



SHALOM



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Join us for fascinating photography exhibit

A major exhibit of photography opens Feb. 28 at the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, 201 Washington St., and offers a fascinating view of life in the early days of Israel.

"Your Fortunate Eyes — Photographs by Rudi Weissenstein" runs Feb. 28 through April 13 in the Cohen Gallery at the GoggleWorks.

The exhibit was curated by Ben Peter, Michael Amram & Andreas Grau-Fuchs, Pri-Or PhotoHouse Tel Aviv.

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. In 1940, he and his wife, Miriam, opened Pri-Or PhotoHouse, a photo studio in Tel Aviv. Weissenstein's work in documenting the development of Tel Aviv is unparalleled. The shop is open today at Tchernichovsky Street in Tel Aviv and managed by Rudi and Miriam's grandson Ben Peter.

The exhibit, which features 40 of Weissenstein's images, takes its name from a Goethe quote that Weissenstein's widow, Miriam, selected for his tombstone: "You, fortunate eyes, All you've seen, there, Let it be as it may, Yet it was so fair!"

In addition to the exhibit, our community

will be treated to a special screening of "Life in Stills," a funny, heartwarming documentary that 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 legendary PhotoHouse shop and its nearly 1 million negatives that document Israel's defining moments.

Join us Sunday, March 9, for a reception from 4:30 to 5:30 hosted by Jewish Federation of Reading, followed by the screening at 5:30 in the GoggleWorks Film Theatre.

The event is made possible by a grant by Jewish Federation of Reading and private donations.



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2014 totals as of Jan. 20

Jewish Community Campaign \$188,565

*Includes transfers from Donor Advised Funds



More on the Weisseinstein exhibit. Page 3



Federation News

Generations

By Paul L. Landry

The preparation of the Planned Giving ad in this month's newspaper started me thinking about what one generation owes to future generations.

My family's genealogy was done a couple of decades ago — but we were only able to go back to 1639, when three Landry men emigrated from France and went to Nova Scotia. We found out for the first time that we



were Cajuns, having been thrown out of Nova Scotia in the mid-1700s. And we couldn't go back farther than that because the church in Normandy that held the records had burned to the ground a few hundred years ago.

Whenever I look at the genealogy, I can't help but think that at least one of those people should have made millions so that I could be rich! Then I realize that my children could say the same about me and I retract that thought.

But as I was preparing this month's ad (on Page 14), I realized that I did do what

I could for my children and have drafted a will that does even more — though not a million dollars. And I realized that all of the modern members of the Berks County Jewish Community are benefiting from estate gifts arranged by members of previous generations of local Jews. Most of these gifts weren't huge — the people who set them up did what they could with what they had. But they did SOMETHING!

Isn't it our turn to do SOMETHING!? It doesn't need to be huge — bequests aren't just for millionaires. And we can all arrange for a beneficiary designation

for an insurance policy or checking/savings account or CD, etc. Any size gift will be important and will help.

So please step up — TAKE YOUR TURN — and call me. There's no obligation. I'll help you think about what you could do to ensure that there is a vibrant Jewish Federation in Berks County that can enrich the lives of generations of your descendants.

And when you do arrange an estate gift of some kind, give me a call to let me know. That way I can add you to the L'Chaim Society rolls.

Tributes pour in following death of Ariel Sharon

Leaders from the Jewish world and beyond joined in mourning the Jan. 11 death of former Israeli Prime Minister and military hero Ariel Sharon at the age of 85.

The Jewish Federations of North America Board of Trustees Chair Michael Siegal and JFNA President and CEO Jerry Silverman issued a joint statement lamenting Sharon's passing:

"Today, Jewish Federations mourn the loss of a great Israeli leader. Ariel Sharon was a highly regarded military leader, but he was also a peacemaker. One of the country's most daring and celebrated generals, he was also a man who was able to take bold steps in the hopes of achieving peace.

"Sharon worked his entire life for the unity of the Jewish People. He was closely connected with Jewish communities around the world, and acutely aware of their needs and aspirations. In all his leadership roles, and especially as prime minister of the Jewish state, Sharon engaged with Jewish communities across the Diaspora. He was a regular speaker

at Jewish Federation events and is warmly remembered for welcoming countless Federation groups to his private home in the Negev.

"Today it is not only the State of Israel that has lost one of its most celebrated figures, but the Jewish people as a whole. Arik Sharon was not just the prime minister of the Jewish state, but a determined and inspirational leader of the entire Jewish world. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his sons Omri and Gilad, to the entire Sharon family, and to all the people of Israel."

The World Jewish Congress offered similar sentiments, calling Sharon one of the great military strategists of the 20th century.

"I spent many hours with Sharon on his farm and learned what a true patriot he was," WJC President Ronald S. Lauder said. "Nobody knew the land of Israel better than he did. The love he showed for Israel was truly unique. He knew that when Jewish security was a stake, there was no compromise.

"Many Israelis may fault one or another of Sharon's political or military



decisions," Lauder continued, "but probably no single individual fought harder to safeguard Israel. In a climate of fierce debate, he did what he thought was right for his country, whether it was his brilliant encirclement of Egyptian troops during the Yom Kippur War or the withdrawal from Gaza. His tank maneuvers will be studied as long as there are military colleges. His efforts to house and absorb the nearly one million Russian-speaking Jews who arrived in Israel in the 1990s will forever be appreciated."

Lauder added: "While many people think of Sharon as extremely hard, strong and tough, the Ariel Sharon I knew was very warm and had tremendous sensitivity, especially for his friends. May his family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem, and may his memory be for a blessing."

Israeli Consul General Yaron Sideman offered these thoughts:

"Ariel Sharon was a Zionist, guided by a single mission — to protect the State of Israel. His mission was evident even as a young, 19-year-old company commander during the War of Independence in 1948, when he was severely wounded in the battle over Latrun. With a near-fatal shot in the abdomen, he was barely able to drag himself away from the battle zone to relative safety. At the hospital, the doctors told him he would need several weeks to recover. That night, Ariel Sharon got out of bed, dressed himself and hitchhiked back to his unit. He would not wait several weeks, nor days. He sensed that the recently declared State of Israel may not hold that long. His place was with its defenders.

"My first personal encounter with Sharon was in 1999, when he was head of the Likud Party, then in the

opposition. I was a diplomat at the Israeli Consulate in New York. Sharon often visited the city, where Lili, his wife, was undergoing cancer treatment. He spent long grueling hours at her bedside, yet always made himself available to us. I was greatly inspired by his profound sense of Jewish identity. 'First and foremost, I am a proud Jew.' That is how he proudly presented himself to everyone he had met.

For me, perhaps the most inspiring feature of Ariel Sharon was his strong sense of loyalty to people, particularly those who fought alongside him in combat. He never forgot them, their names, their faces and their personal stories. No matter how high up the political ladder he climbed, he never left his friends behind. Loyalty was a two-way street for Ariel Sharon. He was always within reach to those who stood by him at the many junctures of his life. He took active interest in their lives, and was always there for them and their families during times of need.

Sharon was born in 1928 in Kfar Malal. He served in the Israel Defense Forces for more than 25 years. In 1973 Ariel Sharon was elected to the Knesset. For decades he served in a variety of ministerial posts in the Israeli government.

In February 2001, Sharon was elected prime minister, succeeding Ehud Barak. In June 2004, his government approved the disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria, which was implemented the following year. In January 2006 Sharon suffered a brain hemorrhage and Ehud Olmert was designated acting prime minister.

Sharon never regained consciousness. He was widowed and is survived by two sons, Omri and Gilad.



"I FEEL LIKE I LIVE ON A CRUISE SHIP!"

— Hilde Gernsheimer

Hilde Gernsheimer says moving to The Highlands was the best move she's made. From her spacious, two-bedroom apartment to meeting wonderful people, enjoying daily fine dining and participating in social events, Hilde says, "At The Highlands, you have everything you need to live a full — and fun — life. My one piece of advice: move here while you're still active!"



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From the President's Desk

Our Fortunate Eyes

By Tammy K. Mitgang
President

On May 14, 1948, Rudi Weissenstein was invited to the Tel Aviv Museum on Rothschild Boulevard as the only official photographer at the signing ceremony for the State of Israel's Declaration



of Independence. His photograph of David Ben-Gurion at the reading of the Declaration was published in newspapers around the world.

Born in Iglau (today part of the Czech Republic), Rudi Weissenstein worked as a freelance photojournalist in Palestine from his arrival in 1936 until the 1970s. Comprised of more than 1 million negatives, the body of his work is a visual memory of his country — Israel. Much of it never has been viewed.

His love of photography began when he was a boy working in the darkroom his father had constructed in their home. He later studied photography at "graphische Lehr — und Versuchsanstalt" in Vienna. In 1940 he and his wife, Miriam opened Pri-Or PhotoHouse at 30 Allenby Street in Tel Aviv.

With World War II reaching the Middle East, his first clients were mostly English, Australian and Canadian soldiers. They were followed by personalities who would become Israel's leaders: Golda Meir, Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres to mention a few. He was the official photographer of the Israel Philharmonic for 40 years and a reporter for the United Nations. From behind the lens, Rudi became Israel's eyes.

If Rudy's work was the "body" of the studio, Miriam, his wife, was its heart. Born in Czechoslovakia, Miriam arrived in Israel in 1921 at age 8. Having studied sports and gymnastics in Austria, she became a gymnastics instructor. She went on to manage the shop she and Rudi founded together until her death at age 98 — committed to continuing its legacy and the work of her beloved Rudi. A favorite subject of her husband, Miriam is the young woman pictured jumping in the air with Tel Aviv in the background.

When I first discovered Weissenstein's work, I was mesmerized. The images he captured as he traveled



Rudi Weissenstein's wife, Miriam, in one of his many memorable photos

across the land document the arrival of immigrants, the construction of villages and towns, the growth of industry, life on Kibbutzim and the Bedouin. He snapped the day to day life of the people of the book, the people of the land and the faces of those who would go on to build the State of Israel.

Thanks to the generosity of two local patrons who wish to remain anonymous, funding support from Jewish Federation of Reading and the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, our Berks County community has the opportunity to view a sampling of Rudi Weissenstein's photographs. It is one of several exhibitions of his photography being toured across the country in an effort to draw attention to his work and to raise funds to preserve an archive of crumbling negatives — "...a testament to Israel: the atmosphere, the spirit, its people."

I hope you will join me on Sunday, March 9, at the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts for a special community opening reception celebrating the photography exhibition of "Your Fortunate Eyes: Photographs by Rudi Weissenstein." The reception begins

at 4:30 p.m. and is an opportunity to view his images with family and friends. Following the reception, guests will have an opportunity to enjoy a private screening of the documentary film "Life in Stills," the story of Miriam Weissenstein and her grandson Ben Peter as they work to save the photo studio. Together, they embark on a touching, sometimes funny journey to save the legendary "Photo House" while working through a family tragedy that forges a special bond between the two. Rabbi Minna Bromberg of Keshet Zion Synagogue will lead a discussion after the film. She joined me at Pri-Or PhotoHouse during my recent visit to Israel, where we were graciously hosted by Michal Minsky.

When Rudi Weissenstein died, Miriam chose a quote from Goethe's masterwork "Faust, Part II of the Tragedy (Act V)" for his gravestone. It is spoken by Lynceus, the warder, from his place in the palace watch tower —

*"For watching, employed,
To the tower, I'm sworn,
While the world, I enjoy.
I gaze at the far,
I stare at the near,*

A note to our community Dear Community,

Although it seems somewhat premature, many of you by now have learned that I will be leaving Jewish Federation of Reading in April. I will be talking more with you during the transition, but I want you to know what an honor it has been to work on behalf of our Reading Jewish community, Israel and communities around the world that benefit from your generosity.

In the next few months, we have planned some special events that I would like to consider my grand finale. Many of them can be found highlighted in this edition of Shalom, so please — save the dates and be sure to join us.

Tammy Mitgang, President

*The moon and the star,
The forest and deer:
The eternally lovely
Adornment, I view,
And as it delights me
I delight myself too.
You, fortunate eyes,
All you've seen, there,
Let it be as it may,
Yet it was so fair!"*

—Goethe

About "Life in Stills"

The documentary "Life in Stills," written and directed by Tamar Tal and produced by Barak Heylmann, has won several awards, including the Best Israeli Film in the Docaviv festival in 2011 and the Talent Dove of the Media Foundation of the Sparkasse Leipzig for an extraordinary documentary film talent.

"The winner was a story movingly and sensitively told, which managed to combine a strong sense of comedy with powerful insight. It managed to combine the strengths of its characters with a strong story, and noticeably entranced its audience.

"This is an intimate film that celebrates the individual in all his richness and complexity. Director Tamar manages to share the most beautiful moments of bonding between grandmother Miriam and her grandson Ben Weissenstein (Ben Peter) with the audience. The film also shows that a positive approach to life, understanding, forgiveness, empathy and a sense of humor are things that keep us alive and let us overcome even the most tragic moments."

—Docaviv

SHALOM

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Jesus, Judaism, and Jewish-Christian Relations

Thursday, Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m.
Merner-Pfeiffer-Klein-Memorial Chapel, Albright College

The annual James J. Gallagher Memorial Lecture at Albright College on Thursday, February 13 will be presented by Amy-Jill Levine, a leading New Testament scholar and author. The topic of her discussion will be “Jesus, Judaism, and Jewish-Christian Relations.” Details of the lecture including time and campus location will follow. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Dr. Levine is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies and Professor of Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and College of Arts and Sciences. She holds a B.A. from Smith College, an M.A. and Ph.D. from Duke University, and honorary doctorates from Christian Theological Seminary, Drury University, the University of Richmond, the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest, and the University of South Carolina-Upstate.

Her books include “The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus” (HarperOne), the edited collection “The Historical Jesus in Context” (Princeton), and the fourteen-volume edited series, “Feminist Companions to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings” (Continuum). With Marc Brettler of Brandeis University, she has edited the Jewish Annotated New Testament (Oxford).

The Jewish Annotated New Testament, edited entirely by Jews, includes notes and explanatory essays by 50 leading Jewish scholars, including Susannah Heschel, a historian and the daughter of the theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel; the Talmudist Daniel Boyarman; and Shaye J. D. Cohen, who teaches ancient Judaism at Harvard.

In her Vanderbilt profile, Dr. Levine describes herself as a “Yankee Jewish feminist who teaches in a predominately Christian divinity school in the buckle of the Bible Belt.”

Get ready for the lecture at Keshet Zion Synagogue

Keshet Zion is offering an opportunity to learn in preparation for Amy Jill Levine’s upcoming lecture.

What does Jesus’ Jewishness mean for Jews and Christians, historically and today?
 Keshet Zion’s own Dr. Jennifer Koosed will be helping participants get the most out of
 Dr. Levine’s lecture by teaching about her work beforehand.

Learning Sessions: Wednesdays, Feb. 5 and Feb. 12 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Keshet Zion Library.

These sessions are free, and all are welcome.

Contact the KZ office at 610-374-1763 for optional reading materials in advance

Save the dates for these big spring events!

10th annual Richard J. Yashek Lecture: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945-1962 *featuring Dr. Hasia Diner*



Thursday, April 3, 7:30 p.m. in the Wachovia Theatre at Albright College

Professor Hasia Diner challenges the idea proposed by nearly all historians of postwar American Jewry that between the end of the war and the 1960s, the Holocaust rarely appeared in American or Jewish public discourse. Uncovering a rich trove of remembrances, Dr. 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. Please join us for what promises to be a fascinating talk.

The Sephardim : Who They Are and The Customs and Foods They Use to Celebrate Passover *Saturday, April 5 at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom*

featuring

Sheilah Kaufman

Cookbook Author, Culinary Instructor, Food Editor & Writer, Culinary Lecturer

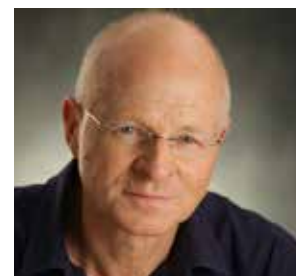
Every cuisine tells a story, and Jewish cooking is far more than food on a plate. It is a map of the past, as well as a continuing story of religion, history, culture, and family life. Jewish cooking has been a constant as Jewish cooks crisscrossed the globe, repeatedly, fleeing from persecution and prejudice, in search of physical safety, economic security, and religious freedom. Join Sheilah and learn about the Sephardim, who they are/were, and the different customs and foods they use to celebrate Passover.

WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS ON THIS EVENT SOON

Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance Program at Alvernia University *Sunday afternoon, April 27*

Yom Hazikaron Observance Guest speaker: Noam Shalit

Sunday, May 4, 3 p.m. Watch for more details soon!



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.

Biden unveils effort to support Holocaust survivors

Vice President Joe Biden has unveiled a major new initiative of the federal government in collaboration with Jewish Federations and Jewish Family Service Agencies to address the social needs of aging, low-income Holocaust survivors in the United States.

The Jewish Federations of North America welcomed Biden's announcement at December's American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's Centennial luncheon in Washington.

The initiative follows years of discussions between the White House, members of Congress, Jewish Federations and Jewish Family and Children's Service agencies to address

the social service needs of Holocaust survivors.

"Today our country took a major step forward toward addressing the needs of many Holocaust survivors," said Michael Siegal, Chair of the Board of Trustees at The Jewish Federations of North America. "We are looking forward to working with the Special Envoy to raise awareness and help ensure that Holocaust survivors receive the support of programs to help them live with dignity and comfort."

JFNA has made the issue of Holocaust survivor care a top priority. It advocated vigorously for the Responding to Urgent Needs of Survivors of the Holocaust (RUSH) Act, which would provide support

for tens of thousands of survivors who need services to age where they live. This is critical for survivors, for whom being moved to a senior facility or institution could prove emotionally traumatic.

Of about 127,000 survivors in the U.S., three-quarters are over the age of 75 and about two-thirds live alone. Many struggle to afford basic needs, such as adequate food and healthcare.

More than half of the survivors who arrived from the former Soviet Union since 1967 fall below 200 percent of the federal poverty line, meaning they earn less than \$21,660 annually. Many survivors live alone and have little or no family support.

Biden announced the White House would take several steps to help aging

survivors, including:

- Appointing a special envoy at the Department of Health and Human Services to act as a liaison for Holocaust survivors and the nonprofit community organizations that serve them. The Special Envoy will support programs that help Holocaust survivors live with comfort and security and help raise awareness of the challenges survivors face;

- Creating a partnership with the AmeriCorps VISTA program to dedicate volunteers to increase the capacity of community organizations to serve impoverished Holocaust survivors.;

- Exploring public-private partnerships to address funding shortfalls, so that community organizations can continue to serve Holocaust survivors.

All Around the Town

Jillian Bluestone, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Eric Bluestone of Reading, PA was recently engaged to Michael Eisner, son of Dr. and Mrs. Steven Eisner of Lancaster. They are planning a



wedding in 2015.

Mazel Tov to **Helene and Henry Singer** as they have become great-grandparents. Reuben Alan Keck was born to Chelsea and Ben Keck in Melbourne, Australia. Chelsea is the daughter of Phil and Julie Singer Scanlan!

Until next time: Shalom!

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

Obituaries

Judge Elizabeth (Lewinski) Ehrlich, 83, of Wyomissing.

In her graduation from Yale Law School she was one of four women in a class of 200 students. From 1960 to 1983 she was partner with her husband, Leon, in the firm Ehrlich and Ehrlich in Reading. She served as a judge of the Berks County Court of Common Pleas from 1983 until 2005 and in positions of leadership in many local organizations.

Judge Ehrlich is survived by her children: Nathaniel Ehrlich and his wife Meghan of Virginia; William Ehrlich and his wife Alina of Emmaus, Steve Ehrlich and his wife Sarah of Sinking Spring and Nancy and her husband Philip Blazar of Massachusetts. Other survivors include seven grandchildren.

Suzanne "Sue" Wolfe, 83, formerly of Reading. Sue was well known for her yearly participation in the Berks County March of Dimes Walk-a-thon, for which she was recognized as the top fundraiser. She is survived by her daughter Lynn Triebel and her husband Harry of Guilford, Conn., and her son Marc Wolfe and his wife Kathi of Reading. Other survivors include her five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.


Grace R. (Lieberman) Lewis, of Reading. Grace is survived by her husband, Meyer L. Lewis, and her children; Andrea Bronson and her husband Jon and Neal Lewis and his wife Claudia. Other survivors include her grandchildren and their spouses, her six great-grandchildren and four nephews.

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What's new at Gratz JCHS

By Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner
Gratz JCHS, Reading Branch

Several special treats greeted our students as they returned to class in January!

First of all, we had a visit from Marley Weiner who taught with us at Reading Gratz last year and was welcomed back so warmly. It was thrilling for me to see how both the students and Marley were excited to see each other again. Thanks to Tammy for a precious picture that we share with you.

We had a brief but entertaining and tasty reminder of the holiday known as Tu BiSh'vat. We began our "snack break" by reviewing the meaning and importance of the the 15th of the Jewish month of Sh'vat, also known as the Jewish New Year of the Trees, celebrating fruit and nut trees in Israel throughout Jewish history, from the Biblical period to modern day Israel.

Then we had a special snack treat. Rabbi Dov brought fruits that represented the different periods in Israel history, kosher blenders and we had "Tu BiSh'vat Smoothies" — with

and without "leben" today occurring in Israel as fermented milk close to Greek yogurt. The students could pick their own ingredients, tasted various recipes, and some even stayed after classes to finish up the fruits and juices!

In addition to the Smoothies and the fruit provided by Federation, Rabbi Dov brought his own gift to the students of "bokser," carob fruit. Known in Hebrew as charuv, it was one of the products of Israel used for centuries as an Israeli product because it could be dried and the pods taken to wherever Jews lived. This is also known as St. John's Bread, and it is used today as a chocolate substitute because of its unique taste. Careful: the seeds are very hard and over the centuries it is believed a seed of carob led to the word "carat" in terms of weight of jewelry.

Gratz Notes

■We are grateful to all of our families who have endured a long series of winter closings — snow, ice, winter vacation and New Year 2014 — and virtually everyone was present Sunday the 12th as we resumed classes. Thanks for the

understanding and the personal effort to insure virtually 100 percent attendance!

■Our Gratz instructors are really part of a family, more than just teachers. Our students over the years really become "our kids" in addition to "your children." We are grateful to you the parents for sharing your children with us, and we appreciate another year of the Reading Federation and JCC sponsoring our regular classes and activity meetings.

■Everyone who might be interested in joining us for the second semester, we have a new class. We are also planning new courses for next year, 2014-2015.

■We changed our course offering from Bible this year for students in 8th and 9th grades to the highly regarded Israel Etgar Program. Not only is the content up to date, very contemporary in preparation and presentation, but our teacher Andrew is committed to Israel in his own life, having studied at Hebrew University.

■In our last Branch Director Letter to the students, parents and interested community members, I ran a contest.

The first winning answer for the prize of a book about Israel was submitted very quickly — by our Federation President, Tammy Mitgang. While she said I could give it to a student, instead Rabbi Dov is honoring the offer — and also awarding a prize to the second promptest answer — from a student! Mazal Tov to both, and we are blessed that Tammy also reads our news!

Are you the parent of a student who is or will be eligible to participate in Gratz JCHS program in Reading?

Are you the parent or a student who is living in the Jewish community in the Reading area who would like to learn more about the area Gratz program?

If so, you may sign up to receive news and photos each week by email along with links to YouTube videos that support our current studies, Jewish celebrations, Israel and Jews around the world

Send a request to bdlerner1@gmail.com to join the mailing list.

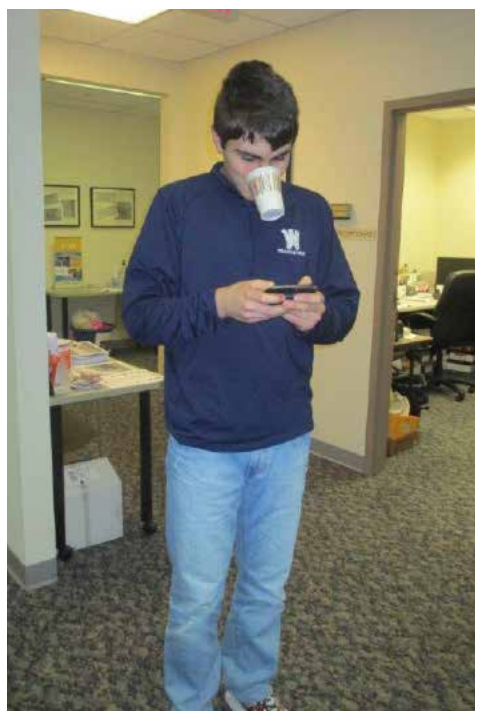
Questions about our program can always be answered personally with a call to Rabbi Dov, 215-572-9175.



Gratz JCHS branch director Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner with former Gratz instructor Marley Weiner, left, and current instructor Andrew Apt.



Fun with fruit as students celebrate Tu BiShevat



Satisfied children enjoy the Israel Etgar program

Tu BiShevat fun with fruit, special smoothies and much more

Congregational News

Let's work to strengthen our connections with Israel

By Rabbi Minna Bromberg
Keshet Zion Synagogue



"In my last column, I told you about the very first meeting of the weekly bet midrash ("house of learning") I attended while I was in Tel Aviv. "You know," Alan told me, before I got on the bus that first Sunday evening, "you might actually meet some 'real Israelis.'"

You see, whenever I'd been to Israel before, I'd always been part of a structured program, and I always wondered whether maybe the Israelis I met were somehow a particular slice of the population that were interested

in meeting Americans. Even when I explained this to an Israeli friend, and told her that I truly felt I had met 'real Israelis' in my bet midrash she asked, "So, were they nice to you?"

I am happy to report to you all that they were very nice to me. They were patient and encouraging with my Hebrew, and sweetly curious about just what it meant to be a "Rabbah" (the emerging Hebrew word for a woman rabbi).

On my last night there, everyone began wishing me well and one older gentleman, named Yigal, slyly asked me where I was going. When I explained that I was returning to the United States, he smiled a twinkly smile and asked, "Oh, for how long?"

I thought maybe I hadn't said "returning" correctly, or in some other

way hadn't made it plain that my VISIT to Israel was over and I was going home. He nodded his head that he understood me perfectly, his smile became even more twinkly and Yigal asked again, "But, for how long?"

Yigal embodied for me the way that Israel has answered our 2,000-year-old longing to come home. No matter how many times I would have explained to him that my home, my congregation, my house, my family were all Stateside, he still came back to his sense that diaspora is a temporary condition.

We read in Psalm 126: "When God brings about the return to Zion, we were like dreamers." Rav Kook (the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of the Land of Israel under the British Mandate) asks why "we were like dreamers" is in the

past tense. Isn't this meant to be a vision of future redemption? He goes on to say that "we were like dreamers" refers not to the "dream come true" aspect of redemption, but to the ways that our dreams of return keep us going during our long period of exile.

It is easy here, in Pennsylvania, in the winter, to experience Israel as impossibly far away. Rav Kook and Yigal both remind me that dreams of our faraway home can in fact be a deep source of inspiration. These dreams themselves can warm our wintry hearts.

When I remember Yigal's twinkly smile I want to commit myself to encouraging all of us to dream of strengthening our connections with the land of Israel and with the people of Israel (by which I mean each and every one of you).

Save The Date

Saturday, May 10

RCOS Supper Club presents

Third Annual Ruth & Irvin Balis Volunteer Appreciation Award

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

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

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND SERVICE TIMES

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Friday Evening Service – Please call for service information
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REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM (610) 375-6034

Friday, Feb. 7, Shabbat service, 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8, Haftarah Study Group, 10 a.m.
Fridays, Feb. 14 and 28, 7:45 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 22: Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.
Friday, Feb. 21, Shabbat service led by third-graders, 6 p.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.

CONGREGATION SHOMREI HABRITH

Healing Service at Keshet Zion

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m.
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One year down

By Anne Seltzer

We recently marked the one-year anniversary of my brother Dave's death.

One year is not a long time, but yet it can be a lifetime. We have experienced a year without his humor, love, and caring. When most people pass away,



other than their family and best friends, no one really thinks about them much after a few months or so. It's just how it is. But the tributes and memorials and scholarships for Dave are still continuing to this day. He was a rare individual. If you know me, you are probably saying "you complained about him and fought with him." Yes, this is true. I definitely did. He wasn't perfect, nor am I. But when the chips were down, we were each other's allies and were always there for each other, whether it was convenient in our lives or not. That is what family is about.

Truthfully I got myself worked up about this for about a week prior to the anniversary of his death. If you know me this will not come as a surprise. However, my wonderful friends pulled through and made sure I survived the day. The two-hour lunch with Barb and Karen really helped me to break up my day and they even got me to laugh. There is nothing like laughing with good friends. Ellice remembered and called to check on me despite having her own issues that day. Of course I talked to Gina and Ada. Jonathan even kept texting me to ask if I was OK. That was a total switch. The Facebook messages from friends were lovely, and so were the texts and phone calls. One friend even called this morning to check on me.

So what have I learned this year? One thing is that I can sustain unbearable loss once again and live to tell about it, plus laugh and live my life. Even when

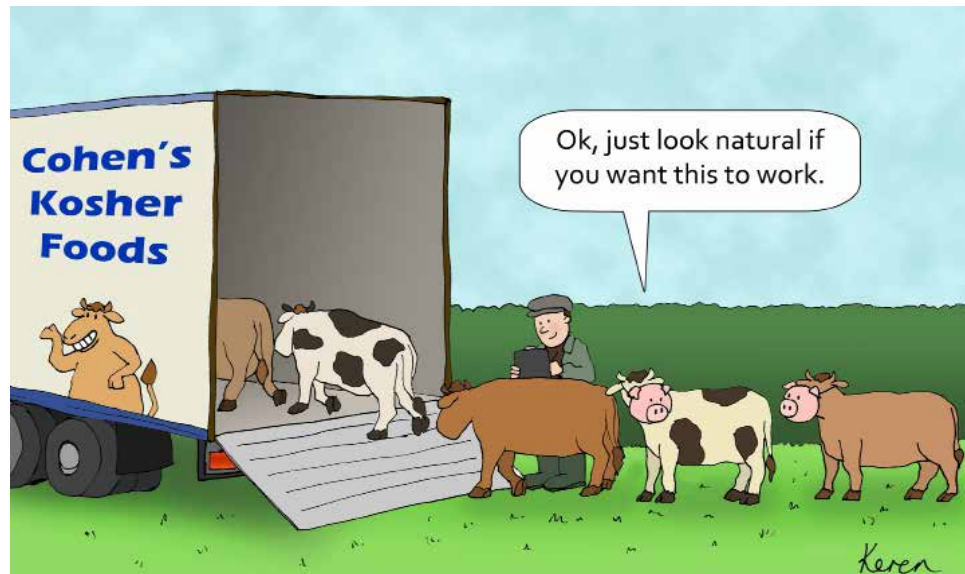
I feel guilty doing so. I've learned once again that we don't have any guarantee for tomorrow. It's not a good idea to put stuff off until we "get older". I've learned who really cares about me and will be there to listen and put up with my bad mood, whether it is one day or one year later. I've learned to once in a while keep my mouth shut and not give an opinion on something that is really none of my business. That one is hard.

To that end, I want to thank all my wonderful friends who have hung in there with me and made the journey a little easier. I do not think I would have survived without all of you. Each of you plays a special role in my life and I love all of you. Family kind of has to put up with you, but friends choose to put up with you. So if it wasn't January, and if everyone was not on a diet, I would bake something really special to thank you, but instead I'll make this out of my new vegan cookbook "Isa Does It". They are semi-good for you.

Kitchen Sink Chocolate Cookies

¾ c. granulated sugar
 ½ tsp. baking powder
 ¼ c. canola oil ½ tsp. salt
 1 T. ground flaxseed 1 c. rolled oats
 1/3 c. unsweetened applesauce
 ½ c. semi-sweet chocolate chips
 1 tsp. vanilla extract ½ c. raisins
 ¾ c. all purpose flour
 ½ c. dry-roasted peanuts

1/3 c. unsweetened cocoa powder
 In a large bowl beat together sugar, oil, flaxseed, and applesauce for about 2 minutes. Mix in vanilla. Sift in flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt and mix well. Fold in oats, chips, raisins and peanuts and mix well. Drop heaping tablespoons onto parchment-lined baking sheets about 2" apart. Pat tops down with your fingers a little. Bake at 350° for about 10-12 minutes until bottoms appear a few shades darker. Don't overbake. Let cool on sheets for 5 minutes then transfer to a cooling rack. Enjoy!



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A weeklong exploration of literature and culture for **high school students** will be held **Aug. 3-10**.

Great Jewish Books Summer Program brings together rising high school juniors and seniors to read, discuss, argue about, and fall in love with powerful and enduring works of modern Jewish literature.

Participants study with professors, meet prominent contemporary authors, and connect with other teens from across the country.

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Netanyahu: Israel is what's right with the Middle East

Compiled by Federation staff

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu offered a stirring defense of the Jewish state's role in the region during a January speech.

Appearing before the Davos World Economic Forum, he argued that investing in the Israeli economy is a way to facilitate peace in the region, the *Jerusalem Post* reported.

The prime minister stated that "Israel is not what's wrong in the Middle East, it is what's right with the Middle East," the *Post* reported on its website, www.jpost.com.

His talk focused on the strength of Israel as a hub for innovation, research and development. The prime minister argued that the advancement of the Israeli economy would help Israel's Arab neighbors, specifically the Palestinians.

The *Post* reported that during a question and answer session following the speech, Netanyahu called on Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to

embrace the opportunity for peace.

"I'm ready for peace," he said. "I'm ready for a real, secure, genuine, peace, and I hope President Abbas is ready too."

He stated that the Middle East was undergoing a process of change, by which many Arab states shared similar concerns to Israel, according to the *Post*.

"Central Arab governments in the Middle East are concerned with the arming of Iran with nuclear weapons and the spread of the Islamic brotherhood. Those governments see Israel as a partner in holding back those threats," he stated.

He used his remarks to praise his country's economic prowess, which he credited to entrepreneurship as well as sound economic policies.

"Israel is often called the 'start-up nation,' but I call it the 'innovation nation,'" Netanyahu said.

The premier touted an economic policy of cutting taxes and removing barriers to competition so the private

Did you know?

The travel website Waze, an Israeli startup now owned by Google, was named one of the top 10 travel apps by *USA Today*. The site claims it's the world's largest community-based traffic and navigation app. Users can connect with other drivers in the area and share real-time traffic information, keeping one another fully informed well in advance of other methods of discovery. This app is great for those on road trips or other car-bound travelers and even calculates the cheapest gas prices in proximity. Learn more at www.waze.com

sector could compete."

Netanyahu said that in the decade since he became finance minister during the administration of Ariel Sharon, Israel managed to tackle its debt problems while reducing inflation and improving the employment rate.

The premier said Israel's small size and the Jewish culture of asking questions has contributed to the country's success economically.

"From the Talmud to Einstein, Jewish people were always asking questions," the *Post* quoted the prime minister as saying: "The questioning mind is something in our culture and adds very

much to our capacities. We're very small, everything is close by, and everyone competes and collaborates with each other.

"This is an invitation to innovation, it's open for business, it's open for your business, please come join us."

The *Post* reported that Netanyahu's appearance at Davos came hours after that of Iranian president Hassan Rouhani.

Immediately following Rouhani's speech, Netanyahu released a statement warning the world not to be deceived by the Iranian leader's pronouncements of peaceful intentions.

An Israeli perspective on current events in the Middle East

Israel's Mid-Atlantic consulate in Philadelphia shared the following information reflecting the government's view on major issues this winter:

US-ISRAEL

As reflected in the recent meetings between Israeli leaders, and Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State John Kerry, Israel and the US share common goals and joint interests: regional stability, the war on terror, and security and peace.

PALESTINIANS

Israel is committed to peace, and to the process led by Secretary Kerry. The Israeli government and public view a resolution of the conflict as a vital interest. ending the conflict with an end to all claims will serve the security and the future of the state of Israel.

We are prepared for a compromise. However, the Palestinian leadership has a rigid, unrealistic concept of a future peace agreement. The peace they envision does not recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state. The peace they see includes the disintegration of Israel as a Jewish state through the claim of return. The agreement that they seek is not compromising. The Palestinian leadership at the moment prepares its people for future confrontation if negotiations will fail, and even if they will succeed. In order to save the peace process and allow both sides to enjoy the benefits of peace, public and international pressure must be placed on the Palestinians to change course.

From an Israeli perspective, the key for success will be security arrangements that will allow us to defend Israelis in Israel, and peace itself.

The ongoing missile rocket attacks from Gaza, including five rockets that were intercepted by Iron Dome in mid-January, serve as a reminder of the security challenges we face. We cannot ignore the fact that there is a strong element among the Palestinian people that is committed to the destruction of Israel, that is operating as part of a wider, radical coalition led by Iran.

IRAN

The Iranian regime remains unchanged despite its attempts to rebrand its image as one of moderacy and amiability. Iran's recent public statements and actions showcases the true, brutal nature of the regime: Iran's Foreign Minister laid a wreath on the tomb of Hezbollah's terrorist mastermind, a man with the blood of hundreds of innocents on his hands, its continued



support of the murderous Assad regime, and its unwavering quest for nuclear capability. Iran perceives the interim Geneva agreement as a step forward in this quest, allowing them the ability to maintain and expand its military nuclear program.

We are witnessing a psychological shift following the interim Geneva Agreement: the pressure has been lessened inside Iran, and the ayatollah feels Iran has more time and less of an urgency for concessions. The isolation of Iran is eroding with the exchange of invitations between Iranian and foreign leaders (Germany, Italy and Turkey, among others). International players are similarly exploring renewed ties with Iran through future business ventures.

Iran is fully focused on achieving military nuclear capability. At this critical time, the international community must be equally focused and vigilant to rollback and dismantling of Iran's dual track enrichment capacity and its weapons program, subsequently preventing Iran's ability to build a nuclear weapon at will. Existing sanctions should be strictly enforced while preparing and designing additional measures should the need arise.

Failure to prevent Iran from becoming

a threshold state will cause major ramifications to the global economy, instigate a nuclear arms race in an already volatile Middle East, and will place international peace and security in peril.

SYRIA

Since the beginning of the civil war, more than 130,000 people have been killed, and many more have been maimed and injured. Millions have become refugees, ongoing massacres by air attacks on cities and communities bring with them horrific, shocking images. Bashar Al Assad has lost his legitimacy as the leader of Syria. We support the effort to provide relief to the Syrian people who are suffering as a result of the bloody civil war and are proud of our doctors who are lending their expertise to treat victims in Israeli hospitals. We support the US and the international community's efforts to bring an end to these atrocities.

Assad's cache of game-changing weapons, including ballistic and surface-to-air missiles, poses an extraordinary threat to regional security and must not get into the hands of Hezbollah or other terror organizations. Israel is following the international efforts to diffuse Syria from its chemical arsenal. Israel is not a

party to the civil war in Syria but we will do whatever is necessary to defend our people and our borders.

HEZBOLLAH

Iranian-proxy Hezbollah is taking an active role in the ongoing Syrian civil war. Hezbollah is providing troops, training and arms to Assad's brutal regime. Involvement of Hezbollah in world terrorism as well its terrorist activities are increasing the tension and destabilization in Lebanon itself. Hezbollah, the terror organization, hides more than 100,000 rockets targeted at Israeli civilians under civilian infrastructure. The Hezbollah continues to threaten civilians in Israel and abroad and continues to succeed in its efforts to acquire game changing weapons from Syria and Iran.

EGYPT

We are closely monitoring the ongoing events in Egypt. We hope that Egypt will be capable of stabilizing its economy and its political system. Maintaining the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt is of the highest importance and mutually beneficial to both peoples. We appreciate the efforts taken by the Egyptian security forces to secure the Israeli-Egyptian border. The growing Jihadist and terrorist elements in Sinai are a source of concern.

Jewish Family Service

**United
Way**



Conference offers food for thought

By Sari Incledon

My family spent a delicious and thought provoking few days over New Years in the Connecticut Berkshires attending the Hazon food conference. Hazon is a nonprofit organization that encourages Jews to think more about food choices. Hazon (the word means vision) strives to create healthier, richer and more sustainable Jewish communities through a variety of programs.

The annual food conference brought together chefs, educators, rabbis and foodies to learn about social justice, food ethics and Jewish values. We feasted on meals that featured organic and local produce, much of it grown on the Isabella Friedman campus (where the conference was held). The chefs tried to stay away from white sugar and white flour and highlighted the best of the late autumn harvest in the Northeast



— pumpkin bread, root vegetable stews and frost-sweetened greens. Sessions were varied. Some were hands on. John learned about making mozzarella cheese, beer, bread, sausage (kosher of course) and how to can. I learned about what leaders in other communities are doing to combat economic and social inequality. We both especially enjoyed meeting and attending sessions given by noted cookbook authors Joan Nathan (Eggplant around the World and Heirloom recipes) and Gil Marks (Ethiopian Cooking, Food from Israel, Jewish Food in the U.S.) New Year's Eve was a special treat, listening to a nine piece jazz band from Brooklyn, Zion 80, and saying to goodbye to all the interesting people we met. The conference was attended by many multi-generational families and babysitting and camp programs for children were available.

The food conference is only one of many Hazon programs. Adamah is an organic farming fellowship for Jews in their 20's to early 30's, learning to produce food, transform identities and change the world. Teva is designed for

5th and 6th grade students, integrating outdoor environmental education with Jewish concepts and values. The Hazon Community Supported Agriculture Program connects communities to a local farm, providing seasonal produce to members at 68 sites nationwide. These are just a few of the numerous programs Hazon sponsors.

At the 2008 Hazon Food Conference a set of 7 year goals were drafted. By 2015 Hazon hopes to have:

- An American Jewish community that is measurably healthier and more sustainable.
- An American Jewish community that is demonstrably playing a role in making the world healthier and more sustainable for all.
- An American Jewish community in which Jewish life has been strengthened and renewed by the work of the Jewish food movement.

Hazon program offices are in New York, the San Francisco Bay area, Colorado, Philadelphia and San Diego. Last month the beautiful Isabella Friedman Jewish Retreat Center in the Connecticut

Berkshires and Hazon merged into one organization, so now both organizations will join together to strengthen each other programs. The goal of both organizations is to offer transformative experiences, drawing on Jewish values, exposing people to new ideas and strengthening our institutions.

Last October Hazon Philadelphia offered an all-day food festival, exploring the dynamic interplay of food sustainability, Jewish traditions and contemporary life. Many DIY workshops were held and this program will probably become an annual event. Families might be interested in the Adamah Farm Vacation that will be held this year on July 21–25 at Isabella Friedman. This is an affordable, family friendly and eco-conscious vacation. You can relax in a beautiful setting, participate in an array of farm activities and enjoy three delicious kosher farm-to-table meals each day. Activities are appropriate for children ages 5 and up.

If you would like to learn more about Hazon's programs and the varied retreats held at Isabella Friedman visit their websites. There's a great deal to digest.

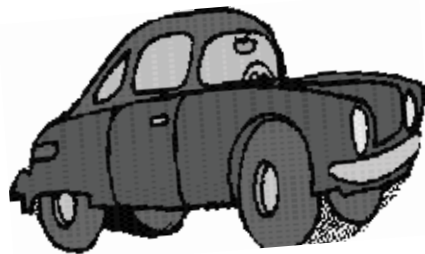
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Jewish Family Service

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Get well/speedy recovery:
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Honey Youngerman – Berna Sherman

In memory of:
Rhoda Rosenberg – Honey and Sy Youngerman
Clara Seymour – Al and Betsy Katz
Elaine Krause's son Monte – Edith Mendelsohn
Grace Lewis – Ruth Isenberg, Berna Sherman

Federation Jewish Community Campaign

In honor of:
Birth of Don and Ellen Abramson's granddaughter – Debbie Goodman and John Moyer

Honorials and Memorials

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Clara Seymour – Judy Copeland, Barbara Arner, Jacquelyn and Lawrence Schwartz, Alan and Margie Leisawitz, Sue and Herb Wachs, Carol and Bernie Gerber, Dona Gregonis, Eric and Deborah Zelnick, Peter and Marcia Kurtz, Judy and Bob Pollack, Joe and Peggy Leoni
Leon Ehrlich – Carol and Bernie Gerber, Joan Darlington-Smith
Susan D'Angelo's mother – Lisa and Ellis Block
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Jerome Smith – Joan Darlington-Smith
Grace Lewis – Hilde Gernsheimer

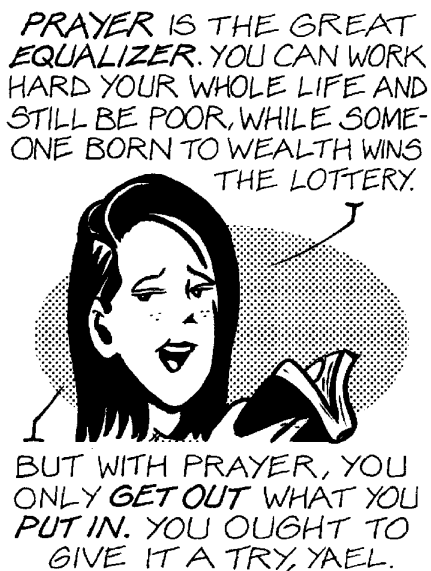
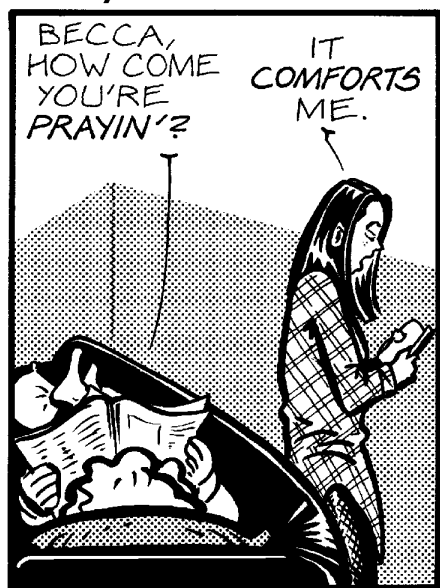
Food Bank

In memory of:
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EVERYTHING'S RELATIVE
by Jordan B. Gorfinkel • www.jewishcartoon.com



Israeli artist has eye for unusual artwork

Israel21c.org

The eye has long been a recurring motif in art, from Edvard Munch, Rene Magritte and Leonardo da Vinci's famous paintings featuring the eye to the popular eye-portraits of late 18th century Great Britain.

Today, eye art has a totally new meaning thanks to an Israeli makeup artist from Kfar Hayarak, just outside Tel Aviv.

Of course, Tal Peleg had no idea that her miniature drawings would trigger a new worldwide movement that is gaining momentum.

She started using her eyes as a canvas on a whim nearly three years ago, and launched a blog on which to upload her amazing designs. Feedback was positive, so she also opened a Facebook page — but only in Hebrew because, as she says, "I had no idea my art would go viral."

Boy, was she ever off the mark. Type "eye art" into any search engine and Peleg's name will pop up near the top.

Her portfolio is extraordinary: intricate pictures from fairy tales, great novels, television shows and movies including Cinderella, Snow White, The Princess and the Frog, Frozen and even Breaking



Bad — all painted with makeup.

It was American singer Katy Perry who set Peleg on the path to become the online superstar of modern eye art.

"The viral craze started in August 2013 after Katy Perry put my cat-with-a-ball-of-yarn drawing on her Twitter feed," Peleg tells ISRAEL21c. "I had no idea it would get to these kinds of levels."

The domino effect from that tweet was immediate. International fashion and style magazine editors still contact Peleg daily about her masterful eye works.

"We've pretty much run out of superlatives for Tal's designs," Glamour magazine states at the end of an 18-photo spread dedicated to Peleg's "crazy artistic and super clever" designs.

She has been dubbed a pioneer of the latest eye art discipline. Just don't compare it to the nail art trend.

"I don't see it as a trend. It's not practical, it's not a fashion like skinny jeans is a trend. This is art," Peleg

said. "I hope it's something that will continue to evolve and open up to a wider audience."

The 28-year-old with a super steady hand has a degree in visual communications from the Minshar Art School and a diploma from the Yarin Shahaf Professional Make-Up School, both in Tel Aviv.

Her palette is made up of eyeliners and eye shadows and her brushes are usually the finest from art stores

"One of the reactions I sometimes get is, 'What's it good for?' I see this as a stupid question. It's like asking 'Why do art?' It's not for wearing. It's art. Eye art," she says.

"The eye is ... said to be the window to the soul," she says. "I don't just draw on top of the eye. I use the shape of the eye. That's part of the challenge."

Peleg says an idea can pop into her head at any time and that she'll usually sketch something on paper before setting to work on her eyes.

"There's no secret behind what I do," she said. "I've drawn my whole life. I have always liked to draw in miniature. So, because I love makeup and I love drawing, I just decided to draw in miniature above my eye."

Her sushi food art was hugely successful on Instagram; while her Anne Frank drawing raised eyebrows. The famous Katy Perry cat took her just over an hour, she says, and the most recent Hansel & Gretel house took nearly four hours because of its "intricacies and fine details."

The oldest of four, Peleg says her sisters — especially the two still in high school — keep her up to date on her social media status. "My sisters follow how many followers I have. They're very excited and their friends at school also help count," says the married Peleg, who has a 25,000-strong Facebook community and a 27,000-plus Instagram following so far.

She makes a living as a professional makeup artist and designer and dedicates just one day a week to her eye art.

Despite the huge interest online, Peleg says she doesn't have a sponsor and funds her eye art out of pocket.

She also runs makeup workshops.

"I give makeup tutorials for conventional makeup," she says. "I'm not sure how to teach the eye art technique. You need talent in illustration and it's not something I can teach in a few hours. Maybe if I find a way to teach it I will."

IT'S YOUR TURN!



In every family, each generation takes steps to insure a bright future for the next generation. Members of previous generations of the Jewish family of Berks County established estate gifts to insure that their descendants would enjoy the benefits of a vibrant Jewish Federation. And they do!

The present Federation offers a host of programs that enrich the lives of today's Jews in Berks County. Now it's time for you to help insure that future generations continue to benefit from the Federation's programs.

It's your turn to establish an estate gift for the Federation. Whether it's a beneficiary designation, a bequest, a trust or some other arrangement – you can provide for the Federation's programs that will benefit your descendants!

**Contact Paul Landry at the Federation to find out how!
610-921-0624 / paul@jfreading.org / 1100 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyomissing, PA 19610**