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Shalom 10|23

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Leo Camp Lecture to focus on environment and Israeli peace

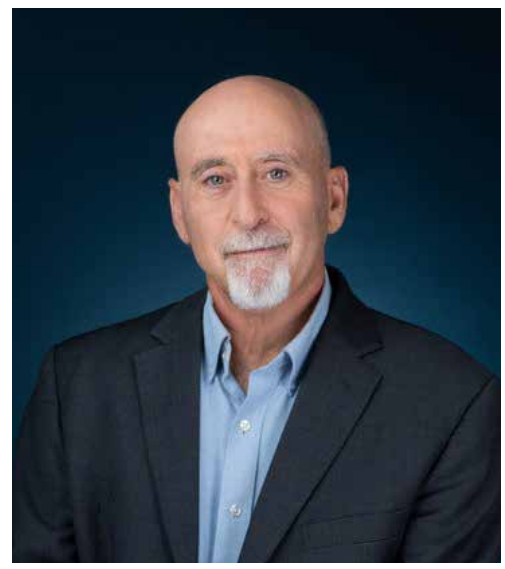
By Amanda J. Hornberger

Will the environment survive a renewed Middle East peace process? Join us for an in-depth look at this fascinating topic with an environmental expert from Israel.

The 43rd annual Leo Camp Memorial Lecture at Albright College is Monday, Oct. 2, at 7:30 p.m. in the McMillan Center, south lounge. Our speaker is Alon Tal, currently a Stanford Graduate School of Business visiting professor and former member of the Knesset.

Because of the country's modest size, Israel's environmental problems are largely transboundary. Cooperation with neighboring countries is needed to progress in areas from stream restoration to species repatriation.

While reviewing over 20 years of regional "below the radar" environmental cooperation, speaker Alon Tal will discuss how the present peace process might be leveraged to ensure an ecological dividend for the region.



Alon Tal

Alon Tal's career has been a balance between academia and public interest advocacy. He is presently a visiting professor at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. Between 2021 and 2022, he was member of member of the Knesset, Israel's parliament and served as chair of the subcommittee for Environmental and Climate Impacts on Health. Previously, he was the chair of the Department of Public Policy at Tel Aviv University. Tal has held faculty appointments at Ben Gurion, Hebrew, Michigan State, Stanford, Otago and Harvard Universities. He has founded several environmental organizations including the Israel Union for Environmental Defense and the Arava Institute Zafuf, the Israel Forum for Population, Environment and Society. Between 2010 and 2013 Tal served as chair of Israel's green party — "the Green Movement".

Special thanks to the Camp family for continuing to support this annual lecture series. The lecture is free and open to the public.

The Jewish community was well-represented at Diversity Night at the Reading Fightin Phil. The Jewish Federation of Reading was one of numerous local groups taking part. Others involved were the Reading Branch of the NAACP, Centro Hispano, The Islamic Center of Reading, Bring the Change, and the LBGT Center of Greater Reading. Veteran Henry Singer received special recognition.

2023 Annual Campaign in full swing

Development

Annual Campaign
Women's Philanthropy
Maimonides Society
Your Jewish Legacy
Chai Circle
L'Chaim Society
Book of Life
Letter of Intent

By Laurie Waxler
Development Director

The 2023 Annual Campaign for Jewish Federation is in full swing! With our fiscal year ending Dec. 31, it's time to consider what gift you might offer Federation this year. If you haven't yet made your contribution for the Campaign, I hope you will consider responding to the mailer sent out last week, or going online and making your donation there (www.readingjewishcommunity.org).

For a variety of reasons, fundraising for our Campaign has been a bit challenging over the past few years; however, the needs of our community are growing. Many see us as a JCC where we provide programming for community members of all ages, but Jewish Family Service has become a very important lifeline in our community. We fund utility bills and rents in times of need and we hate to say no, but sometimes we have to because the funding just isn't there.

With the exception of small financial gifts to Meir Panim, a food pantry in Israel, and Yemin Orde, an Israeli boarding school that takes in Jewish children from all over the world, all money raised by the Campaign stays right here in Berks County.

I've always loved the saying "many hands make light work," but I can't emphasize it enough when it comes to giving to the Campaign. We only ask for what you can afford to give and if everyone participated, we would be able to do so much more. Whether your capacity to give is $1 per day, or more, or less, we will appreciate it as the meaningful gift it is meant to be. All I ask if that when you give, you give with your whole heart …your extra is someone else's need.

Thank you in advance for your support and wishing you all the best in the new year.

DONATE NOW TO OUR JEWISH COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN

Please visit ReadingJewishCommunity.org

Make your gift today!

From the CEO's Desk

Try these Jewish New Year's resolutions

By Brian Chartock
CEO

Dear Federation community,

At the beginning of every Jewish New Year, I often find myself a bit puzzled by the word "resolution."

According to Wikipedia, a New Year's resolution is a tradition, most common in the Western world but also found in the Eastern world, in which a person resolves to continue good practices, change an undesired trait or behavior, accomplish a personal goal or otherwise improve their behavior.

Personally, I continually strive to improve myself and endeavor to become a better version of myself. While it is not always easy, it is always worth the effort and affords me the opportunity for self-growth toward positive change.

What role does the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks play in your New Year's resolutions?

Your Jewish Federation truly is an amazing place … just look through this issue of *Shalom* and you will see how the Federation, Jewish Family Services, Jewish Cultural Center and Lakin Preschool serve as the hub of Jewish culture, community and education, together with our partner synagogues. Federation works hard for you throughout the year to offer education, programming, and opportunities for you to become involved in making a difference in our Jewish community.

So now…my challenge to each of you:

As we are taught, challenges often lead to great opportunities.

Recognizing that many are already involved in the Berks Jewish community, may I humbly say thank you. But there is always more to do and more ways for you to be an integral part of our Jewish community.

Allow me to suggest some Jewish New Year's resolutions for your consideration.

1. Join a Federation committee
2. Take your children and yourselves to services
3. Attend a Federation program
4. Support JFS food pantries and efforts in Tikkun Olam
5. Make a pledge to Federation's Annual Campaign and, if you already demonstrate financial support, perhaps stretch your gift a little bit more.

By the way, the above is just a sampling of suggestions and opportunities; moreover, it is OK to do more than one and find others. I remain confident that you will be happy that you did.

I would be delighted to help guide you personally on your Jewish journey in learning more about Federation. Please contact me at brianc@jfreading.org.

Throughout Jewish history, the focus on community has and continues to serve the primary organizing structure of Jewish life. Regardless of where residing, Jews have constructed synagogues and communal organizations. In Judaism, it is incumbent that community provides for all its member's needs.

So much of what Federation does fulfills this duty and with your renewed commitment of your time and financial support, our Jewish community will continue to not only thrive today, but will lead those who follow us in the future.

Thank you and Shalom,
Brian

Berks History Center, Jewish community collaborate

By Susan Weiser

As president of the Berks History Center at 940 Centre Ave. in Reading, one of my first initiatives was an important topic of awareness between the Jewish community and the rest of Berks County. After discussion with executive director Ben Neely, he eagerly approved to pursue this subject.

To get things started, I spoke to leaders of the Jewish Federation of Reading and Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom. There was an undeniable current of excitement about this project. At the same time, many had not heard of the Berks History Center, were not familiar with the location, the Historical Society museum, or the Henry Janssen research library.

As I toured the museum, it became evident there was a lack of representation pertaining to the contributions and presence of the area's Jewish population. I did recognize a few Ben Austrian paintings on display. Austrian is a well-known name in the community, and not only because of Ben's accomplishments in the art world. His father, Raphael, is credited as a founding member of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom in 1864.

Jews migrated to the region as early as the mid-1700's. Researching a Jewish-themed story years ago for the history center's Historical Review magazine, I learned that the Janssen library had limited photos, records, and generalized information on the Jewish community. Lisa Adams, the library assistant, told me that "donations of this kind of material are rare coming from the Jewish community."

I am happy to announce our first Jewish speaker series features Michele Leisawitz and Stacy Seltzer highlighting the stories related to the Holocaust of their grandparents Esther and Sidney Bratt. This event will take place Wednesday, Oct. 18 at 3 p.m. in the auditorium of the Berks History Center. Reservations are required.

Please spread the word to your friends, family and co-workers. Admission is $8 for the general public, $5 for History Center members.

The Holocaust program is just the beginning of the series at the center. Keeping that in mind, an individual membership of $60 or family membership of $75 includes the quarterly Historical Review magazine, discounts on fabulous bus trips, interesting programs throughout the year and access to the museum and library.

Another exciting category is introducing small exhibits showcasing Jewish community members and their commitment, successes, and contributions to Berks. For this to happen, I need your help in gathering memorabilia, photos, artifacts, and information to place on display.

Please contact me at satkinsw@juno.com if you are interested in this important venture, and I will be glad to assist in the endeavor.

The story of Esther and Sidney Bratt will be shared with the Berks County community Oct. 18 by their granddaughters Michele Leisawitz and Stacy Seltzer at the Berks History Center

Change and inclusiveness can only come from all of us as we work together toward a brighter future.

JFR boards take part in discussion on Israel

By Laurie Waxler

Board members from the Jewish Federation of Reading and our new Foundation Board took part in a learning opportunity in September. Inspired by a group of anonymous donors, our board members were challenged to read the book "Israel, A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth," by Noa Tishby. They then participated in a two-hour discussion moderated by Lehigh Valley native Ari Mittleman, author of "Paths of the Righteous: Stories of Heroism, Humanity and Hope." Mittleman works at the nexus of politics, policymaking and the press in Washington and was a wealth of information for our participants.

The group discussed topics such as Zionism, the history of Israel and the current wave of antisemitism. They had some constructive conversations about the BDS (boycott, divest, sanction) movement seen on today's college campuses and how our children might stand up to the misinformation. The evening closed with discussions about Israel today and into the future, addressing some of the current events happening in Israel today.

We are thankful to our donors for allowing our board to learn more about Israel and its many complicated facets, and gain a better understanding of some common misperceptions. The group also freely debated some of the current events happening right now. The discussions were lively and respectful and gave our board members a wonderful opportunity to have a better understanding of each other.

Ari Mittleman

The Federation has a few extra copies of the Israel book if you'd like to borrow it and read it yourself. Just give us a call to reserve your copy today … 610-921-0624.

Shalom

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General Offices: 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125
Wyomissing, PA 19610
Phone: 610-921-0624 **FAX:** 610-929-0886
Web site: www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org

Jewish Federation of Reading
CEO: Brian Chartock
Chair: Sheila Bornstein
Communications Director: Mark Nemirow, Editor
Proofreaders: Federation staff

The opinions expressed in Shalom are of the writers and not the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Simchat Torah and our understanding of time

By Rabbi Brian Michelson
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

There are two, fundamental stories that one can tell about the nature of time:

In the first, most common in the ancient world, time is envisioned as a vast, unbroken circle. The moon waxes and wanes each month, then it repeats. The seasons progress in an endless loop. Babies are born, people die, and those babies have babies and then grow old. What was once will inevitably be again. There is nothing new under the sun.

The second story is: Time is a line, a series of events that make up a journey from one stage to the next. Woven into the concept of linear time is the notion of progress. In a circle, there is no possibility of progress, because every step that one takes leads you closer to where you started. If time is linear, then history is the journey toward the present, and the present gives way to the future.

Let me put this in terms that most of us can understand, the iPhone 24 follows the iPhone 23, and never the other way around. (Yes, I do know that we have not yet gotten to the iPhone 24, but we will.) Time must always flow forward.

Simchat Torah, the celebration of the annual cycle of Torah reading, added as an extra celebration at the end of the holiday of Sukkot, uses aspects of both definitions of time. On one hand, Simchat Torah is all about circles. As soon as we complete the final reading from Deuteronomy, we go back to the beginning and start all over again. We dance the hakafot, circuits carrying the Torah, in which we symbolize the process of reading and re-reading that has defined Jewish life for millennia. In Perkei Avot, there is a famous statement by Rabbi Ben Bag-Bag (who had a funny name-name): Turn it (Torah) over, and turn it over again, for everything is in it. … Do not move away from it, for you have no better portion than it. (Avot 5:22)

Yet, the Torah rejects the notion that time is a continuing loop. It begins with the story of Creation — the idea that time has a beginning and from the outset, a sense of purpose. Abraham sets out on a quest, leaving his past behind to forge a new life and a new faith. The story of the Exodus from Egypt is the foundational story of our history. It marked a particular moment in time and the evolution of the Jewish people. It is not a circle, but a straight line forever heading from the past to the present, and we hope, into the future.

Simchat Torah does not require that we have one single understanding of time, rather, it tries to remind us to see the truth in both. There is great comfort and meaning in returning to the same stories year after year. However, the High Holidays that we just celebrated remind us that it is not sufficient to simply stay the same. Our world ought to always be on a journey toward greater freedom and a brighter future. The readings stay the same, but we are meant to change, to strive, to grow. On Simchat Torah, we affirm the truth of the circle and the line and rejoice in the intersection between them.

My thanks to Rabbi Adam Greenwald for the idea behind this column.

Maimonides Society learns about Cross Polarized Light Photomicrography

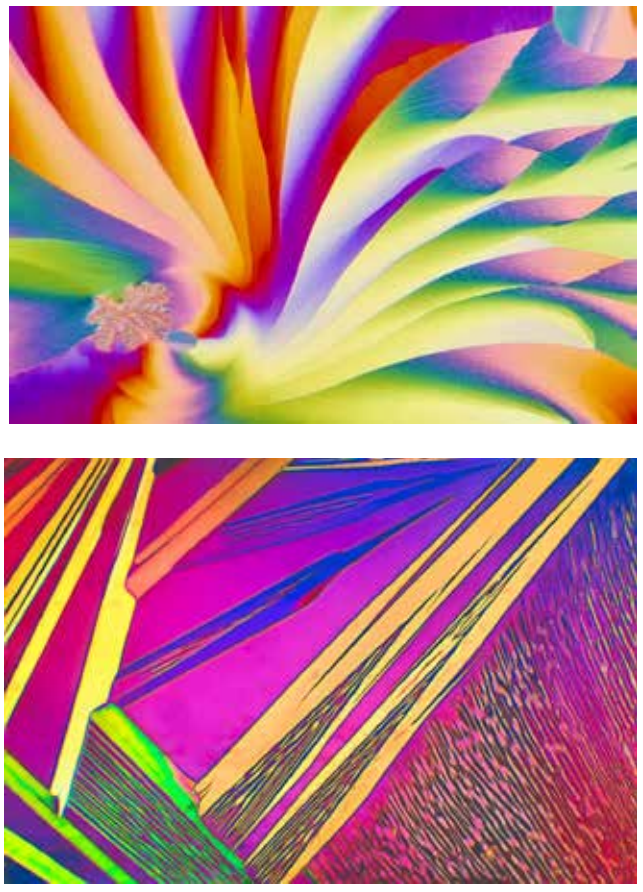
By Laurie Waxler

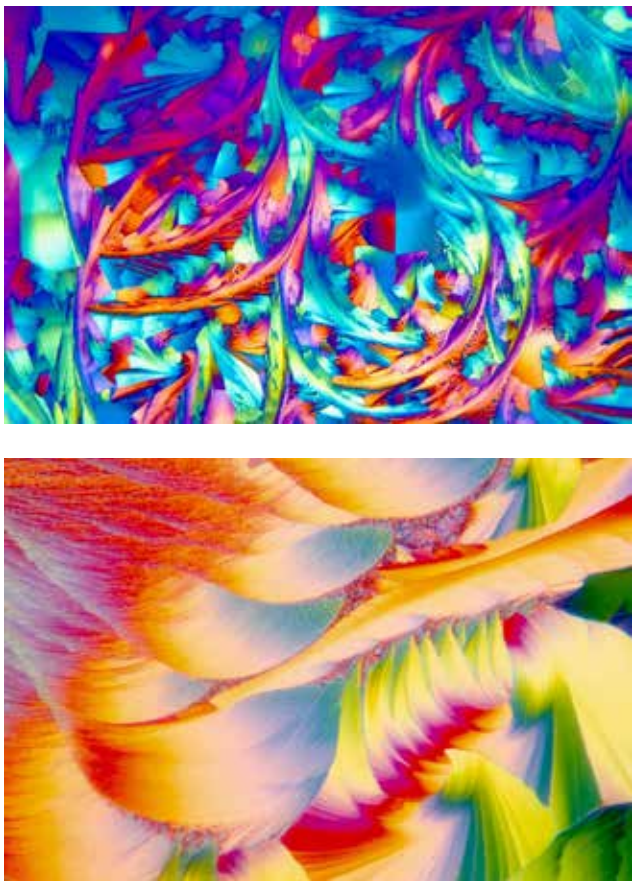
The Maimonides Society met on, Sept. 10 at the JCC and learned about Cross Polarized Light Photomicrography, presented by Ivan Bub, MD, retired family practice physician. Ivan said that when he had his Bar Mitzvah, he asked his older brother for a microscope. He not only got the microscope but the whole kit to accompany it, and it's been a love affair ever since.

Ivan is also a huge fan of photography. With his self-taught techniques in photo-microscopy, and those he's learned in his world travels, he was able to bring the two together to produce incredible images. He uses a variety of substances including Tylenol, salicylic acid, menthol, and anything else he thinks might be interesting to explore. =

Ivan offered a demonstration, producing a slide of the substance and then putting it under the microscope, making the crystals visible by screen to the audience. By using a variety of filters and polarized light, he was able to produce amazing color combinations and at times, you could even see the crystals growing right in front of you. As Ivan says, "no two will ever be the same" and "you never know what you're going to get."

Ivan teaches students in grades 6-12, at the Total Experience Learning center at Albright College. For health care professionals, Ivan is living proof there is life after retirement as he truly enjoys working with the students and shared a video of theirproductions of a variety of photography techniques. Many thanks to Ivan for sharing his passion with the group.





Images created by Ivan Bub. The one on the bottom right was used on the cover of Tower Health's Transformative Medicine Journal.

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Edwin & Alma '51 Lakin Holocaust Library and Resource Center

BERKS HISTORY CENTER

The Berks History Center, 940 Centre Ave. Reading, PA, is proud to present

Sidney and Esther Bratt

Holocaust survivors currently residing in Wyomissing

Join us as Michele Leisawitz and Stacy Seltzer share their grandparents' stories of survival

Wednesday, October 18 at 3 p.m.

$8 Admission/(BHC members $5) Please RSVP at 610-375-4375

Esther was only nine years old when the Nazis invaded her hometown of Vilna, Poland. Sid was also a young child when his mother made the unthinkable decision to send him to England. As the third generation (3Gs), Michele and Stacy strive to keep their family stories alive. Stacy currently serves as president of 3G Philly and will share more about the organization and its mission after the program.

Lakin Preschool off to a terrific start

By Judy Lefante and Wendy Bright
Lakin Preschool

Lakin Preschool had a super start of the school year. Thank you to Olivia Doll for creating a beautiful balloon arch to welcome all of our students. Parents were thrilled to take their child's first day of school picture.

A special thank you to Carole Robinson for celebrating our First Shabbat of the school year with the children.

They learned about the traditions of Shabbat. Carole brought a Tzedakah box to Lakin and explained the meaning of giving.

Children put coins in the box and will have their own box at home to fill. The donations will be given to the Jewish Federation of Reading at the end of the school year.

Thank you, Carole for sharing Rosh Hashanah stories and wisdom with the students of Lakin Preschool.

The children are so excited to be back at school with their friends and teachers.

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Kids ages 7-11 — Be sure to grab your Berks Interfaith Passport!

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Berks Interfaith Passport is a new chance to explore Judaism as well as learn about Christianity and Islam with other kids your own age! This program is your opportunity to ask questions and learn about other faith traditions. There are no dumb questions, and this is a way for you to explore and experience the world in a new way, all without leaving Berks County.

Jewish Federation of Reading is launching this interfaith program funded by PJ Library, Berks Interfaith passport, a program connecting families interested in exploring different religions in the county. The program is a partnership with Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and Immanuel United Church of Christ. It is led by: Rabbi Brian Michelson, Rev. Megan Huesgen, Rev. Jayme Babczak, Amanda Hornberger and Ziv Laskin. Parents are welcome to attend both sessions to learn along with their children.

Our program kicks off this fall with an introduction to Judaism with Rabbi Michelson of RCOS. Our group will gather twice in October: first on Sunday, Oct. 22 at 4 p.m. for an introduction to Judaism held at Wyomissing Public Library. Later that week we will visit RCOS for its Friday night service and share a meal together.

Berks Interfaith Passport is open to kids ages 7-11. Please invite your Jewish and non-Jewish friends to participate in this free program so we can all learn together!

Please email info@jfreading.org to RSVP or call 610-921-0624 for more information.

This program is generously funded through a grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

Literatour Berks author gets canceled … but not in Reading

By Amanda J. Hornberger

One of the best parts of Literatour Berks is meeting new authors with great books on interesting topics and bringing them to Berks. In fall 2020 we hosted Rachel Beanland for a virtual session on her debut novel, "Florence Adler Swims Forever". This year, our Literatour committee was thrilled to learn that Rachel was back again with the Jewish Book Council with her new historical fiction novel, "The House Is on Fire".

Based on the true story of Richmond's 1811 theater fire that killed 72 people, "The House Is on Fire" is told from four viewpoints including that of a Black slave woman. This fact and the mention of slavery in the novel led to Beanland being uninvited to an author event at the Mandel JCC in Boynton Beach and Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. Beanland posted on social media emails in which the committee at the Mandel JCC asked if she would address slavery in her presentation and mentioned concerns due to the political climate in Florida. Mandel JCC CEO Jesse Rosen later apologized to Beanland and invited her to another event there, which she declined. Members of our community may have learned of this story as it was widely reported in the national Jewish press.

Rachel Beanland

The committee for Literatour Berks is proud to host authors and books on a variety of diverse and sometimes challenging topics. We look forward to bringing Rachel Beanland, in-person, to Reading during her visit on April 3 as part of this new season of Literatour Berks.

In the meantime, we encourage you to read "The House is on Fire". It is one of the top books for 2023 for some members of our Literaour Berks committee and we think you will learn something from this fascinating story. Copies of "The House is on Fire" are available at Berks County Public Libraries and copies will be available for purchase and signing at Beanland's event in April.

JewishCulturalCenter

92nd St. Y Programs
Game Nights
Community Shabbat
Reading Jewish Film Series
Great Decisions
Interfaith Mitzvah Day
Yom Ha'atzmaut
PJ Library
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Youth Events
Purim Masquerade Party
Bridge
Chevra
Mahjong
Trips to NYC/Philadelphia
Lakin Holocaust Library
& Resource Center
Shabbat B'yachad
Community Calendar

ROMEO keeps growing

By Jeff Bornstein

In spite of extremely hot weather, vacations and other circumstances, a large group of 12 ROMEO'S (Retired Old Men Eating Out) joined for our September luncheon.

We met at Mimmo's Italian Restaurant on a hot Sept. 5 and were seated on the outdoor deck under the permanent awning. The awning and fast-moving fans kept the temperature pleasant and allowed us to have our usual great discussions and enjoy each other's company. Our group had one new member continuing the growth in our membership.

ROMEO meets at noon the first Tuesday of every month except when it falls on a holiday. Our next meeting will be indoors at noon on Oct. 3 at the Wyomissing Restaurant and Bakery 1245 Penn Ave. Wyomissing.

Please join us – you don't need an invitation and don't need to be retired to eat lunch.

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Successful Mitzvah Project for KZ

The Kesher Zion Social Action Committee would like to thank everyone who donated in support of its latest mitzvah project. Committee members delivered a car full of clothing to Hope Rescue Mission and a car full of children's items to The Life House. They are grateful that they could give the community's used items to those who truly need them.

Holocaust movie inspiration dies at age 91

By Jennifer Goss

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of our friend Frank "Misa" Grunwald. Frank passed away on Aug. 30 at his home in Indiana after a brief illness. He would have celebrated his 91st birthday on Sept. 30. Frank was the focus of "Misa's Fugue," an Emmy-nominated documentary created by students and teachers at Fleetwood Area High School under the direction of Sean Gaston and Jennifer Goss. The Jewish Federation of Reading was a key supporter of this incredible film.

Born in Olomouc, Czechoslovakia to Vilma and Kurt Grunwald, Frank had a peaceful and wonderful childhood in Prague with his older brother, John. In 1938-39, the family's life was irrevocably altered by the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. By the time the war and the Holocaust ended, only Frank and Kurt would survive. In 1952, they came to the United States to start their lives over but the holes left by the deaths of John, Vilma and countless other family members still remain. Frank would go on to graduate from the Pratt Institute in New York and to a successful career as an industrial designer. He married his wife Barbara and raised two sons, Tim and Andy, who subsequently gave the family 5 beautiful grandchildren.

In 2010, Frank entered our lives through the Belfer "Next Step" conference in Indianapolis. At the behest of our friend and colleague, he shared his story with the educators in attendance, which included Sean.

Sean was captivated by Frank's story, including the never before publicly mentioned letter Vilma wrote to Kurt just before her death in Auschwitz-Birkenau on July 11, 1944. That night, he called Jen and the genesis of the film that would

Sean GAston, Frank Grunwald and Jennifer Goss

become "Misa's Fugue" began. Within two weeks, the Federation signed on to support the film from start to finish.

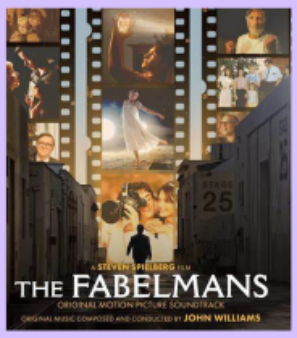
The process of making a film is long and arduous. Jen said: "Through it, we got to know Frank as more than just a man and a Holocaust survivor. He became a friend and extended member of our families. We shared celebrations and sorrows, humor and serious conversations. Over the course of the past 13 years — nearly 13 years to the day we first traveled to Indianapolis to film, we both came to love Frank and his wife, Barbara, and cherish the relationships we built with him."

It is without a doubt that there will be a tremendous void in our lives but we are so grateful that he took a chance on two young teachers from Pennsylvania who had a dream to preserve his story for future generations. It gives us solace that Misa's story will continue to be shared and that his name will live on forever. May his memory be a blessing.

To read Frank's full obituary, it can be found at: https://www.indystar.com/obituaries/ins152554

October 30 at 1:00

Movie Monday



"The Fabelmans"

A coming-of-age story about a young man uncovering a shattering family secret and the power of film and imagination to help us see the truth about ourselves and each other. Inspired by Steven Spielberg's own childhood.

RSVP by calling the JCC at 610-921-0624 or email info@jfreading.org

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Grab a seat for a Jewish themed movie each month at the JCC. It is usually held on the 4th Monday of the month, the popcorn and the movie are both free!

Obituary

Robert Pollack , 69, of Wyomissing passed away Aug. 22. He is survived by his wife, Judy; daughter Susan Pollack- Esposito, her husband Jason Esposito, and brother Stephen and his companion, Tonie. Bob graduated from Blue Mountain High School and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Lehigh University. For more than 40 years he was the president of S. Pollack, Inc., a family-owned fur business established more than 123 years ago. Bob served on many local boards including the Reading Symphony Orchestra (as president), United Way of Berks County (as treasurer), Alvernia University and many others. Bob, an avid tennis player, served as an assistant coach for the University of Delaware women's tennis team and was a USPTR certified tennis instructor. He took pride in coaching his daughter Susan and many youth players over the past 40 years. In his spare time Bob enjoyed crossword puzzles, watching professional wrestling and reading about history and current events. He will be remembered for his silly sense of humor and his ability to light up a room.

John Moyer, 90, of Wyomissing died on Sept. 15. John served as the general manager for a division of Rockwell International and later as President of Wildman-Jacquard, making significant contributions to the local textile industry. He is survived by his wife, Deborah Goodman; his children Jason Moyer and Megan Moyer (Karen Boginski), his step-sons Larry (Kate Golden) and Sam Reading (Alex Minehart) and his step-grandchildren, Max, Elizabeth and Violet Goodman.

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM

Enjoy tax benefits when you donate your vehicle to JFS. Contact Carole at 610-921-0624 or CaroleR@JFReading.org or go to https://careasy.org/nonprofit/JFS-Reading.

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Jewish Family Service

Community of caring

By Carole Robinson

Holidays are a time for family and friends. On Rosh Hashanah, I was blessed to be surrounded by most of my large family of siblings, children, and grandchildren, as well as some cherished friends. As a group, we are generally likeable (despite an occasional whining toddler), frequently laughing, and always loud. Amidst the joyous chaos, I realized that being part of a loving family guarantees you will seldom have the opportunity to feel lonely.

We share stories, exchange viewpoints, and even sometimes disagree with one another, but we also exchange hugs and offer support. Although my family does not live locally, they are only a phone call away, providing me with the emotional connections necessary for me to feel happy. In fact, my phone is constantly buzzing with messages or calls from one family member or another, ensuring that my day is filled with caring interactions.

When I reflect on the connections that I have, it saddens me to realize that there are people who do not have the same family experience. In fact, according to Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, many Americans are experiencing an "epidemic of loneliness."

This epidemic is "like hunger or thirst. It's a feeling the body sends us when something we need for survival is missing." In addition to affecting our emotional well-being, the health risks associated with prolonged loneliness are similar to smoking 15 cigarettes a day and more deadly than consuming six alcoholic drinks a day. Loneliness increases the risk of heart disease by 29%, the risk of stroke by 32%, and the risk of developing dementia in older adults by 50%.

Those are some frightening statistics, but the good news is that there are ways for us to address it. Nicholas Kristof, Opinion Columnist in The New York Times, wrote "We Know the Cure for Loneliness. So Why Do We suffer?" In his article, Kristof provides examples of how other countries tackle loneliness:

- Appointing a "Minister for Loneliness"
- "Chatty benches," encouraging conversation between strangers.
- "Talking cafes," places to meet new people and make new friends
- "Community Connectors," programs to bring neighbors together.

This is encouraging to read about, but it still raises the questions, "How can we as a Jewish community address our own loneliness or the loneliness of others? How can we provide the social connections to build a strong and caring community?"

The good news is that the Jewish Federation and JFS offer many programs to appeal to a wide variety of interests and help provide these social connections! Programs include: Literatour for our book lovers, Walking Club if you're into fitness, Friendship Circle for our seniors, Movie Monday for our movie enthusiasts, Noontime Knowledge for cultural or educational programs, and Shabbat coffee hours.

Another option is to volunteer for JFS. In September several community members worked together to provide a Rosh Hashanah service and meal for 40 seniors. A big thank you to the following volunteers who made the day so meaningful: Paul Schwartz for your shofar blowing; Sue Farrara, Debra Montanino, Scott Bram, and Paul for serving food; Sheila Bornstein for baking numerous delectable desserts; Corinne Wernick and Debra for providing transportation; and Eddie Kazin and Sue for delivering meals. And a special thank you to Eric Shocket of Table 13 Catering, who catered our delicious luncheon!

Our volunteers got to witness first-hand how important it is to engage with others. Many of our community members live alone and do not have family nearby or close friends to provide physical and emotional support. Simply by volunteering to make a friendly phone call or visit, you will help us fight the "loneliness epidemic." So, come join JFS's wonderful core of volunteers and be part of our "Community of Caring."

JFS volunteers shine in September

JFS participated in the United Way Day of Caring with five volunteers from Morgan Corporation

JFS Food Pantry volunteers Pete Jacobson, Sid Lempiner and Paul Schwartz share as a smile as they wait to load the next car.

Many thanks to our
September Food Pantry Volunteers
who distributed 17,000 lbs. of food to
500 households.

Mary Anne Avins
Cindy Balchunas
Raymond Gehring
John Incledon
Pete Jacobson
Sid Lempiner
Mary Neville
Annette Peppard
Jenn Reilly
Mike Schein
Ellen Schwartz
Paul Schwartz
Oleg Umanov
Michael Warshaw
Phyllis Warshaw

Food Pantry
Friendship Circle
Counseling Services
Transportation
Financial Assistance
Hospital and Home Visitations
Living with Loss
Information and Referral
Case Management
Holiday Programs

JFS helps community celebrate New Year

Jewish Family Service offered Rosh Hashana services at the JCC and at the Highlands. Clockwise from top left, the service at the JCC led by Sari Incledon and Carole Robinson with shofar blowing by Paul Schwartz; Rabbi Brian Michelson at the Highlands; Mariette Jacobson praying; Elaine Safir and Rick Ullman taking part in a service.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

October 5 - "Sukkot Celebration"

Although we won't be in the sukkah, Friendship Circle will learn about Sukkot, the fall harvest holiday with Federation CEO Brian Chartock.

October 19 - "Adventures in Australia & New Zealand "

Travel vicariously with Joan Sherman and Debra Montanino to Australia and New Zealand, a trip that will include some Jewish highlights.

Friendship Circle is held twice a month on Thursday afternoons at 1:00 p.m. at the JCC. An optional lunch is served, followed by an entertaining or educational program or holiday celebration.

Programs are free; optional lunch is $7. Contact Carole at 610-921-0624 to make lunch reservations.

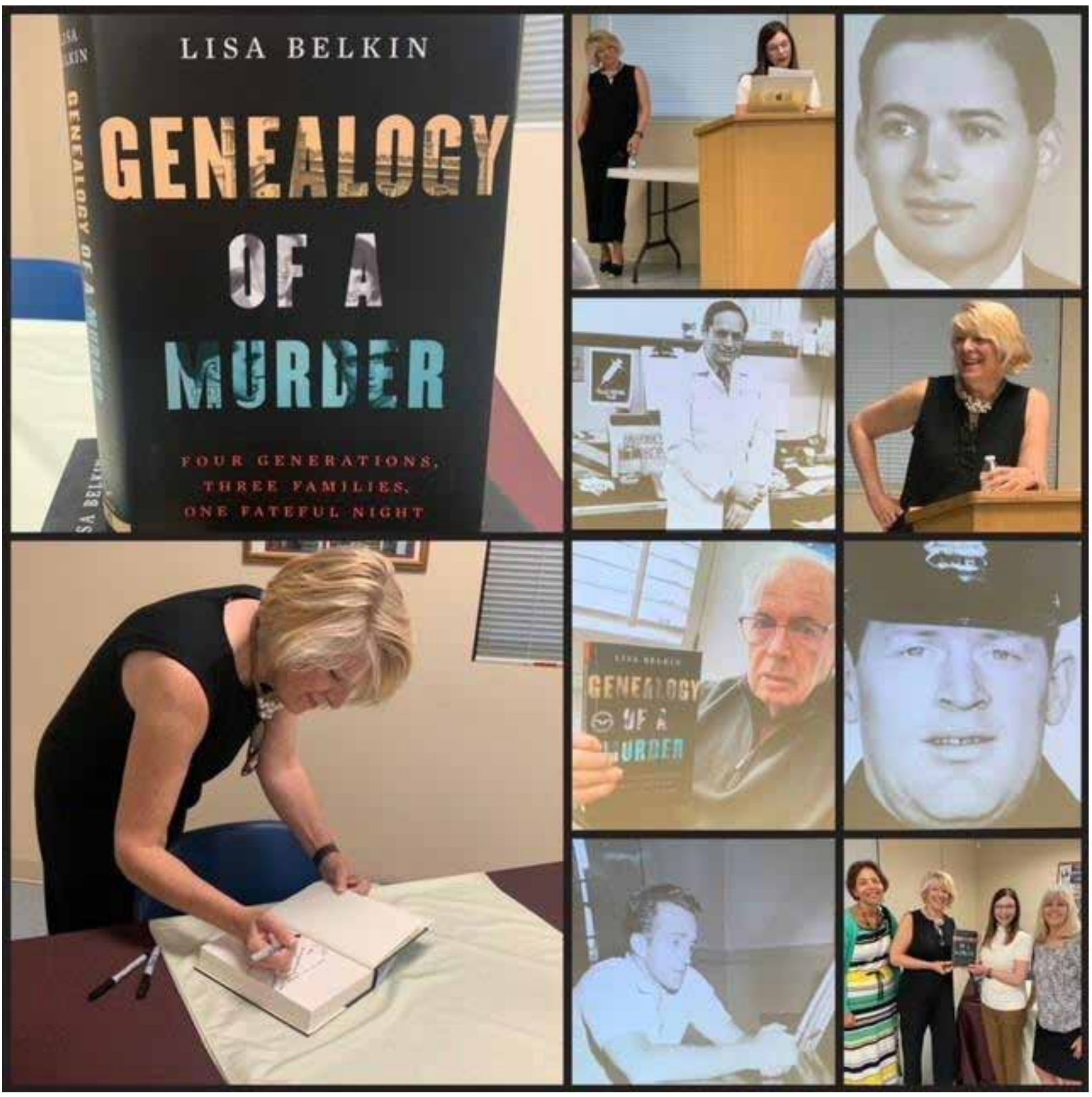
JFS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

This program provides transportation to members of the Jewish community, age 60 and over or those with disabilities, who have no other way of getting around. It allows participants to retain their independence and keeps them from becoming homebound and isolated. It can be used for medical appointments, synagogue attendance, shopping and other errands.

It is easy to participate. Purchase a book of 25 taxi tickets from the Federation at a cost of $25. Each coupon is worth $3. The phone number for Reading Metro Taxi is printed on the ticket book. Call the company and arrange your ride. At the end of the ride, sign your coupon(s) before giving them to the driver. Tipping is left to the passenger's discretion. The coupon does not include the cost of tipping.

This program is subsidized by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Author Lisa Belkin wows Literatour audience



Literatour Berks kicked off its fifth season at the Exeter Community Library on Wed. Sept 13 with Lisa Belkin, author of the riveting nonfiction book, "Genealogy of a Murder: Four Generations, Three Families, One Fateful Night."

Watch for many more Literatour events in the coming months

RCOS trip offers taste of history, Jewish cuisine

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom offered a late-summer trip to Ellis Island with a stop for a classic deli experience in New Jersey.

JFS hospital and outpatient visits

By Carole Robinson and Sari Incledon

Jewish Family Service social workers visit Jewish patients at local hospitals, senior communities, nursing homes and rehab centers.

Our goal in these visits is both to be friendly and supportive at a difficult time, and to provide access to social services that supplement and complement the case managers at these locations.

If you or a loved one is at a local hospital or nursing home and would like a visit, please call us.

If you or a loved one are treated at a hospital out of our area we are also available for follow-up visits upon discharge.

At times of ill health, stress or crisis, families are often looking for information about home care, transportation services, senior communities, nursing homes and rehabs. This is what we're here for.

Please call Jewish Family Service social workers for help at 610-921-0624.

JOIN US FOR OUR MONTHLY

NOONTIME KNOWLEDGE

Peggy Guggenheim: "Art Collecting Under the Nazis"
presented by:
Sara Howell of the Triptych Federation

Tuesday October 17 at noon at the JCC

The 1937 "Degenerate Art" show organized by the Nazis, branded Jewish, Cubist, Surrealist, and Abstract artists as a detriment to both the German economy and its people. Peggy smuggled the art back to New York under the guise of housewares. She transformed New York into the new center of the art world and popularized Modernism in the 1950s and 60s.

RSVP by calling the JCC at 610-921-0624 or email info@jfreading.org

Noontime Knowledge is a free program, held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, provided by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks to educate our community on a variety of topics

Yemin Orde, Meir Panim make difference in Israel

By Ziv Laskin

Society becomes a better place because of people's support for one other and their ability to share their advantages. Israel, a nation often known for its resilience and innovation, is not solely characterized by technological advancements but by a profound shift in how its people provide support for one another and share their advantages; thereby creating a society where compassion and opportunity thrive.

During my last visit to Israel, I had the opportunity to visit two amazing organizations that have major impacts on people's lives in Israel. These organizations are Yemin Orde and Meir Panim.

Meir Panim, which in Hebrew means "brightening faces", is a network of free restaurants and food pantries, that produce thousands of meals every day, feeding the hungry all over Israel.

While visiting in Meir Panim, I learned that it is also a place of home and family that gives hope and revitalizes lives. I met Ilanit Haputa, who is the manager of brunch Or Akiva. Ilanit demonstrated true kindness toward me. She serves as a mother and father of everyone — young and old alike. I witnessed teens volunteering side by side with Holocaust survivors. One of the teens told me that he comes to Meir Panim every week to obtain food for his family; moreover, he even became a Bar Mitzvah in Meir Panim. He shared with me more about the support he gets at school and how, through the teachings at Meir Panim, he learns to be a good person.

I also visited Yemin Orde Youth Village. Yemin Orde is located in one of the most beautiful landscapes in Israel; the Village is located on an edge of Mount Carmel with a beautiful view of the north coast.

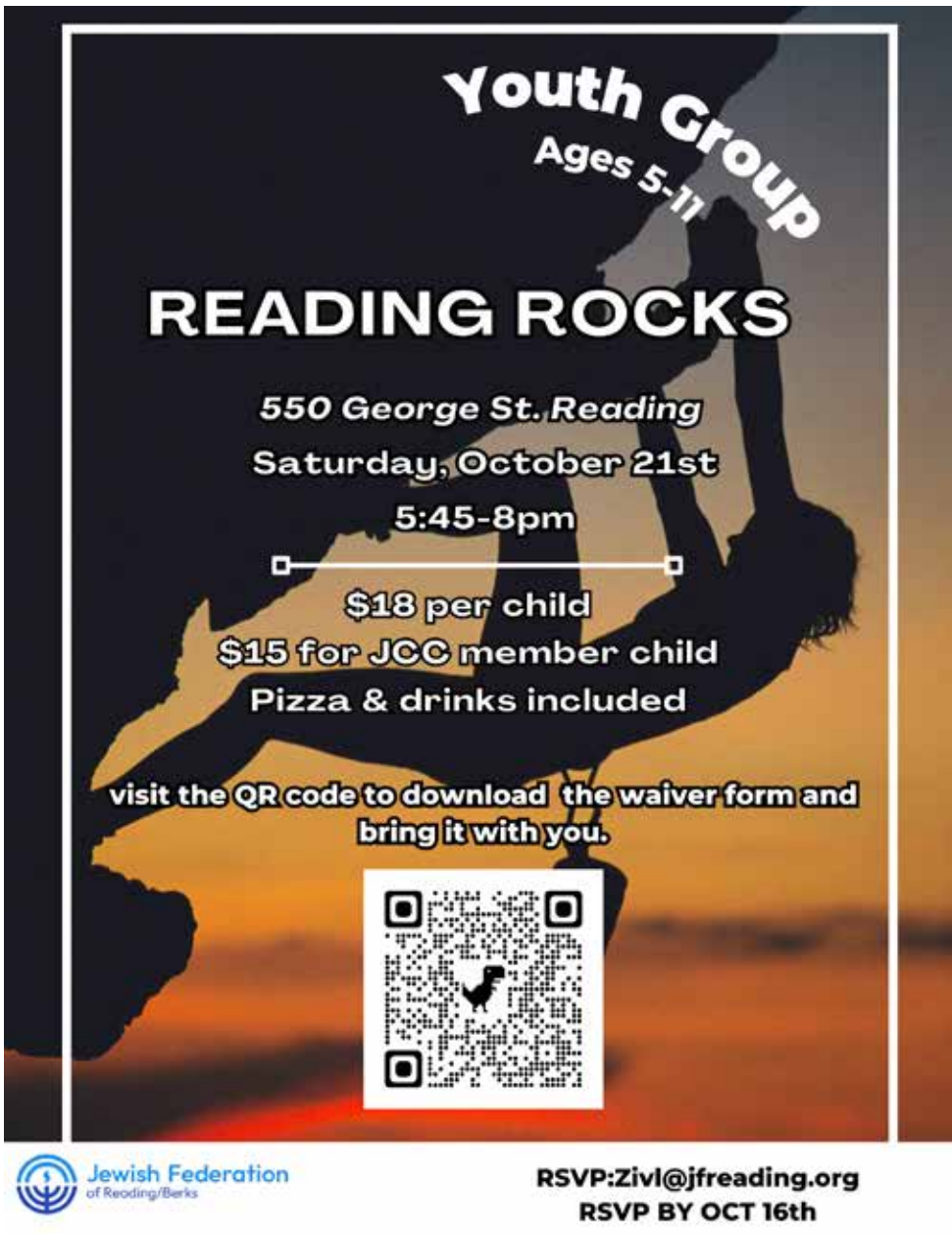
Yemin Orde Youth Village was founded in 1953 by the British Friends of Youth Aliyah and British Major General Orde Charles Wingate. It was established in order to provide a nurturing sanctuary and safe home to Jewish immigrant children left without a home as a result of the Holocaust. Today more than 450 immigrant Jewish youth from all around the world have found a home there and a place to get an education and achieve their dreams.

The Village offers a variety of classes and courses from agriculture and art to robotics and computers, which provides young people the support they need to reach their goals. Additionally, they learn about Zionism and Jewish culture and history, which strengthens greatly their sense of belonging to Israel. You can see the results from the high percentage of IDF officers that lived in the Village.

On Chanukah 2010 a fire occurred at Mount Carmel, killing 44 people; approximately 17,000 people were evacuated from their homes, and close to 25 square kilometers burned as a result. Yemin Orde youth were forced to evacuate as their lives were in danger. Many rooms and classes were damaged in the fire. The place that used to be a home for families was destroyed, but with resilience, determination and support the Village recovered and, once again, continues to constitute a safe haven for its residents.

These two organizations make Israel a better place to live and ensure every Jewish person in the world would have a safe place in Israel. The Jewish community of Reading has the honor of supporting these two vital organizations. As an Israeli and Jew, I am happy and take immense pride in this partnership.

A visit to Yemin Orde Youth Village, top, and Meir Panim, two organizations in Israel supported by local dollars from donors to the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks.



Representing Israel around the community

Shaliach Ziv Laskin has been busy leading fun, educational programs for the Jewish community and taking part in other activities around Berks.

With Hasna Bahar leading a falafel cooking class at the Exeter Community Library.

Above, Rosh Hashana celebration at Alvernia University, below, with Rabbi Yosef Lipsker at Alvernia's 9/11 commemoration.

Pomegranate Cocktail

By Ziv Laskin

Each year before Yom Kippur my family gathers for a tradition that my grandmother brought with her from Iraq. Kids and adults alike gather around the table and make a fresh pomegranate juice for Sukkot. I remember as a kid how I liked to squeeze the seeds of the pomegranate, it was so much fun! The taste of cold fresh pomegranate juice was incredible.

Last year I shared that tradition with our youth group and just like in Israel, it was fun and tasty. This year I would like to share my family tradition in a new way, Pomegranate Cocktail happy hour, for adults.

Join me to learn how to make your own pomegranate cocktail! More details regarding costs and food will be shared in our weekly emails. Save the date for Saturday, Oct. 28 at RCOS/KZ.

Time for Israel

By Ziv Laskin

Do you want to travel to Israel?

Would you like to know more Hebrew?

do you want to know more about Israel's culture, just because?

If you answered "YES" on one of the questions above, this program is for you!

Join me, Ziv, our Federation's Israeli emissary or Shaliach, and we can explore Israel together.

We will learn about cool places to visit, Israeli lifestyle and how to handle conversations with Israelis.

The program will take a place every Monday starting Oct. 9 via Zoom at 7 p.m.. Zoom link will be sent in the weekly email. The walking club is taking a hiatus for the fall and winter, so join me for this new, interactive program.

Federations aid earthquake victims in devastated Morocco

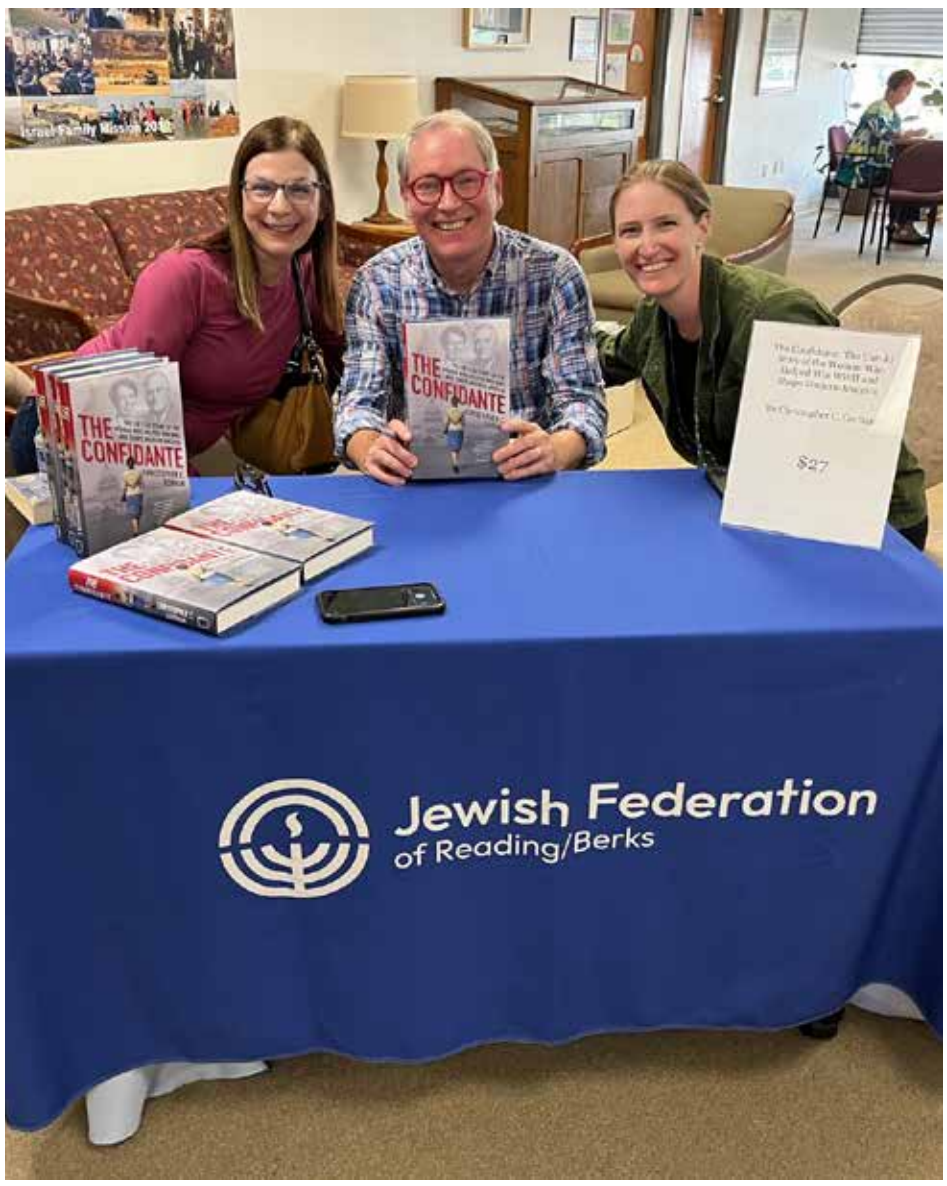
In response to the devastating earthquake that hit the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, Jewish Federations of North America have launched an earthquake relief fund to provide critical humanitarian aid and life-saving assistance to thousands of earthquake survivors.

Thanks to Jewish Federations' core funding, our overseas partners JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Center) and The Jewish Agency for Israel were immediately dispatched on the ground in Morocco to assess the needs and implement an immediate and comprehensive response.

Our donations will have a direct impact by assisting with distribution of urgent essentials including food, water, diapers, hygiene kits, clothing and blankets, providing medical equipment for damaged health facilities and meeting the emergency needs of members of Marrakesh's 120-strong Jewish community.

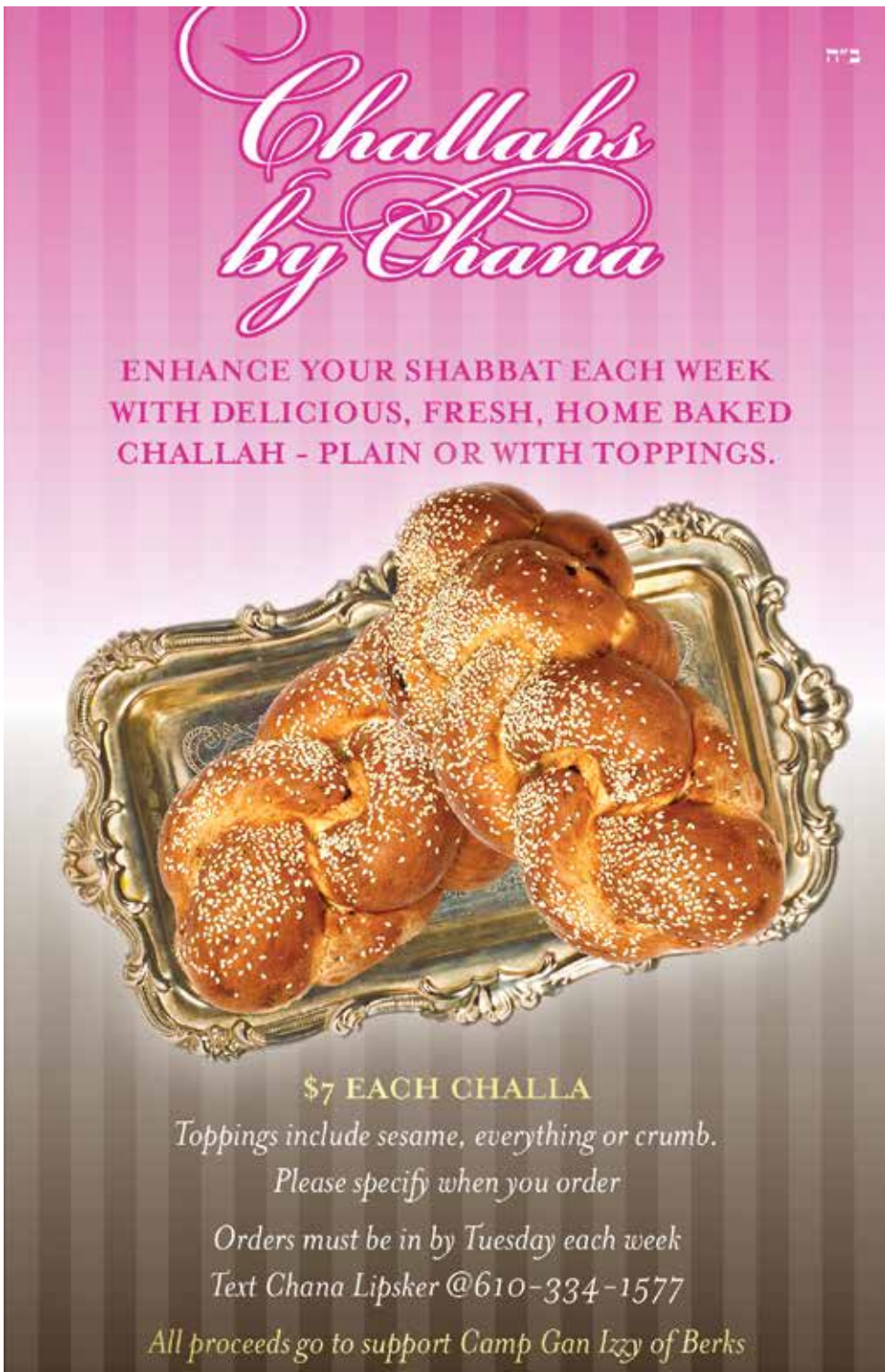
Jewish Federations have a long and storied history of response to global crises, aiding vulnerable Jewish populations and individuals of all faiths and backgrounds in the hardest-hit places. Funds have supported hundreds of relief efforts in the aftermath of major disasters, from California and Hawaii wildfires to tsunamis in Asia, to hurricanes and flooding in the Gulf to tornadoes in the Midwest.

"Jewish Federations of North America Board Chair Julie Platt said, "Our hearts and prayers are with the victims of this horrific earthquake. The tremendous impact of our collective Federation dollars and our long history of emergency response allows us to respond immediately and effectively in the face of catastrophe. Guided by our Jewish values, we remain committed to reaching out our hands to people of all faiths and backgrounds who are in distress."



A captivating afternoon

High school social studies teacher and Literatour Berks author Christopher C. Gorham wowed the crowd at Noontime Knowledge with the unknown story of Anna Rosenberg. Literatour Berks co-chairs Nancy Russo and Amanda Hornberger with Christopher at the event.



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

Contributions as of Sept. 15

Jewish Family Service

In memory of:

Harvey Seidel- Alan and Sue Weisberg
Robert Pollack- Corinne and Andy Wernick, Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer, Alan and Sue Weisberg, Sharon and Ron Berman, Betsy and Al Katz, Louise Zeidman, Corinne and Andy Wernick, Robin and Jess Drezner, Lynn and Dick Gordon, Jackye and Jim Barrer
Alan Bruce Dombek- Michael and Sue Farrara, Gordon and Carol Perlmutter

In honor of:

Michael Kastenbaum's new granddaughter - Jill Skaist and Elaine Safir

Harry & Rose Sack Fund

In memory of:

Robert Pollack - Amy Schein Hollowbush

Federation Jewish Community Campaign

In memory of:

Harvey and Renee Seidel - Elaine Safir, Amy and Jay Safir
Robert Pollack - Judy and Jim Schwank, Debbie and David Goldberg, Dena and Vic Hammel, Carol and Bernie Gerber, Anzie and Edward Golden
Rabbi Dov Lerner- Debbie, David, Scott, Mark and Abby Goldberg
Alan Bruce Dombek - Debbie and David Goldberg, Marty and Norma Beckerman, Vic and Dena Hammel, Myron and Karen Kabakoff
Robert Kauffman- Anzie and Edward Golden, Carol and Bernie Gerber
Ivan Botvin- Anzie and Edward Golden

Honorials and Memorials

Contributions may be made to the following Funds:

Federation Jewish Community Campaign
Jewish Family Service
Leo Camp Lecture Fund
JFS Food Bank
JFS Taxi Transportation Program
Holocaust Library & Resource Center
Doris Levin Fund
Sue B. Viener Memorial Fund for PJ Library
Harry & Rose Sack Fund
Evelyn Thompson Fund

Lakin Holocaust Library & Resource Center

In memory of:

Robert Pollack - Maralyn and Ken Lakin

In honor of:

Rosalye Yashek's 95th birthday - Elaine Safir

PJ Library

In honor of:

Barbara and Bernard Fromm's great-grandson - Sue Wachs
Michael and Susan Fromm's grandson - Sue Wachs
Dr. Michael Kastenbaum's grandchild -Sue Wachs
Barbara and Bernard Fromm's great-grandson - Deborah Goodman
Michael and Susan Fromm's grandson- Deborah Goodman

Jewish Family Service Food Pantry

In memory of:

Robert Pollack- Margo Thomas

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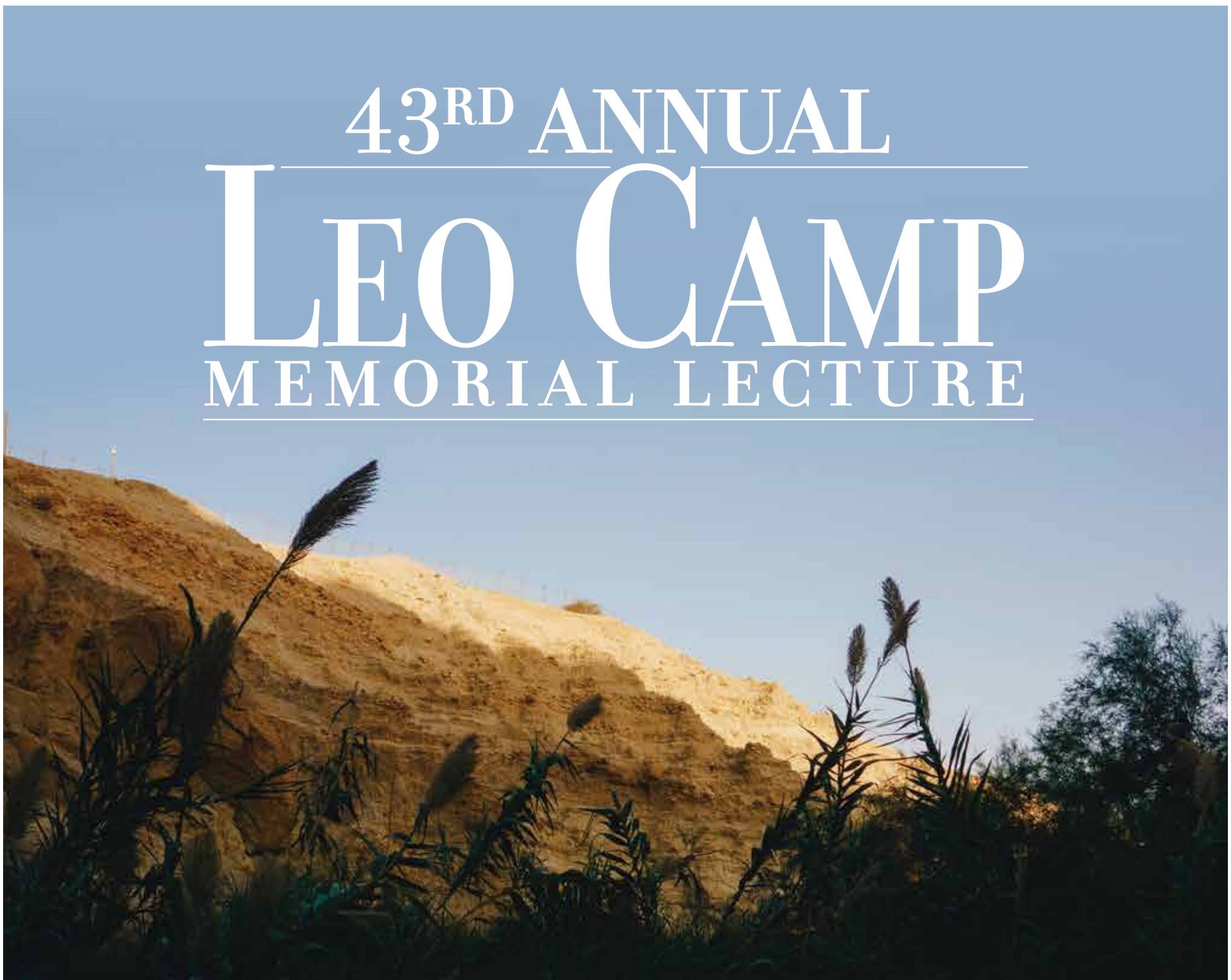
43RD ANNUAL LEO CAMP MEMORIAL LECTURE



Will the environment survive a renewed Middle East peace process? A blueprint for progress.

Presented by Alon Tal

MONDAY, OCT. 2, 7:30 P.M.

Albright College, Student Center, South Lounge. Experience Event. Free and open to the public.

Because of its modest size, Israel's environmental problems are largely transboundary. Cooperation with neighboring countries is needed to progress in areas from stream restoration to species repatriation. While reviewing over 20 years of regional "below the radar" environmental cooperation, speaker Alon Tal will discuss how the present peace process might be leveraged to ensure an ecological dividend for the region. **Alon Tal** is a Stanford Graduate School of Business visiting professor. He was a member of Israel's parliament and served as chair of the subcommittee for Environmental and Climate Impacts on Health from 2021 to 2022.
Sponsored by Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks. For more information, call 610-921-0624.

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