



Shalom06|24

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

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Federation hosts Soldiers in Uniform program

By Laurie Waxler

There was a whirlwind of activities at Federation in mid-May as we welcomed two Israel Defense Force soldiers to help celebrate the holidays while spreading a positive message and dispelling many of the myths surrounding the Israel-Gaza war. On May 12, Jonathan Primack and Pam Charendoff opened their home to our community for a fundraising cocktail party where the soldiers spoke to the crowd about their civilian experience on October 7, followed by their most recent experience as medics in the IDF.

Bati Kur and Joey Hendry began their story describing hearing the sirens sound at 6:30 a.m. on Oct. 7 and waiting to hear either the Iron Dome activate or the sirens to stop. To their surprise, the sirens continued but they noted there were no rockets in the sky. It was hard to comprehend what was happening until the texts started coming across their phone. They were both called back as reservists and recently completed six months of service until they get the next call. The audience had a lively discussion during the Q & A, talking about Israel, the IDF and current events in the U.S.

The next day, we hosted Israel Campaign and JFR board members for a drop-in breakfast, followed by a commemoration of Yom Hazikaron, Israel's Memorial Day. Ziv Laskin, our Shaliach, organized a meaningful ceremony highlighting two young IDF soldiers who lost their lives on Oct. 7 and hearing Bati and Joey, once again, talking about their personal experiences in Israel. Just as in Israel, Ziv sounded the siren for a moment of silence, lit candles in memory of lost soldiers, offered prayer with Cantor Prosnitz and ended with Hatikvah.

On May 14, Federation hosted 38 non-Jewish community leaders including administrators from all five colleges in Berks County, local politicians including



IDF soldiers Bati Kur and Joey Hendry at the JCC.



Mayor Eddie Moran attended Federation's community leader luncheon

Reading Mayor Eddie Moran, and representation from organizations such as the United Way, LGBT Center and VOICE Up. It was a great opportunity to talk about all that Federation offers as well as allowing our non-Jewish partners to hear first-hand accounts of Oct. 7. There were a lot of questions, allowing Bati and Joey to talk about how the IDF are trained to be humanitarians as well as soldiers, the diverse make-up of the Israeli population and the need to quell the misinformation circulating in the U.S. The evening was capped off celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, with fun and games for the kids, Israeli dancing and wine tasting and an Israeli themed dinner



Ziv Laskin, Joey Hendry, Ben Leisawitz, Elliott Leisawitz and Paul Schwartz



Joey and Bati with Jonathan Primack and Pam Charendoff, who hosted a fundraising event featuring the soldiers.



Sen. Judy Schwank meets Bati and Joey.

from Goldie in Philadelphia. Bati and Joey are safely back in Israel, and we feel blessed to have been able to share their stories with so many during their short stay.



Ziv Laskin, our Shaliach for the last two years, is ending his tenure here in June. The community is grateful for his tireless work educating people about Israel, particularly during what has been a very challenging time in the wake of the Oct. 7 attacks.

A farewell party is scheduled for Thursday, June 6, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Beverly Hills Tavern, 710 Old Fritztown Road, Sinking Spring.

Read more about Ziv on Page 4 of this edition.

Uncomfortable conversations

On May 1 I had the privilege of hearing Noa Tishby and EmmanuelAcho speak about their new book, “Uncomfortable Conversations with a Jew,” which was released the day before.



Acho is known for his previous work, “Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man,” released in November 2020. Tishby was born in Israel and upon moving to Los Angeles, in an attempt to further her acting career, was surprised by the lack of knowledge amongst Americans about Israel. That inspired her to write the book “Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth.” (I’ve written about her before, because our board was lucky enough to have the opportunity to read the Israel

book and have a moderated discussion about in this past September.) What I found most intriguing was that Acho approached Tishby two years ago to begin working on the book. He noted a rise in antisemitism at the time and wanted to act on it. Most people would think this book was a knee-jerk reaction to Oct. 7, but that’s not the case. Acho believes “marginalized groups fight in silos. Black people fight for Black people, women fight for women, and Jewish people fight for Jewish people.” He noted how powerful we could be if everyone fought collectively together.

Just as Federation works with our Greater Reading Unity Coalition partners, Tishby and Acho are setting a wonderful example to the world that we can all, indeed, work together for the greater good. We all need



Emmanuel Acho and Noa Tishby.

to continue open dialogue with our colleagues and friends of all races, religions and genders. Together, we can make a great impact on the world and show that love is stronger than hate and by supporting your Federation, we too can continue the conversations and work together with other minority nonprofits for a better Berks County.

Make a statement with Blue Square pin

By Laurie Waxler

Have you seen the Blue Square pin? Created by the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism (FCAS) founded by New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft, the blue square is a symbol of solidarity with the Jewish community to raise awareness of antisemitism. The small square represents the small percentage of Jewish people in the United States, standing at 2.4%. The idea is that when you see the small blue square on a big television screen, you see how small our numbers really are.

The mission of the FCAS is “to win the hearts and minds of non-Jews and Jews through powerful, positive messaging and partnerships, motivating and equipping them to be defenders of and upstanders for Jews.” The foundation’s focus lies in raising awareness and responding to antisemitism, engaging and informing individuals through mass media and to rebuild and celebrate Jewish identity.

After being awarded the Genesis Prize in 2019, honoring individuals for their accomplishments and commitment to Jewish values, Mr. Kraft announced the opening of the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism, formed to stand up against racist and violent rhetoric aimed toward the Jewish community. Since then, the Foundation has produced television commercials (one played during the Super Bowl), and billboards and was also able to promote the cause during the most recent NFL draft. While the message of #StopJewishHate is at the forefront of the pins, they are also meant to speak out against hatred of all types.

Pins are available at the Federation office at no cost, or you can visit the Foundation website at fcas.org to request a free pin and learn more about the group’s mission. We encourage you to wear your pin and share the story with others. As the website states, we can all do better.



Founder Robert Kraft wearing the Blue Square pin.

Development

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Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 2 11:30 am - 2:00pm

Adults: \$18 Children (12 & under): \$10

Wyomissing Hills Park, 53 Valley Road, Wyomissing

Join us for a family event with kosher picnic lunch buffet, annual meeting, activities for the kids, juggling class for teens and a magic show for all ages!

RSVP: www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org or by calling 610-921-0624



The modern significance of Shavuot

**By Brian Chartock
CEO**

Shavuot, one of the three pilgrimage festivals in Judaism (the others are Passover and Sukkot), holds profound significance in both ancient tradition and modern practice. Celebrated seven weeks after Passover, Shavuot recalls the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Beyond its historical roots, however, Shavuot holds contemporary relevance for the Jewish people, resonating with themes of renewal, community, and spiritual growth. In modern times, Shavuot has evolved to encompass a broader spectrum of meanings, reflecting the evolving nature of Jewish identity and practice.

Below are some ways in which Shavuot holds significance for the Jewish community in our lives today:

Celebrating Jewish Learning

Shavuot is often referred to as the "Festival of Weeks" or the "Festival of



Reaping" in reference to the agricultural aspect of the holiday. However, Shavuot is also known in Hebrew as "Zman Matan Torateinu," the time of the giving of our Torah. In contemporary Jewish practice, Shavuot is a time to celebrate Jewish learning and scholarship. Communities join together to study Torah throughout the evening in a practice known as "Tikkun Leil Shavuot," symbolizing the commitment to lifelong learning.

Cultivating Spiritual Connection

Shavuot serves as an opportunity for spiritual connection. For instance, the story of receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai is a reminder of the ongoing relationship between the Jewish people and God. In today's fast-paced world, Shavuot offers a moment of pause for us to reflect on our personal, spiritual journeys, reconnecting with our values, and reaffirming our commitment to living meaningful Jewish lives.

Embracing Diversity and Inclusivity

Shavuot emphasizes the unity of the Jewish people. According to our tradition,

the entire Jewish nation stood together at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, regardless of background or status. In our modern world, Shavuot should serve as a reminder of the diversity within our own Jewish community and the importance of inclusivity. It is a time to join together as one community, regardless of denomination or affiliation, and to celebrate our shared values.

Engaging with Social Justice

Shavuot is also a time to reflect on the ethical teachings of the Torah and their relevance to contemporary issues. Themes of justice, compassion, and tikkun olam (repairing the world) are central to Jewish tradition and resonate strongly on Shavuot. In recent years, many Jewish communities have used Shavuot as an opportunity to engage in social justice initiatives such as volunteering, advocacy, and community service projects, demonstrating the enduring relevance of Jewish values in addressing the challenges of our time.

Honoring the Environment

As an agricultural holiday, Shavuot

provides an opportunity to reflect on our relationship with the environment. Shavuot reminds us of the importance of stewardship and sustainability. Traditions such as eating dairy products and decorating our homes with flowers and greenery serve as reminders of our connection with the Earth; moreover, that is our responsibility to protect the environment for future generations.

While Shavuot may have ancient origins, its modern significance for the Jewish people is multifaceted and dynamic. From celebrating Jewish learning and cultivating spiritual connection to embracing diversity and engaging in social justice, Shavuot serves as a reminder of the enduring relevance of Jewish tradition and values in an ever-changing world.

As we celebrate this year, let us be reminded of our shared heritage, our journey of spiritual growth and our collective responsibility to make the world a better place.

L'Shalom and happy Shavuot,

Holocaust remembrance ceremony emphasizes need to remind people ‘never again’

By Margo Levin

The words "never again" are heard frequently during annual observances of Holocaust Remembrance Day — and were said several times during Civic Commemoration of the Holocaust at the Pennsylvania Capitol.

On May 6 we were honored to attend the 40th annual Civic Commemoration of the Holocaust, which was held in the Governor's Reception Room at the State Capitol and organized by Pennsylvania Jewish Coalition. The ceremony was led by our own Judith Kraines, co-chair of the Planning Committee.

We thank Gov. Josh Shapiro for his steadfast support of the Jewish community during these difficult times and who stated a somber fact: "Since Oct. 7 we have seen a 150% increase in antisemitic incidents across the country and sadly in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania it's even higher."

He added, "Far too many people in the world today, even with that piece of history, even what is playing out every single minute of every single day right now in this nation and across the globe, you see far too many people in today's world not only don't remember the atrocities of the past, they seem hellbent on repeating them."

Nevertheless, the program was inspirational in that it showed that the people of Pennsylvania stand together in the face of antisemitism as we remembered the 6 million Jews murdered during the Holocaust.

We also want to thank our Berks County state Reps. Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz, and Mark M. Gillen, and Sen. Judy Schwank, for attending the ceremony. Rep. Cepeda-Freytiz was kind enough to invite us onto the floor of the Capitol. We would further like to thank the Speaker of the House, Rep. Joanna McClinton, for welcoming us onto the floor and for her show of support.



Margo Levin, state House Speaker Joanna McClinton, Judith Kraines and Rep. Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz at a Holocaust Remembrance Day event in the state Capitol.

Follow us on social media!



Jewish Federation of Reading &
Jewish Cultural Center of Reading



@jfedreadingberks

Don't forget to share your email with us to keep on the latest Community news!

Send us an email at info@jfredreading.org to get added to our email list!

Shalom

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



Thank you to Ziv for serving our community so well

By Brian Chartock
Federation CEO

Ziv Laskin, Federation's Community Shaliach, will be completing his time with the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks in early June.

Ziv began his journey with us in September 2022, during the High Holidays. During his tenure, Ziv successfully taught our community about the beauty of Israeli culture and all that it has to offer. Ziv built many personal connections with so many of us; moreover, our Jewish community benefited greatly by his presence. For all of that and more, Federation remains truly grateful to Ziv.

Below are some of the many programs that, under Ziv's leadership and vision, Federation was proud to bring to our greater community.

- Youth and Adult programming
- Coffee Time
- Cooking classes
- Israeli programming at Alvernia,

RACC and Exeter Library

- Berks Interfaith Passport program for ages 8-12 yrs
- Collaboration with the Islamic Center and IUCC
- Jewish holiday programming
- Hebrew School instruction
- Lakin Preschool programming
- JCC Walking Club
- Hebrew Classes for adults
- Collaboration with synagogues
- Soldiers in Uniform

Federation will be honoring Ziv at a farewell Happy Hour. The event is scheduled for Thursday, June 6 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Beverly Hills Tavern, 710 Old Fritztown Road, Spring Township.

Please join us that evening as we wish Ziv a mazel tov.

Even though he is returning to Israel and continuing his career, Ziv will always remain a part of our Federation family.

Ziv - Todah rabah and b'hatzlacha (Thank you very much as we wish you continued success).



Shaliach Ziv Laskin was recognized at a Philadelphia event for his outstanding work.

Looking back on a great journey

By Ziv Laskin

On Sept. 12, 2022, I flew from Ben Gurion Airport to Newark Airport. Initially, I felt very confused — new language, new



food, new people, new landscape, and everything seemed so vast! A year and eight months have passed since I started my Shlichut in Reading. It is hard to believe that I am close to finishing my mission here. I have found lifelong friends and unforgettable experiences that have helped me rediscover myself.

The Shlichut program places young adult Israelis, after their IDF service, in Jewish communities throughout the world. The Jewish Federation of Reading

and the Jewish Community Alliance of Lancaster (JCAL) partnered with the Jewish Agency for Israel to host me as the Shaliach of our communities. I had the privilege to be here and share my experiences from Israel, and I hope I succeeded in bringing Israel closer to you.

My journey of Shlichut is not done; I will continue to share what you have taught me in Israel. The connection between Israel and Jewish people around the world is so important. We must remain connected on both sides and, like this, strengthen our unity.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has made my time here so amazing. I hope I've been able to give you a glimpse of Israel and share meaningful experiences with you.



Ziv became a friend to many in the community.

ZIV'S FAREWELL HAPPY HOUR



FREE APPS

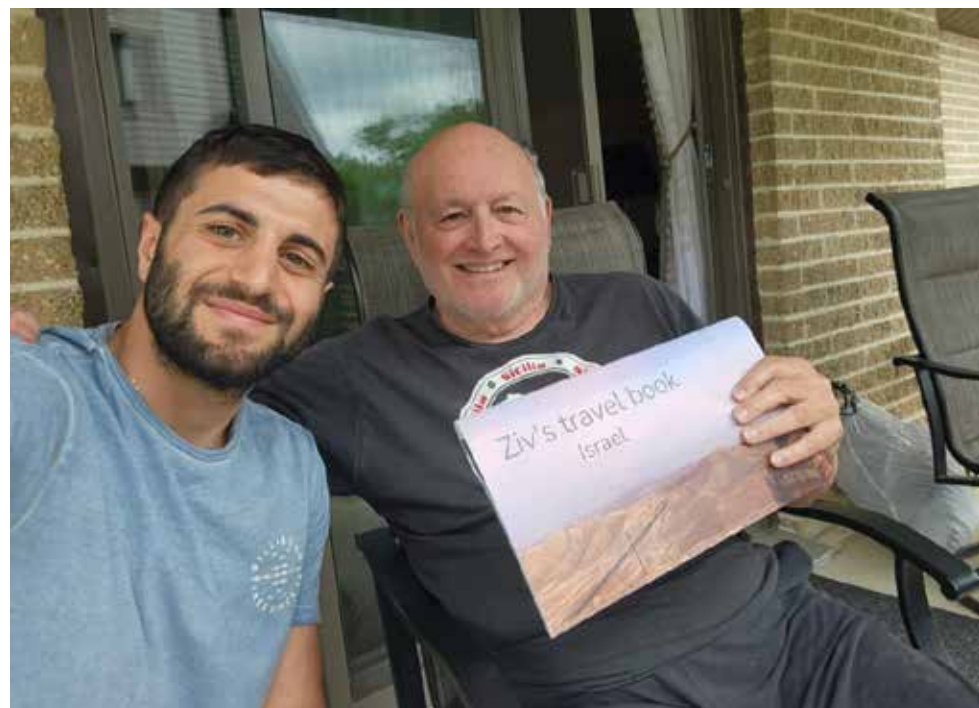
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JOIN US AT BEVERLY HILLS TAVERN
710 OLD FRITZTOWN RD SINKING SPRING
TO WISH HIM WELL AS HE RETURNS TO ISRAEL
AFTER 2 YEARS WITH THE COMMUNITY

**THURSDAY JUNE 6, 2024
5-7 PM**

RSVP TO INFO@JFREADING.ORG
OR CALL 610-921-0624





Ziv gave his neighbor a traveling book as a goodbye gift, including a Hamasa and a small plate. all made in Israel. These travel books will be available at the Annual Meeting and at the JCC for a small donation

Graduations and B’nai Mitzvah



Joshua Nathan Brown, son of Lisa and Robert Brown, is graduating from Exeter High School. Joshua is a member of National Honor Society and Business Club. He plays soccer for Exeter High School and Evergreen Soccer Club. As a senior, Joshua decided to run track, where he excels. He will attend Franklin & Marshall College in the fall and will study biology and continue to run track.



Alexa Chronister, daughter of Cindy and Brett Chronister, graduated from Duke University School of Law. While in law school, Alexa served on the editorial board of the Duke Law Journal, was a Margolis Scholar in Health Policy and Management, and worked at the Health Justice Clinic. This fall Alexa will begin her legal career at Reed Smith in Washington.



Kacie Horowitz, daughter of Jeff and Elyse Horowitz, received her MA in Communications from Monmouth University. She worked as a graduate assistant in the communications department, helping with teaching, VR and media for the university. She currently is freelancing in media looking for a full-time position.



Silas Mitchell Platt, son of Dr. Alec and Gretchen Platt, was called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on March 16 at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom. Silas is in seventh grade at Wyomissing Area Junior High School, where he is a member of the cross country, wrestling and lacrosse teams. Silas’ mitzvah project, “Growing Hope from the Ground Up”, was a great success because of the generous support of RCOS congregants and the community at large. During the Jewish Food Festival, Silas handed out tulip and daffodil bulbs in exchange for donations to the Israel Emergency Fund.



Rachel Radosh, daughter of Jodi and Lee Radosh, graduated Magna Cum Laude from Pennsylvania State University with a major in Elementary and Early Childhood Education, and dual minors in Special Education and Child Development and Education. In February Rachel danced for 46 hours as part of THON, the world’s largest student-run philanthropy. She was a Sigma Delta Tau sorority member, Panhellenic delegate, research assistant, LifeLink volunteer for students with special needs, PSU Lion Scouts tour guide, and involved in Hillel. She will be pursuing a master’s degree in the fall at Columbia University.

"ART, CULTURE & IDEAS"

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MONDAY, JUNE 3
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RENÉE FLEMING IN CONVERSATION WITH DAVID RUBENSTEIN:
MUSIC AND MIND
A PRE-RECORDED PROGRAM

Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks

Art, Culture & Ideas is a
monthly series

NOONTIME KNOWLEDGE

"Itai Anghel: Two Days Inside Gaza"

Tuesday June 18 at noon at the JCC

Join us for a prerecorded Streicker Center program with Itai Anghel, an Israeli reporter. He captures the reality during two days inside Gaza with a reconnaissance unit of IDF reserve fighters as they made their way into a mosque and school complex. He will discuss what he saw and heard embedded with soldiers under unimaginable pressure.

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

Music, history and fun with Dave Kline



The audience had a great time at Dave Kline’s May 2 program on “The History of Folk, Pop and Rock Music” at the JCC. At right, Kline meets with Sylvia Wenger and Louise Zeidman.

Counting down as we approach Shavuot

By Cantor Ted Prosnitz
Kesher Zion Synagogue

In the game “Name That Tune,” contestants compete to name a tune in the fewest number of notes. That is a little unusual, in that in most competitions, the goal is to get the bigger number. Golf, too, is unusual in that the low score wins. But



between Passover and Shavuot, per the Biblical command to count seven full weeks, we count up, from one to 49. This year, Shavuot starts Tuesday, June 11.

But if we are looking ahead to the festival of Shavuot, which (since the 3rd century CE) we associate with mattan torateinu/the giving of the Torah, why not count down? After all, we count down the number of days until a birthday or an anniversary. We count down: 10...9...8...til the ball drops at midnight on New Years Eve or a rocket blasts off. But that is not our practice, we count up: today is the first day of the counting of the omer... today is the second day...till we fulfill the count. Counting down diminishes the value of each day.

In Psalm 90 (verse 12), we read, “Teach us to number our days, rightly That we may attain a heart of wisdom.” Counting up makes each day count. Our sages saw that it was the 50th day into the Exodus when the Israelites received the Torah

at Mount Sinai. We (the Haggadah told us we should each feel as if we, ourselves, had been taken out from Egypt) left Egypt. It is as if we are counting: this is one day of freedom...this is two days of freedom. Our journey took us to Mount Sinai, where we (and homilectically all Jewish souls) experienced the Revelation. Counting up can encourage us to grow, to lift ourselves higher.

The Amora Rav Yosi bar Zavida explains why (Hillel taught us) to add a candle each night of Hannukah (rather than subtracting, per the School of Shammai). He cites the principle, Maalin B’Kodesh v’Ein Moridin, in matters of holiness we should always ascend and never descend. The same principle applies to sefirat ha-omer/counting the omer. What is wisdom? Psalm 90’s theme is the finite nature of man and the infinite nature of God. We were created to praise, to labor, and to love.

In the days when the Temple stood, an omer was brought from the harvest, with thanksgiving to the One who brought us out of Egypt and who gave us His Teaching. Centuries later when agricultural Temple offerings were no longer a means to connect with Hashem, mystics attached meaning to each of the 49 days by contemplating various aspects they perceived of Hashem. As modern prayers, how can we attempt to achieve deveikut/closeness with our Creator? One tool is to access Psalm 67, which has, count ‘em, seven verses totaling 49 words (after the introduction). Its plain sense has both a harvest reference, a particular connection



with Israel, and a wish for universal well-being.

Another practice is to engage in a night of Torah study. The entire community is invited to come to a Tikkun Leil Shavuot on Tuesday, June 11. It will be hosted at Kesher Zion Synagogue with cooperation from Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and support from Federation. You will be able to listen to and learn from several speakers, some whom you have probably never had an opportunity to experience. And of course there will be desserts (did someone say ice cream?) and shmoozing between the sessions (three during the 90-minute event). “Come precious ones and let us establish that all who join together on this night will be preserved from all harm, from above and below throughout the year and will be enabled to finish the year in peace...” (Zohar).

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, says a Chinese proverb. Take upon yourself the spiritual journey from Egypt to Sinai, from slavery beneath a human tyrant toward the uplifting service of the Eternal. Let us learn to make each day count.

“Today is the first day of the rest of my life,” (sung by John Denver).

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Shabbat Candle Lightings



Torah Portions

June 7
8:14 p.m.

June 14
8:17 p.m.

June 21
8:19 p.m.

June 28
8:20 p.m.

June 1/24 Iyar
Bechukotai (Leviticus 26:3-27:34)

June 8/2 Sivan
Bamidbar (Numbers 1:1-4:20)

June 15/9 Sivan
Naso (Numbers 4:21-7:89)

June 22/16 Sivan
Behaalotecha (Numbers 8:1-12:16)

June 29/23 Sivan
Shlach (Numbers 13:1-15:41)

Great preschool activities continue; camp awaits

By Wendy Bright & Judy Lefante

Lakin Preschool celebrated its second Annual Art Show on April 10. Families and friends of Lakin Preschool enjoyed viewing their child's Eric Carle inspired artwork.

This was a fabulous opportunity to spend time with one another, make new friends, visit with their child's classmates' friends and create new memories. Families shared pizza, salad and a variety of desserts, and the children had a special activity to paint their own cupcake!

We are grateful to Elyse Horowitz for her time spent with the children to create each unique piece of art inspired by Eric Carle's stories. Thank you to all of the Lakin parents for their organization, willingness, creativity and dedication to programs for our preschool. We are looking forward to next year's art show, which will focus on art technique, mediums and a variety of famous artists.

We celebrated Passover with our Lakin Seder. The children learned about the symbolic foods eaten to remember the history of Jewish ancestors who lived in Egypt under harsh conditions as slaves.

Our Seder was led by Carole Robinson. She told the story of the Jewish people and we sang songs, ate matzoh, tasted charoset, apples with cinnamon, marshmallows, celery, carrot sticks, parsley and grape juice to represent wine.

It was especially fun to find the hidden afikomen and receive a prize. What a good feeling to spend this time together during our school day to celebrate a very



Preschoolers had a chance to try some matzoh.

meaningful message.

Summer Camp is around the corner! Please be sure to register your child for one or all four weeks of camp. Our camp runs from 9-noon Monday through Friday. Please register at ReadingJewishCommunity.org or contact us to learn more: 610-223-8058 or lakinpreschool@jfreading.org

June 17-21 — Super Heroes

June 24-28 — Shark Week

July 8-12 — Pirates & Treasure

July 15-19 — Planets & Solar System



The Lakin Preschool held a Passover Seder led by Carole Robinson. The children learned the story of the Exodus and the symbolic foods associated with the holiday. The red dots represented boils as part of a reenactment of the 10 plagues.



LAKIN PRESCHOOL

Register Now For September!

Ages 2-5

(610)223-8058

Lakinpreschool@Jfreading.org

Vibrant Senior Living with a Tradition of Trust



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Our Independent Living, Personal Care and Memory Care community will offer dedicated wellness specialists, a putting green and golf-themed pub, enriching activities, **and no buy-in fee!**

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LAKIN PRESCHOOL SUMMER CAMP

FOR AGES 2-5

MON - FRI
9 AM - 12 PM

A new
theme each
week!

Camp Weeks:

June 17	June 24
July 8	July 15

located in Wyomissing Hills
555 Warwick Drive, inside Reform
Congregation Oheb Sholom
Everyone Welcome!
\$160 per week

ACTIVITIES:

- Storytelling
- Painting
- Arts & Craft
- Fun Games
- Music & Dance
- Water Play

FOR MORE INFO:

610-223-9058

lakinpreschool@jfreading.org

Register online: ReadingJewishCommunity.org



**SCAN HERE TO
SIGN UP!**



LAKIN PRESCHOOL

PILATES CLASSES AT THE JCC



Join Martha Connolly of Pilates At Any Age, LLC who will be instructing classes of Pilates. All community participants are welcome, no experience is necessary and all levels (including beginners) are welcome. Participants should wear comfortable clothing and either grippy socks or bare feet and bring a water bottle. 45 min chair class at 9:30 am on Tuesday and a 45 minute mat class at 10:30am on Tuesday. \$5 per class. Class fee is payable by cash or check only.

**\$ 5 PER CLASS
TUESDAYS IN JUNE
9:30AM - 10:15AM CHAIR CLASS
10:30AM -11:15AM MAT CLASS**

***PLEASE NOTE THE DAY AND TIME CHANGE
FOR CLASSES ***



1100 Berkshire Blvd Suite 125
Wyomissing



RSVP to info@jfreading.org or
call 610-921-0624



Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks

Annual Meeting at the park to take place June 2

By Laurie Waxler

Jewish Federation of Reading is pleased to invite community members to our upcoming Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 2, at the Wyomissing Hills Park.

Now is the perfect time to thank our board members for their time and dedication to our Federation, with special recognition this year to outgoing members Jessica Leisawitz and Jim Rothstein. We hope you'll join us to

review the past year and welcome new members Debra Montanino and David Spillerman.

The family fun festivities begin at 11:30 a.m. and includes a kosher picnic lunch, activities for the kids including a

juggling class for ages 12 and up, and a magic show for all ages.

Cost is \$18 for adults and \$10 for children ages 12 and under. Please RSVP on our website ReadingJewishCommunity.org.

A powerful Yom Hashoah observance



The Federation observed Yom Hashoah on May 5 at the Highlands. Many thanks to Mariette Jacobson for sharing her family's survival story.

KZ SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE MITZVAH PROJECT



On April 11, there was a fire at Dayspring Homes in Cumru Township. Thankfully everyone got out safely. However, the home is burnt to the ground and the residents have lost everything. Dayspring Homes is a Christian nonprofit organization which provides housing and services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Keshet Zion Social Action Committee is collecting items to help these people in need, including toiletries, personal care items, clothes, shoes, undergarments, socks, pajamas, and gift cards. All clothing items should be new or in extremely good condition.

The sizes needed for these residents are:
Women's size 2XL, shoe size 7
Men's size L, no shoes needed
Men's size XL, shoe size 10
Men's size 2XL, shoe size 12 W

We have set up a collection box, in the lobby at Keshet Zion Synagogue at 555 Warwick Drive in Wyomissing. The lobby is open Mon.-Fri. 10-3:00 p.m.

Call Lisa Levine at 610-507-0569 or the KZ office at 610-374-1763 with any questions.

Please drop off the above items before June 15, 2024. Thank you for your help!

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What will your Jewish legacy be?

By Carole Robinson

As I cuddle my newborn grandson, Carter, in my arms, I have a few quiet moments to reflect on my life and my legacy. What values do I want to share with baby Carter? What matters most to me? How can I ensure that I am leaving the world a better place for Carter and future generations?



My grandkids call me CeeCee, and ironically, the values that I align myself to all begin with the letter “C”, so my “grandma name” is fitting. I believe in compassion (emotionally connecting with others), caring (taking action to help), and community (people who share a culture, heritage, or geographic location).

These values help to shape the Jewish legacy that I am leaving behind in our world and play a pivotal role in my professional career as Director of Social Services for JFS.

Take for instance, the partnership

between Jewish Family Service and CommunityAid. JFS was proud to be featured at CommunityAid recently as one of its partner agencies. (See ad below).

CommunityAid invests its time, resources and proceeds directly into other local nonprofit and faith-based organizations, such as JFS, that diversifies the impact in the lives of neighbors in our community. They believe that creating lasting positive changes to a community begins with helping one neighbor at a time. CommunityAid focuses on “taking ownership to bring about positive results, choosing humility in all things that we do, and treating others how they want to be treated.”

It means a lot that JFS and CommunityAid share many of the same values that I believe in. We serve all age groups and are dedicated to strengthening the quality of life of our community (i.e. compassion). We offer services including, but not limited to, counseling, transportation, senior programming, community outreach and helping connect clients to additional local resources (i.e. caring). We also focus on issues central to the mission of CommunityAid to help those in Pennsylvania

(i.e. community): food insecurity, housing insecurity, and basic needs.

And now my “C” values – compassion, caring and community — get to share a space in my heart with my newest “C” grandson, Carter. (My daughter named her kids in alphabetical order: A, B and C!). The birth of Carter has also reminded me of the importance of tikkun olam, repairing the world.

I want to have a positive impact on the world that my grandson will inherit, but I can’t do it alone. With your help, JFS will continue to build community and work together to create systematic change. The vision that JFS shares with CommunityAid is “creating a lasting difference in our community, one neighbor at a time.”

In honor of my latest grandson, I encourage you to help us continue our successful partnership by donating your clothes and household items to CommunityAid, either in our donation bin or at their store, or by shopping at CommunityAid.

Maya Angelou expressed it best, “You have no idea what your legacy will be because your legacy is every life you touch.” Let’s touch each other’s lives and repair the world!

NEIGHBORS HELPING TEMPLE!

Your donations make a BIG difference!

“Jewish Family Service is a small faith-based social service organization that incorporates the Jewish value of ‘tikkun olam,’ repairing the world, into everything we do. One way we help our neighbors in need is by fighting food insecurity. We have two monthly food pantries, serving 500 households each month. Another example of tikkun olam is providing emergency rent and utility assistance for Jewish community members in crisis. A few months ago, a single mother contacted JFS. Her rental house was badly damaged in a fire and she lost all her possessions. Thanks to our partnership with CommunityAid, JFS was able to provide her with the security deposit and also give her an interest free loan for the first month’s rent.”

-Jewish Family Service

To read more about Jewish Family Service or for more information on our community impact, visit: CommunityAid.org/CommunityImpact





Jewish Family Service

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



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You can also donate clothing anytime in the bin in our parking lot located at 1100 Berkshire Blvd.



Your donations turn into financial assistance to support the important work we do in our community!

Celebrating Passover in the community



Above, the JFS Seder was held at the Federation on April 18. It was attended by 30 seniors, and Passover meals were delivered to an additional 10 seniors who were unable to attend. At left, Anzie Golden and Ingrid Soltysik enjoy the Seder.



Sid Bratt, Esther Bratt, and Rosalye Yashek



Rabbi Lipsker, Cantor Prosnitz, and Rabbi Michelson leading the Seder at the Highlands



Shirley Boscov, Sue Wachs, and Pat Frankel

A BIG thank you to our Passover volunteers:

- Rabbi Lipsker, Rabbi Michelson and Cantor Prosnitz for leading the seder at the Highlands.
- Anzie Golden and Gail Tomrell who served meals at the JFS seder.
- Pete Jacobson and Eddie Kazin who delivered meals.
- Special thanks to our fabulous Passover dessert baker Sheila Bornstein and her help with the seder



FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

June 6- "Learn about Osteoporosis"

Join Dr. Joan Zeidman, an obstetrics & gynecology specialist, as we learn about the risk factors of osteoporosis and the recommended treatments for it. This will also be a chance to say goodbye to our Shaliach, Ziv before he leaves for Israel.

June 20- "Here Comes the Sun with Alex Eskin"

Join your Friendship Circle friends for a musical afternoon with Alex Eskin as he plays music of the 60's and 70's.



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.

Feeding the community



Volunteers hard at work at the May JFS Food Pantry. Above, Allison Althouse with a bag of items. Below, Cindy Balchunas distributes food to walk-up clients.



Many thanks to our May Food Pantry volunteers who distributed over 20,000 pounds of food to 550 households.

Allison Althouse	Annette Peppard
Mary Anne Avins	Jenn Reilly
Cindy Balchunas	Mike Schein
Raymond Gehring	Ellen Schwartz
Patty Hartman	Paul Schwartz
John Incledon	Russ Shanahan
Pete Jacobson	Joan Sherman
Sid Lempiner	Oleg Umanov
Debra Montanino	

All Around the Town

Mazel tov to grandparents **Corinne and Andy Wernick** and great-grandparents **Esther and Sid Bratt** on the birth of Ella Sydney Wernick. Ella’s parents are **Joy and Brian Wernick** of New Jersey.

Mazel tov to **Carole and Mike Robinson** on the birth of their grandson Carter. Carter is the son of **Madelyn Robinson and Jakob Shipe**, Hawthorne, N.J.

.Send good news to Marknem@aol.com or call 610-921-0624.

Until next time: Shalom!

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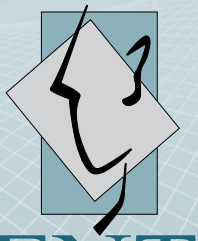
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JFS hospital, outpatient visits

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.

Celebrating Passover during basic training



Community member Jacob Sileski, left, attends his first seder with his unit during basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He has been able to attend services and engage in other Jewish activities.
Photo courtesy of Irene Sileski

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

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Jewish Family Service is grateful to our committed volunteers!

Here are some ways that you can help:

Help Fight Hunger

Join us at a JFS Food Pantry to distribute food to our hungry neighbors.

Share your Professional Expertise

Present a program on travel, photography, or your unique interests or hobbies to our seniors.

Share your time

A small investment of your personal time can make a profound difference in someone's life. Visit a shut-in, shop for a homebound senior, or take someone to a doctor's appointment.

Donate your vehicle to JFS or donate clothing to CommunityAid

Enjoy tax benefits of donating a car or help our clients through our partnership with CommunityAid.



Contact Us
Carole Robinson at
610-921-0624



"IMordecai"

A Holocaust survivor, born and raised in a different time, must face the realities of modern world. When confronted with an unfamiliar object, an iPhone, will Mordecai be able to fit into a world that has changed so much around him?

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



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!

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Study shows financial challenges among Jews

Jewish Federations of North America

A new financial analysis using data from 2018 to 2023 shows that 19% of Jewish households in 12 communities around the United States either cannot make ends meet or are just managing to make ends meet.

Like households in the United States at large, Jewish households with children, people with a disability or chronic health issue, and single parents are much more likely to experience financial vulnerabilities than other Jewish homes.

They're not alone though. In the Jewish community, Orthodox households, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and Russian-speaking Jewish are also more likely to face financial difficulty. This is primarily because these populations tend to be younger and more likely to have children. For Orthodox households, an additional financial challenge is the cost of enrollment in day schools.

The report, entitled "Analysis of Financial Well-being Using the CMJS Combined Dataset," was the result of a new effort to standardize financial data across community studies, allowing researchers to accurately compare communities and draw broader conclusions about the Jewish community on a national scale.

This report is part of a comprehensive effort undertaken by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish (CMJ) Studies at Brandeis University, in collaboration with the Jewish Federations of North America and The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. The dataset gathered information from more than 53,000 respondents in 25 communities since 2015. This report on financial

well-being incorporates data from 22,000 respondents in 12 communities representing over 1 million Jewish adults and nearly 700,000 Jewish households throughout the United States.

"With our broad communal reach, Jewish Federations were uniquely able to coordinate a consistent approach to the survey questions across communities, giving us new insights into what drives our Jewish communities and what barriers they face to flourishing," said Jessica Mehlman, Associate Vice President of Impact and Planning at Jewish Federations of North America. "We know that day schools and Jewish Family Services are among the top three collective recipients of local Jewish Federations, and we look forward to working with them on incorporating these latest findings into the work they do every day to support Jewish life in our communities."

The analysis found that financial vulnerability remains a problem within the Jewish community across several key indicators. While 2% of households say that they are unable to make ends meet, another 17% say that they are just managing to make ends meet. Data shows that 11% of Jewish households fall below 250% of the federal poverty line, which in 2023 equated to \$62,150 for a family of three. Additionally, 6% of Jewish households report they could not currently cover an emergency expense of \$400, and 7% were unable to afford necessities in the past year.

"This report breaks the myth that poverty is not a Jewish problem," said Jon Hornstein, Program Director leading the Weinberg Foundation's grantmaking focused on the Jewish

community. "It should serve as a call to action for how funders, direct service agencies, and Federations can work together to better serve individuals and families in our communities who are struggling financially."

Additionally, the costs of participating in Jewish life pose a greater barrier for both lower-income and middle-income Jewish families than higher-income Jewish families.

While an overall 11% of Jewish households said financial limitations affected their engagement in Jewish life, the report found that 49% of poor households, and 28% of those managing to make ends meet, say finances are a constraint to participation in Jewish life.

"We see this unexpected split when it comes to the effect of costs," said the study's lead author, Dr. Janet Krasner Aronson, Associate Director of CMJS. "Those who are more well off are able to better afford the costs of Jewish life, while those who are on the lower end of the financial spectrum tend to be more Orthodox who may be more motivated to participate in Jewish life regardless of cost, as well as financial assistance is more generally available for lower income families."

Working with legislators

Jewish Federations of North America are proud to announce that the National Association of Jewish Legislators (NAJL) will join the Federations system as part of the Public Affairs team.

Jewish Federations are the backbones of our Jewish communities and have advocated on behalf of the community's interests on the local, state, and federal level for decades. As the threats of antisemitism and anti-

Zionism have continued to surge, these relationships and connections have only grown more important.

"More and more, we see the fight to protect Jewish communities and the policy actions needed to make them flourish take place on the local and state level, which is why we are so excited to welcome NAJL into the Jewish Federations fold," said Karen Paikin Barall, Vice President, Government Relations, for Jewish Federations. "NAJL has an excellent reputation and track record at engaging and organizing Jewish legislators to represent our community's perspectives."

Founded in 1977, NAJL is a national, nonpartisan network and forum for Jewish state legislators, representing over 240 Jewish state legislators from across the country in nearly 40 states. With NAJL's support, Jewish legislators across the nation have been an active force in fighting anti-Semitism and serving as Jewish voices in our state capitols.

NAJL also promotes support for Israel, promotes Jewish values of civility, inclusiveness and tolerance, and encourages a new generation of Jewish Americans to run for public office and engage in electoral campaigns.

"When legislators need to act on issues of importance to the American Jewish community, Jewish Federations are always ready to assist them. That's why we are so excited to join efforts and forces," said NAJL Executive Director Jeffrey M. Wice. "The infrastructure we have built over the years to boost Jewish legislators at every level of government will be an extraordinary tool in the Jewish Federations' growing advocacy arsenal, and we look forward to fully integrating our efforts."

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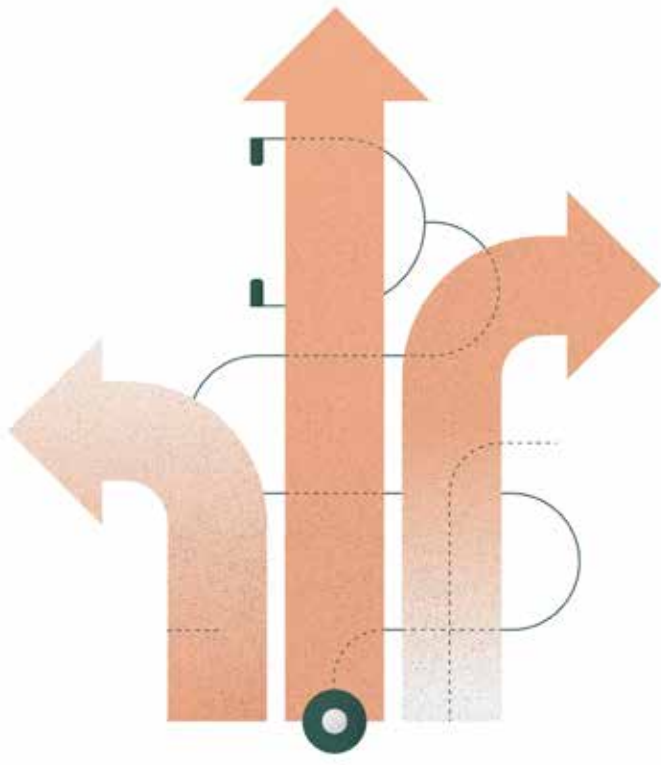
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This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint sponsorship of New York Medical College and The Rabbinic Jewish Learning Institute (RJLI). New York Medical College is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians. Please visit www.accme.org/continuing-medical-education for a complete accreditation statement.

18 cool things to do in Haifa for free

Israel21c.org

Until a few years ago, Haifa was perhaps Israel's most underrated city. Written off as a sleepy, elderly place that's not as cool as Tel Aviv or as special as Jerusalem, it passed under the radar. What a mistake.

Haifa has loads going for it: It is the center of real, everyday coexistence in Israel, it has fabulous beaches, gorgeous nature right in the middle of the city and a burgeoning cultural scene complete with top-level art, music and food.

And while we strongly encourage you to treat yourself to a delicious meal or two and check out some of the city's famous museums, we equally strongly encourage you to enjoy what the city also has to offer free of charge. That way, you can enjoy it for longer, and splash out on that extra dinner. Here are our top recommendations – enjoy!

1. Marvel at the Baha'i Gardens

Together with nearby Acre, Haifa is one of the main landmarks of the Baha'i faith that originated in Iran in the 19th century. This is because they are home to the shrines of the religion's main spiritual leaders, surrounded by what brings us to discuss them – the beautiful Baha'i Gardens UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

A walk through the perfectly symmetrical, colorful gardens, with their views of the sea and the city, is a breathtaking experience – and not only because of the stairs involved. It's a wonderfully serene place, and also one of religious significance, so make sure to dress appropriately and tour around respectfully.

2. Look up at Stella Maris

The 19th century Stella Maris Monastery is one of the prettiest spots in Israel, both inside and out.

You can take in the sea view and the greenery outside, while inside the building — which sits atop what is believed to be the cave of the Prophet Elijah —you should check out the beautiful stained-glass windows and colorful ceiling. Even the door is special. The church is open daily to the public and is a must-stop on any visit to the city.

3. Take a scenic seat

While you're at Stella Maris, wander off a few feet to what is apparently the most coveted bench in the whole city. The two-seater bench on the path leading from the parking lot to the monastery is a very romantic spot that offers panoramic sea views and a refreshing breeze. It can also be enjoyed solo, of course.

Haifa's coastline makes it a proper seafaring city with a huge port. It also makes it a great beach destination. Top locations include Bat Galim Beach near the Israel Navy base that also offers marine sports services, and Dado Beach, which is accessible to wheelchairs.

5. Go promenading

Where there are beaches, there are also seaside promenades. Dado Beach has the most famous one, complete with lawns, picnic tables, sport and playground facilities and even an amphitheater, as well as less-than-free restaurants and cafes.

6. Snap a pic at Louis Promenade

Haifa's most famous promenade rests atop the slopes of Mount Carmel. Boasting bay views, Louis Promenade is also a convenient spot for entering the Baha'i Gardens and is probably the best place to snap that selfie.

7. Feel European at German Colony

Built in 1868, the German Colony in Haifa was the first planned urban neighborhood in Israel. It was constructed by German Templers who arrived in Israel out of religious convictions. After World War II, during which the Templers were banished by British authorities, the area fell into disrepair. In the 1990s, the German Colony was renovated and reinvigorated to be the urban hotspot that it now is. Admire the



The skyline of Haifa.



The beautifully symmetric Baha'i Gardens in Haifa are one of the main landmarks of the Baha'i faith.

architecture and history, and treat yourself to a very stylish coffee while there.

8. Go spiritual at Elijah's Cave

While you may remember that Stella Maris sits atop Elijah's Cave, fear not — we are not losing it. Instead, there are two caves associated with the Prophet Elijah in Haifa, and this one is actually the more major one.

Considered a revered site by Jews, Muslims, Christians and Druze, the grotto has been a pilgrimage site for centuries, with people coming to pray for health, children and love throughout the years. Stop by yourself for a quick prayer or wonder at the stories of the people who arrived here through the ages.

9. Go techy at the Technion

The Technion — Israel Institute of Technology is one of Israel's most revered institutes of higher education and offers a tour of the David and Janet Polak Visitors Center. Registration is required at least 72 hours in advance. For those wanting to tour the leafy campus, hear about the university's many successes and admire the Israeli research and technology scene, this is a great tour.

10. Dig deep at the Hecht Museum

The Hecht Museum at the University of Haifa is a great option for archeology lovers, and especially those with an interest in ancient coins. The permanent

collections at the free museum include an ancient shipwreck, artifacts from crafts such as glassmaking, metalworking and stone vessels, and objects relating to the Phoenician seagoers who once lived in the area. The museum also houses works by Manet, Monet, Soutine and Van Gogh.

11. Feel hipstery on Masada Street

Masada Street is perhaps the center of all things hipster in an already hipster city. The street is home to a great array of cafes, secondhand stores and seemingly endless street art, and is beloved by cool Jewish and Arab residents alike.

12. Hike in nature

Haifa offers numerous urban nature spots that can give you a green break from its (relative) hustle and bustle. Top recommendations include Wadi Siah, with its downhill trek from the Carmel to the sea via Mediterranean foliage and little pools, or Nahal Ahuza, which starts next to a bus station and ends in a pool of cold water.

13. Wander the markets

Haifa is home to quite a few food markets. There's the Talpiot Market, which combines grungy surroundings and fine dining restaurants; Wadi Nisnas, famous for its top-quality fruit and vegetables, a legendary falafel spot and a Christmas market, and the Turkish Market, replete with bars, restaurants and street food.

14. Go skateboarding

Happen to have packed your skateboard? Then try the municipal, community-based skate park. It includes ramps, slopes and railings and is designated for amateur and professional skaters alike.

15. Check out local art

Haifa is home to some great museums, but art can also be enjoyed free of charge in galleries around the city, such as the Pyramid contemporary art gallery in the Wadi Salib neighborhood that showcases the works of local artists.

16. Get your glutes in shape

Haifa is one hilly city, and wandering around makes for a fabulous workout. Thankfully, it's also such an interesting city, with the endless sea and urban views helping you forget the burn in your legs.

17. Behold the graffiti

Haifa is a top-notch place to check out urban art from a variety of street artists. Wherever you go, you'll likely come across some interesting street art that adds to the contemporary and diverse feel of the city.

18. Be blown away by Bauhaus

Bauhaus architecture is popular in Haifa. Buildings built in the International Style are dotted throughout town, with many bearing plaques describing their history. Examples include a seafront villa, the former home of the British high commissioner and the old Carmel Hospital.

Group issues call to action against antisemitism

American Jewish Committee

The face of antisemitism completely changed following the Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel on Oct. 7 and left American society leaders wondering how they can respond meaningfully to this new manifestation of the world's oldest hate.

Recognizing the need to provide all of society with not just the tools to prevent and combat antisemitism, but also to understand what antisemitism is and how it can present itself in various forms, AJC in May released a newly updated and expanded Call to Action Against Antisemitism, a Society-Wide Nonpartisan Guide for America.

The Call to Action includes, for the first time: a section providing specific guidance for Jewish communities and another for influencers — including athletes, actors, musicians, celebrities, and social media content creators. The newly expanded section for technology companies addresses new and growing concerns around artificial intelligence.

AJC first introduced its Call to Action in September 2022. In addition to the new sections for Jewish communities and influencers, this updated Call to Action Against Antisemitism in America includes amended policy suggestions and actions for federal and local governments, Congress, law enforcement, technology companies, media organizations, the private sector, intergroup and interfaith

partners, and educational institutions.

Every recommendation takes into account current manifestations of antisemitism, especially in light of Hamas' attack against Israel and the ensuing war, which has led to an even greater surge of antisemitism both domestically and around the world.

"The world's reaction to Hamas' Oct. 7 massacre has not only led to a staggering increase in antisemitism, but it has also completely changed the face of anti-Jewish hatred and how we, as a society, need to combat it," said AJC CEO Ted Deutch. "While many of these manifestations will feel eerily familiar — the blocking of Jewish students from some university campuses is reminiscent of the 1930s — we're now also seeing hate-filled protesters telling their Jewish peers and neighbors to 'go back to Poland,' where 3 million Jews were systematically murdered during the Holocaust, and scores of demonstrators calling to 'globalize the Intifada.' We've been hearing from leaders across our society that they need better and updated guidance on how to counter antisemitism at this moment — AJC's Call to Action provides those resources."

Among the recommendations for influencers is a call to collaborate with and "[a]mplify the voices of trusted, nuanced Jewish content providers and organizations, ensuring they represent the mainstream opinions of Jews"

as well as pointing out the need to "hold celebrities, including actors, artists, athletes and other personnel, sports franchises, and sports leagues accountable [to help] push antisemitic rhetoric to the fringes where it belongs."

AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2023 Report, for the first time, asked American Jews about generative artificial intelligence. 72% of American Jews are concerned (very or somewhat) that generative AI or automated systems, such as ChatGPT, will spread misinformation about Jews. 62% of American Jews expressed concern that generative AI will show bias against Israel.

To address these concerns, the Call to Action highlights the need for companies to "utilize the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism to strengthen policies around hate speech and hateful conduct, violence, abuse and harassment, Dangerous Organizations and Individuals (DOI), and synthetic and manipulated media, amongst others, across their platforms" and also proactively "[t]rain AI models to properly identify antisemitism, including contemporary terms and tropes." Due to the various and disparate forms of antisemitism, anti-Jewish hate speech can be difficult to pinpoint. Recognizing this, and that antisemitism is often coded, it is recommended that AI companies

"consider creating computational models and workflows specific to the Jewish community that detect extremist speech and prevent it."

With 93% of American Jews feeling that antisemitism is a problem in the United States and nearly two-thirds (63%) saying the status of Jews in the United States is less secure than a year ago, this nonpartisan plan is a critical tool in the fight against Jew-hatred.

"Antisemitism is not just a problem for the Jewish community," said Holly Huffnagle, AJC U.S. Director for Combating Antisemitism. "Thankfully, the vast majority of Americans agree — more than nine in ten believe antisemitism is a problem that affects society as a whole and everyone is responsible for combating it. This Call to Action, for the first time since Oct. 7, lays out how we, as a society, can fulfill this responsibility."

AJC's September 2022 Call to Action first called on the White House to publish a national strategy to counter antisemitism and this new iteration builds off the recommendations outlined in the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, published by the White House in May 2023, which contained dozens of recommendations from AJC.

In addition to the Call to Action, AJC has also published numerous guides to help all sectors of society implement the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism.

Five things to know about Yemen's Houthi rebels

American Jewish Committee

The Houthis are an extremist Shia-Islamist movement and terrorist army. Backed by Iran, this organization controls approximately one-third of Yemen's territory and more than two-thirds of the country's population. It has emerged as a prominent player in the Israel-Hamas war, which began on Oct. 7 with a mass murder attack by Hamas on Israelis.

Houthi terrorists have fired ballistic missiles and suicide drones at Israel and ships in the Red Sea and have hijacked commercial ships, posing a direct threat to international shipping and the global economy.

Here are five facts about the Houthis and the threat they pose.

1. What are the Houthis?

Made up of members of Yemen's Shia-Zaidi minority group in the country's north, the Houthis have gained considerable power and influence over the last several years amid an ongoing civil war. They are receiving Iranian funding, weapons, and training, posing a growing challenge to regional stability and global security.

According to the Alma Research and Education Center, initially a neglected group, the Houthis capitalized on the Arab Spring's momentum in the early 2010s to strengthen their position. By the end of 2014, they had taken control of Yemen's capital, Sanaa, and by February 2015, they declared control over the country. This power shift was supported by Iranian influence and aid from Iran's Lebanese terror proxy, Hezbollah.

2. Who finances the Houthis?

Iran's involvement has been pivotal in the rise of the Houthis and has created a significant destabilizing factor in the region. Tehran's support included arming the group with advanced weaponry and facilitating training by Hezbollah operatives. This backing transformed the Houthis into a formidable force that has challenged the Saudi-led Sunni Muslim alliance in the Arab Gulf region.

3. How powerful are the Houthis?

The Houthis have demonstrated significant military capabilities, particularly in their use of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and armed unmanned aerial vehicles. The group's ability to launch long-range attacks highlights its growing strength.

4. What threat do the Houthis pose?

Yemen's strategic location along a vital waterway for global commerce amplifies the Houthis' potential impact on regional stability. Their aggressive actions underscore the group's intent to extend its influence beyond Yemen's borders.

5. What are the goals of the Houthis?

Their ideology is deeply rooted in antisemitic, Islamic fundamentalist, anti-American sentiment. This stance aligns with Iranian interests and suggests a broader objective of promoting Iran's radical Islamist revolution throughout the Middle East.

Their ideology is deeply rooted in antisemitic, Islamic fundamentalist, anti-American sentiment. This stance aligns with Iranian interests and suggests a broader objective of promoting Iran's radical Islamist revolution throughout the Middle East.



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Eight must-read books on Israel-Iran conflict

By Naama Barak
Israel21c.org

In what possibly constituted one of the weirdest nights in the country's history, Israel faced a massive UAV and missile attack launched by Iran on the night of April 13.

With millions of people awake in the middle of the night, watching the skies or their TVs, it was a historic event that was thankfully thwarted in a most magnificent manner.

All that midnight worrying left us with plenty of time to wonder how Israeli Iranian relations have gotten to where they are. After all, once upon a time, Jerusalem and Tehran were great friends. To learn more about the history of the relationship and the challenges facing it today, we recommend these books.

“Target Tehran” by Yonah Jeremy Bob and Ilan Evyatar

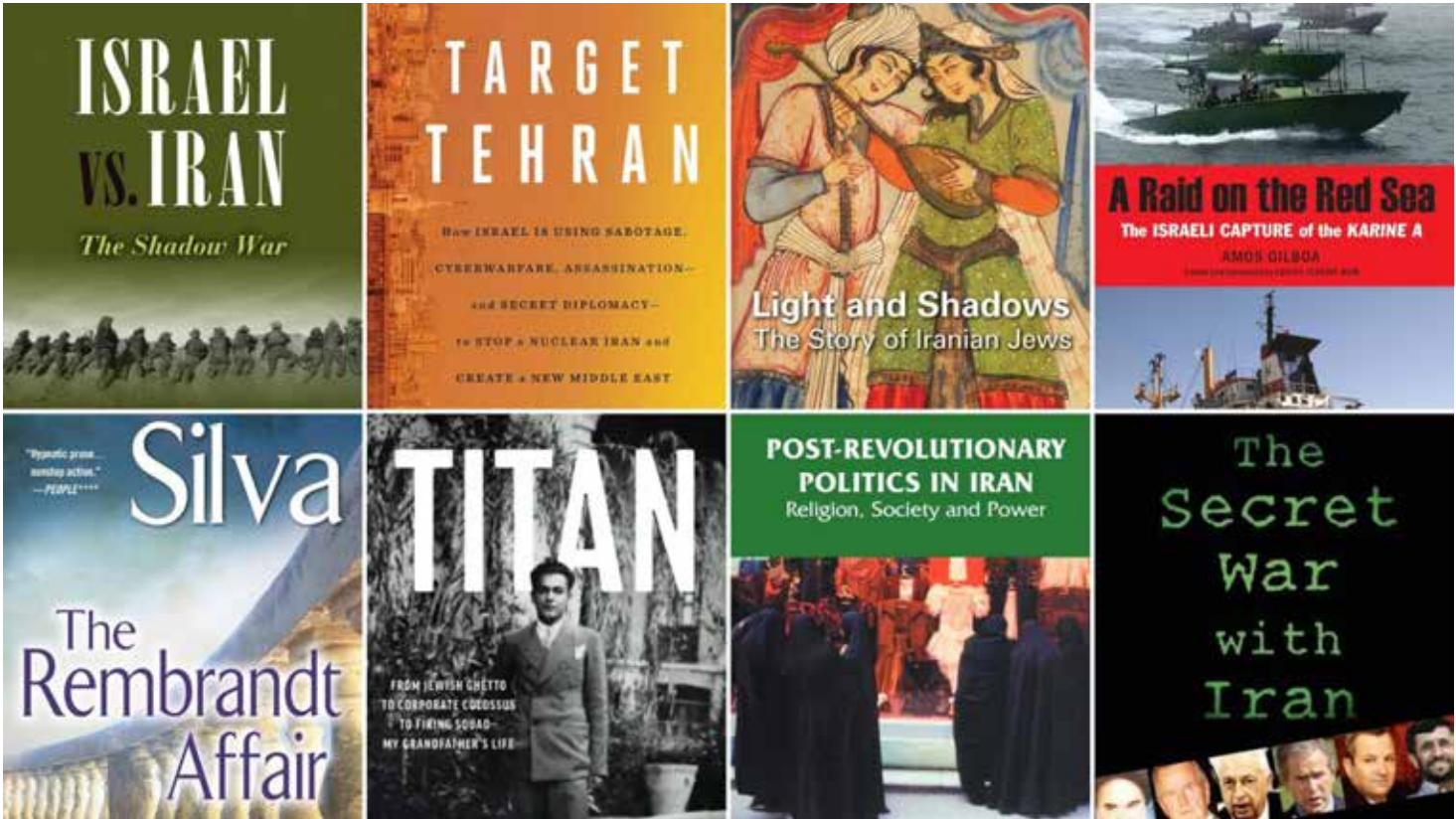
This focuses on the nuclear threat that Tehran poses to its erstwhile ally. Based on documents captured in a Mossad raid in Iran and on interviews with American and Israeli intelligence officials, Bob and Evyatar’s book explains what Israel has done to thwart the Iranian nuclear project, including cyberwarfare, sabotage and assassinations. A very timely read.

2. “The Secret War with Iran” by Ronen Bergman

Israeli journalist Ronen Bergman is one of the country’s leading authorities on the topic. “The Secret War with Iran” is a comprehensive account. Bergman delves into the clandestine war that Tehran has been fighting with its proxies, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, on the one hand, and the Israeli Mossad and American CIA on the other, over the last few decades.

3. “Light and Shadows: The Story of Iranian Jews” by David Yeroushalmi

While it’s hard to fathom that many Israelis used to call Iran home, it’s worth remembering that Iran boasts almost



3,000 years of Jewish history dating to biblical times. Over the years, the Iranian Jewish community has known hardship and prosperity, oppression and cultural high points — and since the Islamic Revolution, an exodus from an ancient homeland. This collection of essays tells the story.

4. “A Raid on the Red Sea: The Israeli Capture of the Karine A” by Amos Gilboa

To amp up the feelgood factor from the latest Israeli success against Iran, may we suggest digging deeper into a previous success story — the Israeli takeover of the Karine A, a Palestinian ship stocked to the brim with weapons supplied by Iran, all aimed for Israel. The 2002 episode is reminiscent of a Hollywood movie, complete with Israeli special forces dangling off helicopters, employing krav maga and gaining control of the ship without firing a single shot. Gilboa gives an account of the American Israeli cooperation that

facilitated this incredible operation.

5. “Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran” by David Menashri

Professor David Menashri is one of Israel’s leading experts on Iran. The book focuses on internal Iranian developments since the 1979 revolution, as well as their influence on Iran’s foreign policy and regional ambitions. While the book isn’t new, it remains a thorough, knowledgeable analysis.

6. “Israel vs. Iran: The Shadow War” by Yaakov Katz and Yoaz Hendel

Journalists Yaakov Katz and Yoaz Hendel focus on the years following the Second Lebanon War and the behind-the-scenes shadow war that was taking place between Israel and Iran and its proxies at the time. The book covers key events such as Operation Cast Lead against Hamas in Gaza, the bombing of the Syrian reactor and the assassinations of an Iranian nuclear scientist and Hezbollah leaders.

7. “Titan of Tehran” by Shahrzad Elghanayan

Shahrzad Elghanayan tells the story of her grandfather, Habib Elghanayan, one of the most prominent Iranian Jewish figures of the 20th century. Tragically, the self-made industrialist millionaire was executed by Iranian revolutionaries. The story sheds light on his surrounding Jewish community, the incredible hardship that they endured following the 1979 revolution and the deterioration of Iran’s ties with Israel.

8. “The Rembrandt Affair” by Daniel Silva

For those looking for lighter reading, look no further than the adventures of Daniel Silva’s famous fictional Israeli spy, Gabriel Allon. This time, Silva delves into the dirty world of European provisions of goods to Iran that end up going toward its nuclear project, wrapped up in a story of art theft, crooked billionaires and skewed morals.

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Boris Corbin - Louise Zeidman
Roxie Walker - Louise Zeidman

In honor of:
Sid & Esther Bratt’s anniversary- Louise Zeidman
Carole Robinson, Sari Incledon - Norma Sigal
Jewish Family Service’s lovely Passover Seder - Anzie Golden

Evelyn F. Thompson Nursery School Fund
In memory of:
Frank Synnamon - The Fromm Family, David & Debbie and Scott, Mark, Abby Goldberg, Andy & Corinne Wernick, Beth & Bob Caster
Rochelle Missan - Beth & Bob Caster
Muriel Winn - Beth & Bob Caster

Federation Jewish Community Campaign
In memory of:
Ken Bloom – Annette & Sean Peppard
Rochelle Missan - David & Debbie Goldberg, Vic & Dena Hammel
Boris Corbin - Arlene & David Klavens
Frank Synnamon - Sheina, Seth, Isaac and Paul Missan

Israel Emergency Fund
In memory of:
Seth Bosin - Linda & Mickey Roeberg

In honor of:
Don Karabelnik’s birthday - Manny and Yvonne Wittels

Honorials and Memorials

Contributions may be made to the following Funds:
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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 Adult Education Fund
Evelyn Thompson Fund

Friendship Circle Fund
In memory of:
Dr. Boris Corbin – Victoria Sweeney & family, Jill & Tom Barch, Nancy Hippert, Lawrence & Sondra Valeriano

Lakin Holocaust Library & Resource Center
In memory of:
Frank Synnamon - The Bram Family

In honor of:
Larry Rotenberg’s birthday - Helene & Henry Singer
Birth of Ella Sydney Wernick, granddaughter of Andy & Corinne Wernick, great granddaughter of Esther & Sid Bratt & daughter of Aaron & Melissa Wernick - Jan & Jonathan Simon

Harry and Rose Sack Adult Education Fund
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Harry and Rose Sack - Sue & Barry Simon

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