



SONS OF JACOB SYNAGOGUE

*Upcoming Services
with Rabbi Kushner*

Winter Break

January 2025: No services

February 2025: No services

This year, we were unable to host a Hanukkah party because the holiday occurs Dec 25–Jan 2, a major vacation time.

Game Day at SOJ:

To be held next in

February; we are unable to schedule for January.

Board Meeting:

Mon. January 20, 6:30pm

Board Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month via Zoom.

January 12, 2pm

Inquisition to Religious Freedom: Jews & the US Constitution.

Sponsored by SOJ & CVIC.

1st Congregational Church UCC, 608 W Fourth St, Waterloo, (See p 5 for more information).

*Happy
New Year*



Featured stories:

- **Silent action of Jewish art (pp 2-4)**
- **Historic Tree of Life Plaque by Dr. Ted Lederman (pp 6-7)**

THANK YOU

With sincere appreciation Todah Rabah to everyone who sent an email, card, phoned or shared November 1st oneg and Nov. 13th game day in celebration of my 90th birthday. Special thanks for the cake, shabbat lunch, and flower bouquet on game day. -- Sharon Offman



Second meeting of “Ol’ Kockers”, the new SOJ Men’s Coffee Club: Wednesday, Jan 15th, 9:30am, Sidecar Coffee downtown, 21 West Jefferson Street #101, Waterloo. See page 10 for more information.

Silent Auction for SOJ Art Looking for a New Home



Our cozy, new synagogue is all decorated. There was no room for nine framed artworks, which the Board is making available to to members and Bulletin readers via a silent auction during the months of January and February.

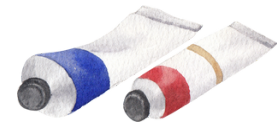
After the silent auction, transferred art can be picked up by appointment at the synagogue or packed, insured, and shipped via UPS at the new owner's cost for those who live out-of-town.



Information on each available artwork , including the recommended opening bid, is provided on the next two pages.

Write to us at soj.iowa.office@gmail.com or call Shirley at 319 233-9448 between 10am & 2pm on Monday, Wednesday or Friday if you want more information or wish to place a bid on a particular item described on the next two pages.

Silent Auction for SOJ Art Looking for a New Home continued



The Rabbi

Artist: Unknown
Oil on board (14X11")
Opening bid: \$50



Sabbath Candles

Artist: Chaim Adler
Hammered copper
with some damage (27X23")
Donated: In memory of Ida Levi
Opening bid: \$25



Jewish-themed portrait

Artist: E. Diamond
Screenprint (30X24")
Opening bid: \$20

Silent Auction for SOJ Art Looking for a New Home continued



Morning Service

Artist: George Crionas
Lithograph (26.5X19")
Donated: Hal Wohl
Opening bid: \$40



Ketubah Reproduction

Artist: Arthur Szyk
Color print (25X21")
Donated: In memory of
Mr. & Mrs. Lou Copper
Opening bid: \$20



Jewish Holidays

Artist: Ori Sherman
Print (23X31")
Donated: Hal Wohl
Opening bid: \$25

What did our Founding Fathers learn from Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition?



Isaac Amon, J.S.D. (PhD in Law)
Director of Academic Research
Jewish Heritage Alliance

On January 12, 2025 at 2pm, the outstanding documentary, "From Inquisition to Religious Freedom: The Story of Jews and the U.S. Constitution," featuring legal scholar and historian, Dr. Isaac Amon, will be shown at **First Congregational Church UCC, 608 W Fourth Street, Waterloo IA 50702.**



Revolutionary War Torah Scrolls from Congregation Shearith Israel, desecrated in 1776 when British forces took possession of New York City



Gershom Mendes Seixas (1745-1816), the first American-born spiritual leader of Shearith Israel and a strong advocate for American independence.



Poet Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), a descendent of Portuguese Jews fleeing the Inquisition, wrote: "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," inscribed on the plaque for the Statue of Liberty.



This free educational program is co-sponsored by Sons of Jacob Synagogue, the Cedar Valley Interfaith Council, and Women of Faith of the Cedar Valley. Dr. Amon, Director of Academic Research at the Jewish Heritage Alliance, www.jewishheritagealliance.com, will join us via Zoom for Q&A following screening.



SOJ Members: Contact the synagogue if your need a ride.

This interfaith event is co-hosted by Naomi McCormick, Ph.D., Sons of Jacob, & Rev. Abigail Livingood, Trinity Episcopal, Waterloo.

*The Tree of Life Plaque has been hung
in the new synagogue!*

Historic Tree of Life Plaque by Dr. Ted Lederman



Dr. Ted Lederman with his parents, Marvin & Dorothy Lederman,
& other family members standing before the Tree of Life in 1989

My cousin, David Lederman, asked me to relate the history of the "Tree of Life Memorial." In the 1950s-1970s, the Waterloo Jewish community never numbered more than 125 families. Although this included about ten professionals, small business owners were always the backbone of our Jewish community. As years passed, big box stores opened and Jewish children left to pursue other opportunities causing decline in membership and donations.

My parents, Marvin and Dorothy Lederman, felt an endowment fund was needed.

Tree of Life Plaque continued on next page

Historic Tree of Life Plaque by Dr. Ted Lederman continued

Although my Dad was a small businessman, he had a tremendous background as well as a willingness to work and a love of Judaism. While attending East Waterloo High, he worked at Gramp's clothing store and participated in symphony, camera club, gymnastics, and wood working. At Iowa State Teachers College, now the University of Northern Iowa, he majored in physics and participated in Civil Pilot Training Program, being certified as a pilot.



SOJ Tree of Life Plaque
at our current location

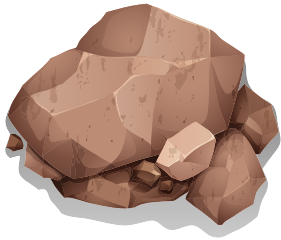
When Japan struck Pearl Harbor, Dad enlisted in the US Navy as an officer and because of his background, was sent to Annapolis for further specialty training. At the end of World War II, he was hired by Iowa State Teachers College as a physics instructor, but elected to work with Gramps in clothing sales. Dad felt to maximize donations, a plaque would be most helpful. He then visited many churches, photographing their memorials and then personally designed and paid for its commission.

There was a formal unveiling of the Tree of Life Plaque at SOJ in 1989 with my family, Rabbi and Ruthie Serber, and congregants present. A leaf could be purchased for \$1,000 and a rock for \$5,000. For the last twenty years, about \$15,000 to \$25,000 per year was withdrawn from the fund and never repaid.

Because of the work of my parents and the generosity of SOJ donors and our volunteer workers, we have survived lean times and we hope and pray Sons of Jacob will survive many many more years.



Words of Wisdom from Rabbi Kushner



Between a Rock and a Very Hard Place



We know about the story of Hannukah for the most part from the two Books of the Maccabees. These narratives were never part of our Hebrew Bible (scholars argue as to the reason for their exclusion).

The first Book of Maccabees describes the early days of the revolt against the Seleucid Greeks and includes an account that seems to us absolutely counterintuitive. Pursued by the enemies, the fleeing rebel Jewish forces took shelter in caves in the Judean hills. Refusing to fight the Greek forces on Shabbat and desecrate this holy day, around a thousand of them – men, women, children – were murdered.

The priest Mattathias (father of five sons, including the famous Judah “The Hammer” Maccabee) mourned greatly over this loss, and together with his friends came to a decision: “If any man attack us in battle on the Sabbath day, let us oppose him, that we may not all die as our brothers did in the hiding places.”

Continued on next page

Words of Wisdom from Rabbi Kushner continued

Between a Rock and a Very Hard Place

What an agonizing conclusion, given that the Greek enemy King Antiochus had forbidden the Jews to observe Shabbat! Now even the most zealously observant groups found themselves forced to re-think their previous standpoints. Better to desecrate one Shabbat to be able to observe many others. This change of mind has invoked modern consequences: In contemporary Israel, the Israeli Defense Forces fight any day of the week; it is a case of survival: now, no less than in the days of the Maccabees.

The laws of Shabbat are meant to provide focus and restoration. Ideally one should be at peace with oneself, with one's family, and with the entire surrounding world. Saving a life, even if it involves desecrating Shabbat, is not only allowed, but mandated. Our Sages remind us: "We are to live by the Commandments, not die by them." The Maccabees came to the right conclusion. They fought the first war in human history for religious freedom – and won!

*Chag Urim Sameach,
Happy Holiday of Lights!*



Rabbi Rebecca





Enjoy a cup of coffee with the “Ol’ Kockers”, the new men’s group for SOJ members!

You don’t need to be an alter kaker to join the new Sons of Jacob men’s group being organized by co-leaders, David Lederman and David Duke. Beginning last month, Ol’ Kockers started meeting once a month at a coffee shop. The group is open to all men who belong to the synagogue who want to discuss the latest Jewish topics.

The second Ol’ Kockers meeting is:

- Wednesday, January 15th, 9:30am
- Location: Sidecar Coffee downtown, 21 West Jefferson Street #101, Waterloo.
- If you have any questions, contact David Lederman at Lederm David@LBC65.com



BOOK CLUB

The book club meets monthly via Zoom. Here is our reading list for the year. Contact the SOJ Office if you are interested in joining.

- **September 18, 2024**

Looking backward: True stories from Chicago's Jewish past (2014). By Walter Roth. Academy Chicago Publishers.

- **October 16, 2024**

The Deadly Scrolls (Book 1 in The Jerusalem Mysteries) (2022). By Ellen Frankel. Wicked Son.

- **November 20, 2024**

To the End of the Land (2011). By David Grossman (translated by Jessica Cohen). Vintage International.

- **December 18, 2024**

Abomination (2022). By Ashley Goldberg. Vintage Australia.

- **January 15, 2025**

To & Fro (2024). By Leah Hager Cohen. Bellevue Literary Press.

- **February 19, 2025**

The Puttermesser papers: A novel (Vintage International) (2021). By Cynthia Ozick. Vintage.

- **March 19, 2025**

Into the arms of strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport (2000). By Mark Jonathan Harris & Deborah Oppenheimer (Editors). Bloomsbury USA.

- **April 16, 2025**

On Her Own: A Novel (2024). By Lihi Lapid (translated by Sondra Silverston). HarperVia.

- **May 21, 2025**

The Vixen: A Novel (2022). By Francine Prose. Harper Perennial.

- **June 18, 2025**

Welcome Home, Caroline Kline (2024). By Courtney Preiss. G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Yahrzeits

We gratefully acknowledge the following contributions.

Jonathan Nashel: In memory of his Grandfather, Harry Blindman.

Arthur Ratute: In memory of his Grandmother, Ethel Siegel.

The yahrzeits of these beloved, departed relatives listed below should be observed on the Friday and Saturday of the week listed.

Jan 5th - Jan 11th

Irving Becker
Joseph David Cohn
Nadelyn Cohen
Judith Cohen
Allan Cutler
Frank Kreft
Leo P. Gradinger
James Lemson
Cornelia "Sosie" Levi
Abe Lemberger
Daniel Power
Alice Rose
Frank Rubin

Jan 19st - Jan 25th

David S. Deutchman
Esther Duke
Sidney Guralnik
Adele Goldstein
Benjamin Gradinger
Eva Kronberg
Charles J. 'Chuck' Meyers
Abraham Aba Siegel
Minnie Slavin

Jan 12th - Jan 18

Ida Barg
Elmer Cohn
Harry E. Cohen
Louis Feinberg
David Gershovitz
Fannie Rothschild
Charlotte Steinberg
Charles Edes Walner

Jan 26th - Feb 1st

Ted Fratrik
Elsie Levine
Clara D. Obendorfer
Clara Pallant
Harry Strom