

June 11, 2023

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Menschwork's **BROTHERKEEPER** Newsletter

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Remembering Our Deceased Brothers:

- Jeff Marker (z"l)**
- Bennett Neiman (z"l)**
- Melvin 'Mickey' Metelits (z"l)**
- Ross London (z"l)**





The Marker Brothers at JMR 31: David, Jeff (z"l) and Bill

Jeff Marker (1948-2023)

Rabbi Jeff Marker (z"l), a regular attendee of the JMR for decades, died on February 26, 2023 in New York City. The three Marker brothers-Jeff, David and Bill-attended JMR 31 in 2022 at the Pearlstone Retreat Center. David wrote a heartfelt remembrance about his brother.

Some of my earliest memories of Jeff are when we took a family car trip from Maryland to California and back, 5 weeks in an Oldsmobile sedan with my two parents and children aged 14, 11, and 5. What is so unusual (in addition to parents agreeing to do that) is that Jeff planned the entire trip. He identified the National Parks and cities to go to and given Jeff's love of trains this included stopping in Durango Colorado to visit a train museum and ride the train to Silverton. When we were in California, he called someone he had read about in a magazine and got him to invite us to come to his house and see his model railroad set-up in the basement! At 14 years old!

Apparently, his love of trains started early. There is a story that one day when living in Brooklyn Jeff disappeared (at the age of 4 or 5). Our parents found he had ridden his tricycle (TRICYCLE!) a couple blocks away to where he could watch the subway come out of the ground.

When Jeff went to college at Carnegie-Mellon University (then called Carnegie Tech) in Pittsburgh, the city was in the process of eliminating many of its streetcars. Jeff tried to ride them all before that would happen. Between that and suddenly deciding to start keeping kosher, he focused on things other than school and lasted only one year at Carnegie. He went on to get his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Maryland.

Jeff was a huge baseball and football fan. There are home movies of Jeff and Bill at Brooklyn Borough Hall after the Dodgers won the 1955 World Series. They were on the steps with the team and both got signed baseballs with many of those great players on them.

Over the years Jeff rooted for the original Washington Nationals/Senators, then after both teams left town we supported the Baltimore Orioles. After moving back to Brooklyn, he became a big Mets fan. No matter what year it was, he rooted for whomever could beat the Yankees! He also loved the Washington football team, and then the Jets, because how could he support the Giants?

After a stint as a New York City cab driver (think Harry Chapin, "taking tips and getting stoned"), Jeff graduated from the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). Our mother was particularly thankful since her father had endowed a fund at JTS. She was particularly proud of a photo of her dad and leaders of JTS that she shared with everyone when Jeff was there.

Jeff was most of all a child of the '60s, always questioning authority. Here's a wonderful story about Jeff at JTS when he almost got kicked out instead of graduating. During his senior year, the leadership of JTS finally agreed to start admitting women to become rabbis. Late in the year they backtracked on their decision, saying it wasn't finalized. Jeff was furious, and in his own way, called the leadership of the JTS "chicken shit." They let him graduate, I think, to get him away from them. At graduation Jeff had large buttons made that in big letters said OWN, and smaller text saying 'Ordain Women Now!' He gave them to us to wear and he wore his on his robe as he received his diploma.

As a young rabbi, Jeff would refuse to be counted in a minyan if they wouldn't also count women. He did his best to clear the way for equality of men and women in American Jewry. A few years earlier, Jeff had gotten arrested at a sit-in at the NYC Jewish Federation over their lack of funding for programs for the poor (I don't remember the details). The interesting thing is that that same weekend, Bill and friends from the University of Pennsylvania came down to DC to protest and get arrested, chaining themselves to the Soviet embassy. Our parents were embarrassed by arrests, and at the same time very proud of their son's activism for good causes.

All of you know Jeff wore a beard. You may not know that he shaved it off once. As part of the 1968 presidential campaign, he was one of many young volunteers in the McCarthy campaign who "came clean for Gene" and were clean shaven for door knocking events.

Before Jeff became the rabbi at Park Slope Jewish Center, he was a Hillel rabbi at Penn State and then a rabbi in Hoboken NJ. On RavNet a story was recently posted that we did not know, about his time in Hoboken. Apparently, a number of buildings in Hoboken had recently been burned, pushing out a number of poor residents to make way for gentrification. Along with some Christian clergy, Jeff helped set up a homeless shelter in a church for these refugees, and then took turns with other clergy sleeping in the shelter to make sure the city didn't come take everyone away. The city sued to close the shelter but lost their lawsuit in court, establishing the right for religious organizations to shelter the homeless regardless of local laws.

Jeff kept searching for spiritual enlightenment and using it to improve our current world. From traditional conservative Judaism to Fabrangen, to Jewish Renewal, he was always looking for connection and meaning. He loved the Jewish Men's Retreat and repeatedly encouraged us to attend. We are so glad that we got to experience JMR 31 with him in 2022.

Jeff had two long-term loves in his life. Jeff loved his family very much and was married to Paula for over 46 years. They saw each other through life's highs and lows, sharing a common world view, especially loving to share Jewish holidays with their many friends. For even longer than he knew Paula, Jeff was a devoted Grateful Dead fan. He saw an uncountable number of shows, and

had tickets for a Dead & Co. show in New York later this year. He loved to incorporate Dead tunes in the liturgy. Park Slope uses Ripple to sing the first paragraph of Hallel; his funeral service started with Ripple as well.

Bill and I loved Jeff our whole lives. He made crazy decisions, he could be stubborn, but there was never any doubt that he cared deeply for what he believed in and would do anything to help those who needed his assistance. He will be missed by many, many people.

***May Jeff's Memory Be For A Blessing and
May His Good Deeds Be Magnified A Thousand-Fold***



Bennett Neiman (1948-2023)

It is with sadness that we mourn the death of Bennett Neiman (z"l) in Georgetown, TX on January 21, 2023. He was the cherished husband of Sandi; devoted father of David and Amanda Neiman, Emily and Simon Abramson, and Lizzy and Zachariah Neiman; adored grandfather of Nora, Samara, Ellie, and Leia.

Bennett was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. He raised his family in St. Louis. Before moving to Austin in 2012, Bennett lived in Woodstock, NY where he was active in the artistic scene. Bennett was creative, playful, joyous, and committed to learning and celebrating Judaism. He wrote many Purimschpiels and authored a book about letting go of negativity. He and Sandi were regulars at Congregation Agudas Achim in Austin, Texas for Erev Shabbat services before they moved to Sun City (Georgetown, TX) in 2021. He was 74 years old.

While living in the Woodstock, NY area, Bennett served as the last executive director of the Jewish Retreat Center in Accord, NY-Elat Chayim (EC)-before it merged with the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village, CT in 2006. Bennett arranged to have the yurts moved to the new campus in Falls Village and a Torah procession traveled from Accord to Falls Village to mark the merger of these organizations. Bennett organized JMR 13 in 2004 around the theme of Bar Mitzvah. He also brought Rabbi David Ingber to EC as the spiritual leader for JMR 13.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Bennett's memory to:

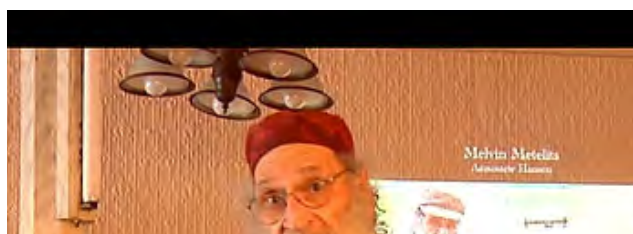
-Hebrew Free Loan Association of Austin- www.hfla.org

-Alzheimer's Association- www.alz.org

See A Link To Bennett's Memorial Service Below (45 minutes)

*May Bennett's Memory Be For A Blessing and
May His Good Deeds Be Magnified A Thousand-Fold*

Bennett's Memorial Service





Melvin Metelits (1933-2023)

Melvin, 'Mickey' Metelits died on January 28, 2023 at age 89 with his family by his side. He lived an outsized life while remaining enormously grounded. His early activism in the organised left and civil rights movement included leadership in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee of Philadelphia and journalism with the left wing newspaper, The Independent Citizen. He was a member of the Communist Party USA from 1963 to 1991. An elementary school teacher who ended that phase of his career in the Frederick Douglass School, his early work in the Philadelphia Teachers Union securing rights for permanent, part time teachers including full time pay and benefits changed the economic fortunes of many. He organised protests against the Vietnam War as well as busloads of protestors and activists for The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963.

A charismatic, intellectual and deeply spiritual man, he returned to his Jewish roots through P'nai Or in Philadelphia and Jewish Renewal. Teaching scores of bar and bat mitzvah learners, as well as aspiring converts, Melvin became a revered teacher of Torah and Jewish values. He led several circles of Torah and Jewish text study groups, and eventually received smicha as a Maggid, a traditional teller of folk stories in the Jewish mystical and ethical traditions. He held storytelling sessions far and wide, and his last session was captured on a CD entitled 'The Whispering Maggid.' His storytelling was all the more remarkable given that he had survived throat cancer. He only had one vocal chord and spoke in a whisper that was at once penetrating and captivating. A warm, open

teacher, whose appreciation for the wonder of everyday existence could turn any moment into a deep lesson, his spiritual guidance and example transformed the lives of congregants and students, and even some of his own teachers.

In his youth and middle age, he was an avid athlete, excelling in table tennis and cycling in his middle years as past President of the Pennsylvania Cycling Club. He played classical guitar at a very high level when younger, and had a keen appreciation for music. He spoke Spanish perfectly from a young age, and loved sports, being an ardent supporter of the Philadelphia Eagles and Phillies. He is survived by his third wife, Maria, and his son Michael, grandchildren Caleb and Leah, as well as stepchildren Letetia, Sabre, Chandler and Cassandra; and step grandchildren Niara, Kyle, Simone, Cloe, Chandler Jr., Victoria and Terrell, and step great grandchildren along with Jeremiah, Timothy, Shalayh, Samir, Mahlani, Tyreek and Carter.

Services will be held on Wednesday, February 1 at Goldsteins' Rosenberg's Raphael-Sacks Funeral Home at 6410 North Broad St, Philadelphia PA, 19126.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to:

-P'nai Or Philadelphia- www.pnaior-phila.org

-The Shalom Center www.theshalomcenter.org

**May Melvin's Memory Be For A Blessing and
May His Good Deeds Be Magnified A Thousand-Fold**





Ross London (R) with his son, Daniel

Ross London (1948-2023)

This eulogy was written by Ross's brother-in-law, Yosaif August

My brother-in-law, Ross London, died last month while rototilling part of a field in his 'Gan Eden' home in New Paltz, NY. He was planting a field of cosmos. He died 'with his boots on' and with deep heart connections to so many people he loved, cared about and who have and will benefit from his legacy.

He was, to use the title of a book by our beloved Harry Brod (z"l), more than a 'Mensch Among Men.' Ross was a mensch amongst everyone who knew him.

His obituary speaks of the many roles he played over his 74 years—son, brother, husband, father and grandfather; and professionally, as Peace Corps volunteer, lawyer, judge, entrepreneur, playwright, actor, author, educator....he even briefly had a bagel business in Ohio!

He was an adventuresome and courageous seeker - of the mind and spirit and also of the natural world. He survived many cardiac events; these never held him back from joyfully exploring places off the beaten path. And, most of all, from my perspective, is what an open hearted, continually growing, generous loving man he was.

Ross and I shared our lives over a period of some 44 years. The earlier years often saw us wrestling with each other. Ultimately, our loving bond was so strong that we learned how to be present and to listen and be heard. Passing Jacob and Esau, we were much more like Jonathan and David, those other 'brothers' who so deeply cared for each other. We had each other's backs and also found joyful ways to connect, especially jamming with him and his wife, Catharine, on their ukuleles. A special memory for me was the time a few years ago when Ross and his beloved son Daniel joined me at a JMR.

Family was first and foremost for Ross. He worked hard to develop loving, lasting relationships with both his children, Danny and Annie Rose. He created a wonderfully rich later chapter of his life with his second wife, Catharine, the two of them creating a paradise at their home in New Paltz and also fearlessly traveling off the beaten path all over the world. Ross and my wife, Tsurah, had a deeply loving sibling relationship.....often wrestling with the big questions of existence and meaning.

Most recently, Ross taught a course in Restorative Justice for inmates at Shawangunk Correctional Facility, a maximum security prison in New York State. His students were all degree bound. They were part way through their semester when he died. The many letters from them (see excerpts below) that were received by the family attest to how he helped them restore faith in themselves and in their worth as human beings. Catharine stepped in to assist another staff person so they could complete the semester.

Ross' passing is a deep loss for all of us. He was indeed a mensch and we are all blessed by our connection with him. Onwards with love.

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE FROM ROSS'S STUDENTS

"....you guys take time out of your lives that could be spent with your family and the people you love. But you invest it with us. Men that have been written off as criminals and societal pariahs. Thank you, Mrs. Malone, for everything, and please give my sincerest condolences to Mrs. London and the rest of of his family. Thank you, be well."

"...I always see professor London in passing and he always had a smile on his face and would tell the group of us passing him on our way from class "Keep striving, don't let up." That statement will forever stay with me because it's powerful especially for a student in prison trying to stay focused chasing that degree...."

"...Professor London helped me in understand the importance of considering what is it the victim of crimes actually experience along with their family and loved ones. Mr. London help open my mind he helped me tap into a deeper awareness to a point where I understand empathy...."

“...What struck me the deepest was that in reading this book, I was moved by how intelligent and passionate he was in advocating for a common and shared sense of justice. Professor London advocated for me in his book without truly knowing who I was or that I even existed. He envisioned someone like me who has made a terrible decision to break the law, to have a fair chance in being restored is a reflection of his humanity and in a sense it is almost a God like quality, that is, to be able to have compassion for the lowest and loneliness of all society...”

*May Ross's Memory Be For A Blessing and
May His Good Deeds Be Magnified A Thousand-Fold*

Update About JMR32 Planning

WHAT: 32nd Annual Jewish Men's Retreat
WHERE: Isabella Freedman Retreat Center in Falls Village, CT
WHEN: October 27-29, 2023





JMR32 Planning Team Meeting in Philadelphia on May 4-5, 2023

L to R: JoJo Kottler, Josh Millman, Phil Wachslar, Cliff Liberman, David Shaw, Marc Jacobs **Not in photo: Reb Shawn Zevit, Cobi Waxman, Baba Lou Haber, David Piver, Ori Alon-Ray, Les Fagen, Elliott Myrowitz**



JMR32 Co-Chairs: Baba Lou Haber, David Shaw and Cobi Waxman





Cobi Waxman leads the planning team in Havdalah

The planning for JMR32 is well underway. Members of the planning team met in person in Philadelphia on May 6 and 7, with other members of the team joining via Zoom. The team brainstormed about how to bring the theme of "uncovering holy sparks" to life in order to create meaningful and memorable experiences for retreat attendees. Survey responses from JMR31 informed the discussion as the team explored both new ideas and beloved Menschwork traditions.

The team is working to bring back the Ohel Avot (sweat lodge) and a new and improved Mishkan Avot that rivals the heated tent experience. The team is also planning storytelling sessions based on the program 'The Moth Radio Hour' to give attendees the opportunity to inspire each other with stories about their discoveries of holy sparks in themselves, others, and their communities.

JMR32 will take place at Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village, Connecticut on the weekend of October 27–29. We expect full capacity this year so if you are interested in attending you are advised to register and reserve your space as soon as possible.

**It's Time To Register for JMR32!
Over 70 Men Have Registered
Don't Delay-Ensure Your Seat At**

The (Dinner) Table.
Click On The Link Below To
Reserve Your Spot

Register for JMR32

Meet Your Menschwork Wisdom Council



We want our JMR community to meet the men who serve on Menschwork's Wisdom Council (WC), the governing body that oversees all Menschwork financial, programming, and governance matters and ensures that the JMR planning team has everything it needs to run a successful weekend. The WC meets monthly. Board members are appointed for a two-year term with the option to serve two additional two-year terms.

We want to introduce one of the newer members of the Wisdom Council, **Lior Liebling**, who was part of the most recent class of WC members (which included Bill Magaliff and Allen Spivack). Lior has attended at least ten JMRs and has been a participant on several of the JMR planning teams. He was interviewed for this profile by Allen Spivack on April 26, 2023-his 32nd birthday!

AMS: *Why did you decide to join the Wisdom Council (WC)?*

LIOR: I've never served (on a board) before and so it's a very new thing for me. I'm very interested to find out what it's all about. I really enjoy the connections at meetings with the other men and learning about how decisions get made about the JMR and other things.

AMS: *What are some of your strengths you can bring to the WC?*

LIOR: My strengths are to share my wisdom with the group. I'm the youngest person on the WC, so that's a good thing. I have a lot of experience from attending so many retreats and I've participated a lot- playing drums, singing, prayer leading, and participating in the mishpacha groups. I love the drum circles, singing, and any of the musical activities.

AMS: *Tell me about the first JMR you attended and why you keep coming back year after year?*

LIOR: I attended my first JMR maybe ten years ago with my dad (Mordechai Liebling). Now I go by myself (with the Philadelphia contingent). I keep going because I just love the JMR. I feel like the JMR is my identity! I say this because when I'm there I feel so comfortable and welcomed. I feel so happy being there. I'm known now after going so many years and have a lot of friends and connections. I especially love the singing and the Beit Avot (sweat lodge). And I've served on several planning committees to organize the weekend which keeps me connected with my friends.

AMS: *Tell me about yourself and how you spend your time?*

LIOR: I live in Bryn Mawr, PA (outside of Philadelphia). I'm part of a program called JChai- a program for people with disabilities where we spend time

together, take trips and have meals. I now live in an apartment sponsored by JChai and have two roommates-Matthew and Alex. We are responsible for keeping the place clean and we have staff who help us to prepare meals. I worked at Whole Foods in Winwood for about seven years. I recently got a new job at Acme Supermarkets. It's a three minute walk from where I live. I work in the 'front end' of the store-moving shopping carts, bagging and talking with the customers. I'm working about 20 hours a week, mostly afternoons and evenings. I don't have as much time as I used to to see my friends, but I try to do that in the mornings before work.

Most Fridays and weekends I go home to be with my dad and Lynn and we often go to Saturday services at Mishkan Shalom (Reb Shawn Zevit's synagogue). I also do davenning on Zoom with Rabbi Yael (called A Way In). I have two brothers and four sisters.

AMS: Lior, it's been a pleasure to spend this time with you and thanks for allowing our Menschwork brothers to learn more about you and your participation on the Wisdom Council. And of course, a very Happy Birthday!!



What Our Brothers Have to Say About Their MenschGroup Experience

We asked some members of our MenschGroups to reflect on what it's been like for them to participate in these groups. Here is a sample of what they had to say.



Bruce Stanger (R) with his brother, Doug

Bruce Stanger

I'm in awe at the openness, gentle wisdom, and warmth and thankful for the opportunity to think about and then present my Jewish journey. It gives me a chance to recall, judge myself, and understand certain aspects of who I have become. Each meeting prep is a new opportunity to take some time to reflect on a Jewish theme and its reality, whether it be in the past or now. Thanks to all.





David Markman

Our MenschGroup has given me the opportunity to have a safe space in which I can bond with a diverse, intelligent and compassionate group of men. I look forward to every zoom meeting and to meeting my brothers in person at the next retreat.



Ori Alon-Ray

The twice monthly MenschGroup by Menschwork is highly meaningful and helpful for me. I am extremely thankful for participating in the conversation and each meeting I learn more about my new chosen family and myself. Thank you Menschwork for organizing it and thank you so much for the great facilitation!





Al Quiery

I am a man who has always felt uncomfortable sharing in an open and vulnerable way with other men. Over the course of my life, this trait has limited my ability to develop meaningful and lasting friendships with other men. This is something that I have regretted and have desired my entire life. My brothers in our MenschGroup have provided a safe space to begin exploring vulnerability. Over the past 2 years, they have inspired me to take risks in communicating my thoughts and emotions and to make positive changes in my life. I have gained insight about myself, relationships, the struggles of other men, and about Judaism.



Harvey Freedenberg

MenschGroup has given me an opportunity to extend and deepen the JMR experience in our meaningful twice monthly conversations with a group of thoughtful Jewish men who are willing to reflect candidly on the experience of being Jewish and male in contemporary American society. I come away from each discussion with new insight into my own life through learning how others have encountered some of the questions I face.

Artists Among Us

BROTHERKEEPER Newsletter begins a new feature that will highlight the writing, artwork and other creative expressions of our brothers. Thanks to Yosaif August for developing this feature. If you have artwork of any medium you'd like to submit, please send an email to: allenmspi@theothermanofsteel.com.



Marc Jacobs

I believe JMR24 was my first retreat weekend. I remember the release I felt seeing David Malchman lead the free form dancing during Friday night. I joined the Planning Committee and became deeply involved in using my Life

Coaching and prior men's work experience to support and lead future Mishpacha groups. I was asked to join the Wisdom Council and eventually served as chair for two years. During Covid, after running drop-in groups with Michael Landau, I formed the first MenschGroup. We currently have over 30 men meeting twice a month with 7 facilitators. My current Menschwork project is coordinating and expanding these MenschGroups.

I've often been considered a wordsmith. A former neighbor of mine was a college prof and gave an online poetry class. I found I could express myself through poetry. Most of my poetry is inspired during times of prayer, meditation and self reflection. I write primarily from my life experience. I'm pleased when I hear that the words have touched someone else.

This particular poem traces the blessed changes that have occurred in my life. From a troubled raging human to a more peaceful contributor to my own wellbeing and to those I encounter.

**Through the Shadow of Rage
(December 27, 2022)**

**He once raged at everything.
He saw so much that was wrong.
He felt he had to make it perfect.
He tried so hard but could only do so much.**

**So he raged and raged,
To express his anger and his frustration.
Why wasn't everything all right?
Why couldn't he make it all right?**

**They said he was a good man;
Holy in spirit, hard working, dedicated.
But inside raged the demon
Erupting to the demand of perfection.**

**The violence of his words and his volume
Assaulted those who came his way.**

**Whether they be officials or simply clerks
Or worst of all his children and his family.**

**Today this is not the man they know.
He has faced his shadows and learned.
Through the power of love and acceptance,
Now they only see who he has worked to become.**

David Piver

David Piver has attended many JMRs, has been on several JMR planning teams and served as a co-organizer for JMR31. This poem is David's ruminations about the story of Jacob's dream.

Vayeitzei וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב
(December 3, 2022)

**I am Jacob,
laying upon
the Mother Earth
panting, sweating,
having just been threatened
by hairy big brother.
I've fled.
Running running running from
his fury.**

**I rest, at last, laying upon
the cool pulsing earth.
Slipping into a sort of sleep,
not the usual sort,
through the portal
into Dream Time.....**

**Awakening into the realm of Adonai, the Devine that's been
seeking my grandfather,**

**my father,
and now, me.
He places before me a bejeweled ladder into the clouds- for me?
For my eyes to be drawn up up up
into The Mystery of
Where I Am of
That I Am
here
not only
my brother's twin
but also
an Angel amongst Angels
a messenger amongst messengers.**

**My eyes trace the infinite length
of the now twisted bejeweled
ladder, until I am gazing into the stars glittering and flashing their smiles upon
me as a firm voice,
says “ Awaken, Awaken, Awaken and receive the blessings.”**

**A bejeweled ladder now,
lithe, alive, twisted like DNA,
an umbilical cord,
connecting from my Ruach
to Ruach Elohim.**

“Ah... I see, yes, Here I Am.”

“Remain in amazement. We are known by our dreams.”





Yosaif August

As far as I can remember, music has always been a part of my life. As a kid, while I went walking, I often played songs with my fingers on an imaginary piano keyboard. Music has been the soundtrack for my Jewish journey and my social activism as well.

My musical experience in Judaism, began with my learning to *davven* in junior congregation at our synagogue and getting the opportunity to sing *yigdal* at the grownup's kabbalat shabbat and *anim zamiros* or *adon olam* on Shabbos morning.

You may remember hearing this melody at several recent *Kabbalat Shabbat* services at the JMR where we sang it as a round. I wrote it at my wife's, Tsurah, suggestion. She pointed me to the text and helped me massage the text to work with the melody. I recorded it on a homemade demo recording that I offered at a fundraiser for the original Elat Chayyim Retreat Center in Accord, NY.

Sometime later, Reb Shawn, at his party for a milestone birthday, told me about a recording of my melody by Cantor/Rabbi Bella Bogart, who had purchased my demo recording at the fundraiser! It was a delightful surprise for me, especially her arrangement of it. Bella has added an awesome video to it to turn it into an open eyes meditation. Enjoy!

Rabbi Bella Bogart Sings Yosaif's
Tune

Remembering JMR30!

Harry Scheyer created this short video (6:28 minutes) of JMR30 highlights. Harry said, "As a member of the organizing committee, I thought it would be a good idea to capture some of the program we created for archival purposes as well as for sharing with some of my friends so they would have a flavor of what a fully engaged Jewish Men's Retreat looks and sounds like."

Video Highlights of JMR30

JMR 31 Survey Review Committee Report

Did you ever wonder what happens to the JMR survey results? Does completing the survey after JMR really matter? Does anyone every read the results? Yes, it does matter and we use the survey results to plan the next JMR!

The results from each year's JMR surveys are reviewed by the new JMR organizers to understand what was done well and what areas need improvement. This year, the Wisdom Council took a different approach and approved the formation of a **JMR Survey Review Committee (SRC) whose tasks are to: (1) review the surveys and prepare a report that highlights successes and accomplishments, areas for improvement and recommendations for improving the weekend; and (2) meet with the organizers of the current JMR to review this report.**

The Survey Review Committee members- Yosaif August, Michael Landau, David Reisman and Allen Spivack- met online in February 2023 to review the JMR31 surveys (and also review surveys from the last five years). A report was prepared and sent to the Wisdom Council in March 2023. After getting feedback and suggestions from the Wisdom Council, the SRC met with the JMR32 Organizing Committee on April 25 to review the report, answer questions and discuss ways to improve the weekend experience.

The SRC will continue to be available to work with the JMR32 organizers on ways to improve the experience of the JMR for every attendee. We are deeply

grateful to all the men who took the time to complete the survey after the JMR. We encourage every JMR attendee to complete the survey because everyone's input matters and, rest assured, we really do read the surveys!!

Editor's Note

Menschwork has embarked on an effort to reach out to our brothers with more regular communications about our activities, volunteer opportunities, and Wisdom Council operations. If JMR men in your community are having events, take some photos and send them to us. If you would like to write a brief article for this newsletter about your JMR experience or a related topic, please be in touch via email: allenmspi@theothermanofsteel.com.

Newsletter Editors: [Allen Spivack](#) and [Yosaif August](#)

