

BY JIM MERRITT
Special to Newsday

Sunday, Sept. 11, marks the 21st anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks in which nearly 3,000 Americans died, including about 500 Long Islanders. This week's clergy discuss how they would talk about that day and its aftermath with the generation that has since come of age.

Rabbi Ira Ebbin
Congregation Ohav Shalom, Merrick

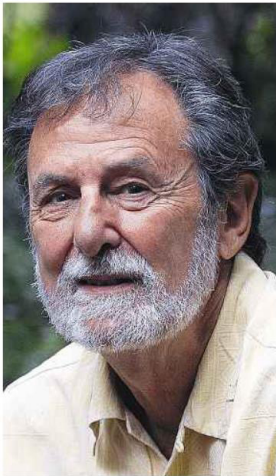
How do we make a personal connection to an event that occurred before we were born? Well, is there a group of people who have tackled this challenge more than the Jews?

Passover is a festival of freedom with rituals that also recall suffering endured thousands of years before any of us were born. To sustain that memory for generations, we must recognize that our stories and fortunes are intertwined. We rise and fall as one, we are bound together as a nation, and we are responsible for one another. There was no better example of this than the incredible display of sacrifice, heroism and compassion that we witnessed after the 9/11 attacks.

We also recognize that ingrained in each of us is the idea that our nation as a whole has a higher purpose and a greater mission. In Judaism, that means to have an innate sensitivity to the poor and to those in need of help. For all Americans, it means that we go back to the vision of the founders: that we must always fight to preserve a nation that upholds the democratic values of liberty and justice for all.



Ira Ebbin



Arthur Dobrin



Natalie M. Fenimore

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION AT SHELTER ROCK

adults most close to them. So how do you explain the 9/11 attacks to children born after 2001? By remembering that day with respect, humility and the resolve to continue to live a life of integrity.

The Rev. Natalie M. Fenimore
Lead minister and minister of Lifespan Religious Education, Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset

Children born after Sept. 11, 2001, have lived in a world shadowed by the death and destruction of that day — we all have. This tragedy was a trauma that seemed to normalize terrorism, war, hate. The deaths of thousands, including individual loved ones, are still mourned.

All our lives we will struggle to make sense of the tragedies happening around us. No one can say why these horrors happen. We struggle to keep our faith in goodness, hope, compassion and love.

Still, with all we know of pain, we must embrace our commitment to one another, to community, to accountability. We must not step away from the struggle of humanity but lean in to care and problem-solve. The 9/11 terrorists embraced beliefs of death and destruction; they were wrong. There is a faithfulness that honors life and is life-giving. It is a loving faith, which we must show to our children because this is the greater strength and the only way to a better future.

ASKING THE CLERGY

How to discuss 9/11 with today's young adults?

Arthur Dobrin
Leader emeritus, Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island, Garden City

For some, 9/11 is intensely personal. Family, friends and neighbors died that morning, so many of them from Long Island. How this is best remembered and memorialized cannot be generalized. Every family has its unique way of understanding tragedy. For others, 9/11 is relived as a shocking event.

To have experienced that day is to

know trauma unlike any other. This was an attack against America and, like Pearl Harbor, it is a day that goes down in infamy. But for those born after, 9/11 is a historical event, as far away from their birth as the First World War was from mine, in 1943, and the Vietnam War is to many parents of children born after the Sept. 11 attacks.

The best advice I have is to remember to see the world through a child's eyes. Children learn the most important lessons from what they observe in

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