with local Jewish organizations. Cliff, too, was President of the B’nai Zion Synagogue. He has also been President of B’nai B’rith, Jewish Federation Campaign Chair, Jewish Community Center and has only now just stepped down as President of the Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso after 8 years of service.

He has also been involved in local civic life as President of the Sunturians, a businessmen’s club, President of the El Paso Country Club, and Chairman of the Trust Committee of the same.

Cliff has been married to Martha for 47 years and they are parents of three children, Jenna, Lauren, and Ernest, and seven grandchildren.

What do you value most in your friends?
A good sense of humor. Life can be complicated and serious so having good friends who are fun loving and have a good sense of humor adds to the enjoyment of life and reduces stress. I am fortunate to have many good friends with whom I share good times.

Who’s your favorite Jewish hero (living or not/fictional or not)?
I have two really. Growing up when I did and being a sports fan, I always admired Sandy Koufax for refusing to pitch a world series game on Yom Kippur. I wasn’t a Dodger fan (I was a Yankee fan), but I, like most Jewish boys at that time, was proud of the position Sandy Koufax took. My other Jewish heroes are all the survivors of the Holocaust. They suffered such inhumane treatment and torture that we today can’t even imagine so to have the wherewithal to survive that persecution is truly admirable.

What value do we need most in our world today?
Tolerance and open-mindedness. For example, I am bewildered by the fact that shrinking has also come over the last few decades. With the Jewish community has shrunk the Foundation play?

The holiday of Tu BiShvat – the New Year for Trees - is this month. Ironically the logo for The Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso (JCFEP) is a tree. Can you explain the correlation between the two?
The purpose of planting trees on Tu BiShvat is to provide nourishment in the near future and for future generations just as setting up an endowment fund with the JCFEP is intended to provide financial nourishment to local Jewish organizations and institutions in the future so that they may survive and thrive in perpetuity. The parallels are striking. All of us have an obligation to do our individual part, to the greatest extent possible, to provide for future generations and endowing a fund with the JCFEP is an excellent way to meet that obligation.
Todah Rabah
Thank you to our volunteers
Borderland’s Café Europa
Guest Speakers-
Susan Goodell and Yossi Lapid

For Those We Love Caregivers Support Group -
Lee Chayes
Chanukah Donut Deliveries - Naomi Estrada, Noel Hollowell-Small, Bob and Monika Kimball, and Clara Viana

JCRC Chanukah Program - Debra Kanof and Noel Hollowell Event Co-Chair, Debra Kanof, JCRC Chair, Tatiana Avila, Diana Cepeeda, Rachel Curtin, Mindy Escobar-Leanse, Brian Kanof, Eitan Lavi, John Porras, Peter Svarzein and to all those that shared Chanukah wishes with us: Monika Kimball, JFED President, Marc Ellman, Hamichca family, Peralta family, Felicia Rubin

Borderland’s Café Europa
Call-in and Lunch for Seniors 65+
EPHM: Connecting History to the Contemporary
Jamie Flores, Executive Director of the El Paso Holocaust Museum & Study Center
Wednesday, January 13 | 11:30am
Life as A Wandering Historian
Meet Elizabeth Sloan, Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso
Wednesday, January 27 | 11:30am
For Assistance Call: 915-842-9554
RSVP by noon on Monday before the event to have a light lunch delivered to you

These We Honor With Tributes
Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso
TO: The Family of Bruce Rosen in his Memory
FROM: Irwin Kurland and the Kurland Family
TO: Arianna Bender in Memory of her Husband Joseph
FROM: Irene and Ira Batt
TO: Rosie Dow in Memory of her Husband Jimmie
FROM: Irene and Ira Batt
TO: Barbara Perez in Memory of her Husband Paul
FROM: Irene and Ira Batt
TO: Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso with thanks for Café Europa meals
FROM: Irene and Ira Batt
TO: The Family of Charlie Saul in his Memory
FROM: Steve and Carol Sage

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Conversation and Support for the Bereaved

Bereavement Support Group
Led by Sharon Ash Tancredi

Loss is a lonely and isolating experience. In this online ZOOM group, you have the opportunity to share the loss of your loved one with others from our community. Coping with a loss is particularly difficult during a pandemic when some of us are secluded. We will come together weekly, comfort each other, share our stories, discover how each of us cope with the impossible, and inspire each other.

6 online sessions
Advance registration required
Group limited to 8 individuals

Course requires computer access to join online Zoom sessions.
Advance registration required; group limited to 8 individuals.
Links will be emailed upon registration.

Sign-up through our weekly email
Sharon Ash Tancredi earned a Master’s Degree in Social Work from Boston University and has been in private practice for more than twenty-five years.

www.jewishelpaso.org

Bea Weisz Memorial Scholarship Fund

Applications are now being accepted for the Bea Weisz Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Applications must be received on or before May 17, 2021 for distribution by August 6, 2021

In July 2001 the Beatrice L. Weisz Memorial Scholarship Fund was established so that proceeds from the fund would be given to a needy and worthy Jewish college student(s) in El Paso to enable him or her to pursue his or her studies.

Applications are available online at www.jewishelpaso.org

Summer Camp Fair (Virtual)

Come see and hear the very best of Jewish sleep away camps and local Jewish day camps

Sunday, January 24, 2021
3:30 - 5:00 pm
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The Jewish Voice

The Thrill of Learning

Suzie Gibson, Head of School Administration

The students, teachers, and staff all joined together in learning songs, a dance, and to reflect on what they have been most thankful for this past year in 2020. A display of “gratitude” was the underlying theme, as the children stated being thankful for Mom and Dad, the season with gifts, and being able to spend Chanukah and the holidays with their family.

Can you say tri-lingual? The songs are in English, Hebrew, and Spanish including a special dance performance to “nigun atik – (Israeli folk dance to an ancient melody). We were so excited to share virtually Ice-Ice Chanukah with The El Paso Jewish Federation, Monte Vista at Coronado Nursing Home, along with parents, friends, and The Cherry Hill School Board members. The Cherry Hill School family hopes to have lit a spark within the hearts of all those watching the children on their very first recorded performance at TCHS and the celebration of lights.

The beauty of The Cherry Hill School is the kids learn by working together, questioning, exploring and are hands on. The students are participating in the El Paso Zoo Adoption Program. They will be learning about different animals and choosing a special one for Cherry Hill as their very own to take care of and support. Stay tuned a new Cherry Hill School mascot just might be coming to us soon!

Enrollment for the 2021/22 school year has begun. The response has been overwhelming and we feel blessed that The Cherry Hill School is growing and will have 1st – 3rd grade next school year.

The students The Cherry Hill School, like all of us are starting 2021 with a light heart. The thrill of learning about so many exciting topics at their brand-new school creates a heartwarming experience for the first cohort of students at The Cherry Hill School. We sincerely hope when it is safe to do so you will please come visit us and see the students and the school.
LAS CRUCES — “In Judaism, there’s this idea that it’s beautiful to do as much as you can, but it’s even more beautiful when you help others, help others,” said Rabbi Bery Schmukler of the Chabad of Las Cruces.

As the Las Cruces community weathered the COVID-19 pandemic and grieves for the loss of life and socialization, Rabbi Schmukler and his wife Chenchie provide help and understanding where they can.

Not wanting to put their community at risk, the couple decided to halt in-person services at the Jewish center in March. Although the religious community is unable to gather in-person, the two have reached out to make sure their neighbors are not alone.

Their support ranges from delivering food to answering law enforcement chaplain calls. On a weekly basis, Schmukler said he sends emails and makes as many calls as he can just to check in on people and families that are part of the Chabad community, offering help where there is a need.

“If you spend two minutes a day, or even five minutes a day, and call one or two people and just ask them how they’re doing, you don’t realize how much it means to people. Knowing that we’re not alone, because we really aren’t alone,” Schmukler said.

Rather than canceling their monthly Friday night Sabbath meals, the Schmuklers adapted the meals to be delivered to people on an alternating basis. He said this allows for the community to celebrate the Sabbath together, yet physically apart.

“One area where Schmukler said he has seen an increase in need is answers to calls for a chaplain by the Las Cruces Police Department and the Doña Ana County Sheriff’s Office. He said many times these calls involve families who are trying to manage a loved one’s death from suicide. While he may not have answers for them, he said showing them that they are cared for can go a long way toward helping them heal.

“Unfortunately, with the amount of suicides and so on nowadays and domestic violence and so on, it’s a lot of my time that I usually wouldn’t have focused on. I’ve been getting a lot more calls than usual,” Schmukler said. “Especially in the beginning when we all thought it (COVID-19) was short term, I was hoping maybe I won’t take calls for a month or two and it’ll blow over. And then when you realize that it’s not short term and you can’t just say ‘I’m not available’ for the next year. You realize that the need is there."

He added that physically distancing himself from the people he helps makes the job harder because sometimes people need a hug or reassuring touch.

Many people have been financially impacted by the pandemic and the economic devastation of businesses closing. In response, the Schmuklers started a COVID relief fund they asked the community to donate to. The money collected then goes to, for example, families who need money for food or help paying their bills.

Schmukler said some people need financial support just one time, others need help with groceries. “We weren’t trying to replace any government subsidies or anything like that,” he said. “It’s just a lot of these things took a lot of time. A lot of these things were a lot of paperwork. And so some people we help them file unemployment.”

Another way the Schmuklers and volunteers are filling in gaps is by preparing Kosher Thanksgiving meals for those who may not have access to Kosher products or who need help securing food for the holiday.

Schmukler said the Chabad has never had a Thanksgiving meal delivery like the one this year, but they do operate a Kosher store year-round due to the difficulty in finding these products in southern New Mexico.

The meals, at most 100, will be cooked by Chenchie and volunteers and then delivered by the couple’s children who range in age from 12 to 1 and a half, who Schmukler said are excited to be involved. The interaction will benefit seniors and others who have been isolated because of the virus, he added.

“Especially in the beginning when we thought it (COVID-19) was going to be, might be our entire purpose of being here can be just to help another person one time,” Schmukler said. “So you don’t know that this one smile, this one hello, this one dinner, this one, you know, you, check or whatever it might be, might be our entire purpose for being in this world. So we really, you know, try not to waste opportunities and helping.”

Leah Romero is a fellow with the New Mexico Local News Fund and can be reached at lromero@lcsun-news.com or @lromero_leah on Twitter.

Leah Romero
Las Cruces Sun-News

Look Who’s Coming to Dinner!

We are very excited to announce that award-winning, celebrity chef, restaurateur, cookbook author, philanthropist and native El Pasoan Top Chef Aarón Sanchez will be coming to dinner for Pacesetters 2021. Martha and Cliff Eisenberg and Tania and Scott Schwartz are co-chairs for the event.

Pacesetters donate a minimum gift of $1,800 individually to the Community Campaign. Those attending will receive surprise gifts prior to the evening.

RSVP by Tuesday, February 2, 2021 to be included in this very special event.

Zoom information will be sent upon receipt of your RSVP.
One single spark in one Jewish heart…

This year, Tu B’Shvat falls on Thursday, January 28th. The rabbis in the Mishnah designated Tu B’Shvat as the New Year for trees.

My earliest memories of Tu B’Shvat include selling JNF tree stamps to friends and family so that I could plant trees in Israel. Additionally, we ate the fruits of Israel including dried carobs, a truly acquired taste.

Tu B’Shvat was also a time where I heard the story of Honi the Circle Maker, a Talmudic personality whose actions inspired great faith. The familiar story of Honi and the Carob Tree remains one of my favorites. It appears in the Babylonian Talmud in Tractate Taanit (23a):

One day, Honi the Circle Maker was walking on the road and saw an old man planting a carob tree. Honi asked the man, “How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?”

The man replied, “Seventy years.”

Honi replied, “And do you think you will live another seventy years and eat the fruit of this tree?”

The man answered, “Perhaps not. However, when I was born into this world, I found many carob trees planted by my father and grandfather. Just as they planted trees for me, I am planting trees for my children and grandchildren so they will be able to eat the fruit of these trees.”

For me, this story provides a framework for living. Our actions today need to create promise for the future. Tu B’shvat reminds us of the importance of investing in our future.

But there should be more… The more I think about Tu B’Shvat and its celebration of the bounty of this earth, I realize that this fails to fully honor the legacy of the old man in this story. Perhaps we should consider adding another ritual to Tu B’Shavat: perhaps we should recite a brief Yizkor, a memorial prayer in gratitude to those who planted before us?

My family was and remains a JNF family thanks to my grandfather, Irving Sloan, of blessed memory. For over 50 years, he dedicated his life to the JNF as Executive Director of the New York office. I dedicate this message to his memory, with eternal gratitude.

By Rabbi Scott Rosenberg
The legacy letter is a way to let future generations know who we really are and what really matters to us. Participants in this four-session course will learn about the Jewish context of the legacy letter, how to transmit values and important lessons, how to connect the generations, and how to convey love and blessing to those who come after us. No previous writing experience is necessary.

**Wednesdays | 6-7:30pm**
**January 13, 20, 27 and February 3**

Advance registration required $18* by Friday, January 8 | Limited Space available

There is limited space available for this workshop.

Class session links will be emailed upon registration

Joanne Turnbull, PhD, is a licensed clinical social worker, certified Legacy Facilitator, certified Sage-ing Leader, and published, award-winning writer. She was honored with an award from Maine’s Jewish Community Alliance to develop the material for this course and has taught it several times.

Sign-up through our weekly email
www.jewishelpaso.org

As this pandemic forces us all to stay apart, our thoughts keep wandering to family celebrations that we shared together, often around the table. Food and recipes have a way of chronicling the history of a family, of a people, of a region. They are an edible legacy. This treasured history is something we want to preserve and commemorate so we’re going to create a Jewish Community Cookbook!

In the 150+ year history of El Paso’s Jewish community, we believe this is the first time this will be done, so think of the dishes that everyone in your family loves, the dishes you’re known for and are asked to prepare over and over again.

Please send us your recipes by 1/21/21.

Proceeds from this cookbook will go to benefit The J Center for Early Learning. We hope to be done by Rosh Hashanah and to be able to celebrate together. This cookbook will honor and chronicle the amazing families, and family histories, that make our community so very special!

Let us know if you would like to help with what will surely be a fun and meaningful project. We look forward to hearing from you!

XOXO,
Paullette Neuberger & Jennifer Ehrist
imjm@qprr.com jenne227@ebiglobal.net
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Follow us on The El Paso Jewish Community Cookbook

Harvesting Our Wisdom: A Legacy Letter Writing Workshop with Joanne Turnbull

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May the coming New Year bring blessings for peace, respect and harmony.

Nicole Nathan Gibson
ADL Southwest Regional Board Chair

Mark Toubin
ADL Southwest Regional Director

Follow us on The El Paso Jewish Community Cookbook

Follow us on The El Paso Jewish Community Cookbook
This February, we come together for a month-long virtual experience to fight the stigma around people with disabilities, culminating in a week of action and advocacy. Will you be there? Learn more at JewishTogether.org/JDAM #JDAM #JewishTogether

What can be done to promote the best inclusion and supportive care practices for people in our communities with disabilities? Learn about this and more during the month-long virtual Jewish Disability Advocacy Month this February. LEARN MORE: JewishTogether.org/JDAM #JDAM #JewishTogether

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Streaming online as follows:

Jan 10 - 18: Commandment 613 Calligraphy lesson and discussion with Rabbi Hale, Rabbi Zeidman, and Miriam Lewin Sunday, January 17 at 2pm

Jan 22 - 24: The Keeper

Jan 25 - Feb 1: Incitement

Feb 1 - 8: Six Minutes to Midnight

Feb 8 - 15: Ottolenghi and the Cakes of Versailles
Discussion with Director Laura Gabbert, Sunday, February 14 at 2pm

Feb 15 - 22: Sublet
Discussion with Director Eytan Fox, Sunday, February 21 at 2pm

Feb 22 - Mar 1: Aulcie

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Dedicated in Memory of Bob & Jane Rosen