



SHALOM



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Jewish Community Campaign \$566,700

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"(Shabbat is) the one day to slow down, smell the roses, hug someone important, play with your kids, listen to them, have a long conversation or argument" — and texting or any other kind of social media is completely "antithetical."

-Jon Meved, founder & CEO of OurCrowd and Vringo

Federation News

Nothing is ever easy!

By Paul L. Landry

I've just returned from two days of advanced training in our new computer software. The training was held in Austin, Texas. It was my first flight in about eight years, and I was struck by just how much more difficult it is to fly today than it was before 9/11. The security coupled with the airlines' desire to squeeze as many of us onto



a plane as is physically possible made it a difficult experience.

The training was very worthwhile, though, and it got me to thinking that while most things in life are hard, many are still worth doing. That we all have to decide for ourselves what those things are and commit to doing them!

As 2014 begins, we are putting to bed the 2013 Jewish Community Campaign. The 2014 Campaign began earlier with the Leadership Gifts Dinner and will continue the rest of the year,

with a general mailing coming soon. But before we ask you for your commitment for 2014, I am asking you to think about that commitment.

Think about the many things the Federation and JCC do with your dollars – check out page 18 for a listing. I can't know which of those programs has particular meaning for you, but I hope you'll agree with me that maintaining them provides us with a stronger, more vibrant, Jewish community here in Berks County. And

our support of Meir Panim, a feeding program for the disadvantaged in Israel, and Yemin Orde, a school for at-risk youth in Israel, and support for the JDC and the Israel Agency through our affiliation with the Jewish Federation of North America, help provide a better life for Jews throughout the world.

Think about this, and consider increasing your gift to the Campaign this year. I know increasing is hard — but it's worth doing!

Celebrating art at the JCC



Ed Kershner, Wendy Kershner and Carolyn and Jerry Holleran enjoying the opening reception of Wendy Kershner's "Organic Growth: Prints & Collages," which runs through Jan. 31 at the JCC gallery.

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From the President's Desk

The man who preferred caves

By Tammy K. Mitgang

President

At times, life can suck the breath out of you. It may take years, but when it leaves you gasping, it is time to step back and regroup. For me, the timing of my recent trip to Israel provided me with a



much-needed opportunity to catch my breath and consider my life at 55.

A trip to Petra had long been on my "bucket list," and although I have been fortunate to travel regularly to Israel over the past five years, my schedule had simply been too tight to carve out the time needed to travel south and cross into Jordan. So when a belated gift from my late mother arrived, it took little encouragement from my husband to extend my upcoming visit. With the click of a seat belt and a quiet sigh, I settled in for a much needed trip home.

Week One was busy, filled mainly with site visits to community projects such as Yemin Orde and Meir Panim and new opportunities such as Arad Young Adult Center, Ben Gurion University and Arava Institute. In the evenings I enjoyed dinner with community expats, Rabbi Minna Bromberg, living in Tel Aviv, and our two "Rebeccas" – Maidansky & Robinson, teaching fellows in Ramla and Beer Sheva. All were well and busy embracing every moment of their time in the Promised Land.

Armed with a map and at times Google and Waze, I walked whenever possible, inhaling the sites and sounds of the shuk before Shabbat, exploring the streets of Florentin and Jaffa and talking with locals about politics, life in the U.S. and everyday challenges facing Israelis at the counter of Miznon. When I needed a car, my new friend, Sha'har, filled the miles with lesser-known facts and side excursions that took me off the beaten path and into more complex neighborhoods and cities such as Jisr az-Zarqa and Rahat.

My time in Jerusalem was condensed into a few packed days at the General Assembly (GA) overflowing with meetings, breakout sessions and plenary events along with the "Who's Who" in Israel from Benjamin Netanyahu and Shimon Peres to entrepreneurs such as Daniel Birnbaum of Sodastream and OurCrowd's Jon Medved. When the

GA is held in Jerusalem, it is possible to chat personally with one or more members of the Knesset and Natan Sharansky and enjoy dinner with Steve Linde, editor-in-chief of *The Jerusalem Post* later that same day. And, it was in Jerusalem that I closed my briefcase and joined my new friends from New Orleans and Alabama to head south on a mission that would end in Petra.

Petra

The excitement was building as we boarded our bus to cross over into Jordan but it wasn't until I walked through the Wadi Araba Crossing gate into Aqaba that I realized my journey to Petra was just a few short hours away.

Declared a World Heritage Site in 1985, Petra is a stunning architectural site accessed through a shaft or Siq where the sandstone rock had split and a hidden valley formed. The chasm reveals what some have called a fairy tale city and the most famous facade in Petra, the Khazneh, (Arabic for "treasury"). Petra was what I had been waiting to experience firsthand, but it was the Bedouin of the landscape that I found to be most memorable.

Don't get me wrong, the ruins were incredible — regal buildings carved into the sheer, pink rock face. But I hadn't considered the true wonder of the landscape that ultimately distracted me from the towering ruins — the Bedouin. Although Bedouin tribes reside throughout the Middle East and are familiar figures in Israel, I found myself mesmerized with the Bedul, one of the traditional tribes that inhabit the Petra Basin. Perched on rock cliffs, managing the horses and cart traffic and staffing the souvenir shops, the Bedouin of Petra reminded me that people are the landscape. Traversing the cliffs like ibex and greeting visitors with warm smiles, it was clear to me that the Bedul of Petra were simply working from home.

The Bedul live in black tents of woven goat hair, masonry structures built into the rockshafts or inhabit Nabataean tombs and caves in and around the site. Although granted the right to residence and use of Petra in 1923, the Jordanian government later relocated the Bedul to Umm Siehoun, a village designed to provide the Bedouin access to education and health care.

Over the past decade, many of the Bedul have returned to Petra only to find themselves in the middle of a battle for economic development of

the area and heritage preservation. Regardless of the winner, the Bedul are finding it increasing difficult to have access to their pastureland and the mountains they call home. Even today, they primarily make their living from goat herding and rainfall farming with much of the land tilled with ards and harvested by hand. Roughly 1,000 indigenous Bedul live in and around Petra.

It was on my way out of the valley that I met a young Bedul horseman, Hasan*. He was clearly in charge of a group of horses and the guides who would either walk or ride beside the tourists as they exited the Siq. Bedouin typically are welcoming people, and the Bedul and Liyathnah Bedouin providing most of the labor for the tourist industry in Petra understand their jobs well. They are charismatic and patient, accommodating the throngs of tourists who arrive in all shapes and sizes. The transporters are charged with finding the best way to get you up on a horse or in a cart (a more expensive option) for a ride back to the main road where lines of shops and concession stands await the tourists.

Hasan was my transporter. He gathered the reins and began to lead my horse out of the valley. He was charming. Lean, handsome and confident, his skin was darkened from the sun and his kohl lined eyes were bright and alive. He wore a keffiyeh wrapped around his head to protect him from the desert sun, sand and wind and the loose-fitting robes that absorb the heat of the sun while allowing the cool breezes to circulate. His English was perfect, his smile broad. And, he wanted to talk — practice.

When I asked Hasan if he attended school in Petra, his eyes lit up. He proudly told me that he had never attended school but learned his flawless English by listening to and observing the tourists. He and his family were horsemen who provided horses at the site for many years, a fact he shared with pride. When I commented on the quality of the horses, he grinned from ear to ear. Bedouin are known for their care of their livestock — essential to their livelihood and will open their tent to a sick animal or their livestock more generally on cold desert nights. Serving the tourists is a coveted job in an area where jobs are scarce, so the quality of the horses offered to tourists ensures job security. "Of course, of course," he said. "We bring only our

best."

While walking along the dusty road, we talked about his life in the valley. As a Bedouin, he does not possess the papers that would permit him to venture outside of the immediate area, relegating him and his friends to living in Petra's shadow. When I suggested a visit to Amman, he was adamant that he and his friends would not fit in to the neighborhoods of Jordan's capital, even if they were to find some way to get there. He cited his appearance ("the way we look") and dress as foreign to the more modern life in Amman. He seemed resigned to the fact that he would live and die in Petra.

"I prefer to sleep in the caves," Hasan shared. Although he lived in a house (a fact he wanted me to know), he passionately told me how happy and comfortable he was sleeping in the caves. It was obvious that the sandstone cliffs of Petra were his true home.

He spent his spare time caring for the horses and pointed out a building in the distance where a medical technician cared for sick or injured horses. He liked to spend time there, learning how to care for his animals when natural Bedouin medicine failed to cure. And, he was teaching himself to read — "TA-ME", he said, lifting the nametag hanging around my neck. His efforts reminded me just how much I take for granted and how fortunate I was to have ready access to education and opportunity.

We chatted a bit more, and when he clarified a question, I responded, "Gotcha." "What is 'gotcha'?" Hasan asked. He repeated it several times after I explained its meaning, and he was pleased with himself when he was able to correctly use the slang after several practice exchanges. Walking toward the bus, I turned to wave goodbye, but he was gone.

As ongoing modernization threatens to change forever the lives of the Bedouin in the Middle East and indigenous people around the world, I can only hope that the 'man who preferred caves' will be able to continue to find restful nights in the comfort of the cave homes of Petra.

For more on my recent trip to Israel and Petra, Jordan, see pages 5, 6 and 7 of this edition of *Shalom*.

*The name, Hasan, is a fictitious name used for the purposes of this column.

SHALOM

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Chanukah 5774

Event kindles warmth for entire community



More than 80 people gathered at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom for a community menorah lighting, and many brought their own menorahs. Adults and children enjoyed the latkes and sufganiyot (jelly donuts). The children decorated menorahs, made candles and created Chanukah sand art pictures.

A special thank you to BBYO advisers Janine Ure and Mindy McIntosh and all the BBYO'ers who helped make the event so special. Thank you to the community for generous donations and contributions that benefit Jewish Family Service Food Pantry at Keshet Zion. Thanks to Keshet Zion Synagogue for its generous contribution of Chanukah children's gifts, to Janine Ure for supplying drinks and to Boscov's A la Carte catering for supporting the event.

This community event was funded by Chabad Lubavitch of Berks County, Keshet Zion Synagogue, Jewish Federation of Reading, Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and the Rubin Family Educational Fund of JFR.

Menorah lighting at the mall



At left, Rabbi Yosef Lipsker, Chabad Lubavitch of Berks County, leads menorah lighting at the Berkshire Mall. From left are Howard Hafetz, Victor Hammel, Meir Mazuz, Betsy Katz and Al Katz, chairman of the Jewish Federation of Reading. At right, Ari Lipsker joins with the Baal Shem Tov Band during a Chanukah Family Sing-a-long. Adding to the festivities were students from the Rabbinical College of America (foreground). The event was sponsored by Chabad Lubavitch of Berks County & Boscov's Department Stores. Latkes and sufganiyot were served.

Home away from home



Celebrating at the library



PJ Library Chanukah book reading at Spring Township Library. Volunteer Chery Sylvernale read "Hanukkah!" by Roni Schotter. After story time the children played the dreidel game and colored dreidels.

Twenty-six students from Kutztown University with their Hillel adviser Dr. Avidan Milvesky and students from Albright College with Drs. Diane Conrad and John Inledon gathered at the JCC to celebrate Chanukah with a kosher meal featuring chicken and latkes. They sang songs, played dreidel and most of all had FUN! After the event Dr. Milevsky sent a note to the Federation extending thanks from all those involved for a marvelous evening.

When in Israel . . .

Every five years, Jewish Federations of North America holds its General Assembly in Jerusalem. While in Israel for the event, Federation President Tammy Mitgang took a few personal days to travel along with Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans. Special thanks to Michael Weil, Executive Director and Sherri Tarr, Development Director for adopting Tammy on their journey south.

Wonders of nature



View overlooking the Ramon Crater; the largest of three Negev craters. Formed by water (geomorphologic evolution) that eroded and deepened the crater, the rock layers at the bottom of Ramon Crater are 200 million years old. The crater is 40 kilometers long and 2-10 kilometers wide. The settlement of Mitzpe Ramon on the northern wall of the crater is the only community in the area.



The Nubian ibex is a desert-dwelling goat found in the mountain areas throughout the Middle East. The ibex pictured are relaxing on the rocks overlooking Isrotel Beresheet Hotel in Mitzpe Ramon and the Ramon Nature Reserve.

Securing the border



With Egypt just a 'stone's throw' away (tower topped mountain in background), the group had a better understanding of the importance of the work of the soldiers stationed along the 104 mile-long desert border to ensure Israel's security. The border is a frequent target for the flow of illegal infiltrators and the smuggling of drugs and weapons. For the past two years, Israel has been working to complete a fence along its border with Egypt, a \$400 million project with the bulk of the work completed earlier this year.



The group listened during a security briefing focusing on Israel's border with Egypt at the Yotam Outpost. The panel included members of the IDF Combat Observation unit ("watchers") and Givati Brigade Special Forces 'Rimon' warrior unit stationed along the border between Egypt and Israel. Most 'watchers' are women, recognized for their abilities to observe effectively for longer periods of time, exceptional observation skills and 'intuition'.

When in Israel . . .

Petra

Petra is a World Heritage Site located in Jordan. It is known as the “Rose City” and was carved out of the sandstone by the Nabataeans, who lived in southern Jordan, Canaan and the northern part of Arabia. It is regarded as one of the world’s more famous archaeological sites, where Eastern traditions are combined with Hellenistic architecture. The city is located in the mountains on the east side of Arabah, the valley that runs from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. Petra is accessed through the Siq (“shaft”), a natural geological feature that was formed when there was a deep split in the sandstone rocks.



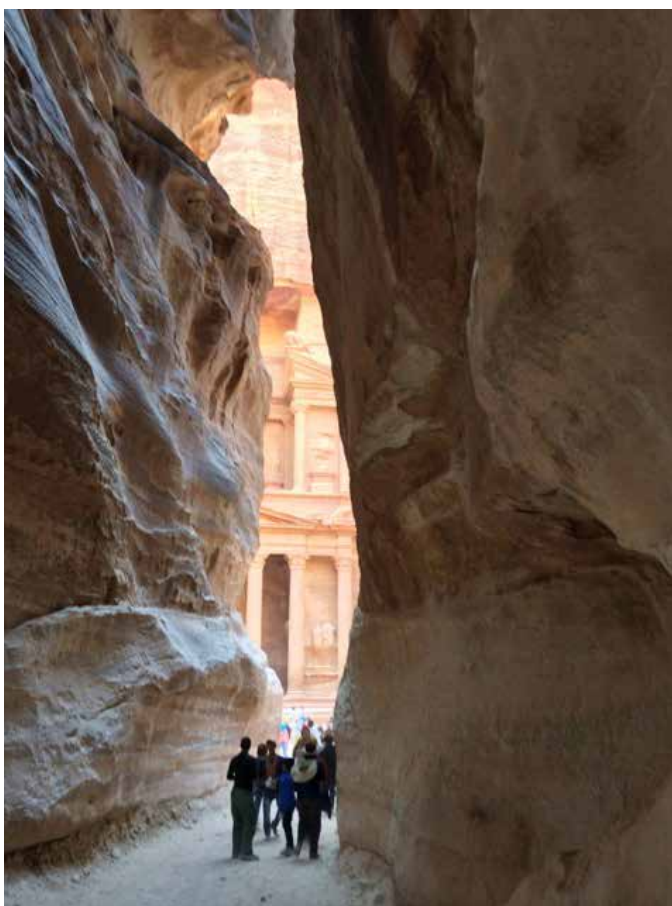
To enter Petra, visitors go down the dusty trail along Wadi Musa (The Valley of Moses). Along the way, you see Nabatean tombs and caves. Petra means “rock” in Greek and Latin and is its modern name. It was most likely called Rekem, a site mentioned in the Dead Sea scrolls.



Spelling aside, the sandwich board sign at a snack shop near Petra builds on the celebrity status of the site made most famous to movie-goers thanks to the Steven Spielberg film “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.”



The panoramic view of the Treasury provides some perspective to the size and scope of the ruins. The building was originally believed to be where the Nabataeans stored treasure. In reality, El Khazneh was most likely a tomb or temple. It was built between 100 BC and 200 AD and soars about 40 meters from the desert floor.



Going through the Siq, visitors have a better understanding of how the Nabataeans survived the harsh environment. They built a dam to divert the flow of water from a nearby stream and used it to create an oasis in Petra. The water management also prevented flooding. The Siq is roughly one kilometer in length and is accessed by foot, horseback or cart. Our first glimpse El Khazneh (Arabic for “Treasury”), Petra’s most famous building.



Horse-drawn carts speed through the narrow passages that cut through the Siq adding to the foot and horse traffic at the popular tourist destination.



The tombs and chambers surrounding Al Khazneh extend to the foot of the mountain called en-Nejr; where a 8,000 seat amphitheater is located.

When in Israel . . .

Eilat



Eilat is reminiscent of Miami with its sleek, modern hotels and beautiful beaches. The city's beaches, coral reef, nightlife and desert landscapes make it a popular destination for domestic and international tourists.



Located on the Gulf of Aqaba on the northern tip of the Red Sea is Israel's southernmost city, Eilat. This is the view approaching the port and popular resort from a sailboat. The large dockside building that boasts an Israeli flag is rumored to have been painted to distinguish the beach area from nearby Egypt.

A fond farewell



Night falls over Wadi Rum just outside of Aqaba, Jordan. Tomorrow, the group returns to Tel Aviv for their flights back to the the US - New Orleans, Alabama and Philadelphia. Amazing adventures, new friendships and a commitment to once again return to their homeland, Yisrael.

Community News



Washington trip opens teen's eyes

By Jojo Ure

Recently I had the honor of being chosen to attend the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's Schusterman High School Summit in Washington along with 400 other Jewish teens from youth groups and Jewish day schools.

For two and a half days we began to be trained and master the skills a good AIPAC advocate has in order to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Through a series of lectures and seminars from various different professional speakers and AIPAC activists we were informed on current Israeli affairs in the Middle East with other countries and within the country itself.

From there we were taught how to appropriately and successfully contact and form a relationship with our member of Congress, and then we could begin to inform each congressman on Israeli

affairs.

College AIPAC activists spoke to us about how they are active in AIPAC on their campus and how we could begin to become active in our communities now.

On our final day in D.C., the teen delegates were split into groups by location of residence and sent to Capitol Hill to lobby his or her member of Congress.

I met with one of Rep. Pat Meehan's staff members to discuss the U.S.-Israeli relationship. To our benefit Meehan and his staff already supported a strong U.S.-Israeli relationship.

Going to AIPAC's Schusterman High School Teen Summit definitely opened my eyes to the importance of a strong, unified relationship between the U.S. and Israel.

It was an experience I'll never forget, and I want to thank the Federation for supporting me on this trip.

Obituaries

Roberta (Gordon) Dunitz, 82, of West Palm Beach Fla. Her lifelong love of art inspired her to continue her education at Columbia University and The Barnes Foundation. She was a member of the board of the Reading Hospital and Medical Center and was president of the Michael Dunitz Crisis Foundation. She is survived by her husband Merle Wolfson of Florida and her son Jay Dunitz of California. Other survivors include her grandchildren Mikaela & Cody Dunitz.

Leon Ehrlich, 93, of Wyomissing. Leon was a graduate of Reading High School, after graduation he was awarded a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania and he enrolled in law school. He served in the Army, and after the war he resumed his studies and was admitted to the Berks County Bar. Leon is survived by his wife, retired Judge Elizabeth Ehrlich and his four children: Nathaniel, husband of Meghan of Virginia, William, husband of Alina of Emmaus, Steve, husband of Sarah, of Spring Township. and Nancy Ehrlich, wife of Philip Blazar of Massachusetts. Other survivors include his seven grandchildren.

Rhoda M. Rosenberg, 93, of Reading. Rhoda was a member of Keshar Zion Synagogue and the JCC Friendship Circle. Rhoda enjoyed playing Mah Jongg and spending time with family and friends. She is survived by her son Michael Rosenberg and his wife, Vicki, of Ohio, and daughters Sandee Rosenberg of California, and Rose Safir of Maryland. Other survivors include her three grandchildren and

three great-grandchildren and her siblings Marcia Gross of Reading; Doris Brok, wife of Robert Brok of Reading; and Paul Safir and his wife, Elaine, of Wyomissing.

Clara (Portnoff) Seymour, 98 of Wyomissing, formerly of Michigan, wife of the late Philip Seymour is survived by her daughter Francine Krieger wife of Burton. Other survivors include two granddaughters and one great granddaughter. The family would like to thank Shirley Krieger, a friend and companion, for her help in making Clara's life better for the last six years. Clara welcomed Shirley (Burt's mom) into her home when Shirley's husband died in 2006, and it was a blessing for both.

Marjorie B. (Cohen) Burton, 66, of Spring Township. Marge was born and raised in New York City, but called Reading her home for the past 35 years. She is survived by her husband Norman and her sons Michael and his wife, Judi, of Blue Bell; and Leonard and his wife, Julie, of Exeter Township. She is also survived by her grandchildren Jonathan, Allison, and Emerson.

Jane (Fisher) Sher, 89, of Wyomissing. Jane was an active member of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and the Oheb Sholom Sisterhood. She was an avid golfer and enjoyed playing bridge. Jane is survived by her daughters, Clara Breen-Beck and her husband, Alfons Beck of Blandon; and Holly Springer of Wyomissing. Other survivors include her grandchildren, step-grandchildren, great-grandchildren and her twin sister, Jean Johnston, and a younger sister, Nancy Rittenhouse, wife of John Rittenhouse.

All Around the Town

Mazel tov to **Gayle and Mike Kastenbaum** on the engagement of their son Isaac to Allison Mansueto.

Until next time: Shalom!
Please e-mail all your simcha news to
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Local BBYO teens win medals at event



Berks-Chai BBYO members Marissa Missan, Cecily Hewins, Janine Ure (adviser), Bryce Weizer, Jackie Greene, Jojo Ure, Ari Spillerman and Megan MacIntosh with their trophy for winning second place in the small chapter category at Tournies this fall. The group won this trophy by doing its own things (poetry, singing, storytelling, checkers, volleyball, basketball, chess, photography, drawing, ping pong) and even activities that forced them to step out of their comfort zone (instrumental and dancing), and being able to come together as a team. Tournies Convention was hosted by the Allentown AZA/BBG BBYO Chapters and attended by almost 300 Jewish teens from the Liberty Region.



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Israeli consulate in Philadelphia survives threat of closing

Thanks to an impassioned effort by leaders in the region and its allies in the Israeli diplomatic corps, the Mid-Atlantic Region office of the Consulate General of Israel will remain open.

After considerable speculation that the Philadelphia office would close, leaders worked hard to impress upon Israel's leaders how important the diplomatic presence is to our region.

Consul General Yaron Sideman announced the decision in December.

"I had the occasion today to deliver to Mayor Michael Nutter a letter addressed to him from the Foreign Minister of Israel, stating: 'I am pleased...to advise you that I have instructed the Foreign Ministry to keep Israel's Consulate General in Philadelphia open,'" Sideman wrote.

"I laud the tireless efforts made by so many of our friends in the Mid-Atlantic Region to keep the Consulate open, efforts that bore fruit in the form of this

exciting news. It is now up to all of us to roll up our sleeves and continue with the task of working together to strengthen the ties between Israel and the region we serve."

Jewish Federation of Reading President Tammy Mitgang expressed relief at the decision.

"Joining organizations such as Pennsylvania Jewish Coalition and other federations and Jewish organizations throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region, Jewish Federation of Reading applauds the decision by the Foreign Minister of Israel to keep Israel's Consulate office open in the City of Brotherly Love," she said.

Part of the effort to preserve Israel's presence in Philadelphia was a Nov. 18 opinion piece published in the *Jerusalem Post* and written by Lou Balcher, former director of academic affairs of the consulate. His article made reference to our Federation. Some excerpts are

reprinted below:

"The hidden cost of abandonment"

The Jewish and Israel support community in Philadelphia is in shock over news of plans to close the local Israeli consulate in order to open a new consulate in China.

Ambassador Michael Oren, and every Israeli diplomat, speaks of the shared values of the U.S. and Israel, and of the US being Israel's most critical ally. The Philadelphia consulate has been a lifeline to Jewish leaders in six key mid-Atlantic states, and central to the growth of relationships and strengthened support from America's Christian community.

Fourteen mid-Atlantic region interfaith leaders responded to the 2007 request of then foreign minister Tzipi Livni to meet under her "Succat Shalom" in New York City. The "Shelter of Peace" was arranged prior to her opening address to the U.N. The relationships with those

interfaith leaders have grown.

An outstanding Philadelphia program called "Word From Jerusalem" showcases briefings from Israel's political, academic, military leadership to executive directors of Jewish and Israel support organizations.

Jewish execs meet on "neutral ground" at Israel's consulate, conducting other community building connections with their colleagues. Federation directors Tammy Mitgang from Reading, Pa., and Steve Schimmel from Vineland, N.J., drive the 90 minutes to learn the latest from Israel.

In Israel advocacy, Philadelphia has been a center of Israel support activities.

Values of leadership and sacrifice for Israel are evident in the Israel-US-Philadelphia narrative.

As Israeli diplomacy looks to efforts of expanding its message and gaining support for Israel, it would be short-sighted to abandon Philadelphia.

Romirowsky, Joffe co-author book on Palestinian refugees

Asaf Romirowsky and Alexander Joffe have written a new book published by Palgrave Macmillan. "Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief" documents the history of Palestinian refugee relief from its inception. The refugee problem fuels the Arab-Israeli conflict and is the leading obstacle to peace.

Romirowsky and Joffe illustrate how the problem began, the international community's first responses, the successes and failures, and offer concrete recommendations on how to deal with the issue going forward.

Romirowsky has been a guest speaker at several Jewish Federation of

Reading events.

Efraim Karsh, Professor of Middle East and Mediterranean Studies, King's College London, and author of "Palestine Betrayed," endorsed the book, stating:

"Drawing on a wealth of recently declassified documents, this groundbreaking book tells the little-known story of the creation of the United Nations Relief and Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). A must read for anyone seeking to understand how the international community helped transform a secondary post-World War II humanitarian predicament into the world's most enduring refugee problem and the foremost obstacle to Arab-Israeli

peace."

The book examines the leading role of the Quaker American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in the U.N. relief program for Palestine Arab refugees in 1948-1950 in the Gaza Strip. It situates the operation within the context of the AFSC's attempts to exercise new influence on the separate issues of pacifism and disarmament at a time marked by US efforts to construct a Cold War security regime in the Middle East and British efforts to retain influence and bases in Arab countries.

Using archival data, oral histories, diplomatic documents, and biographical and autobiographical accounts, the

authors provide a detailed look at internal decision-making in an early non-governmental organization where beliefs regarding the requirement to provide refugees with skills for self-reliance clashed with intractable political and cultural realities and the realization that only full repatriation or resettlement elsewhere would solve the problem (a lesson that UNRWA and the international community learned only decades later). Faced with impossible solutions, the Quakers withdrew. The story of AFSC involvement in Gaza shows that refugee relief is always political and that humanitarianism can prolong the problems it seeks to solve.

Wiesel takes out newspaper ads noting dangers of a nuclear Iran

Professor Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Laureate and the Allgemeiner Advisory Board Chairman, recently published full-page ads in *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* urging that Iran not be allowed to remain nuclear.

The ads were paid for by Jewish philanthropist Birthright Israel co-founder Michael Steinhardt and were produced by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach's This World: The Values Network.

In the ad, Wiesel asked "should the

civilized nations of the world trust a regime whose supreme leader said yet again last month that Israel is 'doomed to annihilation,' and referred to my fellow Jewish Zionists as 'rabid dogs?'"

He told readers that they must "appeal to President Barack Obama and Congress to demand, as a condition of continued talks, the total dismantling of Iran's nuclear infrastructure and the regime's public and complete repudiation of all genocidal intent against Israel. And I

appeal to the leaders of the United States Senate to go forward with their vote to strengthen sanctions against Iran until these conditions have been met."

Of the decision to co-sponsor the ad, Rabbi Boteach said: "Elie Wiesel is the greatest Jewish personality alive and my personal hero. He is a man of incomparable humanity and he is calling the world's attention to the unmitigated catastrophe of a nuclear-armed Iran. I salute his courage in speaking out

against the human rights outrages of the Mullahs of Iran who slaughter their own people with impunity and who have repeatedly threatened Israel with extinction."

On Steinhardt's involvement, Boteach also said, "Nobody loves the Jewish people like Michael Steinhardt, a name synonymous with bursting Jewish pride and incomparable generosity. I thank Michael for facilitating Elie Wiesel's warning to the world about Iran."

Israel reaches historic agreement on water pipeline

Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority have signed an agreement on laying a water pipeline to link the Red Sea with the Dead Sea at the headquarters of the World Bank in Washington.

The pipeline will be 180 kilometers long and will pass through Jordanian territory and will channel 100 million cubic meters of water annually from

the Red Sea at an estimated cost of \$300 million-\$400 million. The pipeline will take an estimated three years to complete.

The inflow of water from the Red Sea will slow the drying up of the Dead Sea and its concomitant negative effects. About 200 million cubic meters of water will be drawn each year. Around 80 million cubic meters will be

desalinated at a facility to be built in an Aqaba facility with Israel receiving 30-50 million cubic meters of water for the Arava region and Eilat, and with Jordan receiving 30 million cubic meters of water for use in the south. Israel will sell Jordan another 50 million cubic meters of water from the Kinneret.

"This is a historic agreement that realizes a dream of many years," said

Silvan Shalom, National Infrastructures, Energy and Water Minister. "I am pleased that an investment of years has reached its hoped-for conclusion and will benefit Israel and the residents of the region as a whole. The other goals of this project are the generation of electricity by utilizing the difference in elevation between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea and the development of tourism infrastructures."

Jewish Medal of Honor recipients

Did you know that many Jewish servicemen have been bestowed with the Medal of Honor? Here's a list courtesy of Herb Schneider:

Benjamin Levy
Awarded March 1, 1865

David Orbansky
Awarded Aug. 2, 1879

William Sawelson
Awarded Feb. 4, 1919

John L. Levitow
Awarded May 14, 1970

Abraham Cohn
Awarded Aug. 24, 1865

Samuel Gross
Awarded May 25, 1917

Raymond Zussman
Awarded May 24, 1945

Ben Salomon
Awarded May 1, 2002

Leopold Karpeles
Awarded April 30, 1870

Sydney G. Gumpertz
Awarded Feb. 9, 1919

Isadore S. Jachman
Awarded July 25, 1950

Tibor Rubin
Awarded Sept. 23, 2005

Simon Suhler
Awarded Nov. 16, 1876

Benjamin Kaufman
Awarded May 8, 1919

Jack H. Jacobs
Awarded Oct. 9, 1969

Local children get in the swim during JCC youth activity



It was snowing outside but perfect for swimming indoors Dec. 8 during the JCC's latest youth activity, a pool party at Body Zone. Watch for more great events for kids throughout the year.

Longtime director leaving Yemin Orde for ministry post

Yemin Orde Youth Village director Dr. Benny Fisher has left that post to become the top-ranking government official for the Israel Ministry of Education's Rural Education and



Benny Fisher

Youth Aliyah division. Fisher joined Yemin Orde as director in 2009. The Village's Board of Directors has selected longtime senior staff member, Itay Cohen, to serve as interim director.

Yemin Orde is supported by the Jewish Federation of Reading's Israel Now campaign.

Fisher's education career has spanned 25 years and has focused primarily on managing programs for distressed and emotionally-fragile youth in Israel. During his tenure at Yemin Orde, Fisher's steady guidance and leadership helped the Village successfully face one of the most challenging periods in its 60

year history: the December 2010 wildfire that swept through the region and nearly destroyed Yemin Orde.

"Benny's strong leadership during this crisis enabled the children and staff to remain calm and optimistic in the months following the terrible fire. We are exceptionally proud of him and his new position and I am confident he will bring the same passion and vision to the Ministry of Education as he does to the Village's children and entire Yemin Orde family," said Michael Frieze, chairman, Friends of Yemin Orde.

Since the fire, the Village has embarked on a two-year comprehensive recovery project to replace homes and offices destroyed in the blaze as well as to restore Yemin Orde to its original beauty. Today, new homes for the children and staff are well underway and work will begin shortly on the Village's new library, key administrative offices and new perimeter road.

In his new role with the government, Fisher will oversee 120 schools and about 66,000 students who live in residential

educational settings or who are alienated in their communities because of severe poverty or cultural and language barriers.

Fisher's experience at Yemin Orde, where children are from highly dysfunctional families, suffer poor educational and language skills and carry emotional scars of personal trauma, has expertly prepared him for his new high-level position in Israel's government.

In the past four years at Yemin Orde, Fisher built a strong and highly-qualified staff that is committed to the Village and will provide the children with continuity and stability during this transition period.

The Village's Board of Directors has convened a special search committee for a new director.

"Of course we are disappointed that Benny is leaving us but we are incredibly happy and proud of him," said Adina Hagege, Chair, Yemin Orde Youth Village Board of Directors. "I know Benny believes strongly in our mission and he is committed to continuing to expand the Village Way vision. His new position is a

great honor for him and a great honor for Yemin Orde."

Based on his experience at Yemin Orde, Fisher said he intends to invest special effort to bring youth living in the margins of Israeli society into the framework of educational settings that will provide quality support and education to at-risk children.

"I already feel that many of the strategic issues that I will need to deal with are the same as those we dealt with in Yemin Orde. The experience and insights that I absorbed in the Village will influence my work in the Ministry of Education and Yemin Orde will remain the model village in my eyes," said Fisher.

Earlier in his career, Fisher served as superintendent for the Ministry of Welfare for At-Risk Youth Shelters where he was responsible for training directors and monitoring programs as well as developing initiatives and creating partnerships with other agencies. Fisher is also a combat company commander with the Israel Defense Forces.

Hunger is not a game

By Hunter Joshua King

About one in every six people in the United States is hungry. That equates to about 43 million Americans. Let's put this number into perspective. In my school of 2,000 students, it is estimated that 333 are not getting sufficient food each night. If you are in an elevator with six strangers, it is most likely that one will be hungry. The statistics are quite shocking. In fact, 12 million children in the United States are hungry and food insecure.

Recently I attended a teen summit, "Hunger is Not a Game," sponsored by BBYO. I was educated on the issues, both in the United States and globally.

At the summit held in Detroit, I engaged in many simulations teaching me about the lives of impoverished Americans. Poverty is the leading cause of hunger. Other contributing factors include natural disaster, war, and agricultural failures. Hunger lends itself to poor health and nutrition. Other secondary problems associated with hunger include poor ability to focus and attend school, as well as low self-esteem. We had the opportunity to volunteer at a massive Gleaners food bank that serves the needy in southeastern Michigan. The majority of people who volunteered regularly were teens like myself.

On the final night of the summit, all the attendees considered global views of poverty and hunger. We were presented with the statistic that 1 billion people in the world are hungry. Then it was shared that there is more than enough food in the world's supply to feed the entire world's population. I became quite disturbed. We examined the current Food Stamp (SNAP) program in America and realized how poorly SNAP is managed. Still, it was disheartening to learn that that SNAP's funding, despite it's flaws, is being cut by Washington's legislators, with no replacement program being offered.

On the day of my departure from Detroit, I was asked to consider strategies on how I could make an impact in my own community. All the teens wrote letters to President Barack Obama highlighting our concerns for SNAP cuts and we learned how to communicate our concerns to local congressmen. Returning home with a desire to combat hunger and advocate this issue to my peers, I write this article with the hopes that you will join me, educate yourself, volunteer in your communities, and address your local representatives.

Hunter Joshua King is a member of BBYO Liberty Region #13, which covers eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware.

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Recalling the journey

Rabbi Yosef Lipsker, Chabad Lubavitch of Berks County, shared highlights of a collage of photographs taken during the Community Mission to Israel with Tammy Mitgang and the Board of Directors of Jewish Federation of Reading during the November board meeting. The mission began on Oct. 21, 2012, and included both Reading community members and friends from the Lehigh Valley community. The collage was created and presented to the Cultural Center by Rabbi Lipsker in appreciation for the Federation's efforts to include local spiritual leaders in the journey. Rabbi Lipsker participated along with Rabbi Brian Michelson, Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom.

Mark your calendar!

Your Fortunate Eyes – PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUDI WEISSENSTEIN

Curated by Ben Peter, Michael Amram & Andreas Grau-Fuchs, Pri-Or PhotoHouse Tel Aviv

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* (Film Theatre at GoggleWorks)

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!

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 legendary “PhotoHouse” shop and its nearly one 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

'Dry Bones' Haggadah — Coming to a Seder near you!

For 40 years, "Dry Bones" cartoon strips have been tickling the 'funny bones' of readers in *The Jerusalem Post* and many other newspapers. Featuring the likeable character "Shuldig," the internationally syndicated editorial strip has been poking fun at politicians and their constituents, the Jewish world and what makes us human for 40 years. Created by 75-year-old cartoonist Yaakov Kirschen, a native New Yorker who made Aliyah in the early 1970s, he and his wife, Sali, now call Kfar Shmaryahu, home. His latest contribution to the Jewish world is a Passover Haggadah.

In an interview with *The Jerusalem Post*, Kirschen explained why he chose to create a "Dry Bones" Haggadah: "...As it ("Dry Bones") is an editorial comic strip, people read the news and then look to see what 'Dry Bones' has to say about it. It is as if I was having a conversation with the reader. 'Dry Bones' is a cartoon that speaks to English-speaking Jews. It is a way of bringing people together. So it occurred to me that when we read the Haggadah,

it is the story of our people, and we all sit together to read it. Long after I'm gone, people will still continue to do so. I wanted to make a serious contribution to the world of Judaica, so I thought I'd do a 'Dry Bones' commentary on the Haggadah like I do a 'Dry Bones' commentary in newspapers."

In an effort to make his Haggadah attractive to all Seder participants, Kirschen made the text as gender-friendly as possible — "Four Sons" in the text are referred to as "Four Children", "Ruler" replaces "King" and, so on. His objective was to create an interactive tool not a manual to rush through.

With the help of S. Kim Glassman, the book's talented graphic designer and his wife, the Haggadah was completed. In addition to the print edition, it is available for sale as a PDF and may be downloaded so family and friends can bring their iPads and smartphones to the Seder table and follow along.

Kirschen attended the recent Jewish Federation of North America's General Assembly in Jerusalem to promote the



Yaakov Kirschen, creator of the "Dry Bones" comic strip, charms Tammy Mitgang, at the Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly in Israel. Kirschen was at the event promoting his new Passover Haggadah.

Haggadah, and he graciously spent time with Reading Federation President Tammy Mitgang.

"Yaakov, Sali and designer Kim are quite a talented team," Mitgang said. "And, he (Yaakov) is quite a character in his own right and a delightful person – cuddly and gruff. Although he left New York in the early '70s, he never lost that 'Brooklyn charm'! His goal for the Haggadah? He is hopeful that it will become the next Maxwell House Haggadah.* And, having met Yaakov, it may just happen!"

To order your copy of The Dry Bones Haggadah, visit store.drybones.com

*Since the early 1930s, JJA has produced the Maxwell House Passover Haggadah which is the longest running sales promotion in advertising history. More than 50 million Maxwell House Haggadahs have been printed, making it the most widely used Haggadah in the world. For many decades, the Maxwell House Haggadah was known for its famous blue cover. In 2011 a newly designed edition was introduced.

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Boycotting Israeli universities: A victory for bigotry

By Alan M. Dershowitz

Originally published in Ha'aretz

The American Studies Association has just issued its first ever call for an academic boycott. No, it wasn't against China, which imprisons dissenting academics. It wasn't against Iran, which executes dissenting academics. It wasn't against Russia, whose universities fire dissenting academics. It wasn't against Cuba, whose universities have no dissenting academics. It wasn't against Saudi Arabia, whose academic institutions refuse to hire women, gay or Christian academics.

Nor was it against the Palestinian Authority, whose colleges refuse to allow open discourse regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. No, it was against only academic institutions in the Jewish State of Israel, whose universities have affirmative action programs for Palestinian students and who boast a higher level of academic freedom than almost any country in the world.

When the association was considering this boycott I issued a challenge to its members, many of whom are historians. I asked them to name a single country in the history of the world faced with threats comparable to those Israel faces that has had a better record of human rights, a higher degree of compliance with the rule of law, a more demanding judiciary, more concern for the lives of enemy civilians, or more freedom to criticize the government, than the State of Israel.

Not a single member of the association came up with a name of a

single country. That is because there are none. Israel is not perfect, but neither is any other country, and Israel is far better than most. If an academic group chooses to engage in the unacademic exercise of boycotting the academic institutions of another country, it should do it in order of the seriousness of the human rights violations and of the inability of those within the country to seek redress against those violations.

By these standards, Israeli academic institutions should be among the last to be boycotted.

I myself disagree with Israel's settlement policy and have long urged an end to the occupation. But Israel offered to end the occupation twice in the last 13 years. They did so in 2000-2001 when Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered the Palestinians a state on approximately 95 percent of the occupied territories. Then it did so again in 2008 when former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offered an even more generous deal. The Palestinians accepted neither offer and certainly share the blame for the continuing occupation. Efforts are apparently underway once again to try to end the occupation as peace talks continue. The Palestinian Authority's President Mahmoud Abbas himself opposes academic boycotts of Israeli institutions.

China occupies Tibet, Russia occupies Chechnya and several other countries occupy Kurdish lands. In those cases no offers have been made to end the occupation. Yet no boycotts have been directed against the academic institutions of those

occupying countries.

When the president of the American Studies Association, Curtis Marez, an associate professor of ethnic studies at The University of California, was advised that many nations, including all of Israel's neighbors, behave far worse than Israel, he responded, "One has to start somewhere." This boycott, however, has not only started with Israel. It will end with Israel. Marez's absurd comment reminds me of the bigoted response made by Harvard's notorious anti-Semitic president A. Laurence Lowell, when he imposed anti-Jewish quotas near the beginning of the 20th century. When asked why he singled out Jews for quotas, he replied, "Jews cheat." When the great Judge Learned Hand reminded him that Christians cheat too, Lowell responded, "You're changing the subject. We are talking about Jews now."

You would think that historians and others who belong to the American Studies Association would understand that in light of the history of discrimination against Jews, you can't just pick the Jewish state and Jewish universities as the place to "start" and stop.

The American Studies Association claims that it is not boycotting individual Israeli professors but only the universities at which they teach. That is a nonsensical word game, since no self-respecting Israeli professor would associate with an organization that singled out Israeli colleges and universities for a boycott. Indeed, no self-respecting American professor should in any way support the bigoted

actions of this association.

Several years ago, when a similar boycott was being considered, a group of American academics circulated a counter-petition drafted by Nobel Prize Physicist Steven Weinberg and I that read as follows:

"We are academics, scholars, researchers and professionals of differing religious and political perspectives. We all agree that singling out Israelis for an academic boycott is wrong. To show our solidarity with our Israeli academics in this matter, we, the undersigned, hereby declare ourselves to be Israeli academics for purposes of any academic boycott. We will regard ourselves as Israeli academics and decline to participate in any activity from which Israeli academics are excluded."

More than 10,000 academics signed this petition including many Nobel Prize winners, presidents of universities and leading scholars from around the world.

Shame on those members of the American Studies Association for singling out the Jew among nations. Shame on them for applying a double standard to Jewish universities. Israeli academic institutions are strong enough to survive this exercise in bigotry. The real question is will this association survive its complicity with the oldest and most enduring prejudice?

Alan M. Dershowitz, the Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law at Harvard University, is a practicing criminal and constitutional lawyer and the author, most recently, of The Trials of Zion. His autobiography, "Taking the Stand: My Life in the Law", was published in October 2013.

Zionism, between the real and the ideal

By Daniel Gordis

Danielgordis.org

It's in that painful gap between the real and the ideal that life is truly lived. In our marriages, in our relationships with our children and our parents, the chasm between being the people we are and the people we would like to be plays host to life's most painful — but also most productive — moments. It is when great expectation confronts disappointment, when love is hamstrung by betrayal and yearning, that we learn that real commitment is tested in the crucible of heartache, in the desperate wish that things had been different, or still could be.

Zionism is no different. For those of us raised on stories of brave Jews saved from the cauldrons of Europe, defending themselves in the 1940's against marauding Arabs and then dancing the hora on the streets of Tel Aviv in 1948, being forced to confront the reality of the Jewish state is always a deeply painful process. Most of us know people who, once exposed to Israel's underbelly, have become Israel's most relentless, loveless critics. Others assume precisely the opposite position, denying any fault or imperfection — anyone who dares critique the Jewish state must be shown to be wrong, or self-hating, or worse.

Is that really the world we wish to inhabit?

Ari Shavit's new book, "My Promised Land: The Triumph and the Tragedy of Israel," puts us to that test. There were a couple of chapters during which I literally could read only two or three pages and then had to put the book down. I paced the living room, made myself a cup of tea, took a deep breath, and forced myself to plow through another two or three pages before taking yet another break.

I finished "My Promised Land" exhausted, pained — and deeply grateful. For here is a book by a man whose love

for Israel permeates every page. He adores the country and knows it deeply (unlike authors of much less nuanced critiques in recent years, for whom Israel is little more than an "occupation") and is staying in Israel — "Come what may," as he says in his last sentence. So Israel's flaws don't just trouble Shavit — they torment him. He wrote his book, one suspects, because he wants them to torment us, as well.

"My Promised Land" is a deft weaving of agony and ecstasy. Just as the narrative becomes almost unbearable, Shavit shifts tone and reminds us of the marvel, the creativity and the decency at the core of Israel's soul. He does so with the keen eye of the first-rate journalist he is and the supple art of a great novelist. It's no surprise, therefore, that reviewers as disparate as Leon Wieseltier, Jeffrey Goldberg and Thomas Friedman have heaped praise on the book.

But not everyone has. Some, distressed by Shavit's criticism of their beloved Israel, have sought to prove that Shavit is, well, just wrong.

Perhaps Shavit's most painful chapter is about the mass killing and exile of Lydda's Arabs in the War of Independence. When he recently published it in *The New Yorker*, predictable responses surfaced immediately. There was the "You see ... Israel born in sin, and violently murderous to this day." And there was the "No, Israel is legitimate, precisely because nothing of the sort ever happened."

One column, written by a very articulate and knowledgeable Israel-advocate, cited a journalist, Dan Kurzman (who, though prolific, was not a trained historian), as basis for claiming that Lydda had "surrendered, went back on its word, massacred and mutilated Israeli soldiers, and then despite all this the residents were allowed to leave unharmed." Then, the writer then asks, "Why would Shavit and his editors omit the crucial fact that

Lydda had surrendered, and had agreed to disarm and live in peace, and that the Israelis had agreed to let them stay?"

A fair question. So I reread parts of an authoritative history of the period, Benny Morris' masterful "1948." Morris writes that IDF records show that 250 civilians were killed, and that Ben-Gurion authorized the expulsion of the town's 50,000 residents (and then boasted to his Cabinet that they were all gone). Records of the IDF's Fourth Regiment reported that "Some 30,000 women and children from ... Lydda ... are suffering from hunger and thirst to a degree that many of them have died." Does this count as "all the residents being allowed to leave unharmed?" As for the "surrender," Morris writes that "as for the surrender instrument that implicitly [emphasis added] allowed Ramla's inhabitants to stay," Yitzchak Rabin gave an order that "the inhabitants of Lydda must be expelled quickly without attention to age."

I'm not an historian and I've never researched that period. So I make no claim to knowing precisely what transpired. What does seem incontrovertible, however, is this: since the history of that era is highly contended, intellectual honesty demands that we at least not pretend otherwise. Did Morris (a world-class historian) and Shavit (an equally talented journalist) knowingly create a fictional account? Or is it more likely that my adopted country was (re) born in circumstances that were far more complex — and messy and painful — than the narratives on which many of us were raised?

Do I agree with every assertion in Shavit's book? I don't. Would I personally have written a sentence such as: "Zionism had carried out a massacre in the city of Lydda"? I don't think that I could.

But here's the rub. Precisely because I hope to bequeath to my grandchildren a better Israel than the one I inherited, I need thoughtful observers, careful

researchers and Israel-loving writers such as Ari Shavit to pen such sentences. For that prose stops me in my tracks, makes it hard to breathe. Accounts like these, even sentences like those that make me bristle, force us to recognize, when it's easiest not to, that despite its just cause, our country — like many others — was created in a crucible of confusion, anger, passion and violence. And they force us all to ask what kind of narrative we're going to create from here on in.

It's that painful mix that Shavit believes we can — and must — confront, in order for Israel's moral core to continue to flourish. Can we love this country only if it is perfect? Or can we model a Zionism in which we both confront the complex and painful parts of our history all while asserting that we have every right — and need — to be here?

Shavit believes we're capable of taking the intellectually and morally sophisticated high road. He hopes, I sense, that we can bequeath to generations to come an Israel that is profoundly Jewish yet deeply committed to humanity at large, physically secure yet confident enough to be deeply self-reflective. Isn't that what Jewishness is all about?

Is Shavit justified in his faith in us that we can be that sophisticated? Or has he, perhaps, overestimated us? For all our sakes, we must hope — and we must ensure — that he hasn't.

Dr. Daniel Gordis is Senior Vice President and the Koret Distinguished Fellow at Shalem College in Jerusalem. He writes a regular column — "A Dose of Nuance" — for the Jerusalem Post and is a regular contributor to The New York Times, in print and online. The author of numerous books on Jewish thought and currents in Israel and a winner of the National Jewish Book Award, Dr. Gordis was founding dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at the University of Judaism.

Congregational News

Why we celebrate trees at Tu b'Shevat

By Rabbi Brian Michelson

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

In a work known as Avot d'Rabbi Natan it teaches, "Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai said, 'If you are holding a seedling in your hand and you hear that the Messiah is coming, plant the seedling and then go greet the Messiah.'"

I can still remember the first time my mother read me the Dr. Seuss book "The Lorax" about a people who lived in a world without trees. I could never imagine living in such a place. Growing up in a city, I knew that trees grew in the holes left open



in the pavement, but even then I had a love of trees and nature. Imagine wide boulevards without trees, no forests to go leaf peeping in the autumn, or no backyard trees to climb. From the very start of the Torah, trees are an important part of our lives. It is not the bush of the knowledge of Good and Evil, but the tree.

This month we celebrate the minor festival of Tu b'Shevat — the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat— sometimes known as the birthday of the trees. Originally the holiday had more of a legal purpose, which was the counting the age of the trees, which was important for two reasons: *orlah* and *ma'aser*.

Orlah is the fruit produced by a tree during its first three years. This fruit is supposed to be set aside; it cannot be

eaten or sold. It is meant to remind us that all we have is given to us by God.

Ma'aser is the tithe (one tenth) of the fruit grown each year that was expected to be given to the priests and the Levites who ran the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. It was understood as a way to show gratitude for the rain and fertile soil as well as providing sustenance for the priests and the Levites who were not allowed to own land.

What does this have to do with the birthday of the trees? The answer is actually very simple. Since trees are planted at different times of the year and fruit ripens at different times of the year, how do you know when your *Orlah* is finished and to which harvest the fruit you have just collected belongs? Tu b'Shevat! It was no different than the idea

of a fiscal year. It was simply the fiscal year for the trees.

However, for most of us the issues of *Orlah* and *Ma'aser* are not pressing issues, so what can Tu b'Shevat mean to us. Even though the weather outside is cold, we know that spring is on its way. The days are getting longer, and the world is preparing to come back to life. It is meant to be a reminder that we survive on the gifts of nature and that we are all children of the Garden of Eden.

Tu b'Shevat reminds us that we are not just supposed to be consumers of nature but stewards of nature, as well.

May your Tu b'Shevat this year be filled with a little bit of awe at the wonder of nature and gratitude for the gifts the trees and all of nature give to us each and every day.

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND SERVICE TIMES

COMMUNITY SHABBAT SERVICE, FRIDAY, JAN. 17, 6 p.m. CHABAD CENTER
RSVP required for dinner that follows. See Page 1 for details.

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM (610) 375-6034
Friday, Jan. 3, Shabbat service, 6 p.m.

Fridays, Jan. 10 and 31, 7:45 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 11: Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.
Friday, Jan. 24, Shabbat service led by first-graders, 6 p.m.

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



**If you love to read,
pass it forward!**

**Volunteer Reading Tutors needed
for Ready.Set.READ! Program**

Help make a difference in a child's life! Volunteers are needed to tutor 2nd grade students who are struggling with reading at elementary schools in the Daniel Boone and Reading School Districts.

No previous teaching experience is required. This opportunity is for anyone interested in volunteering weekly for one hour. Current background clearances are required prior to assignment.

Please contact Darby Wiekrykas at United Way 610-685-4574 or darbyw@uwberks.org or visit www.readysetreaddberks.org

Donations of new books on a birth – third grade reading level are always appreciated for the children in the Ready.Set.READ! program. Please contact Darby Wiekrykas at 610-685-4574 or darbyw@uwberks.org



Megan McIntosh selects the winning ticket from a pile!

What's new at Gratz JCHS

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.

Sample a link? – www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXsxCohQNT8.

Gratz Notes

■ For "Thanksgivukkah," we gave a special thank-you ("Todah Rabbah") to Federation for providing holiday themed kosher cupcakes created expressly for our students by *NDULGE of Philadelphia. The artisan treats were topped with miniature sufganiyot and sweets — verdict — "Outstanding".

■ Through wind, freezing rain, snow and more snow... the students persevered along with Rabbi Dov who served up hot chocolate topped with kosher marshmallows as a special treat on a blustery evening — second verdict — "Yummy"

■ "Learning" is typically an outcome (and, compliment) of students and teachers working collaboratively during a class. When students

expressed a desire to have a class on Israel instead of Bible — Federation supported the request for a topic change as did Gratz. JFR invested in special classroom materials and reports from the teachers on students' impressions have been positive. Congratulations to the students for speaking up and for the teacher who was willing to listen and rethink the class offering.

■ **Classes Resume** - Gratz classes resume after winter vacation on January 5 at 6:00 p.m. at the JCC. The first semester concludes on January 26 with grades and all make-up work due. Please note that there are no classes on January 19.

■ **Weather Cancellations** - To find out if classes are cancelled, check our email, phone or cell phone for a message. We will contact all of our numbers on record for each family and email addresses to inform you if indeed we are closing. If you are still uncertain, feel free to call Rabbi Dov at 215-572-9175.

■ **New Classes** – New classes are being planned for 2014-2015 for grades 8-12. If there is a subject area in which you or your student are particularly interested, please contact Rabbi Dov via email.

■ **New Incentive/Happy Ending** – Students arriving early or by the time classes begin receive a raffle ticket. One or more lucky winners are drawn during the class. Winners take home a Jewish book to add to their library each week.



Different Thanksgiving

By Anne Seltzer

This was the first Thanksgiving we have had since my brother Dave passed away in January. It is probably only about the third I've spent without him since he was born. After he passed away we decided as a family that we should spend Thanksgiving this year in Kentucky with Gina and the girls.



We were very lucky to have all three of our guys and Jamie there, plus my cousins Ed and Sue and their families. One of Dave and Gina's good friends, Diane, who has joined us for many years, was also there. So we were blessed to all be together, except for Dave...

We laughed and cried and told stories about Dave around the table at Thanksgiving. You had to tell one, funny or serious. I claimed to have the privilege of telling two since I knew him longest. Gina knew him best though. Some of the stories I would really like to have shared could not be told because his 17-year-old twins were sitting there. There is only so much your kids should know about your past. Particularly if you are not there to defend yourself.

As the weekend wore on, I found it weirder to be there for Thanksgiving without him. It got harder, not easier. There were so many things I wanted to remind him about from our "growing up" Thanksgivings. And, as always, lamenting the fact that I never got my mom's stuffing recipe. Dave always cooked most of the dinner when we were there, and I usually brought a lot of cookies. Gina really didn't want to do the cooking, so I found myself cooking in their kitchen. It is always strange to cook in someone else's kitchen, unless it is your mother's. Everyone contributed, and since we were the only ones who flew, the others could bring already assembled food. Ben makes pretty good mashed potatoes and cranberry sauce, and my cousin Peter makes amazing hummus. I pretty

much lived on it and spinach au gratin all weekend. Ed is famous for his potato knishes, and he also decided to turn the carcass into soup. My niece Ada baked chocolate chip cookies and spent a lot of time chopping veggies for me.

Alan led the dishwashing/cleaning up squad. Believe me when I say that was the most important job of all. Find me a cook who wants to clean up after making a holiday meal. And the kids did a lot of quick trips to the store for forgotten items.

So while I'm very sad and still grieving that Dave is not with us, I am also grateful for a wonderful family who all chipped in and helped to make it possible. They are my Thanksgiving blessings.

The one dessert I did make, and take with me, was grown-up Rice Krispie treats.

Brown Butter Vanilla Bean and Nutella Swirled Rice Krispie Treats

- 1 c. (2 sticks) butter
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 vanilla bean, seeds scraped out
- 8 ½ c. Rice Krispies
- 2 (10 oz) bags mini marshmallows
- 1 ½ c. Nutella

Grease two 9x13" pans. In a large heavy pot melt the butter and vanilla seeds over medium heat until just browned. Butter will melt, foam, and froth, then begin to brown along the bottom. Whisk browned bits off the bottom.

Just as the butter begins to brown, add the marshmallows and turn off the heat. Stir until marshmallows are completely melted, about five minutes. If not fully melted, turn stove on low and stir until smooth and melted. Add Rice Krispies and coat completely with marshmallows.

Press 2/3 of mixture into one pan. Press remaining mixture into the other pan. It won't fully cover pan, there will be holes.

Spread Nutella on the 2/3 fully pan, then flip the other pan onto the Nutella. Press down so that some of the Nutella oozes through the cracks.

Let it sit for at least an hour at room temp. before slicing. Enjoy!

It's been great to share these puzzles

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68						69					70			
71						72					73			

Solution on Page 17

© 2013, Bernard Mann / Legacy Crosswords
 Editor's note: This is the final puzzle from Legacy Crosswords.

Across

1. Slang for \$100 bills
5. Throats harrsid1919820 of birds, animals generally
10. U.S. tennis champion
14. ____ and hearty
15. Send in a payment
16. Lustful look
17. Word ending for winter eave pendant
18. The Swiss cross-country skier quickly schussed from one ____ another (2 words)
19. Wine sediment
20. START OF THEME DECLARATION (Am Yehudi - - - -)
23. nsrsid1919820 Website acronyms
24. The ____ Who Came In From The Cold
25. ____ at attention!
28. Rebellious computer of "2001: A Space Odyssey"
31. Islands in Latin America
35. "Keep walking ____ the road and you'll find it." (2 words)
37. Prevaricate
39. ISRAEL-____, one of many who sojourned in Egypt
40. PART TWO OF THEME DECLARATION
44. Hwy.
45. Each constituent of Stalin's realm was given this designation.
46. The stove was beginning to ____ acrid odor
47. The captain vowed ____ the ship on an even keel. (2 words)
50. Urban roads, abbr.
52. Employment position in Italian (Refer to the 1960 film with this in its title.)
53. One or another duct in a human body is so named.
55. At that point in time
57. PART THREE OF DECLARATION, an affirmation of our creative spirit
65. When at least one Hollywood oater shootout took place
66. Outstanding individuals
67. "Mom! ____ the table an hour ago!" (2 words)
68. Winslet or Hepburn
69. French painter
70. A Shakespearean king
71. Cats will do this! (Oh, bother!)
72. Flavoring for a liquor, otherwise a spice in baking
73. Maiden

Down

1. Piece of paper showing an amount paid or owed
2. Every one
3. She, in Cherbourg
4. "Take a look at the first day following May 31."
5. Baby's way of making headway on the floor
6. Condiment for a hot dog
7. They go with volts
8. "Better take an umbrella ____ you."
9. "How many more ____ before we reach Tel Aviv?"
10. Amalgam of metals
11. Move from, say, a rock wall, as does water
12. You might utter this as a command to Poochie
13. The Irish language
21. Earth, in German, AND the name of an image processing system for arcGIS
22. Prefix meaning "outer"
25. Beginning
26. Lone Ranger's sidekick
27. South American mountain range
29. Wide awake
30. 2Capp's Abner
32. Light airs
33. "And now, the Mighty Casey will be ____!"
34. One monkey would ____ evil (2 words)
36. Syst's built for locomotives and cars
38. Prairie or pasture mama
41. Balaam of Genesis had one (or more)
42. Move something forward
43. The ____ always be king of the jungle. (2 words)
48. It all ____ out (made for a f air playing field)
49. What you might get, sitting in the sun
51. A metric volume, plural
54. Pore in a leaf
56. It makes waste.
57. Used in screen paintings
58. He captained the Ark, saw the Rainbow
59. Exercise the democratic franchise
60. I'll be there, ____ instant.
61. "____, vidi, vinci.," proclaimed Caesar
62. The Kinneret is ____ fed by the Upper Jordan. (2 words)
63. "And the ____ have it," cried the chair, after the vote.
64. Steps, abbr.

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Jewish Family Service

**United
Way**



Stop Medicare fraud

By Sari Incledon

Our Friendship Circle recently had John Vogel from Senior Medicare Patrol Program speak about preventing Medicare fraud. The S.M.P. is a fraud prevention program that utilizes volunteers to teach their peers about fraud and what they can do about it. The Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE) sponsors the S.M.P. and is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for vulnerable older people through advocacy, education



and action.

The CARIE LINE is a free telephone and online consultation service providing information and resolving problems for older adults and those who care for them. All calls are welcome – Medicare, long term care, housing, health care, quality of life concerns, advance planning and anything else that is of concern to older adults, their families and others who. CARIE LINE is in operation Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., call 215-545-5728 or 1-800-356-3606.

Medicare fraud happens when Medicare is billed for services or supplies that patients never get. This fraud costs billions of dollars and hurts all of us.

Here are some tips to prevent fraud from the Medicare.gov website:

DO's

* Do protect your Medicare number (on your Medicare card) and your Social Security number (on your Social Security card). Treat your Medicare card as if it's a credit card.

* Do remember that nothing is ever "free". Don't accept offers of money or gifts for free medical care.

* Do ask questions. You have a right to know everything about your medical care including the costs billed to Medicare.

* Do educate yourself about Medicare. Know your rights and know what a provider can and can't bill to Medicare.

* Do use a calendar to record all of your doctor's appointments and what tests or X-rays you get. Then check you Medicare statements carefully to make sure you got each service listed and that all the details

are correct. If you spend time in a hospital, make sure the admission date, discharge date and diagnosis on your bill are correct.

DONT'S

* Don't allow anyone, except your doctor or other Medicare providers, to review your medical records or recommend services.

* Don't accept medical supplies from a door-to-door salesman. If someone comes to your door claiming to be from Medicare or Medicaid, remember that Medicare and Medicaid don't send representatives to your home to sell products or services.

* Don't give our Medicare number to anyone who calls on the phone. Medicare does not call patients.



James P. Restrepo, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Charles K. Lutz, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Jeffrey S. Driben, M.D., F.A.C.S.
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Living with Loss

Mondays,
Jan. 13 and 27
3 - 4:30 p.m. at the JCC
For more information, call Sari
at 610-921-0624

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!

Seniors, rise n'shine to a hearty breakfast compliments of Manor at Market Square!

If you have never visited Manor at Market Square, join us for a hearty breakfast and learn about our affordable senior living community!

Crossroads Family Restaurant

(4643 Pottsville Pike, Reading)

**Friday, Jan 24
8-10am**

Please RSVP to Kristine
by Jan 21 at 610-790-1707
or kmcafee@manoratms.com

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Federation Honorial - Memorial Card Information

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 Nov. 18

Jewish Family Service

In honor of:

Marriage of Howard & Debbie Blanck's daughter Stacey – Louise Zeidman
 Fran Mendelsohn's Special Birthday – Hilde Gernsheimer
 Grace and Meyer Lewis' new home – Edith Mendelsohn

In memory of:

Susan D'Angelo's mother – Andy and Corinne Wernick
 Leon Ehrlich – Dr. Sandra K. Rowan, Helene and Henry Singer
 Rhoda Rosenberg – Ruth Isenberg, Harriet Baskin, Al and Betsy Katz, Barbara Nazimov, Irwin Goldstein, Louise Zeidman, Edith Mendelsohn
 Clara Seymour – Barbara Nazimov

Federation Jewish Community Campaign

In honor of:

Birth of Fran and Burt Krieger's granddaughter – Anzie and Edward Golden
 Rabbi Brian Michelson – Stuart and Carol Cohn
 Isaac Kastenbaum's engagement – Ellen and Don Abramson
 Hal Cohn's Special Birthday – Arthur, Lorayn and Phyllis Fischman

Get well/speedy recovery:

Sue Blum – Anzie and Edward Golden
 Judy Hartman – Alice Botvin and Ned Littlehales

In memory of:

Susan D'Angelo's mother – Jackye and Jim Barrer
 Roberta Dunitz – Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer, Cheryl and Eric Farber, Anzie and Edward Golden
 Leon Ehrlich – Cheryl and Eric Farber
 Rhoda Rosenberg – Ellen and Don Abramson

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

Clara Seymour – Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer, Dena and Vic Hammel, Jim and Jackye Barrer, Cheryl and Eric Farber and family, Susan and Mel Blum, Rick and Mindy Small

Marjorie Burton – Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer, Cheryl and Eric Farber
 Jane Sher – Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer

Friendship Circle

In memory of:

Clara Seymour – Alice Botvin and Ned Littlehales

JFS Taxi Transportation Program

Get well/speedy recovery:

Honey Youngerman – Rosalye Yashek

In memory of:

Roberta Dunitz – Helene and Henry Singer
 Rhoda Rosenberg – Rosalye Yashek

Evelyn Thompson Nursery School Fund

In honor of:

Jason Barrer's marriage – Beth and Bob Caster

In memory of:

Rhoda Rosenberg – Beth and Bob Caster

Jewish Cultural Center

In memory of:

Rhoda Rosenberg – Marlene and George Weiss

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SAVE THE DATE:
FEB. 13, 7:30 p.m.
Merner-Pfeiffer-Klein-Memorial Chapel, Albright College
Gallagher Memorial Lecture Explores
Jesus, Judaism,
and Jewish-Christian Relations

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 Boyarian; 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."

What's in it for you at the JCC!

Jewish Cultural Center (JCC) is YOUR Center

The Jewish Cultural Center (JCC) of Reading is an extension of Jewish life beyond school, the workplace and houses of worship. It is the nucleus of our community and its heart. The JCC is where Jewish life is celebrated, a place where we embrace our Jewish connections. It is the hub of education and Jewish culture for people of all ages. It is where we can grow intellectually, spiritually and socially.

Combining tradition with fresh programming and activities, the JCC is about serving you, our members, and working together to meet the broader needs of our ever-changing community. Regardless of your spiritual path, we hope you will consider the JCC your home.

Jewish Cultural Center of Reading and home to—

Jewish Federation of Reading (JFR), a functional federation that manages and funds programs like Jewish Family Service, JCC events and activities, the Lakin Early Education Center (JCC preschool) and raises funds through an annual campaign that benefits the Reading Jewish community, Israel and Jews around the world.

Jewish Family Service (JFS), a multi-resource human service agency, providing support services directly and networking with other providers to meet the needs of individuals, children and families in our community. JFS operates a monthly *Food Pantry Program at Keshet Zion Synagogue as well as a transportation service for the elderly and disabled.

***Lakin Early Education Center (JCC Preschool)**, a Jewish sponsored preschool for children ages 2-5 yrs., located at the Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom.

***Fitness & Aquatics Programs**, located at Body Zone Sports & Wellness Complex (BZ), where you will find

two NHL-size ice rinks, two synthetic grass sports fields, basketball/volleyball court, state-of-the-art wellness center, six-lane, 25 yd. swimming pool and suspended running track. **See special JCC rates and "no enrollment" fee for Center members!**

SHALOM Newspaper, free monthly newspaper serving the Jewish Community of Reading.

Lending Library, variety of books (fiction, non-fiction, reference)

***Holocaust Library and Resource Center** at Albright College, established in 1993 by the Jewish Federation of Reading in memory of those who perished and dedicated to those who are our future.

Jewish Cultural Center Offerings include:

- Film, Literature and Guest Lectures
- Mahjong Mondays & Bridge Wednesdays
- Music, Art & Theater (local and escorted travel)
- Social & Cultural Programs
- Holiday Events

Friendship Circle for Seniors, a weekly program that brings seniors together for lunch, innovative programs and films as well as social engagement.

BBYO – B'nai Brith Youth Organization

Gratz – Jewish Community High School of Gratz (trans-denominational, independent Hebrew program, grades 8-12)

*Location Key	
Albright College	www.albright.edu
BZ	Body Zone Sports & Wellness Complex 3103 Paper Mill Road, Wyomissing, PA
Chabad	Chabad Lubavitch of Berks Co., 2320 Hampden Blvd., Reading, PA
KZ	Keshet Zion Synagogue Eckert & Perkiomen Avenues, Reading, PA
RCOS	Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing, PA

Your Federation Campaign dollars support the JCC