



SHALOM



The Journal of the Reading Jewish Community. Published as a community service by the Jewish Federation of Reading, Pa.

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ADAR II 5774

Neil Hoffman, Judith Kraines to head 2014 Jewish Community Campaign

The Jewish Federation of Reading is pleased to announce that Dr. Neil Hoffman and Judith Kraines will serve as Co-Chairs of the 2014 Jewish Community Campaign. Hoffman and Kraines, who have been longtime, substantial supporters of the Federation and the Campaign, are looking forward to working with the Federation's Board, volunteers and staff to raise the dollars that will allow the Federation to continue providing its important services to our Jewish community.

"We appreciate the great work that the Federation does for our Jewish community and are very pleased to be able to help with that work," said Judith.

Neil, a board-certified Forensic and



Anatomical Pathologist at Reading Hospital, recently retired. He and Judith, who is a former Berks County Controller, now spend their time with family and pursuing their love of sailing. They have two children, Seth and Rachel, and

three grandchildren.

They follow Yvonne and Rob Oppenheimer who chaired the 2013 Campaign and who recruited them to the Campaign.

The 2014 Campaign began last October when the Leadership Gifts Dinner was held in the JCC. Miri Eisen, a former Intelligence Colonel in the IDF and International Media Advisor for the Israeli Prime Minister presented a fascinating look at the current situation in the Middle East and its impacts on Israel.

The Campaign will continue until Dec. 31 of this year.

Neil and Judith are inspired by the concept of Tzedakah, righteous giving, and hope to make it a byword of the Campaign.



Community Purim Celebration

SEE CENTERPIECE

Boots on the Ground campaign brings results

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Irvin, Lois Cohen win major community award

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Birthright Israel now open to larger group of young adults

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JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE: Community programs worth your attention

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2014 totals as of Feb. 14

Jewish Community Campaign \$191,351

*Includes transfers from Donor Advised Funds

NOW OPEN!

Your Fortunate Eyes – PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUDI WEISSENSTEIN

Feb. 28 – April 13

Cohen Gallery, GoggleWorks Center for the Arts

Sunday, March 9 – 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. *Community Reception* (hosted by Jewish Federation of Reading)
 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. *"Life in Stills" documentary film* (GoggleWorks Film Theatre)



In 1936, Rudi Weissenstein, a 26-year-old photographer, emigrated from Iglau (Czech Republic) to Palestine with little more than 10 lire and his camera. Weissenstein documented everything from the settlers' way of life to the incredible landscapes of the Negev. The GoggleWorks exhibit features 40 of Weissenstein's images.

Film Screening - The documentary film, "Life in Stills," tells the story of Miriam Weissenstein and her grandson Ben, as they fight the Tel Aviv municipality's redevelopment plan and attempt to preserve the Weissensteins' legendary "PhotoHouse" shop and its nearly 1 million negatives that document Israel's defining moments. Written and directed by Tamar Tal, the film is funny and heartwarming.

Made possible by a grant by Jewish Federation of Reading and private donations

Federation News

We apologize for being right!

By Paul L. Landry

In the last few issues I have mentioned that we are working with a new computer system and that, while we made every effort to get everything right, we were not sure that we would be able to do that. Well, we were right! Something went wrong as we were preparing the Honor Roll of Donors for the last issue, and several people were left off the list. We apologize to them and to all of you for that error. We are republishing the list, with corrections, in its entirety this month.

I am writing this on a Friday after the latest snowstorm, which delivered somewhere between 12 and 18 inches of snow. Who could have expected that this winter would be so much more severe than we have become accustomed to?

As the snowstorms have come through and the snow days have mounted, I've been watching my colleagues here at the Federation/JCC deliver their services to the community. The Food Pantry continues to operate, and the need for emergency deliveries seems to have increased. So, too, with



the request for Taxi/Bus tickets that help our seniors get to grocery stores and doctor's appointments. And our great JFS social workers, Sari and Carole, continue their service to our community through hospital or home visits, counseling and the Friendship Circle. Our JCC programs continue to take place — sometimes with appropriate adjustments because of the weather.

As I have been watching all this take place, I realized that these programs are a true lifeline for many in the Jewish community of Berks County. If those of us who are hale and hearty and can get around just fine feel snowbound this winter, how much worse must it be for those of our neighbors who are not so lucky — neighbors who, because of health or infirmity or lack of resources, face challenges getting around even in the best weather? Without the Federation's services, they would be even more isolated.

So the next time you make a change to your will/estate plan, please remember the Federation! A bequest, beneficiary designation or other estate gift benefiting the Federation can ensure that these services continue to be available to generations of Jews in Berks County.



Federation President Tammy Migang, right, presents Boscov's gift cards to Opportunity House VP for Shelter and Housing Delia McLendon, left; President Modesto D. Fiume; and VP for Development Lorri Oziri (a member of the Jewish community). The 2013 Jewish Community Campaign's Boots on the Ground effort enabled Opportunity House to get 46 pairs of footwear for its clients.

Federation donors provide 46 pairs of footwear for Opportunity House clients

When the 2013 Jewish Community Campaign kicked off, an anonymous donor issued the Boots on the Ground challenge to the Jewish community of Berks County. This donor pledged to provide a pair of boots (or other needed footwear) to Opportunity House for its clients for every new or increased gift of \$250 or more.

We're pleased to announce that, because of your generosity, we have been able to provide 46 pairs of footwear. The gifts were made through \$20 Boscov gift cards.

Lorri Oziri, Director of Development

for Opportunity House, expressed the organization's appreciation.

"Thank you very much for selecting Opportunity House to benefit from your program," she wrote. "It has been a pleasure working with you. Please also extend our sincere thanks to your donors who have given generously to make Boots on the Ground possible.

"The Jewish community of Berks County is helping many individuals in our shelter, especially with this winter's challenging weather. From everyone at Opportunity House we wish all of you happiness and warmth."

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Exciting changes in store for our community

By Alvin Katz
Chairman



'Everything old is new again' may be the best way to view many of the exciting changes our community has in store for it as we move past a snowy winter into the spring. Our search committee is hard at work determining Federation's current and future needs when hiring a new executive who will replace Tammy Mitgang when she leaves in April. Although she will be missed and we wish her well in her future endeavors, contracts conclude and new opportunities present themselves.

If you recall, Tammy came from our local community; a growing trend in Federations across the country. As we begin the search for her replacement, we invite interested members of our local community to apply. The Search Committee is headed by Robert M. Caster, CPA and James Rothstein, Esq. Resumes or inquiries may be directed to — robertmcaster@comcast.net or mail your resume to: Jewish Federation of Reading, PO Box 14925, Reading, PA 19612, attn: Search Committee.

New on the preschool front, we are pleased to announce that the Lakin Early Education Center, currently managed by Jewish Federation of Reading will officially be a program of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom beginning in the 2014-2015 school

year. Since the closing of the JCC facility six years ago, the Lakin Early Education Center has been housed in the education wing of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom but managed by Federation.

Management by RCOS will better align itself with Jewish sponsored preschool programs that are more typically associated with a synagogue congregation or movement. Parents and children will see little or no difference. Federation will continue to provide annual grant support to help fund the preschool program along with support from the Edwin A. Lakin and Alma Lakin Philanthropic Fund of Jewish Federation of Reading.

We are excited to join RCOS in this important partnership. If you are a

parent of a preschool age child/children or know of someone who is looking for an exceptional preschool program for their little ones (2 years – pre-K), please call Judy Synnamon, Director at 484-332-5981.

Federation's Nominating Committee, headed by Paul Cohn, Immediate Past Chair, is in the process of considering nominations to fill vacancies on its board of directors for 2014-2015. As I wrap up my chairmanship, I would like to invite you to support your Jewish community by becoming an involved board member. We need leaders of all ages — no previous board experience required. Make a difference in your Jewish community and the broader community by stepping forward and getting involved!

From the President's Desk

Frankly, Scarlett gives a damn

By Tammy K. Mitgang
President



On Jan. 30, actor and SodaStream spokeswoman Scarlett Johansson resigned as global ambassador of Oxfam amid accusations that the bubbly water company's facility in the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim "furthers poverty and the denial of rights to Palestinian communities."

In a prepared statement by her spokesman, Johansson was quoted as having a fundamental difference of opinion with Oxfam International. Ms. Johansson had worked on behalf of Oxfam, a British-based poverty-fighting organization, for eight years.

The real losers in controversies such as these are frequently the very people who are supposedly being protected. In this case, the victims are the Palestinians who work in a plant that provides jobs and benefits.

Even critics such as the online newspaper The Electronic Intifada conceded that workers at the SodaStream plant are paid wages that are three to four times the Palestinian average.

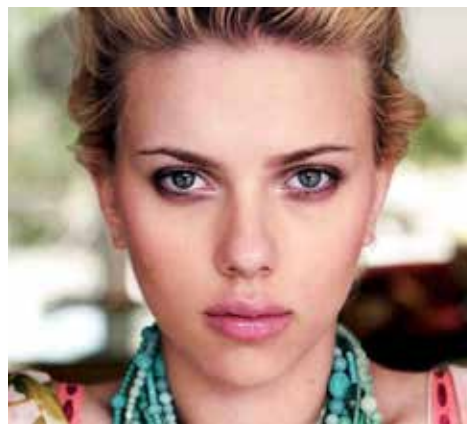
Ma'ale Adumim is located 10 minutes outside of Jerusalem in

what had been a deserted space in an industrial park (Mishor Adumim) within the boundaries of the West Bank.

The plant is located in what is considered by most to be one of the consensus settlements that will most likely be retained by Israel in any final peace deal with the Palestinians. Critics of SodaStream cite special economic benefits provided by the Israeli government for companies to operate in the industrial zone in the West Bank. But, they need only look as far as the Negev and other National Priority Areas throughout Israel, where those same corporate incentives make it easier for companies to relocate and operate in poor, underdeveloped areas. Tax breaks and special incentives spur economic growth and innovation in Israel, the US and countries around the world.

SodaStream employees — Arabs, Jews and Palestinians — enter the factory through the same checkpoint, eat together in a shared kosher cafeteria and work side by side. Ensured by laws put into place by the Israeli Supreme Court, Palestinian workers receive the same rights and minimum wages as workers in Israel. And labor rights groups who monitor the actions of companies have had no reports to date that SodaStream violated any of these laws

But, regardless of the company's



Scarlett Johansson

ability to create a productive, peaceful workplace, Israel's critics continue to get hung up on the plant's location at the expense of the bigger picture. SodaStream did not build the industrial site but moved into the space in the 1990's shortly after company founder Peter Wiseburgh toured the abandoned building.

For a start-up company, the tax benefits helped to offset the lack of ready access to the port and distribution issues. For those living in the area, the company provided valued jobs in an area where there is a dearth of opportunity. There was no hidden agenda; it just made good business sense. Today the company is owned by Fortismo Capital Fund and is headed by Daniel Birnbaum, SodaStream CEO.

SodaStream employs more than 1,000 people worldwide, with more

than 30 nationalities represented. The company manufactures its products in 22 facilities around the world, including: Israel (headquarters), the West Bank, Germany, Sweden, U.S., Australia, South Africa and China.

The company is preparing to open a new, larger plant in the Negev, within Israel's internationally-recognized borders, that could potentially be used to shift its production from Ma'ale Adumim to a state-of-the-art facility.

So, who wins if SodaStream closes its plant in the West Bank? Would it be the 500 Palestinians who are left without a paycheck? In a recent interview by Nathan Jeffay for the *Forward*, Birnbaum was quoted as saying, "We will not throw our employees under the bus to promote anyone's political agenda." He further commented that he "just can't see how it would help the cause of the Palestinians if we fired them." But, when is enough, enough?

So, thank you, Ms. Johansson, for envisioning a world where we all work together, side-by-side; for understanding that few of the world's problems are solved with broad brush strokes but rather strokes that are smaller and thoughtfully placed. Thank you for having the courage to stand firm in your beliefs — "building a bridge to peace between Israel and Palestine." Thank you for giving a damn.

SHALOM

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Deadline for the April issue is March 5



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OUR APOLOGIES

After publishing the 2013 Jewish Community Campaign Honor Roll of Donors in last month's Shalom, we found that several donors had inadvertently been left off the list. We extend our sincere apologies to those donors and to the community for that error. The below listing has restored those donors to their rightful places.

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**Indicates Deceased*

Art Plus Gallery gets showcase at Jewish Cultural Center



Works by artists from Art Plus Gallery are on display at the Jewish Cultural Center in a special exhibition running through March 31. During the exhibit's opening reception, above, Karol Zechman talks to Marilyn Pounder, jewelry maker. At left, photographer John Bolig and artist Susan Goodling are two of the many exhibitors at the show.

Federations renew support of initiatives in Israel and around globe

The Jewish Federations of North America's Board of Trustees convened in Los Angeles for a lively session of 100 top volunteer leaders and professionals from 52 Federations across North America in February to tackle several major issues.

Israel Action Network

The board voted to renew support for the Israel Action Network for three years. Since IAN was established in 2010, Federations have built community capacity and hosted skill-building workshops. IAN played a major role in recent efforts to combat the well-publicized effort to isolate Israel's academics at the Modern Language Association meeting and is working to quietly generate support among progressive groups. IAN leaders plan to continue building relations with Christian moderates and partnering with campus groups.

Joint initiative with Israel

The board agreed to a resolution to cooperate with the government of

Israel in an initiative to strengthen global peoplehood and Jewish identity.

The government of Israel is prepared to invest an additional \$100 million in programs to build Jewish identity and connection with Israel in the Diaspora. Cynthia Shapira of Pittsburgh reported on this initiative and the government's interests in collaborating with Federations and others, offering a dollar for dollar match with philanthropic funds raised in North America. An intensive content development process related to this initiative is underway, with strong participation from local Jewish Federations.

The Board voted to endorse the Jewish Federations' participation in this potentially historic collaboration.

Global Planning Table initiatives

The board heard a presentation about two signature initiatives of the Global Planning Table (GPT), a dynamic new forum designed to engage Federation leaders in a new, communal dialogue about global Jewish needs.

The GPT Committee will convene

small working groups to finalize implementation plans and oversee fundraising efforts, share the plans with all Federations and present the Signature Initiatives to the board for a formal vote. GPT chair David Butler of Washington, D.C., outlined the initiatives:

- J-Quest: designed to leverage the proven success of experiential travel in identity building and dramatically increase rates of participation in immersive experiences, specifically service learning (around the world) and career-building internships (in Israel). Eligible programs will promote Jewish peoplehood and provide continuing opportunities to engage before and especially following the immersive experiences themselves.

- Israel Children's Zone: a comprehensive, community-based approach to coordinate a range of quality education, skill-building opportunities, family stability, psycho-social well-being and community support that Israeli children and their families need to break

out of poverty. The demonstration project will build on existing programs, including Tevet, Better Together and Youth Futures.

- Civil Society: a third initiative still being refined, most likely will relate to religious diversity and civil marriage in Israel. The task force has hired a consultant in Israel to make recommendations on how the GPT could achieve impact in this area.

Response to Pew Study

In response to the Pew Study on Jewish Life released in October, three Federation executives prepared white papers on possible responses for the board's review.

Public policy priorities

The Federation movement's domestic policy priorities for the coming year include maximizing incentives for charitable giving, meeting the needs of Holocaust survivors, sustaining community services to alleviate poverty, protecting the health care safety net and advocating on behalf of people with disabilities. The board voted to endorse this agenda.

Children in youth group get charge out of Laser Tag event



Children from the community enjoy a fun outing at Laser Quest in Wyomissing Feb. 9 during a JCC Youth Group activity. Watch the Centerpiece for more great activities for kids of all ages.



From Pennside to Washington, D.C. Four area women to receive Girl Scouts Take the Lead honors

Sometimes connections from long ago prove quite powerful. Just ask Howard Symons, a Pennside native named vice chairman of the Federal Communications Commission's Incentive Auction Task Force.

Symons, an attorney with an extensive background in the telecommunications industry, will be working on the project with task force Chairman Gary Epstein.

According to Howard's father, Sid, the two men are hardly strangers. They were

neighbors in Pennside, and Epstein used to baby-sit Howard six decades ago! Now they are working together in Washington.

The task force they are leading is working to develop a process to make more room available for wireless broadband Internet service by encouraging license holders to relinquish unused portions of the wireless spectrum. The space will then be auctioned off, with the former holders of the space receiving a share of the proceeds.

The Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania announced its 2014 Take the Lead honorees from Berks County at a preview party hosted by RKL (Reinsel Kunz Leshner) LLP Jan. 30 at the accounting firm's location on Broadcasting Road in Spring Township. Paula K. Barrett, a partner at RKL and a previous honoree, hosted the party along with the committee co-chairs and leaders, Frances "Franki" Aitken, P. Sue Perrotty and Carolyn R. Holleran.

This year's honorees are: Dr. Mary Lynch Barbera, a registered nurse, behavior analyst, author and autism expert who owns Barbera Behavior Consulting, LLC; Tammy K. Mitgang, president of the Jewish Federation of Reading; Jill M. Scheidt, an attorney with Masano Bradley Attorneys at Law; and Laurie Waxler, nurse practitioner with Surgery Consultants of Berks County and president of the Wyomissing Public Library Board of Directors.

Last year, development consultant and past Federation Chair Yvonne Frey Oppenheimer was among the recipients of the Take the Lead award.

The honorees will be honored at the

annual Take the Lead event April 8 at 5:30 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza Reading in Wyomissing.

Take the Lead is much more than an event and award ceremony, it is a unique leadership development program for girls. In addition to recognizing the honorees, Girl Scouts from the Berks County community are inspired to become the leaders of tomorrow. Girls take charge of the event as emcees, presenters and hosts and never fail to impress the evening's guests with poise and presence that is beyond their years.

Women who were once a Girl Scout are more likely to go to college, vote, volunteer and donate philanthropically and 80 percent of women in leadership positions in government and business are Girl Scout alumnae — pretty impressive considering they represent only 10 percent of the girls in the United States.

If you are interested in supporting Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania by attending the Take the Lead event, you may purchase a ticket or discuss sponsorship opportunities by calling Denise Sullivan at 215-564-2030, ext. 1036 or by email at dsullivan@gsep.org.

THE 10TH ANNUAL RICHARD J. YASHEK MEMORIAL LECTURE

AMERICAN JEWS AND THE MYTH OF SILENCE AFTER THE HOLOCAUST, 1945-1962

Detail from a memorial proposed (but never built) in the early postwar period to the 6,000,000 that was to go up in Riverside Park, New York. Courtesy of NYU Press.

LECTURE BY HASIA DINER, PH.D.
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

APRIL 3, 2014

7:30 P.M., WACHOVIA THEATRE, ALBRIGHT COLLEGE

In her controversial 2009 book, *We Remember With Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945-1962*, Hasia Diner, Ph.D., challenges the idea proposed by nearly all historians of postwar American Jewry: in the words of Peter Novick, "Between the end of the war and the 1960s, the Holocaust made scarcely any appearance in American public discourse, and hardly more in Jewish public discourse" (*The Holocaust in American Life*).

Uncovering a rich trove of remembrances — in song, literature, liturgy, public display and dozens of other forms — Diner shows that publicly memorializing those who died in the Holocaust was a deep and powerful element of Jewish life in postwar America. Not only does she marshal enough evidence to dismantle the idea of American Jewish "forgetfulness," but she also brings to life the moving and manifold ways this widely diverse group paid tribute to the tragedy.

EXPERIENCE EVENT • FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

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Two Jewish-themed restaurants to open soon

Philadelphia restaurateurs Steven Cook and Michael Solomonov, who created Federal Donuts, Percy Street Barbecue and Zahav, have two new restaurants planned for this year. Both will open opposite Federal Donuts on the 1600 block of Sansom Street in Philadelphia.

Dizengoff, a casual hummusiya, will offer varieties of hummus with fresh pita, condiments and pickles. The 25-seat space will offer a select beer list and be open seven days a week. The restaurant is named for Dizengoff Street, a major Tel Aviv boulevard, and the restaurant will be modeled after the hummus spots found all over Israel.

Abe Fisher promises to be "an approachable restaurant serving the cuisine of the Jewish diaspora." Solomonov said the food will be inspired by "the foods and dishes found in the Jewish communities outside of Israel, from Montreal and New York, to France, Hungary and Italy."

Abe Fisher's menu will offer small plates with the option of a tasting menu. The restaurant will have 50-seats and a



Chef Michael Solomonov

full bar.

Both restaurants will be located at The Sansom, a new apartment building in Center City.

Solomonov was born in Israel and raised in the United States. In 2011 he made an appearance at a Leadership Gifts event at the home of Sandy Solmon and Douglas Messinger, where he cooked a memorable meal for those in attendance.

Community News

Irvin and Lois E. Cohen named 2014 Thun Award recipients

Congratulations to Irvin and Lois E. Cohen, Reading, on being named the 2014 Thun Award recipients.

They will be honored Saturday, March 15, at a special event hosted by Berks County Community Foundation and Fulton Bank.

The Cohens have shown great compassion and understanding of the needs of others here in our local community through organizations such as Opportunity House and Jewish Family Service.

In 2011, the Cohens joined forces with Jewish Federation of Reading to raise more than \$61,000 for the millions of victims of famine in war-torn East Africa, and every day, music and dance fills the halls at the PAL Center for the Arts thanks to their generous support.

Today the Cohen Gallery of Contemporary Art at the Reading Public Museum has doubled in size thanks to a donation of 20th century works by the Cohens. The collection includes works by Pablo Picasso, Dale

Chihuly and Milton Avery, as well as prominent artists with local ties such as Harry Bertoia, Keith Haring and William Baziotis.

Active volunteer leaders in our community, the Cohens commit their time and efforts to many boards and organizations and are familiar faces at charitable events year round. We wish these world-changers a hearty "Mazel tov!" on this well-deserved recognition.

The Thun Award was established in 1988 by Samuel A. McCullough and the late Ezekiel S. Ketchum to recognize the lifelong commitment of Ferdinand K. and Louis R. Thun to improving the quality of life in Berks County through their philanthropy. The award is presented to a Berks resident who has made significant contributions of civic service, and who exhibits an enduring sense of commitment to the community. Since 1988, the award has recognized 24 philanthropists whose work has profoundly affect our community.



What's a nice guy from Moshav Gealya doing in Reading?

Brickhouse Theater Company, a newly formed theater company will present its first show, "The Marvelous Wonderettes" beginning on Friday, April 4 through Sunday, April 6, at Wilson West Middle School under the direction of professional dancer and choreographer, Yoav Levine.

Born and raised in Moshav Gealya

(25 minutes from Tel Aviv), Yoav Levine's family (eight generations) primarily resides in Safed, one of Israel's four holy cities and the center of Kabbalah. As a child, he became hooked on musicals after watching them on television, and he embraced tap-dancing at age 7. From then on, the stage was his home. He danced with several Israeli folklore

dance groups and toured Europe and the U.S.

In 2004 Yoav was accepted into The American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA), and it wasn't long before he was contracted for two American productions — "Thoroughly Modern Millie" and "West Side Story". Although those productions led to other job offers, he returned to AMDA as an educator in the dance department. Other credits include "A Chorus Line," "Meet Me in St. Louis," "The Producers," "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers," "Hello Dolly," "Man of La Mancha," "All Shook Up," "The Pajama Game," "9 to 5 the Musical," "Little Shop of Horrors," "Annie Get Your Gun" and many more.



Yoav Levine

And, what were his next steps? Directing and choreographing, of course!

Join Yoav and the cast of The Marvelous Wonderettes, Brickhouse Theater's debut production at the Wilson West Middle School, 450 Faust Road near Sinking Spring – located behind Green Valley Country Club.

Featuring an all professional cast from New York and Philadelphia, "The Marvelous Wonderettes" is an Off-Broadway hit that takes you to the 1958 Springfield High School Prom, where you will meet the Wonderettes, four girls with hopes and dreams as big as their crinoline skirts. Audiences learn about their lives and loves as the girls sing classics from the 1950's and '60's – "Lollipop", "Dreamlover", "Stupid Cupid", "Lipstick on Your Collar", "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me", "It's My Party" and more than 20 other classic hits.

Reserved tickets cost \$30. Performances will be at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday.

Call 610-670-7537 for tickets and more information.

All Around the Town

FN Laine M. Heisler, 26, has graduated from Naval Boot Camp, Great Lakes, Illinois. She is now located at the Naval Nuclear Power Training Command in Charleston, S.C.



She is a daughter of Lorrie Heisler and Allen Heisler, both of Reading. She graduated from Reading High and Kutztown University with a physics and engineering major.

Mazel tov to **Audra Nemirow**, daughter of Mark and Geri Nemirow, Exeter Township. She has been accepted to the American Ballet Theatre Summer Dance Intensive in New York City. Audra is an eighth-grader at Exeter Junior High School and dances with Berks Ballet Theatre.



Until next time: Shalom!

Please e-mail all your simcha news to joaniedecorating@comcast.net

Obituaries

Richard Henry, 88, Reading.

Dick served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He was the owner of Quality Roofing Supply Co. Dick was a life trustee of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and one of the major forces behind its current building. He is survived by his wife Maxine of Reading and daughter Jill. Other survivors include his sister Sylvia Gross and four nieces

and nephews. He was predeceased by a daughter, Jane.

Muriel Brownstein, 85, of Wernersville.

Muriel liked to travel and to read. She played the sax and wrote poetry. She is survived by her husband, Mel, and her children: Ted, Carl, Andy and Ruth. Other survivors include her sister-in-law, her grandchildren, great-grandchildren and her niece and nephew.



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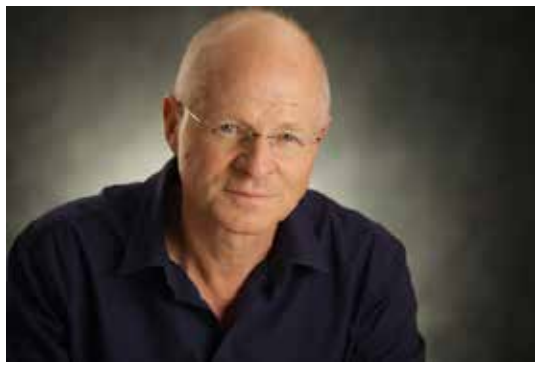
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Yom Hazikaron Observance Guest speaker: Noam Shalit

Sunday, May 4, 3 p.m. Watch for more details soon!
Sponsored by Tali and Don Fox in honor of their daughter Sgt. Mika Fox, IDF

In 2006, an Israeli soldier named Gilad Shalit was captured by Hamas. His father, Noam Shalit, did not rest until his son returned safely home, launching a campaign for his son's release that would ultimately last more than five years. This is his story.

If it's between Uncle Sam and the Federation, guess where the balance of my IRA will go?

With retirement assets being taxed at such a high rate, it might make sense to plan on leaving them to charity and leaving other assets to your heirs. Talk to your tax advisor or contact me, Paul Landry, 610-921-0624 or paul@jfreeding.org. All contacts are completely confidential.



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Congregational News

Community Shabbat observance a powerful experience

By Rabbi Yosef Lipsker
Chabad Center of Berks County



Until recently, being Jewish was very different than the way it is today. Judaism was a way of life, not just a religion. You could point out a Jew anywhere. The Jewish people lived together in small villages called shtetls. What shtetl life lacked in sophistication, it made up for in learning and scholarship, communal justice and charity. Warmth and intimacy were part of the way of life; your

family went far beyond those who were your blood relatives. Living in a Jewish community, small and tight knit the way it was, being Jewish was easy.

Today it is not quite like that anymore. Being Jewish is a choice. We live in a world of ever growing freedom. Choices abound. What to wear, what to eat, when to do things, if to do anything at all, what to buy, and whether or not to be connected to a religion. Today, in these times, no one forces us to go to a synagogue, no one forces us to eat Kosher food, and no one forces us to believe. In order to take advantage of our traditions, our heritage, our faith, much effort is required. Our rich

customs and our birthright of Judaism, are not handed to us on a silver platter the way it was 100 years ago. Today, despite free will, and little to no persecution, being Jewish is harder than ever before.

In this generation of 'I' and 'Me', where people make choices that revolve around themselves, it is difficult to remain focused on spirituality. There are many opportunities and attractions that pull us away from taking care of our souls. Yet, a few weeks ago, as I stood in a room with more than 100 local Jewish people, at a Friday night dinner, I felt very proud to be part of this community. It is astounding and heartwarming that so many choose to be

involved in their Judaism. It is uplifting to see that Jews young, and old, from across denominations are happy and excited to gather together in celebration of our heritage. It is inspiring that people choose to be a part of something greater than themselves, that they cannot necessarily explain but they feel deep in their souls.

Our community is a small one, but because of our size we have a unique advantage. You will not find, in larger communities, a gathering of Jews from all walks of life, and all levels of observance. Standing there, I realized that what holds us together, being Jewish, is much stronger than the differences that pull us apart.

Save The Date

Saturday, May 10

RCOS Supper Club presents

Third Annual Ruth & Irvin Balis Volunteer Appreciation Award to

Jeraldine Kozloff

Cocktails at 6 p.m.,
Dinner at 7 p.m.

This event is open to all members of the Jewish and non-Jewish community.

Healing Service at Keshar Zion

Tuesday, March 11, 7:30 p.m.
in the KZ Chapel.

All are welcome to join!

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LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND SERVICE TIMES

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM (610) 375-6034
Friday, March 7, Shabbat service, 6 p.m.
Fridays, March 14, 21 and 28, 7:45 p.m.
Saturday, March 22: Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.
Artist-in-residence weekend: Feb. 28-March 2

CHABAD CENTER OF BERKS COUNTY (610) 921-0881
Saturday mornings: 9:30 a.m.; Friday evenings: 6:30 p.m.

KESHER ZION SYNAGOGUE (610) 374-1763
Weekly services Saturdays: 9:30 a.m.; Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.
Friday Evening Service – Please call for service information
Babysitting available upon request with one week's notice

CONGREGATION SHOMREI HABRITH

Community Purim Celebration

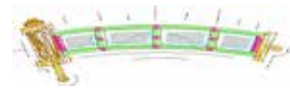
Sunday, March 16

at Chabad Lubavitch of Berks County,
2320 Hampden Blvd.

*Community carnival at 3 p.m.
followed by Shtetl Purim Dinner
and Megillah reading at 4:30*

See Centerpiece for details!

PURIM HAPPENINGS AT KESHER ZION



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SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 16, 2014
MEGILLAH READING

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TIME: 10:00 A.M.

PLACE: KESHER ZION SISTERHOOD HALL
ADDRESS: 1245 PERKIOMEN AVENUE,
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RSVP TO KZ BY 3/10/14



RCOS celebrates 50th anniversary of Czech Torah Trust

On Feb. 7, Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom formally celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Czech Torah Trust. The Trust was established to repatriate or find new homes for Torah scrolls that were recovered from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia. RCOS is the caretaker for scroll number 164, which was given to the congregation in the 1980s.

Scroll 164 came from the town of Mlada Boleslav, located in Bohemia about 30 miles northeast of Prague. Mlada Boleslav was founded in 1334, but the first record of Jews living there is in 1471.

In 1687, there were 775 Jews living in Mlada Boleslav representing about 50 percent of the population at the time. In the mid-1800s the Jewish population peaked at 900. By 1930 that number was down to just 264. Most of the members of the Jewish community were transported to Theresienstadt concentration camp.



Scroll 164, a Torah recovered from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia and given to Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Mlada Boleslav's synagogue reportedly maintained a remarkable

Judaica collection and was a center of Jewish learning and Talmudic study, supporting three different yeshivot. It was called, "Jerusalem on the Jizera River," because in the end of the 17th century Mlada Boleslav was home to eighteen rabbis including the authors of some significant works on Judaism.

Other notable members of the community included:

- Jacob Bassevi von Trevenberg, who was a financier to three emperors and the first Jew to be ennobled in the Austrian Empire

- Isidor Heller, a German Jewish author; Franz Geller, a poet; and Max Horb a painter

- Alfred Meissner, who was a leader in the Czech Social Democratic Party and served as the Minister of Justice

- Siegfried Kapper, who was a medical doctor who practiced in Mlada Boleslav and served as one of the leaders of the Czech Jewish community

in the 19th century.

All that remains of the Jewish community of Mlada Boleslav is a small remnant of the ghetto in the northern part of the town's historic district, marked by a small monument on the local museum and the Jewish cemetery. The cemetery was established in 1584. It has been restored and is taken care of by the Jewish communities of the Czech Republic.

During the celebration at RCOS, Rabbi Brian Michelson's parents Roseann and Allen Michelson, shared some pictures from a trip they took to Mlada Boleslav in 2008. Today Mlada Boleslav is known as the Detroit of the Czech Republic because it is home to the Skoda Company, the largest car company in the Czech Republic.

This special service was a fitting way to pay tribute to the Czech Torah Trust and our local piece of Czech Jewish history.

Germany urged to push for return of artwork looted during the Nazi era

World Jewish Congress President Ronald Lauder continues to push Germany to make a stronger effort to identify and return thousands of looted art pieces the Nazis took from Jews. Lauder recently referred to the stolen art as the last prisoners of World War II and said they should be returned to the victims of the Holocaust and their heirs.

The discovery of 1,400 artworks in a Munich apartment of Cornelius Gurlitt, the elderly son of a Nazi-era art dealer, refocused world attention on many of the paintings that had already been identified and claims filed by heirs of former owners persecuted and killed by the Nazis. Germany's 30-year statute of limitations on stolen property cases remains a roadblock to many restitution claims since it has been nearly 70 years since World War II ended, but Lauder applauded Bavaria for proposing a change in its own law as evidence of good faith, which modern Germany has already demonstrated in so many other ways.

"German museums do not need stolen art to make them great," Lauder said. "Lost art reflects lost lives."

If works for which there are no heirs

are found in museums, they should be auctioned off as was done in Austria, Lauder added.

Lauder has called for the establishment of an international commission that would research and work to return the artworks to families of the original owners. This group "should have real power so museums that have avoided transparency up until now will be required to do the research under its auspices in accordance with international standards."

In response to Lauder's push, Monica Gruetter, the government's top cultural affairs official, said Germany wants to double state funding for the hunt for Nazi-looted art, which since 2008 has amounted to \$19.7 million. She pledged to create a central point of contact for claimants in an effort to make it clear German officials were not trying to avoid responsibility.

London's Victoria & Albert Museum announced it would publish online an inventory of "degenerate art" (Entartete Kunst) confiscated by the Nazi. The ledgers were compiled in 1941-1942 by the Nazi propaganda ministry and list thousands of artworks taken from museums and public institutions

because they were said to corrupt the German people. The roster also records what happened to the artworks. Some were marked with an "X" for destroyed, while others noted a price and buyer — many were sold to Hildebrand Gurlitt, the father of Cornelius, in whose Munich apartment the 1,400 artworks were uncovered. The two volumes may be downloaded in their entirety at www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/e/entartete-kunst/

Hannes Hartung, Gurlitt's lawyer, recently announced his client was ready to discuss claims but noted some German museums were reluctant to retribute looted art. In an effort to make amends and make details of the Gurlitt collection public to help families make a claim, German authorities have set up a "Schwabing Art Trove" task force. The 13 art and legal experts from Germany, Austria, France, Hungary, Israel and the United States are led by Ingeborg Berggreen-Merkel, Germany's former deputy state minister for culture. She said the international profile of the team will help to "guarantee that our work is objective and of high quality."

According to the World Jewish Congress, the Gurlitt art trove appears

to be even bigger than previously thought. A spokesman for Cornelius Gurlitt said that in his house in Salzburg more than 60 additional paintings, including a Picasso, had been examined and put in safe storage.

"On the orders of Cornelius Gurlitt, it will now be investigated if there is a suspicion that they were looted by the Nazis," he said. "At first glance, there are no indications that this is the case."

According to German media reports, the action in Salzburg was ordered by Christoph Edel, who has acted as Gurlitt's custodian since late last year, in order to protect the art works from theft.

The World Jewish Congress has called for the establishment of a new commission, made up of German and foreign experts, that would resolve once and for all the issue of art looted from Jews by the Nazis. Some of these works, Lauder said, still hang in German museums and even government offices.

In addition, Lauder called on Germany to abandon any statute of limitations on returning art to the heirs of Jewish collectors whose works were either stolen by the Nazis or sold off very cheaply under duress.

Germany planning to improve pensions for former Jewish ghetto laborers

Germany's Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs is planning to amend legislation which would allow thousands of Jews who worked in ghettos during World War II to draw a better pension, according to the World Jewish Congress.

A proposal to improve the current law on such pensions was presented to an Israeli delegation in Berlin by

State Secretary Jörg Asmussen, the magazine *Der Spiegel* reported.

A law introduced in 2002 allowed Jews who worked in the Nazi-era ghettos to claim a pension from Germany, but only if they had worked voluntarily and in return for remuneration. Jews who were forced to work in the ghettos at the time were subject to a separate compensation scheme.

However, former ghetto workers who applied for a pension after 1997 only were legally entitled to retroactive payments going back four years, a stipulation the German government now wants to change to grant all claimants the same pension rights dating back to 1997, 'Der Spiegel' reported.

Quoting figures from the Israeli

government, the magazine said the modified legislation would see around 13,000 survivors living in Israel receive an average of \$20,500 each in outstanding payments.

The Nazis established hundreds of ghettos to isolate Jewish communities. Many were used as transit camps for Jews before they were sent to concentration camps.

Adult Education
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"Hot Topics in Halakhah"

Wednesdays, March 5, 12, 19 and 26
at Kesher Zion Library, 2 to 4 p.m.

Contact the KZ office at 610-374-1763
for reading material in advance.

**Jewish Federation of Reading invites you
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The Sephardim: Who They Are
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to Celebrate Passover**

**Saturday, April 5
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom**

**Sheilah Kaufman
Cookbook Author, Culinary Instructor,
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See this month's CENTERPIECE for details

Music to my ears

By Anne Seltzer

Recently Alan and I were in Louisville watching our nieces perform in the Kentucky All-State Band and Symphony. It was a repeat performance from last year. The students involved were all amazing in their talent. The thing that struck me the most was that, though they had their music for a few weeks, they had only played together for three days. One would never have known it.



Ada and Kayla are totally passionate about their music and marching band. They come from a school where music is valued, and their marching band placed fourth in competition for bands their size in Kentucky. When looking for colleges, one of their main requirements was that the schools have a marching band. Both plan on minoring in music. Of course, as we all know, ideas tend to change once they get to college.

It brought me back to the days when Ben was active in marching band and it was his entire life for the fall every year. He, like Ada, was a drum major his junior and senior years. Alan and I spent many Friday nights and Saturday afternoons at football game, both home and around the county. Even a couple times in Hershey. If it wasn't band, it was singing and performing in plays. The arts played a central role in Ben's life and still do to some extent. I'm not sure where he would be today if he had not had music in high school.

Most of us do not think about how relevant music programs are to some of our children. Even if they do not make music their life's work, it provides a release from the everyday demands on them. Think how music plays a part in your life. It may be listening to it while you are driving, singing in the shower, exercising to it, listening to it in the dentist chair or an elevator. Music takes many forms —

classical, ragtime, rap, rock, country, and many others. How many times have you had a song that sticks in your head and plays all day? Imagine the silence if we could no longer hear music? It would be deafening. So turn on the radio, CD player, or your I-Pod, and lose yourself in some music. While we were visiting the girls and Gina, Ada and I were looking at cookie recipes. She likes to bake too. Not sure if I will try these, but since they had another snow day on Monday, Ada made them and said they were really good.

Pretzel and Potato Chip Cookies with Caramel Frosting

- 12 T. butter, softened
- 1 ½ c. all purpose flour
- ½ c. granulated sugar, plus ¼ c. for rolling
- 2 oz. potato chips (2/3 c.)
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ¾ oz. mini pretzels, crushed (1/4 c.)
- 1/8 tsp. salt

In mixer beat butter, ½ c. sugar, vanilla and salt on medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Reduce speed to low and add flour in three additions. Mix in potato chips and pretzels. Place remaining ¼ c. sugar in shallow dish. Roll into 1 T. balls. Roll in sugar and space 2" apart on parchment lined pans. Press dough into ¼" thickness. Bake at 350° for about 15 minutes, rotating pans halfway through. Cool completely before frosting.

Frosting

- ½ c. packed light brown sugar
- ½ tsp. vanilla ¼ c. heavy cream
- 1 c. confectioners' sugar
- 3 T. unsalted butter
- ¼ c. pecans, toasted and chopped fine, optional
- Pinch salt

Bring brown sugar, cream, butter and salt to boil in medium saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla. Transfer to bowl and cool completely, about 20 minutes. Whisk in confectioners' sugar. Spread 1 tsp. frosting on cookies and sprinkle with pecans. Let set and enjoy!



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Haman as a child



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Alvernia University & Jewish Federation of Reading invite you to join us to reflect and remember

Community Yom Hashoah Remembrance



Film: "Besa: The Promise"



**Guest speaker - Majlinda Myrto,
Director of The Eye Contact Foundation**

Followed by a memorial candle lighting service led by survivors and family members of survivors

Sunday, April 27 at 4 p.m.

**Bernardine Hall Lecture Hall
Alvernia University, Reading Campus
Free and open to the public**

4 p.m.- "Besa: The Promise." During World War II, Albanian Muslims provided shelter for thousands of Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria and Bulgaria. Invoking the ancient moral code of *besa* (a vow to care for anyone facing danger), many people, including Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians in Albania sheltered, hid, and protected Jews from the occupying German troops.

"Besa: The Promise" is a documentary that addresses the broad history of the rescues by following two characters affected by the experience: Rexhep Hoxha, a Muslim-Albanian storekeeper, and Norman H. Gershman, a Jewish-American photographer. Toward the end of World War II, Hoxha's family had provided shelter to a Bulgarian Jewish family who left three Hebrew books behind when they fled to Palestine. But, the journey does not end there. It is only the beginning.



Majlinda Myrto, guest speaker following film: Myrto is an Albanian-American Muslim and a daughter-in-law of rescuer Shyqyri Myrto. She will speak about the role that *besa*, an Albanian honor code, played in sheltering and saving thousands of Jews in Albania during the Holocaust. She will share how her husband's family sheltered and saved Josef Jakoel and his sister Ketil from October 1943, shortly after Albania was occupied by the Germans, until its liberation in November 1944. Ms. Myrto is a renowned leader of the Albanian-American community. She was born in Albania and has lived in the United States since 1993. She holds Master's degrees in public affairs (receiving the distinction award for Recognition and Awareness of Human Rights, and political science. Myrto is director of the "Eye Contact Foundation," an organization that promotes religious, political, cultural and economic understanding and tolerance among people worldwide through the use of portrait photography. Part of her work is dedicated to establishing school curricula for teaching tolerance through *besa* as manifested in the saving of Jews by Muslim families.

Related Exhibition:

Albanian Muslim Rescuers During the Holocaust

*Portraits and testimonies of Albanian Muslim rescuers and their descendants
by American photographer Norman H. Gershman*

April 6 – May 1

**Dr. Frank A. Franco Library Learning Center at Alvernia University,
400 St. Bernardine St., Reading**

Open to the public at no charge.

Event hours:

Sunday, noon to 8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

An exhibition toured by Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion Museum, New York

When post-World War II Europe found itself devastated by the loss of its Jewish population, Albania was the only country to have a larger Jewish population than prior to the Holocaust. More than 2,000 Jews from Albania, Greece, Austria, and Italy were hidden in the homes of Albanian Muslim families during the war.

Between 2003 and 2008, Norman Gershman, an American photographer, traveled through Albania and neighboring Kosovo, gathering the stories of those who sheltered Jews. During interviews, when asked why they had rescued Jews, their resounding response was *besa*, which means "to keep the promise" and implies a responsibility to others in times of need.

The stories of Albanian rescuers are relatively unknown due to the political isolation of the country under communism. Albanian rescuers were not acknowledged until 1987, when Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial museum, recognized them a "Righteous Among the Nations," a designation given to non-Jews who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. An effort by historians and Albanian archivists to research and document the Albanian experience during the Holocaust continues today.

"There was no government conspiracy, no underground railroad, no organized resistance of any kind – only individual Albanians, acting alone, to save the lives of people whose lives were in immediate danger. My portraits of these people, and their stories, are meant to reflect their humanity, their dignity, their religious and moral convictions, and their quiet courage."

—Norman H. Gershman

Jewish Family Service

United Way



Local programs worth knowing about

By Sari Incledon, M.Ed.

This month I would like to share some information about local programs that are worth knowing about.



VITA – Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

The VITA program offers free tax preparation for low to middle income county residents and seniors. Berks Encore received a grant from the Internal Revenue Service to train volunteers who can prepare federal, state and local

forms, as well as property tax and rent rebate forms. For an appointment call the following numbers:

- Birdsboro – 610-374-3195
- Fleetwood – 610-944-9252
- Mifflin – 610-777-5577
- Reading – 610-374-3195
- Strausstown – 610-562-4721
- Wernersville – 610-670-1372

Berks County Veterans Affairs

Veterans may qualify for a federal government monthly pension if they served during wartime, can demonstrate low income and limited net worth, and are at least 65 years old.

A surviving spouse of a veteran may qualify for a pension too based on the veteran's military service and his/

her financial need. Both veteran and spouse may qualify for additional financial assistance if either are housebound or receiving supports from another.

The Berks County Department of Veterans Affairs sponsors weekly Tuesday presentations from 1:30-3:00 p.m. at their office – 726 Cherry Street, Reading. Call for more information 610-378-5601 ext. 3 or 4, or 484-650-2139.

Help for Families Coping with Grief

The Pathways Center for Grief and Loss are offering two programs this spring for families. Camp Mend a Heart is a one day family camp for children and teens 6-18 and adults who are coping with the death of a loved one. Camp Mend a Heart will be held at the Penn Grove Retreat Center in

Hanover on May 31. Camp Chimaqua is an overnight weekend camp for grieving children ages 6-12. It will be held at Camp Donegal in York County June 6-8.

Both camps focus on helping children learn about loss, develop coping skills and build self-confidence. This is achieved through fun-filled activities and opportunities for small and large group sharing. The activities at both camps are similar with the addition of sessions for adults and opportunities for family time at Camp Mend A Heart.

For more information about registration and financial assistance call The Pathway Center for Grief and Loss at 717-391-2413 or 800-924-7610 or visit the website www.pathwaysthroughgrief.org

The Benefit Bank

A Jewish Family Service Program

Find out your eligibility and apply for benefits online with a counselor in a confidential setting.

Food Stamps

Medical Benefits

Cash Assistance

LIHEAP and more

To find out if TBB can help you, call Sari or Carole at 610-921-0624

Living with Loss

Mondays, March 10 and 24

3 - 4:30 p.m. at the JCC

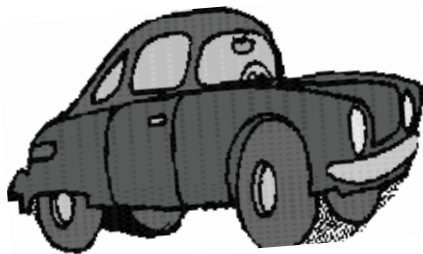
For more information, call Sari at 610-921-0624

Need Help Choosing an Obamacare Policy?

If you are finding that choosing an Obamacare Policy is a daunting task, let Jewish Family Service help. Phyllis Dessel, a 20 year veteran of the Area Office of Aging is helping us help members of the Jewish Community.

If you have questions about subsidies, policies or just need help, contact JFS at 610-921-0624 and an appointment will be made.

Enjoy Tax Benefits While Contributing to Jewish Family Service Vehicle Donation Program



Call Sari at 610-921-0624, e-mail sari@jfreading.org or go to www.charitableautoresources.com

Jewish Family Service Food Pantry Collection



We are serving more families each month! Please bring donations of canned tuna, soup, fruits and vegetables to Kesher Zion or the JCC. Thank you!

We also need plastic and paper grocery bags!

HELP US HELP A VETERAN

Benefit Dinner for struggling veterans

All proceeds will go to **Veterans Making a Difference**, a local organization dedicated to helping veterans in need by distributing donated items and food to local homeless veterans and those in shelters.

Saturday, March 22 • 3 to 5pm

Donation \$15pp
Silent Auction

Please RSVP by March 19 to 610-373-0800



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Taglit-Birthright Israel expands eligibility for previous visitors to Israel

Taglit-Birthright Israel announced it is expanding its program eligibility to include young adults who had previously visited Israel as part of a peer trip when they were younger. The organization said the change was based on an educational assessment that those who may have visited as a teenager would gain a significantly greater understanding and attachment to Israel through the Taglit-Birthright experience as a young adult.

Beginning with the summer 2014 registration that opened Feb. 19, applicants between the ages of 18 and 26 who had made a prior visit to Israel on an organized peer trip before they turned 18 may now apply.

The organization estimates the expansion will allow thousands more to benefit from the Israel's program. To register, visit www.BirthrightIsrael.com.

"I am delighted that the Taglit-Birthright Israel steering committee supports the decision that every young Jew is entitled to an educational tour of Israel," said Taglit-Birthright Israel CEO Gidi Mark. "I believe that the decision will strengthen the ties between Israel and the Diaspora and will provide tens of thousands of

young Jews the knowledge needed in their efforts to present a positive image of Israel to the world."

Taglit-Birthright Israel offers the gift of a free, 10-day trip to Israel for Jewish adults between the ages of 18 to 26. The trip aims to strengthen each participant's identity as a Jew; to build an understanding, friendship and lasting bond with the land and people of Israel; and to reinforce the solidarity of the Jewish people worldwide.

Taglit-Birthright Israel has sent more than 350,000 young Jewish adults to Israel from more than 64 countries and from all 50 U.S. states, including students from nearly 1,000 North American college campuses. Attendees are immersed in an active educational experience that includes visits to Jewish historical sites, history museums, Holocaust remembrance sites, the Western Wall, arts and culture programs as well as touring, hiking, discussions, social events, camel and jeep rides in the desert, and more. The trip focuses on three main areas: the narratives of the Jewish people, contemporary Israel, and the formative values of Judaism.

Taglit-Birthright Israel has a partnership with the



Taglit-Birthright Israel participants visit with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during their free trip to Israel.

government of Israel, thousands of individual donors and private philanthropists, and Jewish communities around the world through Jewish Federations of North America, Keren Hayesod and the Jewish Agency of Israel.

Jewish Federation of Reading

Student Camp and Education Awards

For several years, Jewish Federation of Reading has provided monetary awards to children who attended Jewish summer camp and to support students studying abroad in Israel or participating in a number of Jewish sponsored high school education programs in Israel. Thanks to the work of the Educational Committee, the Federation is proud to offer Jewish children/students, who are residents of our Berks County Jewish community, monetary awards to help support their participation in programs that nurture Jewish identity, leadership and connections with their culture, history and Israel. Working together with our families and thanks to your campaign support, our Jewish community can help its children grow and discover a deep-seated and profound sense of what it means to them to be a Jew while learning about themselves and the world.

If you have questions pertaining to your child/children's eligibility for any of the offerings below, please do not hesitate to contact Tammy Mitgang at the Federation office – 610-921-0624.

*Are you interested in helping send a camper to Jewish camp or support a student as they pursue academic study and explore their Jewish culture abroad?
Please contact Paul Landry, Development Director – 610-921-0624.*

Jewish Summer Camp Award - \$250 per child

Jewish Federation of Reading encourages Jewish overnight summer camp experiences for children 8-18 years of age. Jewish camp offers all the benefits of other summer camps, while giving your child the chance to experience Jewish community in a safe, supportive setting. At Jewish camp, daily activities are enriched by Jewish values and the culture of Judaism. The camp program must be an overnight camp and the camper enrolled for a minimum of 4 weeks (or, 3 week 2nd session). **Application deadline, March 15.**

Leadership Training Award – up to \$150

High school students that enroll in leadership training programs through Jewish youth movements such as BBYO (B'nai B'rith Youth Organization) or USY (United Synagogue Youth) may apply for an award up to \$150 toward the cost of registration and travel. One award per student per year. Requests must be made no less than 60 days prior to the start of the training program.

High School Israel Experience Award – up to \$250

High school students who participate in programs such as Ramah in Israel or NFTY in Israel that are designed to provide students with a meaningful and exciting Israel experience may apply for an award up to \$250 toward the cost of registration and travel.

Application deadline, March 15.

College and Post Graduate Study in Israel Award – up to \$1,000

College and post-graduate students enrolled in academic study programs in Israel or who wish to pursue internship opportunities in Israel are invited to apply for awards to accredited colleges/universities up to \$1,000. Due to the uniqueness of many internship opportunities, requests will be evaluated on an individual basis. **Deadline for applications** – 60 days prior to the start of the program. **Summer programs and internships, deadline for application** - May 15 for the following summer.

Jewish Day School Education Award

Ages 2-Pre-Kindergarten (need-sensitive)

Lakin Early Education Center, a Jewish sponsored preschool located in the Education Wing of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom in Wyomissing, offers programs for children from the age of 2 through pre-Kindergarten. Need-sensitive awards are available for families through Jewish Family Service, a program of Jewish Federation of Reading. Please call Sari Incledon, Director, 610-921-0624 for a confidential inquiry.

Kindergarten – 12th Grade

Berks County does not have a Jewish Day school. In order to help meet the needs of parents wishing to enroll their child/children in a Jewish Day school, Federation will consider funding requests from families seeking a Jewish Day School education for their school age child/children. Annually, funds are allocated toward this program.

Funding requests should be received 30 days prior to the start of the academic year for which the funding request is being made.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT THE JCC

OR DOWNLOADABLE AT WWW.READINGJEWISHCOMMUNITY.ORG

Note: Jewish Federation of Reading is not representative of nor does it support any one movement of Judaism. Jewish Federation of Reading, Inc. reserves the right to discontinue one or more of these programs or limit the number and/or value of any or all of the awards at anytime without prior notification to applicants.

Middle East peace talks a tale of too many certainties

By Daniel Gordis

Two opposing truths characterize this increasingly dangerous world we inhabit. First, many of us are certain that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is no



closer to being resolved than it ever has been. And second, much of the world is certain that it is. The test of the Jewish people's leadership — a test that it seems poised to fail — will hinge on whether it is sufficiently deft and nimble to navigate these competing certainties.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unlikely to be resolved, now or at any time in the foreseeable future, because there is no solution possible if the Palestinians do not both recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people, and give up the right of return. Only when the Palestinians — their leadership and their street — call Israel a Jewish state will we know that they have internalized that we are not interlopers, latter-day Crusaders, here for now but bound to depart.

When chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat opined recently that he would never recognize Israel as a Jewish state because his ancestors were here 5,000 years before Joshua, was he preparing his street for an agreement? With the right of return, Palestinians would just destroy Israel demographically rather than through violence. Yet how many leaders of the Palestinian Authority believe they can remain alive if they sign

an agreement with Israel that gives up on that right of return?

Egypt's Anwar Sadat, it should be recalled, did not attend the ceremony at which he received the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1978. He knew that having made a deal with Israel in which Palestinian demands were not met, for much of the Arab world, he was a traitor. So he sent his son-in-law to the ceremony instead. But it made no difference; Sadat was gunned down barely three years later by fellow Egyptians.

Does anyone imagine that Abbas, Erekat and others do not recall Sadat's fate? What is the likelihood they will take the risk? Europe and North America, though, are equally certain that peace can, and must, be attained — and soon. "A bit more pressure on Israel, and the dominoes will begin to fall." So a Danish bank decides to boycott Bank Hapoalim because it does business over the Green Line. A Swedish bank has now asked for "clarifications" on the settlements, clearly a prelude to another possible boycott. Israel indicates willingness to pay Turkey \$20 million compensation for the flotilla, the result of enormous pressure.

It is in this atmosphere that US Secretary of State John Kerry warns Israel — perhaps correctly — that the world is running out of patience.

"Today's status quo absolutely, to a certainty, I promise you 100 percent, cannot be maintained," he said. "It's not sustainable. It's illusionary. There's a momentary prosperity, there's a momentary peace." Yet another clear warning shot fired across Israel's bow.

It's a tale of two colliding certainties, and it is unlikely to end well. Reasonable minds can, and do, differ as to how Israel

should manage a virtually impossible situation. About one matter, however, we ought to begin to agree: it's time to dispense with our own certainties.

When Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, speaking at the Munich Security Conference, says that Israel does not need an agreement — "We'll manage" — is he (perhaps like Erekat) simply staking out a position from which he can later compromise, or does he actually believe that Israel can survive an international boycott? If it's the former, then fine.

Prime minister Menachem Begin, when told by President Jimmy Carter that he was facing his last chance for peace with Egypt, replied on Israeli TV: "Our people lived thousands of years before Camp David, and will live thousands of years after Camp David... If we are told that this is the last chance to arrive at peace, we shall not agree. There are no 'last chances' in life." It worked, and Begin got his deal.

But Begin was also a pragmatist and knew when to accede. Will our leaders — whether in a few months or in 50 years — know when they have the best deal that they can get and summon the wisdom to take it? Can Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pull that off? Does he wish to? Does Ya'alon really imagine that Israel could withstand the crippling treatment that the world brought to bear on South Africa?

"We'll manage," he says with an air of certainty. How, exactly? Surely, he knows how a global economy works, no? And on the other side of the political divide, one can already hear the lip smacking, the self-congratulatory satisfaction of those who believe that in helping to force Israel's hand, they're doing Israel a favor.

"My involvement in the Jewish world is the Israeli-Palestinian issue," a North American Jewish woman said to me at a public forum in Jerusalem. "I'm working to make Israel better."

Really? The hubris of the certainty was astounding. Are you sure that Israel is "better" when it has both less land and 170,000 rockets pointing at it? Are we sure that Israel is "better" when settlers, some of whom represent the most vibrant, selfless form of Zionism, will be told that their project is to be abandoned? Are we entirely certain that we can take this step without extinguishing the very flame that gives this country purpose? Are we sure that a move to the never-recognized pre-1967 lines will not then lead to a push to the once-recognized 1947 lines?

One day, we are likely to have only choices even worse than the ones we have today. Until then, though, our greatest enemy is certainty. And our greatest asset will be in recognizing the profound pitfalls of any approach we take. Resist international pressure, and the dangers are enormous. Cave in to international pressure, and the risks are equally great.

Despite our predilection for incessant protestation, this is not the time for certainties. It is, if anything, the time to really start to think. It is, if anything, the time to recall Deuteronomy 21:21 — "Let all Israel hear, and be afraid."

Daniel Gordis is Senior Vice President and the Koret Distinguished Fellow at Shalem College in Jerusalem and was a featured speaker in the Leo Camp Lecture Series at Albright College. Follow his work at danielgordis.org.

Danish government enacts regulation banning kosher slaughter

Denmark's Agriculture and Food Minister Dan Jørgensen has signed a regulation which effectively bans religious slaughter in the country. "Animal rights come before religion," Jørgensen told Denmark's TV2 television news. The regulation requires all animal slaughter to be carried out with prior stunning of the animal, which is against shechita (Jewish religious slaughter).

According to the World Jewish Congress, the measure will have little practical consequences for Jewish life in Denmark since for the past 10 years all

kosher meat sold in Denmark has been imported from abroad.

Under the new regulation, Danish slaughterhouses no longer can apply for an exemption to pre-stunning.

Both the Jewish and the Muslim communities in Denmark have strongly opposed the decree, arguing it constitutes an infringement of religious freedom. Jørgensen rejected the argument: "When they [the religious communities] are upset about the ban even though they have not taken advantage of the exemptions available,

it can only be because in the future they would like to carry out slaughter without stunning."

Jørgensen's predecessor as food minister, Karen Hækkerup, last year demanded that all religious slaughter without stunning in Denmark should be banned. Jørgensen is a member of the Social Democratic Party of Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, who has recently struggled to hold her government together.

The ban on religious slaughter is seen by some observers as a populist

measure. Under European Union legislation, the import of kosher or halal meat cannot be banned if it is performed in accordance with the regulations in place in the EU country where the animal is slaughtered.

The director of Copenhagen's zoo recently caused international outrage when he put down a healthy giraffe for eugenic reasons and had its carcass fed to lions in front of a number of children.

An estimated 6,000 Jews live in Denmark, most of them in the capital Copenhagen.

Sochi Winter Olympics a showcase for rising young Israeli athletes

Israel21c.org

Israel's Winter Olympians were never serious medal hopefuls at this year's Games in Sochi, Russia, but that didn't stop them from showing what's to come.

The five athletes — solo figure skater Oleksii Bychenko, pair skaters Evgeni Krasnopolsky and Andrea Davidovich, speed-skater Vladislav Bykanov and alpine skier Virgile Vandepuit — put in quality performances that could result in future Olympic medals.

Krasnopolsky and Davidovich, who only began skating together in the spring of 2013, glided to a 15th-place finish overall.

"We achieved our goal! We qualified for the free program at the Sochi 2014 Olympics ... Thank you for all the support!" the duo wrote on their Facebook page.

Commentators noted that they are a team to watch. And spectators will have that chance in March, when Krasnopolsky and Davidovich compete in Japan at the World Figure Skating Championships.

Israel has participated in the Winter Olympics since 1994. Like other warm-weather countries, its athletes often train

abroad. After Sochi, Krasnopolsky and Davidovich will continue fine-tuning their skills at Ice House in Hackensack, N.J.

The duo is coached by Galit Chait, a three-time Israeli Olympian in ice dancing, and Gennadi Krasnitski. Solo skater Bychenko, also born in Kiev, shares the Hackensack rink space.

Bychenko gave Israeli fans a glimmer of hope when he made it to the men's figure skating finals but a spill plopped him back to a 21st-place finish overall.

The 25-year-old Krasnopolsky was raised in Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel. He started his skating forays at the Canada Center in Israel, but moved to the US to train professionally.

He told *Ha'aretz* that it irks him to hear people say athletes from warm countries can't compete in winter sports.

"An unreasonable number of people raise that argument," he told the Hebrew daily newspaper. "I always respond: 'You don't turn your refrigerators off during the summer, right? With us it's the same thing. We don't need snow; we need a skating rink. Like a tennis court with refrigerators.'"

Bykanov, who moved to Israel from



Ukraine in 1994 and grew up in Kiryat Shmona, trains in the Netherlands. The former IDF outstanding sportsman has voiced his Israeli allegiance.

"For me, representing Israel is everything," Bykanov told Ynet News.

And alpine skier Vandepuit lives in France. His mother is Israeli and he began skiing for Israel in 2010.

The Israeli anthem was not heard in Sochi on the podium. But the five athletes

waving the blue-and-white flag still made a mark.

Bykanov — who carried the Israeli flag at the opening ceremonies — performed better than expected. He missed out on a place in the 1,500-meter semifinals by 76 hundredths of a second.

All five were making their Olympic debut. With proper training, they might get closer to the podium in South Korea in 2018.

IF WE DON'T TEACH OUR CHILDREN WHO THEY ARE . . .

OTHERS WILL.

As they grow up, young Jews will face challenges to their beliefs and identity. We believe the best way to protect our children against ignorance and hate is to educate them. From the pride of a preschooler learning his first Hebrew words to the confidence of a college student prepared to grapple with anti-Israel sentiment on campus, we're strengthening Jewish identity and inspiring a life-long connection to Jewish values. But we need your help.



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Credit Card: ___Discover ___Mastercard ___Visa Card # _____ Exp. date _____ Security Code _____
Name on Card: _____ Signature _____

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Please mail your payment with complete information to the Jewish Federation, PO Box 14925, Reading, PA 19612-4925 or bring to the Jewish Cultural Center, 1100 Berkshire Blvd, Suite 125, Wyomissing. You may set up a "savings account" for the purpose of sending cards. Please contact the Jewish Federation at 610-921-0624 for further information.

Contributions as of Feb. 14

JFS Taxi Transportation Program

In memory of:
Grace Lewis – Rosalye Yashek

Jewish Family Service

In memory of:
Grace Lewis – Louise Zeidman, Florence and Marvin Segal
Rhoda Rosenberg – Jay Safir
Sue Wolfe – Kevin Horowitz
Nancy Dickson (Jeri Kozloff's mother) – Edith Mendelsohn
Richard "Dick" Henry – Andy and Corinne Wernick, Al and Betsy Katz, Louise Zeidman, Selma and David LeVan

Federation Jewish Community Campaign

In honor of:
Isaac Kastenbaum's engagement – Cheryl and Eric Farber

Honorials and Memorials

Contributions may be made to the following Funds:

Federation Jewish Community Campaign	\$10
Jewish Family Service	\$10
Leo Camp Lecture Fund	\$10
JFS Food Bank	\$25
JFS Taxi Transportation Program	\$20
Holocaust Library & Resource Center	\$18
Doris Levin Fund	\$10

Steven Cohn's marriage – Kevin Horowitz
Zena Hafetz's birthday – Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer
Birth of Mr. and Mrs. Ingram Chodorow's new granddaughter – Fran Suknow

In memory of:
Elizabeth Ehrlich – Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer
Nancy Dickson (Jeri Kozloff's mother) – Debbie Goodman and John Moyer
Clara Seymour – Elyse Diamond, Anzie and Edward Golden
Marjorie Burton – Anzie and Edward Golden
Grace Lewis – Anzie and Edward Golden
Sue Wolfe – Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer
Richard "Dick" Henry – Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer, Susan and Mel Blum, Lynn and Richard Gordon, Anzie and Edward Golden, Cheryl and Eric Farber, Roberta and Paul Kozloff, Barbara and Bernie Fromm

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| Glass Pendants – make 5 for \$30 per person | |
| \$5.00 admission fee payable to Hadassah | |

Sunday April 6, 2014 from 2:00-5:00pm

Warehouse Studio - 2130 Spring Street, West Lawn (in the Comunale Bldg)

Hadassah

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Joyva Ring Jells
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