



Shalom05|19

The Journal of the Reading Jewish Community published by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

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- Israel Trips
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- Richard J. Yashek Lecture
- Transportation
- Maimonides Society
- Your Jewish Legacy
- 92ND ST Y Programs
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- Jewish Community
- Relations Council
- Community Holiday Programs
- Women's Philanthropy
- Jewish Federations of North America
- Counseling Services
- Leo Camp Lecture
- Shabbat B'Yachad

Annual meeting and picnic set for June 2 at Wyomissing Hills Park

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Gather your family and friends and join us in the park on Sunday, June 2 for the Jewish Federation of Reading's annual meeting and picnic! A free kosher picnic meal will be served after our annual meeting at noon. Guests will also be invited to swim, free of charge, at the Wyomissing Hills Pool, across the street from the park. For those not interested in swimming there will be plenty of yard games and other fun. Cool off with Rita's Italian Ice after all the fun and dancing.

The meeting will take place at Wyomissing Hills Park, 53 Valley Road in Wyomissing. Activities will start after the meeting and continue until 3 p.m. Free parking is available at the Wyomissing Hills Pool or on the street by the park.

We only ask that you kindly RSVP to Brenda by Friday, May 24 at 610-921-0624 or brendas@jfreeding.org. We hope community members of all ages will join us for this fun afternoon!



Making music at the 2018 community meeting and picnic.

A spotlight on women's philanthropy



Federation Women's Philanthropy sponsored an evening with author and activist Letty Cottin Pogrebin on April 16. The event, hosted by Tracy Rossi, featured a talk by Pogrebin and an opportunity for women in the community to connect with neighbors and friends and learn how they can achieve what they want for our community and families. Above, from left, Betsy Katz, Debbie Goodman with Letty Cottin Pogrebin; and Lisa Levine, Margo Levin and Debbie Goldberg.

Development

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



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Creating your Jewish legacy

By Richard Nassau
Development Director

Creating your Jewish legacy is easy to do. Be remembered forever in our Jewish community – leave a gift through your will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance.

Trees seem to be the image one uses when talking about legacies. Like the story about the father who planted a tree, so his children would have shade or fruit as in our tradition. It is a tree story about the future, about making sure.

Legacies are about making sure. Making sure more children can receive free Jewish books each month through PJ Library; Making sure Jewish families can



participate in meaningful programming with other Jewish families; Making sure the Jewish Family Service food bank can feed hungry families each month; Making sure every Jewish child in Berks County has the opportunity to attend a Jewish summer camp; Making sure senior citizens can receive companionship visits and transportation to doctor appointments. Creating your Jewish legacy makes sure we remain strong and vibrant. Legacies are the best way our community can continue to grow and help those who need us. We are a community that depends on each other. Legacies help connect us as a community working together. We all benefit however your legacy is to be used. Summer camp, PJ Library, food bank, transportation, where needed most or

something else. Our role here at Federation is to work with you to ensure whatever your choice, your legacy is carried-out in the way you want. We know Jewish communities in Berks County and around the world are changing. There is a tree image that answers this. It states, "Communities are like branches on a tree, we all grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one." Legacies are an important part of our future. The next time you see a tree and think about your Jewish legacy you might also recall an ancient Jewish teaching, "just as my ancestors planted for me, I plant for my children" (Talmud, Taanit 23b.) It is a teaching our parents and grandparents took to heart. For a confidential discussion about creating your legacy, contact me at richardn@jfreading.org.

Your impact: Feeding the world — one family at a time

By Richard Nassau

Federation's mission is rooted in our Jewish values. Values that are evident wherever your gift is used. You can actually see your gift repairing the world each month at our Jewish Family Service Food Pantry. Families are receiving food because of your support of JFS through Federation's community campaign.

Feeding families here in Berks County is visible. Not as easily seen is how you are feeding families overseas through a special Israeli agriculture project, Tikkum Olam Ventures, or TOV. It is run by Federation's partner the Joint Distribution Committee or JDC. Tikkum Olam Ventures helps deliver the results of Israel's revolutionary work in agriculture, like the Drip Irrigation System. Through TOV, farmers outside of Israel are learning how to use the system to make their land arable. They are feeding their families and helping to create a more stable local economy.

Eliran Douenias, a former JDC Ralph Goldman Fellow, said: "The idea behind TOV [is that] we were looking to bring these innovations that were developed in Israel and bring them to the developing world. And we were looking for a way to do it sustainably and create a model that would be replicable." TOV is taking these innovations to Ethiopia. Ethiopia, like Israel, is dominated by desert with many small farming communities with limited access to water. TOV will invest in five to 10 agricultural enterprises in Ethiopia, supporting more than 300 smallholder farmers. Pilot



sites will include Israeli drip irrigation equipment and other technology, hybrid seeds and specialized training. Douenias pointed out four major challenges faced by Ethiopians as well as 500 million other smallholder farmers in the developing world: "Farmers don't get access to the capital in order to buy what they need for their farm. They don't have the access to the specific technology that can help them improve yield and income. They don't have the access to the know how that should be gathered with the technology. Finally, many of these farmers live off the road, hours and hours from the main city and the big markets." Small farmers in Ethiopia have to overcome all of these barriers — and TOV helps them

do just that. Douenias said, "TOV's vision in Ethiopia is to create a way for farmers to get access to these innovations and technologies that can help them improve their lives by increasing productivity and income. Mudin Makaria, a small farmer in Ethiopia, has struggled to make his crops grow. His land is desert-like; sandy, mineral poor and far from an adequate water supply. It's been a challenge to feed and support his wife and seven children. Like all of the farmers in his community, he doesn't have money to invest in technology or even access to learn about new planting or watering methods. Speaking about Israel's technology and expertise, Makaria said, [it is] "significantly different compared to what I did before." He intends to use

it in all his fields. Many of his neighbors have expressed that they, too, would like to join the project. Over the first five years, the program aims to reach 5,000 farmers and aid 22,000 local citizens. As one of those 5,000 farmers, Makaria's green fields now supply a bounty of tomatoes, onions, and hot peppers. He knows that he is growing so much more than fresh food for his family — he is planting the seeds for an economically nourished community, whose impact will be felt for generations. An impact that is thanks to you and your support of our Reading/Berks Federation's community campaign. --- Adapted from material by Jewish Federations of North America.

It's Simcha Supplement time

If you had or are having a bar/bat mitzvah or graduation (high school or higher) in your family this Jewish year, share the good news with the community. Please submit a few sentences about the person and their accomplishment, along with a photo. Text and photos can be sent to Marknem@aol.com or to the Federation office.

DEADLINE IS APRIL 30.

WE CANNOT GUARANTEE PUBLICATION OF ITEMS SUBMITTED AFTER DEADLINE

From the President’s Desk

Long-range strategic plan approved

By William D. Franklin
President

Last June, several Board members asked how the Jewish Federation could change to ensure success in our new world. What steps would better engage all of our community and ensure a vibrant, healthy and proud to be Jewish community? How will we ensure that every Jewish person in need receives sufficient help? How do we establish active leadership development for all our community institutions? And more.



Planning started in June 2018 in consultation with Al Weber of Tweed-Weber Danks (TWD). Our first steps were multiple focus groups and a TWD community survey. The initial draft was reviewed, and preliminary strategies were established in January at the JFR Board retreat. Following the development of specific tactics, the JFR Board, at its April 11 meeting, voted unanimously to adopt a Long-Range Strategic Plan. Throughout the process, we listened to our community, our Board developed strategies, and our staff developed tactics. We are very excited about this new direction for our community.

This plan is the result of:

- Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the current Federation.
 - Defining the opportunities and threats we face now and in the future;
 - Articulating a set of strategic assumptions.
 - Targeting short-term actions that enhance long-range strategies.
- The plan focuses on five key strategies:
- We will evaluate current programs and services.
 - We will work to engage our currently disengaged community members.
 - We will, with our partner congregations, work to create a united Jewish community fully engaged in our

shared culture.

- We will reshape development activities to support ongoing operations and strategic initiatives.
- We will assess our leadership and governance structure to support the Federation of the Future.

We will establish accountability parameters and critical measures of success to continuously evaluate our effectiveness in affirming the Federation’s mission, vision, and values. Please join us in working together for one Jewish community.

The 2019-2020 Strategic Plan summary is available on the JFR web page: www.readingjewishcommunity.org/.

Yashek Lecture recounts heroism among Lithuania’s Jews

By Bruce Posten
Courtesy of Reading Eagle

Jews in the Lithuania capital of Vilnius, confined to a ghetto and forced into slave labor, were World War II heroes who risked their lives not by carrying guns in combat but by smuggling precious books, documents and religious scrolls.

The goal was to preserve 500 years of cultural history marked for destruction by the Nazis in the Baltic state.

The dramatic story was told and illustrated in a slide presentation by Dr. David E. Fishman, speaker at the 15th annual Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lecture in the McMillan Student Center at Albright College.



Dr. David E. Fishman delivers the Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lecture at Albright College.

Photos courtesy of Albright College

The annual memorial lecture at Albright College is named for Holocaust survivor Richard J. Yashek (1929-2005) and is supported by the Lakin Holocaust Library and Resource Center at Albright’s Gingrich Library and the Jewish Federation of Reading.

More than 150 people packed the South Lounge to hear Fishman, a professor of history at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Fishman is the author of “The Book Smugglers: Partisans, Poets and the Race to Save Jewish Treasures from the Nazis,” winner of a National Jewish Book Award.

“These are a people who wanted to do something important and meaningful and perhaps die for smuggling rare books rather than die for smuggling a potato,” Fishman said. “They were making an existential statement knowing they probably would be killed. They did it for future generations and that’s what makes them heroes, risking themselves for something bigger than themselves. They did what they could ... this is a story that truly inspires.”

Fishman explained that Vilnius, long known as Vilna, was a historic center of Hebrew and Yiddish printing from the 1500s. It was once claimed by Poland and Russia. The city had about 70,000 Jews, one-third of the total population. Two-thirds of those Jews were massacred, machine-gunned and dumped into pits outside the city, starting after some six months of Nazi occupation that began in 1941 and lasted to 1943 with the Soviet liberation.

“The Nazis actually arrived there late,” Fishman said.

After the initial Vilna massacre, some 20,000 Jews living on seven streets remained in the city, forced into a ghetto and into slave labor, often terrorized, beaten and even killed if found trying to smuggle food upon entering the ghetto gates after a day of labor.

“An opera singer was sent to death

for trying to smuggle a bag of peas,” Fishman said, describing the horrors of living conditions as well as the oppressive regulations such as not allowing Jewish women to give birth.

After a year and half of so-called stability in Vilna, Fishman said, Nazis decided to loot Jewish museums, libraries and a scientific institute, to remove literary treasures and artwork and take them to Germany.

Fishman said the Nazis were attempting to establish their own science dedicated to the study of Jewry with the express purpose of proving how inherently evil and depraved Jews were, justifying the Nazi need to exterminate them.

Johannes Pohl, a former Catholic marketing himself as a Judaic expert, became the leader of the looting mission that set a goal of destroying 70 percent of all manuscripts and sending the remaining 30 percent to Germany, Fishman said.

Such a task became so daunting that he decided to enlist what became known as the Paper Brigade, 20 Jewish intellectuals and 20 technical workers, well-educated in Hebrew and Yiddish and viewed as able to make discriminating choices on the fate of thousands of priceless manuscripts.

“For the Jews, this was excruciating work , forced to be complicit in the destruction of their own culture,” Fishman said.

It was this onerous task that prompted individual Jews to risk their lives to smuggle literary and religious treasures into the ghetto, hide them in bunkers, where guns were already being hidden and stored for a potential future uprising.

In his lecture, Fishman focused

on the personal trials of two poets, Shmerke Kaczerginski and Abraham Sutzkever, and a Jewish woman, Rachela Krinsky, who gave up her daughter to be raised by a Polish nanny after her husband was killed. The trio were key players in smuggling efforts and managed to survive the atrocities.

A fourth smuggler, Ona Simaite, a non-Jewish Lithuanian librarian, also had a role in saving books by claiming to collect overdue books from Jews, while secretly supplying some food and removing smuggled treasures and even some children when she departed the

ghetto after her regular visits.

Unfortunately, many literary works were destroyed when the Soviets entered Vilna, but those taken to Frankfurt, Germany, wound up in the American occupation zone after the war and were ultimately preserved in New York or Israel, Fishman said.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, more than 40 years after the war, more saved treasures became accessible in Lithuania.

“I’m sure there are materials still underground somewhere there,” Fishman said.

Shalom

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Special global documentary screening for International Holocaust Remembrance Day

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Back by popular demand, Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks, the Lakin Holocaust Library & Resource Center and Fox Theatres are proud to co-host an encore screening of “Who Will Write Our History” for Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day on Wednesday, May1.

In November 1940, days after the Nazis sealed 450,000 Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, a secret band of journalists, scholars and community leaders decided to fight back.

Led by historian Emanuel Ringelblum and known by the code name Oyneg Shabes, this clandestine group vowed to defeat Nazi lies and propaganda not with guns or fists but with pen and paper. The group told the truth and risked everything so that their archive would survive the war, even if they did not.

This amazing documentary was a hit at its first screening in January, and we hope even more community members will gather to hear this amazing story.

“Who Will Write Our History” will screen

on Wednesday, May 1, at 7 p.m. at Fox East, 4350 Perkiomen Avenue, Exeter Township (next to Boscov’s East).

A discussion led by Dr. Jennifer Koosed, Holocaust Studies faculty of Albright College, will follow the film.

Admission is \$5 and tickets can be purchased at FOX EAST beginning at 6:30 p.m. the day of the screening. Cash and checks are accepted.

We hope you can join us for this special encore screening!

Holocaust memorial event to be held May 2

By Amanda J. Hornberger

In honor of Holocaust Memorial Day, Yom Hashoah, Jewish Federation of Reading and the Lakin Holocaust Library & Resource Center will hold a commemorative candle lighting by our local Holocaust survivors and survivor family members at The Highlands on Thursday, May 2 at 7 p.m.

Local educator Sean Gaston will discuss Holocaust education and remembrance and his recent trip to Holocaust sites in Europe.

We will be holding an “Unto

Every Person There is a Name” ceremony, a unique project designed to perpetuate the memory of the Six Million murdered during the Shoah. This worldwide project offers the opportunity to memorialize them not only as a collective but as individuals —one at a time— through the public recitation of their names on Yom Hashoah. Emphasis is thus put on the millions of individuals— women, men, and children — who were lost to the Jewish people and not solely on the intangibility embodied in the term “The Six Million.”

The event is free and open

Community invited to share names of relatives who died in Holocaust

We are asking community members to submit the names of family members who perished during the Holocaust so that their names may be read aloud. Please provide the names, ages, place of birth and place of death (if known) to Amanda Hornberger for inclusion in this special name reading.

Names may be submitted to amandah@jfreading.org or by calling 610-921-0624 by April 30.

to the community. I hope you will join us at The Highlands at 7 pm on May 2 as we remember the Holocaust and honor those who survived. A light dessert reception will follow the event.

Lipstadt book is focus of 92nd Street Y program

By Amanda J. Hornberger

The community is invited to read the new book “Antisemitism: Here and Now” by Dr. Deborah E. Lipstadt. We will gather in June to discuss the book and watch Dr. Lipstadt discuss current antisemitism from her recent visit to the 92nd St. Y. The program date will be announced in the coming weeks, but we encourage the community to read the book prior to the program.

“Antisemitism: Here and Now” is available at local public libraries, Barnes & Noble and Amazon. The JCC also has a copy of the book.

From the publisher:

The award-winning author of “The Eichmann Trial” and “Denial: Holocaust History on Trial” gives us a penetrating and provocative analysis of the hate that will not die, focusing on its current, virulent incarnations on both the political right and left: from white supremacist demonstrators in Charlottesville, Va., to mainstream enablers of antisemitism such as President Donald Trump and British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, to a gay pride march in Chicago that expelled a group of women for carrying a Star of David banner.

Over the last decade there has been a noticeable uptick in antisemitic rhetoric and incidents by left-wing groups targeting Jewish students and Jewish organizations on American college campuses. And the re-emergence of the white nationalist movement in America, complete with Nazi slogans and imagery, has been reminiscent of the horrific fascist displays of the 1930s. Throughout Europe, Jews have been attacked by terrorists, and some have been murdered.

Where is all this hatred coming from? Is there any significant difference between left-wing and right-wing antisemitism? What role has the anti-Zionist movement played? And what can be done to combat the latest manifestations of an ancient hatred? In a series of letters to an imagined college student and imagined colleague, both of whom are perplexed by this resurgence, acclaimed historian Deborah Lipstadt gives us her own superbly reasoned, brilliantly argued, and certain to be controversial responses to these troubling questions.

Lipstadt is Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish History and Holocaust Studies at Emory University. She is the author of “History

on Trial: My Day in Court with David Irving” (a National Jewish Book Award winner); “Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory;” and “Beyond Belief:

The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933–1945.” She lives in Atlanta. Lipstadt spoke in Reading in 2011 at a Leo Camp Lecture.

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Maimonides Society presents Laurie Zoloth speaking on bioethics, Jewish studies

By Richard Nassau

Federation's Maimonides Society presents an evening with Laurie Zoloth, University of Chicago Divinity School Margaret E. Burton Professor of Religion and Ethics. The event is scheduled for May 14 at the Wyomissing home of Dr. Jonathan Primack and Pam Charendoff.

Advance registration is required. For more information on the event and the Maimonides Society, contact Federation at 610-921-0624 or info@JFReading.org.

Zoloth is a leader in the field of religious studies with particular scholarly interest in bioethics and Jewish studies. Her research explores religion and ethics, drawing from sources ranging from biblical and Talmudic texts to postmodern



Jewish philosophy. Her scholarship spans the ethics of genetic engineering,

stem cell research, synthetic biology, social justice in health care, and how science and medicine are taught.

She is the author of "Health Care and the Ethics of Encounter: A Jewish Discussion of Social Justice" and co-editor of five books, including "Notes from a Narrow Ridge: Religion and Bioethics and Jews" and "Genes: The Genetic Future in Contemporary Jewish Thought."

Prior to joining the University of Chicago, Zoloth served as a Charles McCormick Deering Professor of Teaching Excellence at Northwestern University. While at Northwestern, she was founding director of the Brady Program in Ethics and Civic Life and founding director of the Center for Bioethics, Science and Society.

Her extensive background includes serving as chair of the first bioethics advisory board at the Howard Hughes Medical Research Institute and as president of the American Academy of Religion and the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities.

The Maimonides Society of the Jewish Federation sponsors programs that bring together Jewish medical professionals. Society members continue the tradition of tikkun olam – healing the world. Members work to integrate Jewish values with community medical needs helping to improve the lives of people here at home, in Israel and around the world.

The society is open to health care professionals and welcomes new members.

Local contingent has powerful experience at AIPAC

By Bill Franklin

Fourteen members of our Reading Jewish community attended the annual AIPAC conference in March, giving Reading the highest per capita attendance in the country. We were among 18,000 pro-Israel Americans, two-thirds of Congress, 4,000 students from 630 campuses and 275 synagogue delegations. We heard from eight Israeli speakers, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and retired IDF Lt. Gen. Benny Gantz, along with the presidents of Guatemala and Honduras and the prime minister of Cabo Verde.

Meeting for the first time since freshman Democratic legislators brought renewed scrutiny on the American-Israeli relationship, politicians from both sides of the aisle delivered a clear message: Israel maintains strong bipartisan support in the halls of Congress.

Netanyahu stated strongly that "The reason Americans love Israel is because America and Israel share a love of freedom and democracy." House Speaker Nancy Pelosi promised that support for Israel will always be strong in Congress under her leadership: "From Israel's founding through the present day, our pledge remains the same. Israel and America are connected now and forever. We will never allow anyone to make Israel a wedge issue. That pledge is proudly honored in this Congress where support for Israel remains ironclad and bipartisan."

In addition to hundreds of breakout sessions, there were many exhibits showcasing Israeli innovative technology developments. Most of our group visited Capitol Hill to meet with U.S. Rep. Chrissy Houlahan and Sens. Bob Casey Jr. and Pat Toomey. The primary talking points were to urge their support for funding U.S. security assistance and missile defense for Israel; enhancing security and economic cooperation between the U.S. and Israel; and legislation opposing boycotts and supporting direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Our group, many of them first-timers, had interesting observations about what they learned and experienced.

Michael Karchevsky — "I very much enjoyed attending my first

AIPAC conference. Being curious on the single most important reason that non-Jewish politicians justify their support for the Jewish state, I learned that their unanimous answer was democracy, i.e. a country with similar values to ours. I loved seeing so many young Hillel delegates with views all over the political spectrum, but nevertheless united in their strong support for Israel. Despite 'brainwashing campaigns' at most colleges and universities to delegitimize Israel, seeing this new generation of Israel supporters gives me hope.

"I was most impressed with Daniel Gordis' eloquent summary of the last 2,000 years of Diaspora, describing the potentially hopeless situation of Jewry in January of 1946 compared to the current situation where Israel is surrounded by enemies, confronted by the BDS movement, nuclear threat from Iran, etc. That our people have persevered against such unthinkable odds gives me hope."

Don Abramson — "As a Jew, we all have different political views. We must look at the big picture and remember that AIPAC, a bipartisan organization that champions U.S.-Israeli cooperation and strength together promotes Jewish survival through a strong US and Israel.

"The speaker who impressed me most was Sen. Chuck Schumer. He really touched me when he said that he listened to his transistor radio for the Six Day War in 1967 as I did. The gathering of 18,000 people from all over the country show the US politicians that there is widespread Jewish support for Israel. The attendance of 4,000 people under the age of 21 is very impressive."

Andy Wernick — "It was nice to hear the bipartisan support for Israel without regard to who is president. I felt that the people like the decisions that were made on behalf of Israel-U.S. relations rather than the decision maker. It was interesting to learn more facts in general regarding the actual bills being presented and being worked upon. Also, that there is a huge rise in anti-Semitism not only abroad but here in the U.S., and the fact that all speakers were very concerned and have introduced bills in Congress to combat this and the rise in the BDS movement against Israel.



Members of the Reading AIPAC group and other PA 6th District attendees with U.S. Rep. Chrissy Houlahan.

"It was really comforting to be at a gathering of 18,000 pro Israel supporters who are so strong as a group. I didn't think that we would have enjoyed Sen. Ted Cruz, but he spoke with much factual information regarding the relationship with Israel. I thought that he would start to "patronize" the audience, but it was clear that his previous experience included many supportive bills being passed for this relationship. I enjoyed all the speakers except Vice President Pence. My favorite workshops were the discussions of the future of the Palestinian state & where an Iranian (Persian) refugee spoke on what it is like living in America."

Vic Hammel — "It was very moving to be among 18,500 enthusiastic supporters of Israel — more people than in my hometown, Pottsville!! (including 14 of us from Berks). It was truly a stimulating and uplifting experience. From so many excellent speakers I came away much better informed. As a result, I am more convinced than ever that history and current anti-Semitism regrettably requires that there must always be a refuge for the Jewish people — the State of Israel. Based on the hostility Israel faces, its relationship with the United States must remain strong and with bipartisan political support. AIPAC, while not a perfect organization, has done a superb job for decades in maintaining this alliance which is beneficial to our

country as well. The conference convinced me that there is no better way to assure the long-term survival of Israel than through AIPAC. I would encourage anyone interested in Israel to put attending an Aipac conference on their bucket list.

Dena Hammel — "This was my first AIPAC conference and I must admit I agreed to attend it somewhat reluctantly. It was a truly enjoyable experience — learning so much and being part of our Federation delegation. I particularly enjoyed so many of the nonpolitical speakers who spoke about Israeli medical & technological innovations. I learned so much from experts on the complicated history of the region which still impacts the current situation. I came away with a better understanding of the importance of bipartisan congressional support for the United States-Israel relationship. I was surprised at how much I enjoyed the experience of lobbying our congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan who impressed me with her thoughtful and interested approach to our comments about Israel."

We will be holding meetings in September to organize the March 2020 trip. If you are interested in attending or being added to the email list, please contact Bill Franklin, williamf@jfreeding.org.

Learn more about AIPAC by going to their website: <https://www.aipac.org/>.

Learning to embrace doing what we can

By Rabbi Brian Michelson
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

A peddler walking through the countryside came upon a little bird on its back with its feet in the air. “And what do you think you are doing?” asked the peddler.

“Well, I heard that the sky was soon going to fall” replied the bird.

“And you thought you could hold it back with your feet?” quipped the peddler.

“I do what I can,” said the little bird.

The peddler’s sarcasm and doubt are shared by most of us. We are creatures not driven by modest deeds, by humble achievements or by the anonymity but rather by a complex of perfection, of drama, of trophies, of winning. We misunderstand our humanity, thinking every endeavor of life must be a flawless show-stopper. When we come to realize that we are not divine, that we are less than perfect, only then are we fully human.

Our culture pushes us relentlessly toward perfection, and we meekly follow; unintimidated by false standards, foolish goals and empty values. How many of us in the privacy of our homes, as our day begins, lament that our belly is a keg, not a six pack; that no matter how much we sweat at the gym we will never be in a Victoria’s Secret catalog; no matter what apparatus we strap on or chemicals we smear on, there will always be wrinkles, blemishes, gray roots and bulges.

How many of us in the privacy of our day lament the cars we drive, the jobs we have, the routines we follow, the clothes we wear, the houses we

own. How many of us long for more, not because we really want it, but because we believe it validates us as being a better human being?

When I was younger; when Atlantic City had a thrilling Boardwalk and no casinos, I used to go there to visit my great-grandmother. I used to go to an amusement pier called Steeplechase. It had all sorts of rides — the Whip, A Haunted House, Bumper Cars. There was cotton candy, taffy and frozen custard. But I was always drawn to the games particularly the Ring Toss. The sign above the booth read, “Everyone A Winner.” In the booth were about 40 wooden posts with prizes attached. You tossed hoops until one landed on a post completely — encircling it and then you won that prize. It could have been an ashtray from China, a straw hat from Jamaica or a stuffed animal — but everyone was a winner. No one walked away feeling cheated — even if they didn’t win that big old stuffed teddy bear.

Life is very much the same. I always wondered about the sports league that tried to teach that everyone was a winner. I am not sure that, in sports, I truly buy this idea. However, sometimes even when we fail we can learn something. We are not perfect. We will not always hit the home run, score the goal, or be the best-looking person but that is OK. We can find out where we may fall short, we can work on it and improve. We do the best we can and we go home winners even if what you won or what you learned was not what you expected or planned.

May we have the optimism and the wisdom of that little bird to embrace doing what we can, because then our goals will be possible.



Celebrate Israel at the JCC

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Join us on Wednesday, May 8, at 7 p.m. to commemorate Israeli Memorial Day (Yom Hazikaron) and Israeli Independence Day (Yom Ha’atzmaut) with a special event at

the JCC.

We will have music and Israeli food to celebrate the holidays.

Bob Cisik and his klezmer band will be performing, and we will have dancing

All Around the Town

Mazel Tov to **Kate and Travis Inman** and to **Karen and Marty Jacobson** on the birth of their son/ grandson Jacobson Alfred Inman on March 18.

Mazel Tov to **Molly Nemirow**, daughter of **Geraldine and Mark Nemirow**, on winning first place in the

Reading Musical Foundation Isabel W. Sondheim Vocal Scholarship competition for students in grades 9-12. Molly is a sophomore at Exeter High School.

We love good news about members of our community! Please share it by emailing Marknem@aol.com or calling the JCC office at 610-921-0624.

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND SERVICE TIMES

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.; Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM (610) 375-6034
Friday, May 3: Shabbat service, 6 p.m.
Saturday, May 4: Ella Klinikowski Bat Mitzvah, 10 a.m.
Fridays, May 10, 24 and 31, Shabbat services, 7:45 p.m.
Friday, May 17: Shabbat service, 7 p.m.
Saturday, May 18: Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.

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Gala pays tribute to Rabbi Michelson



Members of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and friends throughout the Jewish community and beyond gathered April 6 at the Crowne Plaza to celebrate 20 years of Rabbi Brian Michelson's service at RCOS. From left are Rabbi Michelson, Elsayed Elmarzouky and Dr. Bruce Gipson. The gala included tributes by Elmarzouky, state Sen. Judy Schwank, former RCOS President Michelle Mart and Rabbi Laurence Malinge, a longtime friend and colleague of Rabbi Michelson.

Obituary

Hilda E. (Fishkin) Feldman, 96, of West Reading. Hilde was a graduate of Reading High School and worked at Palmer Candy. She was a member of Keshet Zion Synagogue and was active in its Sisterhood. Hilda is survived by daughters Barbara and her husband, Mark Creal; and Sharon Feldman. Hilda also survived by son Joel Feldman and his wife, Sandra, and three grandchildren.

Hildegard (Simon) Gernsheimer, 92 of Wyomissing. Hilde was raised in Cloppenburg, Germany. She escaped the Holocaust at age 12 with her sister Ruth through the Kindertransport program and lived as a refugee in England during World War II. She then immigrated to the U.S. in 1945 through New York City. Hilde and her husband moved to Bernville in 1946 where she raised her family. She was a member of RCOS and its Sisterhood, a member of the Resident's Council at The Highlands, an avid bridge player and a soup kitchen volunteer.

She often spoke to school and religious groups about the Holocaust. Hilde is survived by her three children: Jack and his wife, Nancy; Jeff and his wife, Jan, and Sharon Gernsheimer and her husband, Barry Levine, all of Bernville. Other survivors include her five grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and her sister Ruth Heinemann.

Albert Diamond, 97, of Reading. Albert served in the Army during World War II and was a member of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom. He was a founding partner of Diamond Brothers in Reading. The company made and sold furniture. Al enjoyed volunteering at the RCOS food festival, attending Friendship Circle meetings at the JCC, and playing golf and bowling. He is survived by his son Charles and his wife, Brenda, of Exeter Township. Other survivors include his eight grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, his sister Evelyn of Florida and his daughter-in-law Diane of Vermont.

Do you remember?

By Tootie Moyer

- Hi everyone, here are some more of my memories, see if you remember:
- When cars had no air-conditioning
 - We used our finger to dial a phone instead pushing buttons with our finger
 - We didn't have to fill our car with gas or buy a plane ticket to see our kids, they lived across the street or close by.
 - We saw pictures on slides instead of a smartphone.
 - When a man and woman could not be together in bed on TV, what a difference now.
 - We could play basketball on the

- street with a peach basket because there were hardly any cars.
- There was never a swear word in the movies until Rhett Butler said "damn" in "Gone with the Wind."
 - Boots were worn when it rained, now they are worn every day.
 - You can't tell someone they are wrong because they might have a gun.
 - Girls are now wearing high top black sneakers — \$100 a pair — the same as boys wore when was a kid.
 - Whoever heard of a "sippy" cup or disposable diapers when our kids were little?
 - You could buy chicken feet, lung

- and unborn eggs that cost 50 cents a pound.
- Candy bars were 5 cents each, Brisket was 50 cents a pound.
 - We had no dryers — we put clothes outside or on a radiator.
 - Mailmen walked to every home — they did not have a small truck.
 - There were no TV programs after 11:00 at night.
 - Cashiers always said "thank you," not have a good day.
 - There was no rehab — your family doctor told you what to do.
 - We only paid in cash, no credit cards.
 - We had ice boxes instead of refrigerators, ice was delivered every two days.

- Everyone in the family helped shovel snow — no snow blowers.
 - When you used a wet wash cloth to wipe a baby — there were no "wipes"
 - When you gave birth to a baby your hospital stay was about a week, now you are in out in a day or two.
 - Do you remember these actors/actresses? — Deanna Durbin, Carole Lombard, Martha Raye, Robert Taylor, Jane Withers and Ken Maynard (cowboy actor).
 - And finally do you remember the following words: oodles, hoopla, bumpkin, gizmo, hog wash, shindig and rigmarole?
- I hope you are all well and enjoying every day of your "plus" years. I will see you soon.

A Salute to Tom Flynn

Celebrating a Legacy of Leadership – May 30, 2019, Reading DoubleTree

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Food pantry reaches all-time high number of people

By Sari Incledon
and Carole
Robinson

On April 10 our monthly food pantry served an all-time high number of households — 190! We ran out of a few items but were still able to provide each household with several bags of groceries including chicken, frozen veggies and blueberries. Thirty volunteers helped distribute nearly 8,000 pounds of food.

Our food pantry was started more than 20 years ago by the late RCOS Rabbi Alan Weitzman and Bob Brok. The project eventually transferred to the Federation’s Jewish Family Service and was held at the JCC on City Line Street for several years. At that time the pantry served about 20 households, mostly Jewish. We purchased food from the Greater Berks Food Bank and used a station wagon to transport the food.

We relocated this program to Keshet Zion Synagogue when the JCC was sold, and the number of clients quickly grew. We transported our food in a U-Haul van until we found out we were distributing enough food (3,000 pounds) to qualify for a GBFB delivery truck. During the nine years the pantry was located at Keshet Zion we served an average of 100-130 families each month. Jewish families were a small fraction of the recipients. This program has become a way that we help not only our own struggling families but people from many Reading ethnic groups who need assistance. A minibus of seniors from the B’nai Brith building, many of whom are disabled, are among the regulars.

After Keshet Zion’s former building was sold, our commitment to continue this program led us to partner with the Olivet Club at its new clubhouse off Perkiomen Avenue. It is a roomy, modern, handicapped accessible building and we are grateful to the Olivet’s for welcoming us. JFS is grateful to the United Way for their support of our food pantry. As always a big thank you goes to our many volunteers. We could not run this program without them. Prospective volunteers are always needed. Call Sari at 610-921-0624 to learn about how you can help others one Wednesday a month.

Creative Arts Program

Friendship Circle members shared their artistic talents during a Creative Arts Exhibit on Thursday, April 4.

Sylvia Wenger recited a delightful poem about Keshet Zion Sisterhood, evoking fond memories of Jewish life in Reading in the 1960s and ’70’s.

Helene Berne showed off a necklace that she designed. It was a beautiful piece made from three linked gold bands, her wedding ring, her husband’s wedding ring, and her husband’s mother’s wedding ring, interspersed with diamonds from her mother’s wedding ring.

Meryl Marks shared her coloring and knitting skills. Ellen Schwickrath and



The Jewish Family Service food pantry is thriving at its new location at the Olivet Club fieldhouse in east Reading thanks to dedicated volunteers.



Claire Greenfogel with her artwork at the Friendship Circle’s Creative Arts Exhibit.

Karen Checkamian displayed knitted sweaters. Karen also exhibited a crocheted afghan and a large needlework Western Wall. Tootie Moyer strolled in with her cane, bedecked in flowers to welcome spring, and a variety of projects. Her family tree was unique, fashioned from watch faces and other watch parts.

Claire Greenfogel captivated

everyone with her exquisite Chinese Flower Painting.

Irwin Goldstein displayed a gorgeous “Queen of Hearts” quilt created by his twin sister. He also exhibited his embellished adult coloring and his “pin art,” inspired by his family’s hat business.

We thank the exhibitors for an afternoon of creativity and fun!

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Holiday Programs

Honoring outstanding students, past and present

By Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner

Reading Jewish Community High School

Each year Reading Jewish Community High School gives out the Adiv Vivek Lift Memorial Award. It honors the memory of a former JCHS student who passed away in a car accident at the age of 17 in 2014.

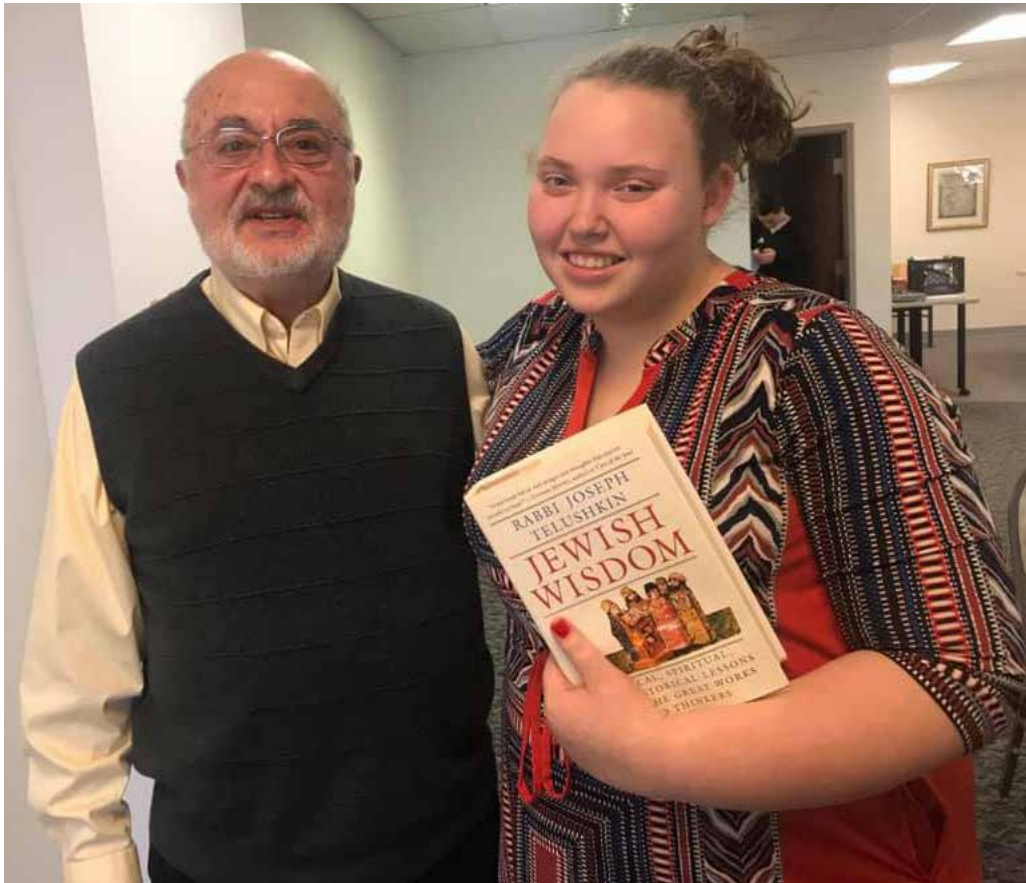
Though Adiv Lift had moved from the area before he died, he remained a beloved figure in the Berks County Jewish community, especially among his peers.

This year's honoree is Molly Nemirow, a sophomore at Exeter High School. Molly is an outstanding student who has been active in Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, in the broader community in dramatics and music and as a friend and student in the JCHS.

She was presented with a volume donated by Rabbi Dov, "Jewish Wisdom: Ethical, Spiritual, and Historical Lessons from the Great Works and Thinkers," collected and edited by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin as were prior recipients.

Prior recipients were Marissa Missan 2015; Evan Cardinal 2016; Matt Driben 2017; and Jamie Zamrin /Chase Weizer 2018.

The same morning as Molly's award presentation, JCHS students heard a talk by her father, Mark Nemirow, opinion page editor at the *Reading Eagle*. He addressed questions concerning separating real news from fake, especially when getting information from online sources.



Adiv Vivek Lift Memorial Award recipient Molly Nemirow with JCHS Director Barry Dov Lerner.

Final meetings of the year

JCHS meets May 5 and May 19 before starting our summer break. Our final gathering will include time with our "Better

Together" seniors. From 11 a.m. to noon at the JCC, teens and seniors meet to discuss significant issues of the day that relate to more than one generation.



Barbara Lerner and students at Reading Jewish Community High School.

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May 18th at 10:00 am

Tot Shabbat

Members and non-members are invited. No registration is required. Tot Shabbat services are held Saturday mornings at 10:00 am at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing unless noted. Please call the Temple office with any questions, 610.375.6034.

A musical, story-filled, interactive hour for children through grade 2. Bring your family & friends to celebrate with Rabbi Michelson & stay for a pint-sized one of juice, challah, fruit, & child-friendly treats!

Final Tot Shabbat: June 8th

A delightful day in Jewish New York



Chabad and the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks sponsored a bus trip to New York March 31. Participants visited a matzah bakery, a state of the art Mikva and a scribe demonstration, as well as a visit to the Jewish Children's Museum, a hands-on experience of both our history & present day Jewish living, and where the kids experienced the fun of making their own matzah.

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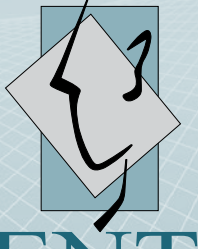
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Tot Shabbat at the Highlands



Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom's Tot Shabbat program held an intergenerational service at the Highlands in Wyomissing in conjunction with PJ Library on March 23.

UN reports on IDF response to Hamas are misguided

From online news sources

The following opinion comes from retired U.S. Marine Lt. Gen. Kenneth Glueck and U.S. Army Col. Ian Corey.

The United Nations recently held a hearing and issued a report by its special commission on Israel's response to the mass demonstrations along its border with Gaza, known as the "March of Return." The U.N.'s findings, which assert Israel violated international law and downplay or ignore systematic legal violations by Hamas, are misguided and pose serious concerns not only for Israel but also the United States.

As a former senior U.S. commander and a U.S. military lawyer with decades of experience, we recently visited the Israel-Gaza border and met with Israeli and U.N. officials as part of a task force commissioned by the Jewish Institute for National Security of America (JINSA). We examine how groups like Hamas exploit international law to combat Israel, the United States, or others politically rather than militarily.

Based on this fact-finding mission, our assessment of the conduct of Hamas and Israel is detailed in a forthcoming task force report, and pivots on four central findings.

First, there is overwhelming evidence Hamas — designated by the United States and European Union as a terrorist organization — violated international

law. Fundamentally opposed to Israel's existence, Hamas set the stage by declaring "we will take down the border and we will tear out their hearts from their bodies." It used demonstrators as human shields to enable its armed fighters to approach and attempt to breach the border fence and attack Israelis.

After one of the largest actions last May, a senior Hamas official admitted its operatives accounted for 50 of the 60 deaths. These actions, a clear violation of Hamas's obligations under international law, made it challenging for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to distinguish between innocent civilians and individuals who could lawfully be targeted for breaching or attempting to breach the border fence.

Second, and contrary to the U.N.'s findings, the IDF's rules of engagement were consistent with international law in regulating the use of force in this setting. The IDF operated in a context defined both by Israel's broader ongoing armed conflict with Hamas, and by the complicated tactical environment presented by the approaching mass crowds that mixed unarmed protestors with operatives of enemy armed groups. Hamas' use of crowds meant that more harm could result on both sides, particularly to civilians, if the fence was breached in any meaningful way.

Provided the appropriate steps

are taken, in situations like these it is reasonable under international law for commanders on the scene to permit use of live ammunition, both in response to a breach of the fence and — under certain conditions — to prevent a breach in the first place. It is also lawful to use lethal force against a belligerent operative of an enemy armed group like Hamas.

Accordingly, we believe it was reasonable for the IDF to authorize lethal force against individuals identified as enemy belligerents, or any other individual posing an imminent threat to the lives of IDF personnel or Israeli civilians. Even then, the IDF rules of engagement called for progressive escalation of force, including text messages, phone calls, leaflets, warnings over loudspeakers, and tear gas. Lethal force was used only as a last resort, and even that was aimed primarily at legs in an effort to produce nonlethal results.

Third, Hamas won in the court of public opinion despite it, not Israel, setting the conditions for increased civilian casualties. Hamas effectively exploited the IDF's compliance with international law and shifted the narrative from the Gazans' grievances (including against Hamas) that initially spawned the protests, to blaming the IDF for these casualties.

Hamas did so by manipulating misunderstandings about international law, chiefly the common but incorrect

belief that legal responsibility for civilian casualties automatically lies with those using force. Unfortunately, such misunderstandings are widespread, not only among the media and the watching world but also many civilian legal experts as well. We are skeptical of judgments about international law — including the law of armed conflict — from a U.N. commission whose principal members appear to lack expertise in military law or these types of security operations.

Finally, the U.N.'s findings are dangerous because they incentivize further bad acts by Hamas and others who would seek to similarly weaponize the law. Indeed, like much of the reporting on the March of Return or the 2014 Gaza conflict, the commission's findings reflect the effectiveness of Hamas' strategic misinformation campaigns. As such, they reinforce Hamas' incentive to continue violating international law and exposing Palestinian civilians to harm. Hezbollah likely will pursue a similar strategy in its next conflict with the IDF.

We also appreciate how this challenge confronting Israel strongly resembles what the United States faces in its conflicts against Islamic State, the Taliban and others. Adversaries emboldened by the lack of censure for Hamas' illegal tactics are now more likely to employ similar strategies against U.S. forces.

Jewish Agency and nonprofit helping youth in Puerto Rico

From online news sources

The Jewish Agency for Israel is teaming with a nonprofit group in Puerto Rico to help at-risk children. The program with PR4PR brings Jewish volunteers to San Juan to create and staff a center for Project TEN, a program of the Jewish Agency that operates volunteer centers in developing areas throughout the world.

Volunteers are being brought from Israel and world Jewry to participate in three-month rotations. The volunteers are to focus on informal education and empowerment, public health and agriculture. PR4PR will identify where Jewish Agency resources will be deployed on the island, focusing on informal education and empowerment, public health, and agriculture.

PR4PR is breaking the cycle of poverty, crime, and dependency in Puerto Rico, and transforming and empowering children who come from low-income and high-risk communities on the island. The organization provides thousands of children a place to go after school and during the summer months, taking them off the



streets and away from dangerous distractions. It achieves this by endorsing activities that promote self-satisfaction, tolerance, empowerment, and self-sufficiency.

To date, more than 40,000 Puerto Rican citizens have benefited from PR4PR's programs and services. "We're thrilled to partner with the Jewish Agency's

Project TEN. Their stellar reputation for collaborating with local organizations — similar to ours — in order to address the local community's issues is something truly needed in Puerto Rico," said PR4PR founder, Henry Orlinsky.

"PR4PR has done a tremendous job working with Puerto Rico's youth to keep them off the streets, providing positive programming to help provide them with the skillsets to become contributing members of society," said JAFI's Chairman Isaac Herzog. "These young people come together for a common good — for a project larger than themselves which enables them to hone their leadership skills, develop and establish a personal and collective identity, and set in place sustainable programs that address local needs."

PR4PR was founded in 2004 by an Orthodox Jewish New Jersey philanthropist to help break the cycle of poverty, crime and dependency in Puerto Rico and empower children who come from low-income and high-risk communities.

By Alan Baker and Vivian Bercovici
Note: Baker is former Israeli ambassador to Canada. Bervovici is former Canaidan ambassador to Israel.
On March 26, 2019, President Donald Trump signed an executive order fully recognizing Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which is of critical strategic and security importance to the state of Israel.

As indicated by the president, he is empowered by the U.S. Constitution to declare recognition of foreign sovereigns. This prerogative was affirmed in a recent Supreme Court judgment in the case of *Zivotofsky v. Kerry*, Secretary of State, in which the U.S. Supreme Court held: “Judicial precedent and historical practice teach that it is for the President alone to make the specific decision of what foreign power he will recognize as legitimate...”

The proclamation by Trump also affirms a previous assurance given by President Gerald Ford in his 1975 letter to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, according to which: “The U.S. will support the position that an overall settlement with Syria in the framework of a peace agreement must assure Israel’s security from attack from the Golan Heights. The U.S. further supports the position that a just and lasting peace, which remains our objective, must be acceptable to both sides. The U.S. has not developed a final

position on the borders. Should it do so, it will give great weight to Israel’s position that any peace agreement with Syria must be predicated on Israel remaining on the Golan Heights.”

On June 5, 1967, war broke out between Israel and Egypt. The following day, Syria and Jordan joined in the pile-on, attacking Israel on the eastern and northern fronts. By June 10, it was over. Astonishingly, Israel had not only repelled the attackers but had taken control of the Sinai desert, the West Bank of the Jordan River, and the Golan Heights in the north.

Between 1967 and 1981, there were continued Syrian hostilities, and Syria refused to enter into any serious peace process. Due to the lack of any clear legal infrastructure in the Golan Heights, Israel decided in 1981 to apply Israeli law, jurisdiction, and administration to the area by legislating the Golan Heights Law.

The recent civil war in Syria, the continued lack of any stable government, the flagrant and willful crimes committed by the Syrian president against elements opposing his regime and against the Syrian civilian population, as well as the placement of Iranian armed facilities on Syrian territory directed against Israel, all serve to indicate the utter lack of any hope that Syria will be prepared to recognize Israel as a legitimate neighbor,

accept a common border, or enter into a peaceful relationship. These factors also indicate a total lack of reliability of Syrian leadership.

Eugene Kontorovich, director of International Law at the Jerusalem-based Kohelet Policy Forum and professor of International Law at George Mason University told the Jewish News Syndicate that Trump’s formal recognition of the Golan Heights as Israeli sovereign territory “will doubtless be met by responses that it violates, or condones violation, of international law and will encourage forcible annexation of territory. These international legal arguments lack merit.”

He pointed out that the relevant international law “prohibits taking territory in a war of aggression.” But in June of 1967, Israel was “fighting a lawful, defensive war, in response to constant Syrian and Egyptian attempts to destroy Israel.”

Kontorovich warned that “if international law does not allow attacked countries to make border changes in some circumstances, it would actually invite aggression because the attacking country would not fear losing territory to the defending country.

Kontorovich asserts that “Israel’s sovereignty has only been recognized after it made multiple good-faith peace

efforts to return the territory; after Syria lost all legitimacy by committing mass atrocities; and, of course, after a 52-year waiting period.”

This position was also supported in 1970 when Stephen Schwebel, a former judge in the International Court of Justice, referred to the situation of the Golan Heights, “... it follows that no weight shall be given to conquest, but that such weight shall be given to defensive action as is reasonably required to ensure that such Arab territory will not again be used for aggressive purposes against Israel.”

The U.S. proclamation acknowledges the de facto situation in which continued Syrian hostility and threats against Israel, and their consistent refusal to recognize and to negotiate peace with Israel undermine any accepted international behavioral norms. It serves as a message to Syria and the international community that aggression and refusal to settle an international dispute will not be rewarded.

Some have speculated that Trump’s proclamation will scuttle the already remote possibility that his peace proposal for the region will be received positively. Given the remoteness of that possibility, the risk is negligible and given international law and 52 years of peace attempts, this is merely diversionary noise.

Israeli medics join relief workers in response to cyclone

Israel21c.com
More than 2 million lives have been affected by Cyclone Idai, a deadly storm that crashed into the coast of the African nation of Mozambique on March 15. Idai has caused some 746 confirmed deaths in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, and left scores of people without shelter, food, water or proper sanitation. Heavy rains, flooding and mudslides also washed away the crops many residents depend on for their livelihood.

Israeli humanitarian nongovernmental

organization IsraAID, always among the first to respond to disasters around the world, began dispatching emergency response teams on March 20. The Israelis have been distributing basic supplies, delivering psychological first aid and helping to restore access to safe drinking water.

IsraAID spokesman Ethan Schwartz stated, “We arrived in Mozambique to a difficult situation,” In Beira, where Cyclone Idai made landfall, most buildings, including the hospital, have had their roofs damaged, lots of trees have fallen, and many roads

aren’t in a great state. Outside of the city, the situation is even bleaker, with large areas still under water and inaccessible by land. Thousands are stranded. We’ve met many people who have lost most or all of what they have, including regular access to food and water, and now are trying to pick up the pieces.”

Schwartz says that more than 141,000 people were staying in 143 shelters across the four main affected regions of Mozambique, while in the District of Nhamatanda, another 15,000 displaced by flooding were scattered in 14 shelters. Many more people found lodging with relatives. More than 143,000 children were unable to attend school. In partnership with the local Ministry of Education, IsraAID’s team trained teachers and educational psychologists to prepare for the return to school. The IsraAID protection and education team worked with volunteers from a local women’s empowerment organization to provide activities and support for low-income women and children as they recover from the cyclone.

After an initial needs assessment, IsraAID sent for a medical team of volunteer doctors and nurses from Sheba Medical Center, who arrived March 26. Schwartz said the mental-health team worked to support communities affected, and the WASH (water, sanitation and

hygiene) team implemented water-filtration systems and delivered hygiene kits to communities without access to safe water.”

In Tika, Nhamatanda, IsraAID’s WASH engineer purified the personal water supplies of displaced families using the Israeli-made NUF Filtration system. The NUF was utilized in other locations, supplementing IsraAID’s distribution of small-scale water filters to support the ongoing provision of potable water.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies warned that survivors of the cyclone face “a ticking bomb” of disease and called for renewed efforts to address the worsening health situation in Mozambique. “Many people are in desperate situations, several thousands are fighting for their lives at the moment sitting on rooftops, in trees and other elevated areas,” said UNICEF spokesman Christophe Bouliera. “This includes families and obviously many children.”

In response to confirmed cases of cholera, infectious diseases specialist Dr. Eli Schwartz, a member of IsraAID’s medical team from Sheba Medical Center, helped shape the local and international response and prevention mechanisms. The IsraAID medical team is working at the newly established cholera clinic in Beira, in coordination with the local Ministry of Health.

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\$25 for adults



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May Nissan-Lyar	
 Shabbat Candle Lightings	 Torah Portions
May 3 7:43 p.m.	May 4/Nissan 29 Acharei (Leviticus 16:1-18:30)
May 10 7:50 p.m.	May 11/Lyar 6 Kedoshim (Leviticus 19:1-20:27)
May 17 7:57 p.m.	May 18/Lyar 13 Emor (Leviticus 21:1-24:23)
May 24 8:03 p.m.	May 25/Lyar 20 Behar (Leviticus 25:1-26:2)

Survey: Majority of Israelis see healthy Arab-Jewish relations

From online news sources

The majority of Israeli citizens believe there are positive relations between the country's Jewish and Arab populations, according to a survey by online magazine *Sicha Mekomit* (Local Call). The survey found that 53 percent of Jewish respondents said that day-to-day relations between Jews and Arabs are largely positive, with one-third testifying to negative relationships based on personal experiences. Just 13 percent said they did not have enough contact with the Arab population to answer.

Some 76 percent of Arab respondents said that, in their daily lives, relations between Jews and Arabs are largely positive. Only 6 percent said they did not have sufficient contact with the other population group to answer.

The pre-elections survey, led by Dr. Dahlia Scheindlin and David Reis, revealed that the majority of Jews and Arabs believe cooperation between the two populations can advance various goals, including environmental protection, workers' rights and women's rights.

Across all subjects, 55 to 58 percent of respondents said that Jewish-Arab cooperation would contribute to advancing the issues, and only 10 to 14 percent thought it would prove harmful. Among Arab respondents, 72 percent said cooperation would be helpful, compared with 54 percent of Jewish respondents.

With regard to the recent Knesset elections, almost half of the Arab respondents (47 percent) said they would be willing to vote for a Jewish party if it reflected their views, significantly greater than the 15 percent of Arab voters who backed non-Arab parties in the 2015 elections.

Only 4 percent of Jewish respondents, however, expressed their willingness to vote for an Arab party. Some 88 percent said they rejected the idea.

While Arab parties have never joined a coalition government, 87 percent of Arab respondents said they favored to some extent an Arab party joining the government. Only 4 percent of Arabs rejected the idea. Among Jewish respondents, however, only 35 percent said an Arab party joining the government would be acceptable to some degree.

When Arab respondents were asked whether they recognized a Jewish people alongside the Palestinian people, a sweeping 94 percent of Arabs answered approvingly and only 6 percent said there was only a Palestinian people.

Among Jewish respondents, 52 percent acknowledged the existence of a Palestinian people, while 48 percent said there is only a Jewish people.

“Judging from the recent Israeli election cycle and the various campaigns competing, it would be easy to conclude that Arab and



Alia Tunisi adjusts the kippah of a student at an Arab Jewish bilingual school in Jerusalem.

Jewish citizens of Israel have completely failed to build a shared life together,” Scheindlin wrote. “The campaigns were filled with insulting and racist messaging that was being disseminated every which way. It’s a shame that Israeli leaders aren’t more attentive to the majority of the country’s citizens, who support values of cooperation, believe that relations between Jews and Arabs in the country are already

good, and acknowledge the national identity of the other — the Jewish and Palestinian peoples, respectively.”

The survey also asked Arab respondents how they defined themselves. Almost half (46 percent) self-defined as Arab-Israelis, 22 percent said they were Arabs, 19 percent said they were Palestinian-Israelis and 14 percent defined themselves as only Palestinian.

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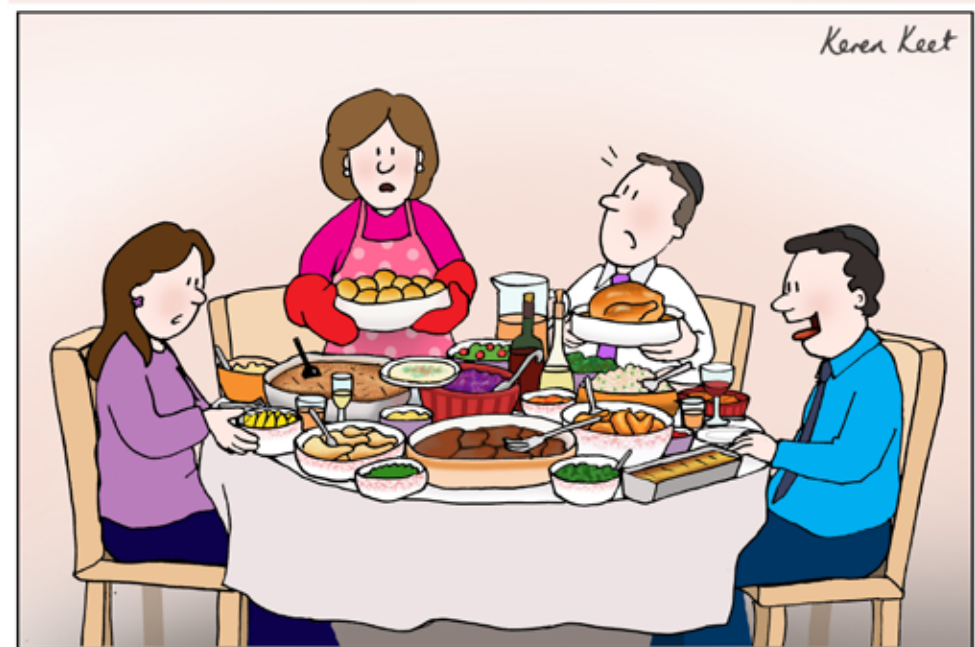
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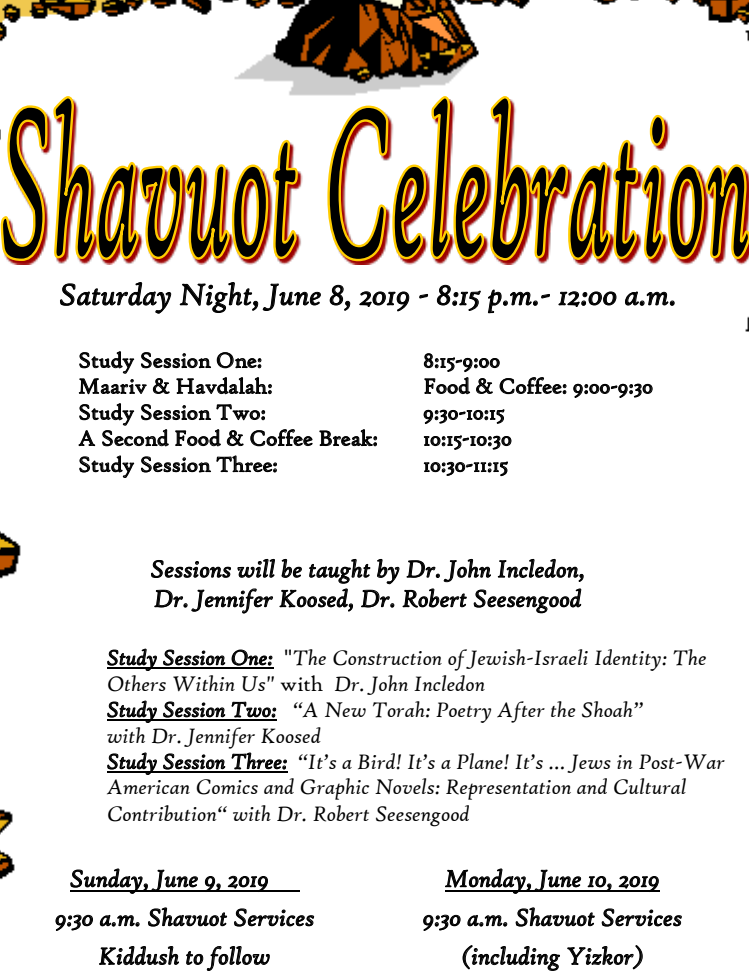
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“Oy! I didn’t make enough!”



Shavuot Celebration

Saturday Night, June 8, 2019 - 8:15 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.

Study Session One:	8:15-9:00
Maariv & Havdalah:	Food & Coffee: 9:00-9:30
Study Session Two:	9:30-10:15
A Second Food & Coffee Break:	10:15-10:30
Study Session Three:	10:30-11:15

**Sessions will be taught by Dr. John Incledon,
Dr. Jennifer Koosed, Dr. Robert Seesengood**

Study Session One: "The Construction of Jewish-Israeli Identity: The Others Within Us" with Dr. John Incledon

Study Session Two: "A New Torah: Poetry After the Shoah" with Dr. Jennifer Koosed

Study Session Three: "It's a Bird! It's a Plane! It's ... Jews in Post-War American Comics and Graphic Novels: Representation and Cultural Contribution" with Dr. Robert Seesengood

Sunday, June 9, 2019

9:30 a.m. Shavuot Services

Kiddush to follow

Monday, June 10, 2019

9:30 a.m. Shavuot Services

(including Yizkor)

Kiddush to follow

There is no charge. Reservations are recommended and would be helpful in order to accommodate everyone who is attending. Thank you!



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Trivia night at Keshar Zion



Keshar Zion Synagogue held a community Trivia Night on March 31, with plenty of opportunities to share some fun and some knowledge.

Purim party at Chabad Hebrew School



Purim fun at Chabad Hebrew School.

South African activists talk apartheid, Arab-Israeli conflict

From online news sources

South African activists and educators Klaas Mokgomole and Mmamalema Molepo recently delivered a talk to a group of more than 30 students in the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business about the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its relation to the apartheid government in South Africa.

The event was co-hosted by Africans for Peace, an organization that writes about global affairs from an African perspective, in addition to Hillel, Chabad and Stand With Us, a pro-Israel student organization.

The discussion, which attracted a predominantly white and Jewish audience, focused on Mokgomole and Molepo’s experiences visiting Israel after becoming involved with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement as university students in South Africa.

Mokgomole was an active member of the BDS student group at the University of Witwatersrand. Molepo never officially joined the movement as a student at the University of Cape Town but still believed Israel was an apartheid state. Both activists are no longer affiliated with the movement and said they now think BDS lied to them about the state of discrimination in Israel.

“Israel is still where Palestinians live,” Molepo said. “Israel is still where a lot of Palestinians go to school. Israel is still where a lot of Palestinians get their food from. Israel is still where a lot of Palestinians get their water from. Gaza gets their electricity from Israel and the one thing you never hear is that whenever the ‘right to return’ marches happen, people actually burn down the power stations in Gaza. So it becomes a thing where people lose power and the Israeli Defense Forces has to go and fix that.”

Mokgomole also said he was struck by the differences between Israel and apartheid South Africa, since he was often told that Israel was an apartheid state. After getting expelled from his university for antagonizing Jewish students, Mokgomole began to educate himself about Israeli society. He said when he visited Israel for the first time and asked an Israeli airport employee for the “Blacks-only bathroom,” he was surprised to receive a silent stare in response.

“I told him, ‘Look, I’m from South Africa and I was told that Israel is an apartheid state,’” Mokgomole said. “During the South African apartheid, Blacks and whites were not allowed to use the same bathrooms. Blacks and whites were not allowed to use the same buses, the same schools, a number of things. So I’m in Israel, and I was told Israel is an apartheid state, and in an apartheid state I don’t want to be arrested for using the wrong bathrooms. He said ‘No, no, no, we don’t have that here. You can use any bathroom if you identify your gender and use the right bathroom for your gender.’”

Echoing Mokgomole’s argument, Molepo noted how the four racially-based social classes that existed during the South African apartheid created a society built on discrimination that explicitly denied black people their rights to education and employment. Molepo said that even though he doesn’t agree with all of the Israeli government’s policies, he can’t classify it as an apartheid country because he doesn’t see the same kind of overt racism.

“Within the whites and the blacks, you find that people weren’t allowed in the same bathrooms, the same buses, the same benches,” Molepo said. “Let’s say if my mother had to raise (a white boy), when they get to a park, she would have to sit on the floor and he would have to sit on the bench, because she’s not allowed to sit on the same bench as me no matter how close they are, no matter what. I find none of that in Israel.”

Senior Robert Weinbaum, a member of Michigan’s chapter of Stand With Us, invited the two activists to campus. He said he hoped the discussion would allow students to reach their own conclusions about whether Israel should be called an apartheid state or not.

“Being at an event on campus and especially in an academic setting, Israel being described as an apartheid state is an adjective, it is very matter-of-fact,” Weinbaum said. “I never really found a place where that was discussion — what does that really mean? In what ways is it an apartheid state? I felt like it was important to create an environment where that kind of conversation could be held and really critically look at Israel and compare it to apartheid South Africa.”

Michigan senior Emily Olin, who attended the conversation, studied at the University of Cape Town last semester and noted how



South African activist Klaas Mokgomole speaks at the University of Michigan.

prevalent anti-Israel sentiment was at the university. After seeing the BDS movement on the Cape Town campus, Olin said it was interesting to hear from South Africans with an alternate perspective.

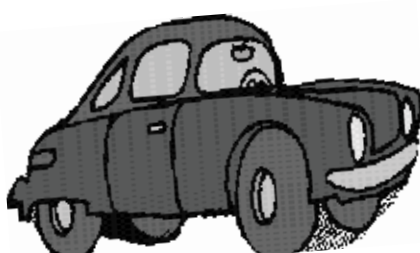
“When we were at the University of Cape Town, we were there for Israeli boycott week, and I have pictures on my phone of the defaced Israeli flag,” Olin said. “My parents were visiting and I brought them up to campus and I was like, ‘Look, this is kind of crazy.’ I thought (this talk) was really interesting from the perspective of a non-outsider who has experienced apartheid, real apartheid, not studied about it, not read about it — their families have experienced it. I think it was a very valuable perspective.”

Even though Molepo and Mokgomole stressed the differences

between South African apartheid and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they said peace should be reached through negotiation just as apartheid was ended through election. Molepo said a two-state solution that preserves Israeli independence should be the goal of these discussions.

“We need to understand that Israel has a right to exist,” Molepo said. “BDS sometimes comes with a narrative that says, ‘From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.’ So what does that say then for the Israeli child? What does that say for the people that were born in that period? Does that mean they’re nonexistent people? It’s something that we always need to be conscious of — the fact that these are people’s lives we’re speaking about at the end of the day.”

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Meir Panim helps when family has no food at home

American Friends of Meir Panim

At 10 a.m., Adi instructed all the children in her Jerusalem gan (school) to take out their aruchat eser (mid-morning meal). Hungry, all the children raced to unzip their tiks (backpacks), remove their lunches and begin eating. All the children, that is, except for Benny.

“At the beginning of the year, I noticed that Benny often came to gan without food. One morning, I asked him if he forgot his food at home. His response broke my heart. “We have no food at home, my belly is empty, and I haven’t eaten anything since the slice of bread you gave me yesterday.”

That night, Adi made a call to Meir Panim and arranged for Benny and his siblings to receive daily hot lunches, free of charge. Unfortunately, Benny is not the only four year old in Israel that leaves for school without lunch and goes to bed hungry.

According to the Israel National Insurance Institute’s

latest report, 21.2 percent of the Israeli population lives in poverty. 29.6 percent of Israeli children are living in poverty. Two out of every five children are victims of Israel’s economic crises.

Meir Panim, which gets support from the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks, steps into alleviate the harmful effects of poverty on thousands of families across Israel by supporting a wide range of food and social service programs aimed at helping needy people with dignity and respect. More than 110,000 children like Benny receive a hot lunch from Meir Panim. Working full-time jobs, Benny’s parents are part of a growing segment of the Israeli ‘working poor.

“It is heartbreaking; both working and unemployed adults have seen their situation plummet, largely due to massive cuts in government spending, leaving them and their entire families helpless. Meir Panim provides food for the body

and nourishment for the soul”, explained Mimi Rozmaryn, Director of Global Development for Meir Panim.

Meir Panim annually serves 490,000 hot meals to children, adults and the elderly at Restaurant-Style Soup Kitchens across Israel.

This time of year, Doron Haloni of Tzfat, one of Israel’s “working poor,” feels more stressed than usual. He and his wife are both employed full time yet struggle to put food on the table for their four young children. “While my children are looking forward to Passover, my wife and I are worried about the extra expenses involved in preparing for Passover,” said Doron.

Like many of its Restaurant-Style Soup Kitchen locations, the Meir Panim restaurant in Tzfat is preparing to alleviate this worry for families like Doron’s. Branch manager Benny Elgad is organizing a large Passover Seder open to all those in need.

To further enable

disadvantaged Israelis to enjoy the holiday, Meir Panim will also be distributing pre-paid food shopping cards as well as food baskets filled with traditional Passover foods to over 2,500 families.

Meir Panim combats Israeli poverty every day of the year with an array of social service programs geared toward both adults and children. “Poverty can quickly become a vicious cycle if not nipped in the bud when children are affected,” said Rozmaryn. “Malnourished children cannot learn in school and often become sick, limiting their future educational success and creating a system where they are doomed to continue working in menial jobs, if at all.”

According to Knesset member Michael Oren, “Meir Panim represents the best of what this country is and represents the essence of the Jewish State of Zionism and everything we stand for.”

Another Yemin Orde success story

Friends of Yemin Orde

The President’s Scholarship for Scientific Excellence and Innovation 2018 was presented to Yemin Orde graduate, Danny Admasu, for his doctoral dissertation, “The Jews of Ethiopia and the Perception of Blacks in Zionist Historiography and Culture.” Israel’s President Reuven Rivlin presented Danny with the award at the President’s residence in Jerusalem.

Danny, 44, is studying at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. His dissertation deals with the attitude towards blackness and blacks in Zionism and in Israel. Danny explores the various factors that shaped and preserve the perception of blacks, the attitude towards them and the discourse about them.

Furthermore, the dissertation examines the historical, cultural and ideological process that shaped the image of black people in the history of Israeli Jewish society, and examines how perceptions of blacks are preserved and expressed in cultural practices and social policy.

Danny is one of the most prominent social activists in the Ethiopian community

in Israel. He is the former executive director of the Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews (IAEJ), an advocacy agency for the full integration of Ethiopian Jews into mainstream Israeli society.

He is also the general manager of “Hila” — an organization for Equality in Education, and Founding Director of Ethiopian Jewry Heritage Center — a government corporation.

Danny holds a BA in Political Science and International Relations from the Open University of Israel, and a Master’s degree in Hermeneutics and Cultural Studies from Bar-Ilan University, where he is now a doctoral student. He is married to Smadar and has three young boys: Liad, Ben, and Tom.

Danny arrived in Israel from Ethiopia as a youth in 1984 in Operation Moses. With three of his seven siblings and his father, Danny traveled by foot after dark to reach Sudan, some 600 miles away from his home. Danny and his family tried to make the journey three times over the course of two months, getting caught twice and spending time in jail before being brought back to their Ethiopian village. “We



Yemin Orde graduate Danny Admasu receives Israel’s President’s Scholarship for Scientific Excellence and Innovation 2018.

were ready to pay any price to get to Jerusalem,” he says. The family succeeded on its third try in reaching Sudan. Danny and his family stayed there in a Red Cross camp for seven months before managing to get to Israel.

Adjusting to life in their long-awaited destination was not easy. Danny recalls that learning a new language and acclimating were his greatest challenges, and he was especially frustrated at not being able to communicate in

Hebrew with children of his age.

Yemin Orde Youth Village welcomed Danny and provided him a unique opportunity to receive an excellent education in a supportive and home-like environment. Danny is a proud graduate of Yemin Orde, where he feels he received significant foundations and skills to succeed in life.

Yemin Orde is supported with local dollars from the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks’ Israel Now campaign.

Israel & Overseas

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Meir Panim

JDC responds to cyclone in Mozambique

From online news sources

Following the deadly cyclone that struck Mozambique, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) is providing emergency medical supplies through its partner the Afya Foundation and deploying a response and assessment team, including a disaster relief expert and field medic, to the devastated nation. JDC is a Federation partner.

With widespread destruction and a rising death toll, JDC activated its network of local and international partners, is

assessing emerging needs, and will continue to direct relief accordingly.

“As we offer our prayers for the safekeeping of those still unaccounted for, and mourn the tragic loss of life in Mozambique, we are doing all we can to ensure the most immediate and urgent needs are met,” said JDC CEO David M. Schizer. “The imperative to aid survivors and begin their healing process is crucial on what will be a very long road to recovery. We are proud to put our Jewish values into action and repair this terribly

broken corner of the world, one life at a time.”

JDC has worked in Africa for decades, addressing a variety of emergencies and development challenges including famine, war, educational opportunities for women, economic advancement for smallholder farmers, and medical issues including spinal and heart disease.

JDC recently has responded to disasters and crises in Guatemala, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Mexico, the Caribbean, Sri Lanka, and East Africa and has continued its

post-disaster development work in Nepal and Haiti. JDC also provides ongoing humanitarian aid to refugees in Europe and the Middle East.

JDC’s disaster relief programs are funded by special appeals of the Jewish Federations of North America and tens of thousands of individual donors to JDC.

Relief efforts of JDC are coordinated with the U.S. Department of State, USAID, the Israeli government and the United Nations, as well as local and international partners.

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 April 12
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Federation Jewish Community Campaign

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Judith Katz – Anzie and Edward Golden
Marcelle Hoffman (Mara Winn’s mother) – Debbie Goodman and John Moyer

Jewish Family Service

In honor of:
Birth of Marissa and Eric Bluestone’s new grandson – Andy and Corinne Wernick
Esther Bratt’s special birthday – Elaine Safir

Speedy recovery:

Yvonne Oppenheimer – Louise Zeidman, Sharon and Julian Syret

In memory of:
Pauline Goldberg – Andy and Corinne Wernick, Cheryl and Eric Farber, Joanne Henninger Nye, Mindy & Laurin Quiat

Honorials and Memorials

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Federation Jewish Community Campaign	\$10
Jewish Family Service	\$10
Leo Camp Lecture Fund	\$10
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JFS Taxi Transportation Program	\$25
Holocaust Library & Resource Center	\$18
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Harry & Rose Sack Fund	\$10
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Dr. Apolinario Tablan (Marissa Bluestone’s father) – Andy and Corinne Wernick
Marcelle Hoffman (Mara Winn’s mother) – Andy and Corinne Wernick, Ellen and Don Abramson
Bruce Regal (Cindy Balchunas’ brother) – Andy and Corinne Wernick
Hilde Gernsheimer – Ellen and Don Abramson, Louise Zeidman, Elaine Safir
Hilde Feldman – Andy and Corinne Wernick
Judith Katz – Louise Zeidman

JFS Food Pantry

In memory of:
Shirley Levy (Eleanor Reyner’s mother) – Sue Schlanger

Sue B. Viener Memorial Fund (PJ Library)

In memory of:
Hilde Gernsheimer – George Viener and Family

Friendship Circle Fund

In memory of:
Pauline Goldberg – Sid and Esther Bratt
Hilde Feldman – Glenn and Gaye Corbin
Marcelle Hoffman (Mara Winn’s mother) – Glenn and Gaye Corbin

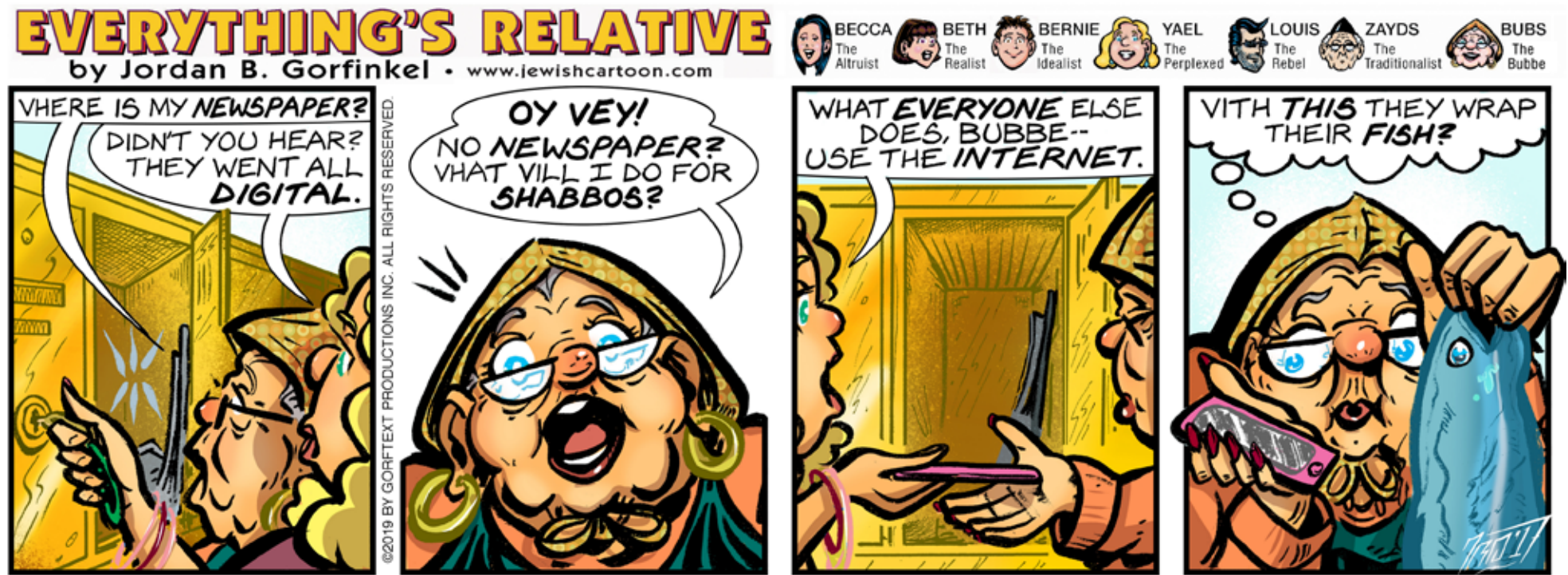
Harry & Rose Sack Fund (adult programming)

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In memory of:
Hilde Gernsheimer – Albert and Nancy Sack

Evelyn Thompson Nursery School Fund

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Marcelle Hoffman (Mara Winn’s mother) – Beth and Bob Caster



Jewish Family Service Food Pantry Collection



We are serving more families each month! Please bring donations of canned tuna, soup, fruits and vegetables to the JCC.
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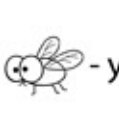
Name _____

Mother's Day Rebus - Harder

In this puzzle, you need to break the rebus codes to discover words related to Mother's Day. To decode the rebuses, first identify the pictures and then add and subtract letters as required. If you figure them out correctly, the remaining letters will spell out a word! Can you decode them all?

1.  - ose +  - eg = _____

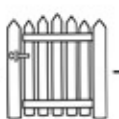
2.  - n +  - a + y = _____

3.  - y +  - m +  -  = _____

4.  +  - c = _____

5.  - a +  - lte +  - n = _____

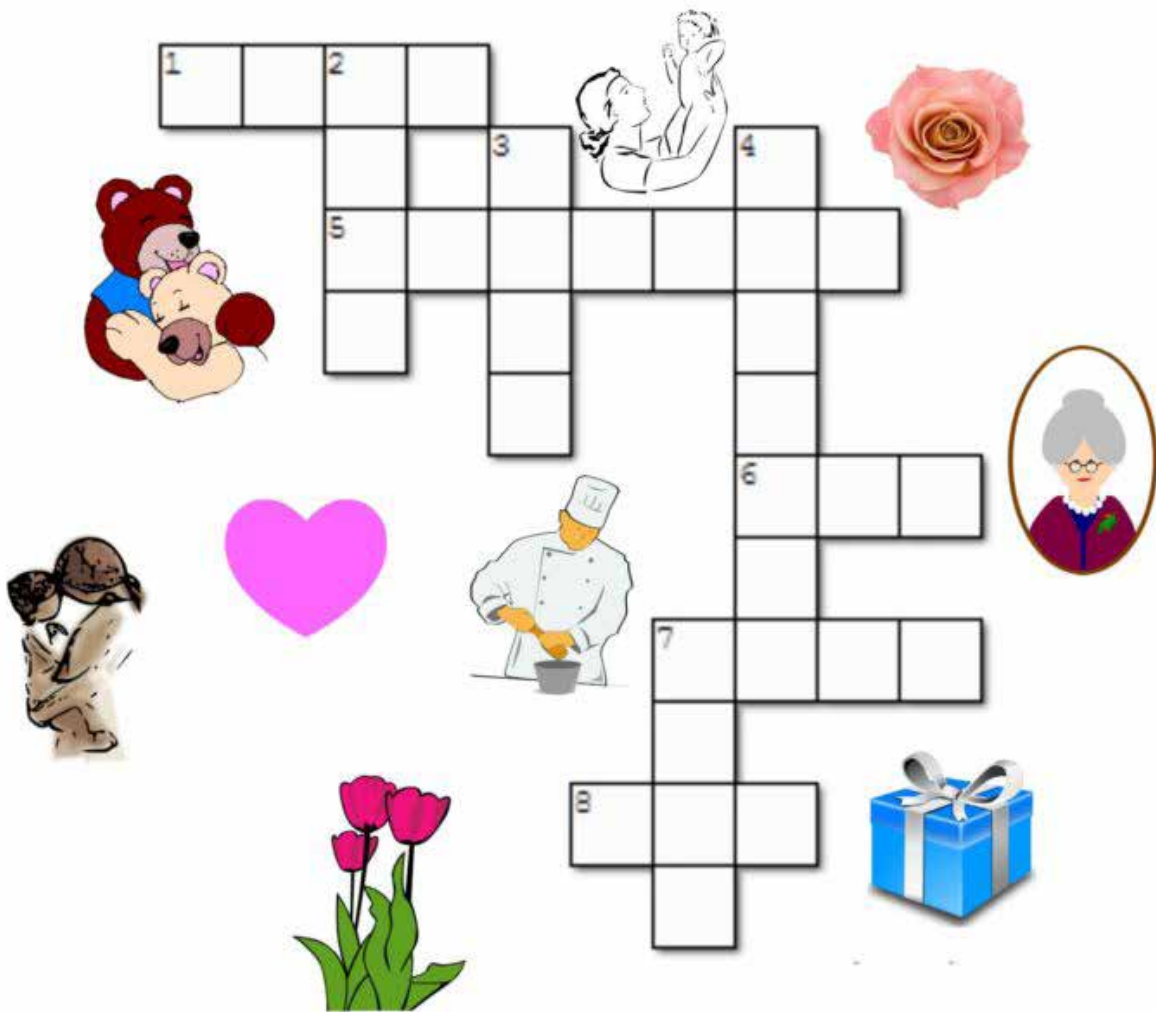
6.  - r +  - n +  - gt +  - tip = _____

7.  - air +  - sk +  - w +  - g = _____

8.  - w + **u** + **?** - sion = _____

The Puzzle Den <http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/The-Puzzle-Den> © 2014 Leslie Vrolyk
Clip Art from Pink Cat Studio (<http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Pink-Cat-Studio>) and Clipart.com

Mother's Day Crossword Puzzle



Across

- 1. I love _____ and kisses from my mom.
- 5. Mom plants _____ in her garden
- 6. Happy Mother's _____.
- 7. I will make my mom a Mother's Day _____.
- 8. _____ is short for mother.

Down

- 2. This is another word for a present.
- 3. I _____ my mom.
- 4. I call my mom's mom and my dad's mom _____.
- 7. My mom is a great _____. I love everything she makes.

Jewish - Holidays - Lag Ba'omer

i	s	a	r	e	o	f	a	h	r	w	a
r	f	o	c	a	m	p	f	i	r	e	v
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a	e	f	z	b	a	o	z	m	o	i	a
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a	i	r	c	d	h	y	d	o	o	w	r
u	w	o	r	r	a	d	n	a	w	o	b
o	t	u	c	r	i	a	h	u	y	y	r

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Match the Symbols – Lag BaOmer

Draw a line between “Lag BaOmer” and the pictures that associate with it

