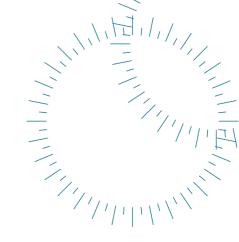
Etrog The Newsletter of Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh

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TAMMUZ – ELUL 5782 JULY – AUGUST 2022

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Word From the Sofa

For summer we four co-chairs have swapped our stuffy old sofa for this beautiful bench, surrounded by flowers. Things are looking up at least in some ways.

The thing that has been most on our minds these last weeks and months has been Rabbi Mark Solomon's health and his recovery from his serious operation. The operation has gone well but recovery has been slow. In the last week we are sensing that he has turned a corner. His pain has started to abate and he has been enjoying local walks, admiring flowers and trees. A sign of real recovery is a start of his reacting to the news with posts on Facebook. We all wish him *refuah shlema* and a full return to his old self, that we have all been missing so much. Meanwhile, the religious affairs group have been keeping things running very successfully. We now have more people helping to run services, either in person or on Zoom. Service attendance has not been great but now seems to be looking up a bit as we are beginning to get used to releasing ourselves from the mental and physical barriers that Covid 19 has erected round us.

One of the most encouraging events we had recently was the service led by Rabbi David Schwezoff from Germany/Hungary that coincided with the cheder end-of-year celebrations. We already knew David from his participation in Mark's Zoom services and especially for his singing of Sholom Secunda's tune for *Adon Olam*. It was great to be able to hear it live and join in with him.

Of course, everything is not so rosy in the wider world. The economic downturn is affecting many people and the war in Ukraine shows no sign of coming to an end. We need to do more to support others and to help one another. Sue Lieberman started a WhatsApp group at the beginning of lockdown that functioned very well for a long period in linking up people who could support each other. Messages can give support, but they can also behurtful. We have now learned the importance of having rules and a moderation procedure for these online fora. This has now all been put in place and the group reconstituted. If you would like to join, just send your mobile number to the admin team at waadmins@eljc.org. When you join, you will get information on the guidelines for postings. We hope it will now continue to be a source of practical help and moral support for all members.

Looking forward, plans are coming together for our High Holyday services. Rabbi David Smith (who retired from Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue in 2019) will be leading our Rosh Hashanah services on Sunday/Monday 25/26 September. We are hoping that Rabbi Mark will be well enough to lead the Yom Kippur services. As ever volunteers will be needed for organising the High Holydays. The shul council has been meeting to discuss how we can devolve more of the running of the community beyond a small core of active members. Stew Green has been very helpful in facilitating these discussions. So expect to hear from us over the coming weeks and months to learn what you would like to gain from the community and, especially, with requests from us to volunteer to help.

Miles for Refugees

Lizy Smith



During the month of June me (Lizy) and baby George are taking part in the British Red Cross's Miles for Refugees fundraiser, and hope to walk 108 miles (the distance between Lviv in Ukraine and Lublin in Poland) to raise money to help refugees.

I was inspired to do this challenge after listening to a podcast where a mother in Ukraine described her experiences of trying to keep her young family safe since the Russian invasion. Looking after little people is hard enough without having to fear for their lives every day. As I write this George is lying asleep peacefully beside me, and it's very difficult to think about all of the children across the world who don't have the basic resources like food, clean water and safety which we take for granted.

Unlike the terrifying experiences of refugees fleeing to safety, George and I have been enjoying our journey so far. Our planned walking routes in Edinburgh and East Lothian strangely often seem to end at places with cakes and/or book shops. Highlights so far

have included George's first trip up Arthur's Seat and a 6 mile walk along the coast from Musselburgh to Prestonpans. We have also seen some wonderful wildlife on our journey including a fox, eider ducklings and George's personal favourite; feral pigeons.

There has also been hard work required, especially when travelling with almost 19lbs (~8.5kg) of small person who prefers to be carried rather than pushed! This challenge has involved using 4 types of baby carriers in addition to the pushchair, with plenty of stops for milk and nappy changes.

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Another reason for undertaking this challenge is for my own benefit. I have been struggling with depression for many years and the extra pressure of looking after a baby has been quite difficult. I have found that getting outside and walking around with George keeps us both much happier. Sometimes it's hard to find the motivation to go out when I am sleep deprived, which is where this challenge has been very helpful in getting me out of the house.

Our target is to raise £150 to help people forced to flee from their homes and any contributions would be greatly appreciated, thank you!

Lizy wrote this in mid-June. We're most impressed to report that as of 28 June, Lizy and George had covered 99 miles! – Ed

Links

Babies, Bombs And Bravery, A Ukraine Mother Talks — https://bit.ly/3awEvoR

Donate to Miles for Refugees 2022 – https://bit.ly/307ZRH2



My Trip to Chicago

Miriam Vickers

After three years of not being able to make her usual annual visit to her home city of Chicago, Miriam's long-awaited trip started disastrously, with changed flights, delayed luggage, the loss of a sheaf of vital documents (necessitating, among other things, freezing of bank accounts) and an incompatible phone. With the loving support of her Chicago cousins, and Miriam's own indomitable spirit, all was well in the end. – Ed

Despite the traumatic events and lengthy subsequent and timeconsuming necessary undertakings, it was great to be with my cousins Michael and Robin who did so much for me and saved the day. I visited with the daughter and family of Michael and Robin on the first Shabbat and my cousin Elliot's daughter and son-in-law who are expecting their first child before the end of the year and whose marriage ended up on Zoom due to Covid intervening. We had a lovely time and I happily brought challah, etc and wedding presents.

I stay in what was my parents' flat when in Chicago, which is good to arrive at after the journey's over. I went to the lovely North Shore home of a long-standing friend who, along with her mother, survived the Dresden bombing and Displaced Persons camps before making the journey to Chicago in the early 1950's and still remembers the good coffee and cake in the Elephant House when they were in Edinburgh in 1996. I also met up with someone from my high school days who will be doing a tour of Scotland later this month when we will meet in Edinburgh.

It would not be a proper trip to Chicago without going to the Art Institute of Chicago with my cousin Barry to see the fabulous Cézanne exhibition, which included a National Gallery of Scotland tree painting, and to the Museum of Contemporary Art, which had a very exciting Nick Cave exhibition.

I also renewed contact with the family who was there for us when my parents and I made the journey from England to Chicago in 1947. I am hopeful that we will have a happy reunion either in Scotland or Chicago. Long conversations with my cousins in NYC and friends in USA were good to have.

The legacy of the lost documents left me feeling bereft as nothing like this has ever happened before but having said that, spending time with family and friends is always a treat and good for the soul.

Amen.

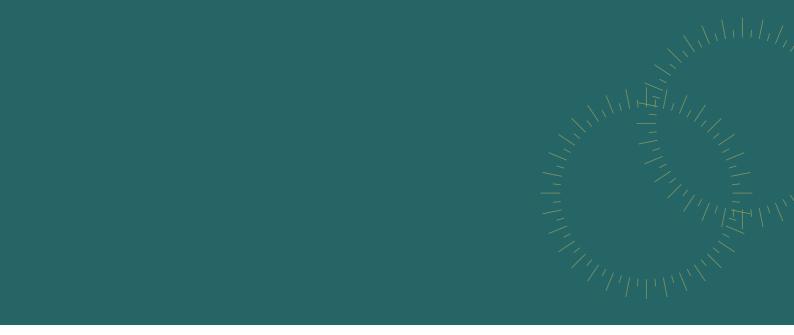
Edinburgh Interfaith Association

Joe Goldblatt

EIFA coordinated its annual peace walk on 22 May 2022 with visits to St Mary's Catholic Cathedral, the Baha'i Centre, the Mandir (Hindu Temple), the Gurdwara (Sikh Temple), the Ukrainian Catholic Church and other places of worship. Representatives from Sukkat Shalom (Professor Joe Goldblatt and Nick and Kate Silk) and 50 other persons participated.

EIFA also recently presented an online programme entitled *The Future of Faith: The Role of Modesty*. This programme brought Muslim, Christian, and Jewish young women together for this important discussion.

Sociable Times



While wonderful online experiences continue, we're also enjoying in-person services and events. Some special ones in May and June were Marloes' visit, accompanied by her harp, en route to the Highlands and Rabbi David Schwezoff's visit in June, when he led a Friday night supper and songs session, and a Shabbat service the following morning. Our cheder children and young people joined us after their party, participating in the Torah service, followed by a communal lunch and ceilidh. Our Book Lovers' Social with tea and cakes, was a chance to display a ge generous donation of interesting books for the first time.

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Festival Recommendations



Edinburgh's multiple summer festivals are back in full swing this summer. Here are some recommendations from Sukkat Shalom members.

Ash Alexander recommends Green Knight as "an intimate one-woman show telling a unique version of the Medieval poem of Gawain and the Green Knight, through the eyes of a young woman who falls in love with the titular hero. Debbie Cannon's performance is captivating, deftly guiding the audience through a tale spanning her lifetime, from a mundane adolescence blown apart by the first electrifying glimpse of Gawain, to her final years reflecting on the journey that first glimpse put into motion. I saw this show at the 2019 Fringe, and it immediately became one of my favourite pieces of theatre."

tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/green-knight

Joe Goldblatt recommends the Sir Rudolf Bing Memorial Lecture on 8 August 2022 at 5pm at the Playfair Library. Jo says: "The speaker is Peter Gelb, General Manager (GM) of the New York City Metropolitan Opera. Bing was a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany who founded the Edinburgh International Festival and then became the GM of the Met Opera. Gelb has revolutionised the Met through their world-wide cinema streaming and new productions. He looks after 3000 artists and an annual budget of £200 million. This lecture is co-sponsored by the Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre."

www.eif.co.uk/events/rudolf-bing-memorial-lecture



Peter Gelb, General Manager of the NYC Metropolitan Opera

Stephanie Mitchell says, "I am particularly looking forward to the **Book Festival**, with its focus on colonialism, which of necessity also involves some discussion of borders, refugees, immigration and identity – themes which probably resonate with all of us, even if not specifically about Jews".

Following on from Stephanie, **Miriam Vickers** has a specific Book Festival recommendation to make – Chitra Ramaswamy talking about 'Homelands' – having heard a very good discussion about this book on Zoom.



Chitra Ramaswamy

Lisa Barcan says "I can suggest one show - my Pilates teacher, Hannah Venet is the choreographer. She primarily works with young people and this show would be of interest to teenagers in the community and others. The show is **Lots and Not Lots**. Greg Sinclair and Scottish Theatre. Summerhall. 14th Aug-21st Aug. 17.45.

This show is part of Made in Scotland Showcase, originally developed with young people from Fife. It's performed by young people for everyone to enjoy. There's a lot of singing and dancing – described by critic Joyce McMillan as 'concentrated vocal and musical energy'."

Lisa says, "I hope to go if anyone wants to join me!" If you're interested, contact Lisa at **l.barcan@blueyonder.co.uk**.



Lots and Not Lots - tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/lots-and-not-lots

Have a browse for yourself on all the festival programmes

Edinburgh International Festival https://www.eif.co.uk 5–28 August 2022 Book Festival https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/the-festival/whats-on 13-29 August 2022 Edinburgh Festival Fringe https://www.edfringe.com 5 – 29 August 2022 Edinburgh Art Festival https://www.edinburghartfestival.com 28 July - 28 August 2022

If you see something you'd like to go to, and would like to invite others to go too, you could message the ELJC WhatsApp group and/or let the newsletter team know for inclusion in the weekly reminders at **newsletter@eljc.org**.

Liberal Judaism Education Hub

Nick Silk

As I hope you know, since we have advertised them in weekly our reminders, Liberal Judaism (LJ) has been running a series of lectures over the past few months in their 'Education Hub'. The first set of lectures was on the theme of "Liberal Judaism in Practice" while the recent set of lectures has been on "Liberal Jewish Thought". I've been attending a good number of these lectures, and while it is usually the case I find that some lectures more interesting than others (and that's no reflection on the speakers - just personal preference!), I have found all of the lectures in this recent series really interesting.

If someone asked you about Liberal Jewish theology, and what we as Liberal Jews actually stand for, would you know where to start? I have always been proud that Liberal Judaism allows us to think things through for ourselves and come to our own conclusions, but it does make it somewhat difficult to answer the question "well, what do you actually stand for?". This was one of the topics covered in one of the lectures, given by Rabbi Judith Rosen-Berry, where the question was posed, does our desire to be inclusive reduce our (theological) thinking? Is Liberal Judaism becoming so open that it has become vague? And the flipside, if we want Liberal Judaism to become more dogmatic, would it still be Liberal Judaism? There wasn't a great conclusion - not that I expected there to be - other than that we as Liberal Jews need to spend time thinking about these sorts of questions, and, it was suggested, "firm up" on the characteristics that differentiate Liberal from other Judaism branches of Judaism. And it was at this point, when talking about what Liberal Judaism stands for, that the "affirmations of Liberal Judaism" were mentioned.

There are a set of 42 "affirmations of Liberal Judaism" (**bit.ly/3Po1bq1**) – have you come across them before? If I had, they're not something that stuck in my mind. Anyway, I have now had a look at (some of) them and even by the time I get to the second one, I'm not sure about what is being said. For completeness' sake, I'll look at the first one, which I imagine most of us would be OK with; it is:

JUDAISM

We affirm our commitment to Judaism, the religious and cultural heritage of the Jewish people, and the centrality within that heritage of the Jewish religion, which, since the time of Abraham and Sarah, has proclaimed the sovereignty of the One God.

However, the second one is:

THE JEWISH VIEW OF GOD

We affirm the Jewish conception of God: One and indivisible, transcendent and immanent, Creator and Sustainer of the universe, Source of the Moral Law, a God of justice and mercy who demands that human beings shall practise justice and mercy in their dealings with one another.

At this point I need to look at what the word "affirm" means. If I am to agree with this second affirmation, am I saying that I agree with / believe in God as one and indivisible, transcendent and immanent, etc., or am I saying that I agree with the statement that the (traditional?) Jewish concept of God is that God is one and indivisible etc. I am happy to go with the latter, less sure about the former.

It's funny, when I started writing this article, I hadn't really thought about looking at the Affirmations, because they were only really discussed briefly in Rabbi Rosen-Berry's lecture. Rabbi Rosen-Berry didn't touch on the nature of God too much either – other than saying that when you bring God into discussions about Liberal Judaism, then things get even more complicated! - but the nature of God, or at least the nature of Judaism and how it views God, was discussed in the lecture on neo-Chasidism. Have you ever heard of this? I hadn't; I know of Chasidism but what is the 'neo'. This was explained to us by Rabbi Michael Shire, and the summary is that neo-Chasidism is trying to go back to the original concept of Chasidism, with a focus of "the Divine ETROG | ISSUE 38 within us" and not the ultra-Orthodox Chasidism of today. Rabbi Shire talked about the universality of neo-Chasidism - that it doesn't see itself as а movement, that it isn't just for Jews but for everyone, and that neo-Chasidism is more about connecting with the Divine within us, and indeed the whole world, rather than worshipping God. And it's this concept of what Rabbi Shire called panentheism, of what Google tells me is "God and the world (are) inter-related with the world being in God and God being in the world", which seems significantly different to what I would say is the traditional Jewish view of God. So, does this mean that you can't believe in panentheism and be a Liberal Jew the the given second of affirmations? I would say not, but...

What else have I learnt from the Education Hub lectures? I now know about Mussar, which like Chasidism has its roots in Eastern Europe, and which is a way of encouraging / helping you to live a better life. It says we should all carry out mitzvot, both 'social' ones like helping the poor but also 'religious' ones like saying blessings, the latter being a way of helping us to be a better person. To me, some of the examples talked about sounded similar to how I understand some self-help groups work – how you can appreciate the goodness in the world to make you feel better in yourself which can then allow you to be a better person. And like neo-Chasidism, Mussar isn't something that's related to a specific branch of Judaism, it's something that anyone can do. (And as a bit of an aside, I personally think there is a noticeable move within Liberal Judaism to more traditional observance practices. Whether this is specifically linked to Mussar I'm not sure, but there is maybe a link.)

Anyway, a bit like I said above when I wasn't surprised that there was no great conclusion as to what should be the specific nature of Liberal Judaism, you probably won't be too surprised that I have no great conclusion to this article. What I would say though is that I have found these Liberal Judaism Education Hub (bit.ly/3uNytaf) lectures really thought-provoking, and would strongly encourage you to think about attending any future lectures, which I'm sure will be coming soon.

Talking to Charlotte Gamsu, and an Invitation to Study

Sue Bard



Welcome to Charlotte, who's been drawn to Sukkat Shalom by Maimonides. During lockdown, Charlotte joined Rabbi Mark's ongoing weekly Maimonides and Talmud classes for members and friends of the Edinburgh, Leicester and Manchester LJ communities. Charlotte, who has lived in Arbroath for many years – "the only Jew in the village" – found the on-line opportunities for connection and learning that lockdown generated 'world-changing', saying "It must have been like this when Gutenberg's printing presses started rolling."

During the first lockdown, she and her daughter, Justine Powell, started studying the Torah together each week, and now her daughter has moved to Giffnock, they've continued the practice on Zoom. They would warmly welcome any Sukkat Shalom members/associate members who would like to join them in:

Immersion in the Words of the Torah - לעסוק בדברי תורה

Charlotte and Justine say: "We read through the week's Parsha and Haftarah in Hebrew and translate it as we go (using a translinear text and other tools where needed!) We frequently pause to discuss idioms, look up the etymology of words, or consider the choices translators have made when producing an English text. We aim to improve our Hebrew reading, and to spend some time with the texts, and each other. We meet online on Monday evenings 6pm till 8pm. Anyone interested is welcome to join us. Just drop in and stay as long as you wish."

If you'd like to try this, contact Charlotte for the Zoom link on charlotte@charlottes-web.org.uk

Thank you, Charlotte for your generous offer, and welcome to Sukkat Shalom.



We aim to improve our Hebrew reading, and to spend some time with the texts, and each other.

Tribute to Joan Eardley

Sue Bard



The Watchie at Catterline - Joan Eardley's studio and home

2021 marked a hundred years since the birth of the painter Joan Eardley. Joan was born and brought up in West Sussex but studied at Glasgow School of Art and spent the rest of her life in Scotland. The subject matter of her work, at least for the last 13 years of her life was indubitably Scottish. Living in Townhead, in Glasgow, she made chalk drawings of the children who lived around her, vividly depicting their lives. In the late 1950s, she began to spend time in the fishing village of Catterline, on the northeast coast, and moved there permanently in 1961, painting powerful landscapes and seascapes.

2021 saw numerous exhibitions and events relating to Joan Eardley's work. Included among them was the call that publishing company Speculative Books put out inviting contemporary writers to respond however they chose to Eardley's work. The title of the two-part anthology, 'All Becomes Art' is taken from Edwin Morgan's poem, 'Flood Tide', reflecting the flood of responses received. The anthology is a wonderful and vibrant mixture of prose and poetry exploring a multitude of aspects of Joan Eardley's life and work and prompting new ways of looking at and thinking about her paintings.

Among the selected work is Sukkat Shalom member Ellen Galford's vigorous and dynamic poem 'Joan Eardley Soundtracks', which you can read here alongside another lovely, and contrasting poem from the anthology, 'Catterline in Spring' by William Bonar.

Joan Eardley Soundtracks

By Ellen Galford

Glasgow in the Fifties too feisty for stately symphonies – Singsongy street games from weans in woolly jerseys, tenement blethers between those women off to one side of the back-court washing lines, and, streaming out from kitchen windows on the steam of soup-pots, old radio jazz.

Then for a change of tune away northeast up that bitten-off coast to hear winds conspire with the snarly sea and cackle over the cottages on Catterline's cliffs looking down on the drying salmon-nets that mutter among themselves as the incoming wave hisses threats and promises.

Catterline in Spring

By William Bonar

- In the Creel Inn on the cliff edge above the crescent sea we ate freshly cracked crab in silence waxing slow in wood-glow after the wind
- winning sweet white meat from claws like old hands who know how to clasp the moments how to cling like Eardley's couping cottages in the salted snow straining to hear once more the gull keen.

'All Becomes Art Part One' edited by Colin Herd is published by (and can be bought from) Speculative Books, Glasgow 2021.

www.speculativebooks.net

Liberal Jews for Justice in Israel Palestine

Maurice Naftalin



We all know about the many disastrous effects of the long Covid lockdown. But amongst those were also some positive changes; for instance, a forced reliance on online communication made some surprising connections possible. One example is the unexpected but very welcome connection that we made with people in Rabbi Mark's other community in Leicester, via shared services and the adult education classes that he took online. Through that contact, some people in each community realised that they were not isolated in objecting, a year ago, to Liberal Judaism's respectful reception of the new Israeli ambassador, Tzipi Hotovely, a vigorous supporter of settlement expansion and denier of the possibility of Palestinian statehood.

The protest against Hotovely created a new alliance: Liberal Jews for Justice in Israel/Palestine (**ljjip.org**). Initially just a handful of people in our two communities, LJJIP has grown in a year to nearly 50 people. We've had three very successful online meetings, and we're currently planning two more. To become a member of LJJIP, you only have to agree with our Statement of Intent, which is couched in the language of human rights and social justice rather than taking sides or proposing political solutions. **ljjip.org/statement-of-intent**

Our aim is to open a space for constructive dialogue in Liberal Judaism around Israel/Palestine. We are convinced that many Liberal Jews want to apply the ideals of our movement to the cause of supporting human rights in Israel/Palestine. For instance, this is part of one message that we recently received:



I am very grateful to have found your organisation, so that I realise I am not alone amongst British Jews in my deep feelings and frustrations over these issues. It feels like a weight off my shoulders to be able to speak about this to other Jews like you who have similar views while still being loyal to the continued existence of the State of Israel.

We believe that we will be doing a vital service for Liberal Judaism if we can provide a safe place for discussion about the difficult questions that the situation in Israel/Palestine raises for Liberal Jews. If you might be interested in taking part in that, read the Statement of Intent and consider joining, or coming to one of our next meetings:

- On July 6th 7.30 8.30, on Zoom, Grahame Gross, a member of the Leicester community whom many of us know from services and purimspielen, will talk about his ten years' experiences in Israel as an oleh and as a soldier in the IDF. To attend, email events@ljjip.org for the link.
- Later this summer, a meeting will discuss the evictions of the many Palestinian villagers who are about to lose their homes to an extended army firing range in the South Hebron Hills.

Teruah



TERUAH ONE!

Kol Nidrei Appeal 2022, 5782/5783

Our Kol Nidrei Appeal is one of the ways in which we try to recognise our various responsibilities for Tikkun Olam – that is, for the wider world. Each year we choose to support a range of charities that between them represent local, international, Jewish and non-Jewish causes. We always try to support smaller charities with low administration costs where a relatively small amount of money can make a big difference. Every penny contributed goes to our designated charities.

Last year, in the second year of the pandemic, we were proud that once again our small community broke its own record, raising more than £4000 for good causes. Let's do that again this year.

We particularly like to support charities suggested by our own members through their personal knowledge of that charity's work.

We would welcome your suggestions for charities to support this year. You can do this by filling in this short form here. If you'd like to make more than one suggestion, fill in a form for each one at **forms.gle/tyFGfDobGkAmZx5y5**. Alternatively, just send an email to **suebard@eljc.com** telling us about your suggested charity.

Please send your suggestions by 31 July.



TERUAH TWO!

Can you blow a shofar?

This year, we're seeking shofar blowers. Can you blow a shofar? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Just send an email to **nicksilk@eljc.com**.

Community Care and Support

In these difficult times, we are here for each other, so don't hesitate to ask for any help and support you may need, including simply the need to talk.

OUR EXISTING CONFIDENTIAL CONTACT SYSTEM: phone 0131 777 8024 or email **contact@eljc.org** and one of the small group of people who respond to calls and emails will get back to you quickly.

OUR WHATSAPP GROUP allows people to be in direct contact with each other very quickly where help is needed. If you're not already on it and would like to be, text your mobile number to **waadmins@eljc.org** and ask to be part of the group.





Sukkat Shalom Scottish Charity Number SC035678

Sukkat Shalom Contacts Community Phone - 0131 777 8024 This phone number sends voicemail to members of the Contact Team

To reach the Care Team, call the Community Phone or email care@eljc.org Contact Team - contact@eljc.org Etrog Team - newsletter@eljc.org

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