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SHALOM

The Journal of the Reading Jewish Community. Published as a community service by the Jewish Federation of Reading, Pa.

Volume 45, No. 2 FEBRUARY 2015 SHEVAT-ADAR 5775

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2015 totals as of Jan. 20

Jewish Community Campaign
$168,382
*Includes transfers from Donor Advised Funds

Campaign brings in more than $540,000

The 2014 Jewish Community Campaign raised $543,093 for the important services and programming provided by the Jewish Federation of Reading and its affiliated agencies.

Hundreds of people from all walks of life in our region's Jewish community rose to the challenge of providing the resources necessary to meet critical needs in our area, in Israel and around the world.

The Jewish Federation provides important social services through Jewish Family Service, entertaining and enlightening programming through the Jewish Cultural Center and serves as a place where Jews of all denominations as well as the unaffiliated can gather and celebrate their shared heritage.

Read Larry Rotenberg's column on Page 3 to learn more about the valuable work Federation does, then see Pages 4 and 5 for our honor roll of 2014 donors.

The 2015 campaign is well underway. Everyone is invited to make their mark on the community by showing support.

We mourn together with France's Jews

We mourn the loss of all those who were murdered in cold blood by the terrorists.

Our thoughts and prayers especially go out to the families of Yoav Hattab, Yohan Cohen, Philippe Braham, and Francois-Michel Saada, viciously killed in the Hyper Cacher supermarket in an act of anti-Semitic murder. May their memories be a blessing.

Together with all Jews around the world, we stand with the Jewish community of France and the French people — kol yisrael arevim zeh la'zeh. Nous Sommes Juifs.

For more on the reaction to the tragedy in Paris, turn to Page 2

Jewish youth experiences: Supported by your Federation

It's that time of year when many students start longing for summer break, especially during these long, cold winter days.

Is your child thinking of summer camp? Or maybe traveling to Israel? If so, don't forget about the Student Camp and Education Awards offered by the Jewish Federation of Reading!

Thanks to the community's campaign support and working with families, the Educational Committee of the Federation is proud to offer monetary awards to Jewish children/students who are residents of our Berks County Jewish community to help support their participation in programs that nurture Jewish identity, leadership and connections with their culture, history and Israel.

This year's deadline for two of the summer awards is Feb. 15, so don't wait to submit your scholarship application.

Jewish Summer Camp Award--$250 per child: Funding is provided for Jewish overnight summer camp experiences for children ages 8-18. Jewish camp offers all the benefits of other summer camps in addition to being enriched by Jewish values and the culture of Judaism in a safe and supportive setting. Applicants must be attending an overnight camp and be enrolled for a minimum of four weeks (or a three-week second session). ***Deadline: Feb. 15.***

High School Israel Experience Award—up to $250: Programs such as Ramah in Israel or NFTY in Israel are designed to provide high school students with a meaningful and exciting Israel experience. Students may apply for awards up to $250 toward the cost of registration and travel. ***Deadline: Feb. 15.***

Scholarship applications can be found on the Jewish Federation of Reading's website: www.readingjewishcommunity.org under the Education tab.

If you have additional questions please do not hesitate to contact William D. Franklin at 610-921-0624.

Interested in supporting students as they pursue academic study and explore their Jewish culture at camp and abroad? Please contact the Federation.

Do YOU like us? Follow us?

One of the benefits of living in the digital age is the way technology brings people together. Did you know the Jewish Federation of Reading is using technology to try to bring our community together through our Facebook and Twitter pages? Both pages are updated by our intern Abigail Heisler and offer information about upcoming events, pictures from activities and general information. We encourage all community members using social media to find our pages on Facebook and Twitter.

Here's a brief How To Guide:

Facebook:

- Search for Jewish Federation of Reading in the search bar on the top of your Facebook homepage.
- Select the Jewish Federation of Reading and Jewish Cultural Center of Reading's page and you'll be taken directly to the JFR/JCC Facebook page.
- "Like" the JFR/JCC Facebook page by clicking on the Like/thumbs up button in the center of the top of the JFR/JCC Facebook page.
- Enjoy! By selecting "Like" you'll receive updates about JFR/JCC events and postings in your Facebook Newsfeed on your Facebook homepage. From the main JFR/JCC Facebook page you can also message us, read through posts and look at photos from recent events.
- Feel free to tag the JFR/JCC page or add your own photos when you attend JCC events. It's a community page and all are welcome to add, comment and enliven the social network via Facebook.

Twitter:

- Search for Jewish Fed of Rdg on Twitter or @JewishFedRdg on the main page of Twitter
- "Follow" the Jewish Fed of Rdg Twitter feed by clicking the Follow button on the top right of the Jewish Fed of Rdg page.
- By selecting "Follow" you'll receive updates about the Federation in your regular Twitter feed.
- Feel free to hashtag Jewish Fed of Rdg whenever you attend events at the JCC or want to involve the JCC in a Twitter discussion. It's a community page, and all are welcome to add, comment and enliven the social network via Twitter.

Still have questions? Email our social media guru Abigail at abigailh@jfreading.org

We look forward to connecting with more of you via social media in 2015!

Jewish Federations condemn attacks in France

Following the tragic attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine in January, a gunman took hostages at a Jewish kosher supermarket in Paris, killing four. The Jewish Federations of North America condemn the attacks on civic institutions and Jewish targets in the strongest possible terms, mourn the loss of life and pray for the injured, and express our support for the people of France at this difficult time.

"We deplore these violent attacks," stated Michael Siegal, chair of JFNA's Board of Trustees, "not just against Jews and Jewish institutions but against the people of France and all those who value freedom and democracy. Once again, we are forced to bear witness to the reality that terrorism continues to pose a threat to civil societies everywhere. Together, as a global community, we must find a way to move past this horrible specter of hatred and violence. Our deepest condolences, hopes and prayers are with the families of the victims, the French people and the Jewish community of France during this difficult time."

Following the attacks, Paul Goldenberg, director of the Secure Community Network (SCN), traveled to Paris to support the community in addressing security issues. SCN, the national homeland security initiative of The Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, has regularly consulted with Jewish organizations in the United States and around the world on security-related matters and in the wake of terrorist attacks such as the ones perpetrated in Paris this week.

As we mourn with the French Jewish community, JFNA leadership will continue to confer with government agencies and officials on matters of Jewish communal safety, and update Jewish community leaders as necessary.

Nutter leads same-sex marriage ceremony for Israeli diplomat

Originally published on Ynetnews.com

Maybe it really is always sunny in Philadelphia — the mayor of the City of Brotherly Love officiated as a high-ranking Israeli diplomat married his partner in a religious-civic ceremony.

Elad Strohmyer, Deputy Consul General of Israel in Philadelphia, and his partner Oren Ben-Joseph were married at the Philadelphia City Hall in January in a ceremony led by Mayor of Philadelphia Michael Nutter and Conservative Rabbi Michael Bills.

Gay marriage has been legal in Pennsylvania since May 2014 and is accepted by reform and Conservative Jews.

The ceremony was held in the official reception hall at Philadelphia's City Hall and was attended by senior leaders of the LGBT community in the city.

"It's a big honor for me to get married in the city that has been my home for the past three years and in which I represent Israel," Strohmyer said prior to the ceremony. "The fact that the local media and the leadership of the community is expressing great interest and will come to the wedding is really moving and also enables us to expose another facet of Israel that is not usually displayed in world media. Through our wedding that has been awarded with a high media profile we are adding another important element of representing Israel other than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Strohmyer met his partner during a gay pride event in Tel Aviv last June when he was on vacation in Israel.

"We realized very fast that this (was serious) and he joined me in the US," added Strohmyer.

In October, during an Israeli technology conference in Philadelphia that was organized by the Consul General of Israel in the city in conjunction with Chemi Peres — who led a delegation of 15 Israeli technology companies — the two got engaged.

Nutter had been at the conference and after hearing of the story he immediately offered to marry the two Israelis.

The mayor followed suit with his promise, and the event was scheduled. The ceremony gathered 150 guests, including friends and family who traveled to Philadelphia from Israel especially for the wedding.

Local media in Philadelphia covered the ceremony, as the mayor has only married three same-sex couples since the law enabling LGBT marriage was passed in Pennsylvania — this it was the first time Nutter conducted a matrimonial ceremony for a diplomat.

"It is important for us to represent the pluralistic side of Israel, a liberal country that has progressive legislation on the subject of the rights of the proud community. We hope our wedding will be an example for many additional couples and will help advance civil and same-sex marriages in Israel," added Ben-Joseph.

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter officiates at the wedding of Israeli diplomat Elad Strohmyer and Oren Ben-Joseph. Photo courtesy of Philadelphia Jewish Exponent.

"I have worked in the tech industry for 18 years and in recent years I've held a central position at Microsoft, and I see the difference in the acceptance of LGBT employees from 18 years ago and today," he said. "I have full faith that we will continue to move forward until we advance to full equality of rights in Israel."

The Foreign Ministry recognizes same-sex couples and is considered to have a liberal approach on the topic. In the Foreign Ministry itself, spouses of same sex couples are listed as "official" spouses.

Strohmyer has been the Deputy Consul General of Israeli in Philadelphia since the summer of 2012, after serving as the deputy ambassador of Israel in Angola for two years. He also represented Israel at the "Gay Games" in Cleveland in the summer of 2014 and won the gold medal in sailing.

CONNECT AND ENGAGE:

COMMUNITY SHABBAT DINNER AND SERVICE

Let us connect with each other, our tradition, and God As we celebrate this special time.

February 6, 2015

Services are at 6:00 PM and Dinner is at 7:00 PM

Kesher Zion Synagogue
1245 Perkiomen Ave.
Reading, PA 19602

Kosher Buffet Dinner: Vegetarian option by request
Adults $20 per person* - Children and youth, 18 and under are free

Please RSVP to Brenda:
brendas@JFReading.org or call 610-921-0624

Sponsored by Chabad Lubavitch of Berks County, Jewish Federation of Reading, Kesher Zion Synagogue, and Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom

***Financial assistance available by calling Sari at 610-921-0624**

Please note that security will be present that evening. Transportation for Highlands residents and carpooling is available to and from the Community Shabbat

From the President's Desk

Shalom! Fun at the Federation

By William D. Franklin
President

Early in January we hosted a Trivia Night at the Jewish Cultural Center. Fifty-four community members of all ages came together to schmooze, have fun and feel part of our Jewish community. One team won twice and over one-third of the participants won a share of gift cards to local businesses. The evening was a great success and evoked enthusiastic suggestions for future events. These ranged from more game nights to entertainment and wine tastings to glass blowing. Everyone had a wonderful time and looks forward to future events.

So, here is a small list of our upcoming events programs.The Community Shabbat at Kesher Zion on Feb. 6. Delicious food and singing with our preschool children are several of the special events for the evening. Our Jewish Film series at the Fox East Theatre starts Feb. 18 with the historical documentary "Welcome to Kutsher's: The Last Catskills Resort". On Feb. 22nd, there will be a JCC Youth Event for Grades 1-6 at Snapology, a fun environment where children learn math, science, technology, engineering and literacy concepts using Lego® bricks and other similar building tools. And on March 1 at noon our community celebrates a special Purim event at RCOS.

The Great Decisions series starts Monday, March 9, and will run each Monday for eight weeks. The first topic focuses on "Human Trafficking in the 21st Century."

We would love your input on any ideas for new programming. Call JCC Program Director Amanda Hornberger at 610-921-0624. She's looking forward to meeting all of you.

Continuing to carry our Jewishness into the future is a privilege and a delight. See you at the community Shabbat.

The Federation: What is it? Why do we need it? And what does it do?

By Larry Rotenberg
Chairman

What is the Federation?

It is the umbrella organization of the Jewish Community. It supports all Jewish life, both individual and organizational. While the Federation is nondenominational and even secular, its services and resources support all religious, ethnic, cultural, and historical activities in the Jewish Community.

Does it play a role in the non-Jewish community?

Absolutely. The Federation receives a generous grant from United Way, and its Jewish Family Service component, headed by Sari Incledon, serves all citizens of Berks, regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation.

Additionally, through its donor-advised funds, the Federation supports a number of cultural activities, open to all in the Community.

What activities does it sponsor?

The range is considerable — from a food bank that serves the needy to scholarly lectures through the 92nd Street Y in New York City.

If you come to the Cultural Center on Wednesdays, you will see crowds of people enjoying a high-level bridge game, the results of which are frequently reported in the *Reading Eagle*.

Again, Jewish Family Service deals with the neediest situations and supplies a safety net, which supplements other sources of help.

What about interfaith activities?

The Federation works with all people of good will to create an atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance for all. Some but by no means all inclusive examples include cooperation with Alvernia and Albright Colleges on various shared cultural activities.

Berks County is fortunate to have Steve Elmarzouky, a Muslim entrepreneur and philanthropist, who works tirelessly for interfaith harmony in our region.

What about problem solving?

The Federation tries to anticipate problems and to take preventive measures to resolve them. And above all, its role is the preservation of Jewish Life in Berks.

The Talmud says that he who save one life, it is as if he saved the whole World. How much more true is it when we are dealing with a community's life.

Rabbi shares positive experiences of life in Reading

Rabbi Rachel Schwartz of Kesher Zion Synagogue wrote the following in response to a community member's concerns regarding security in her shul's neighborhood. She wishes to share it with the community.

Dear Friend,

I have heard that you will not be coming to Kesher Zion Synagogue (KZ) for Community Shabbat and any other event at KZ due to safety concerns. I want to allay your fears by sharing my experiences since coming to Reading in September.

I rent an apartment a couple blocks from KZ. When I moved in, my neighbors put notes on my door welcoming me to the neighborhood and offering assistance during our transition. When the weather is nice, I love to walk all around Reading. (Did you know there is a little vineyard several blocks from KZ?) While walking, I have never been catcalled, harassed, or made to feel uncomfortable by another person in any way. While lost on my way to Tashlich at the Reading Museum, a walk of 2.5 miles, people went out of their way to get me and my children on the right track. One young man, named Acai, was worried he might have given us confusing directions and even came back and found us to make sure we were going in the right direction.

The City of Reading is undergoing a metamorphosis. Come through the center of the city and you can see new construction, interesting independent stores, and cultural activities! I encourage you to witness and be a part of this rebirth of a city and community as Reading and KZ experience a renewal.

In order to get to Kesher Zion, continue straight on Penn Avenue after crossing the bridge from West Reading. When you get to the park make a very slight right onto Perkiomen Avenue. At the end of the park, make a left onto Hill Road and the Kesher Zion parking lot is on your right.

We can't wait to welcome you!

With blessings,
Rabbi Rachel Schwartz

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SHALOM

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President: William D. Franklin
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Member: American Jewish Press Association

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

Next deadline, Feb. 5

2014 Jewish community campaign honor roll

ADVANCED LEADERSHIP GIFTS
$25,000 +
Albert and Eunice Boscov
Shirley Boscov
Irvin and Lois Cohen
Howard and Victoria Hafetz
Victor and Dena Hammel
Edwin Lakin
Sandy Solmon and Douglas Messinger

LEADERSHIP GIFTS
$10,000 +
Richard* and Maxine Henry
Kenneth and Maralyn Lakin
Jerome Marcus
Meir and Haia Mazuz

Irvin G. and Beatrice M. Shaffer Fund of the Berks County Community Foundation

Henry and Helene Singer

MAJOR GIFTS
$5,000 +
Donald and Tali Fox
Hilde Gernsheimer
Neil Hoffman and Judith Kraines
Neal and Judith Jacobs
Robert and Yvonne Oppenheimer
Jill Skaist
Rosalye Yashek

PACESETTER GIFTS
$2,500 +
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Gordon and Carol Perlmutter
Larry and Alison Rotenberg
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Allan and Robin Sodomsky
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SPECIAL GIFTS
$1,000 +
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Nancy Knoblauch

2014 Jewish community campaign honor roll

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Jack and Teri Lefkowith
Ben and Michele Leisawitz
Henry Levin
Margaret Levine
Paul Levy and Susan Tobey
Rabbi Yosef and Chana Lipsker
Daniel Litvin
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Jeffrey and Robin Lupowitz
Dennis and Karen Lutz
Alan and Rochelle Mann
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Michael and Sharon Zamrin
Allen and Amicie Zimmerman

**Indicates Deceased*

"Stop the Sirens" Campaign

We wish to recognize and thank the following members of the Berks County Jewish Community who made gifts to the "Stop the Sirens" Campaign last summer to provide humanitarian assistance to Israelis who were affected by the rocket attacks from Gaza.

Robin and Adam Altman
Carolyn and Henry Ansell
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Emanuel and Yvonne Wittels
Rosalye Yashek
Louise Zeidman

Congregational News

Torah provides spiritual warmth in wintertime

By Rabbi Rachel Schwartz
Kesher Zion Synagogue

This year, as I travel up and down I-287, I-78, and Route 222, I have watched the trees transform from bright green to dazzling yellows, reds, and oranges. Some of the leaves faded to brown as they fell to the ground, leaving tall branches stretching into the autumn sky. At times, white snow rested on these dark branches, transforming the forest into what looked like an enchanted winter wonderland. These trees have stood witness to a myriad of people on their journeys: Some rushing, some dawdling. Some paying attention and others quite distracted. We humans come and go, yet, the trees are always there anchored by their deep roots.

This month, Shevat, we celebrate Tu B'Shevat, also known as the birthday of the trees. The rabbis use this holiday to calculate the life of the fruit- bearing trees in order for us to fulfill our obligations to the trees and to God. Our rabbis teach that we are like these trees. Right now, our trees are storing and preparing substance for spring. In some trees, the starch that is stored in their trunks and roots before winter becomes converted into sugar that goes up in sap through the tree in spring, bringing sweetness to those who tap into it. Isaiah 65:22 states "As the days of the tree shall be the days of my people." We too are waiting for the sweetness and rebirth of spring. We too during these darker months need to tap into our hidden energies and spiritual reserves. When the spring comes we will come out renewed. Rabbi Rami Shapiro teaches, "Tu B'Shevat is a call to return not just to Nature, but to our own nature. It is a reminder to plant ourselves firmly in the Place (Makom, the All-Present One) that is every place, and to awaken to the fundamental unity of God, woman, man, and Nature. We are Nature's way of tending, and of doing what needs to be done."

We must challenge ourselves to stay spiritually energized and connected. For this winter work, we summon up the energy embodied in the word "chayim", meaning "life," spelled in Hebrew as chet-yud-yud-mem. The two yuds in the middle represent God's Presence, and the chet together with the mem form 'cham', meaning warmth. During the cold months, we seek to energize the presence of God in our lives, a presence that brings warmth from the inside out and that brings light into the dark places. In Judaism, our Eitz Chayim - Tree of Life is our Torah.

Torah is available in formal and informal ways to everyone of every age in Berks County. I encourage you to find a way that is comfortable for you this season to connect with our Torah, whether it is by reading at home sitting by a cozy fireplace, attending a class, coming to Community Shabbat, participating in the Sisterhood Tu B'Shevat Seder, eating and sharing with friends, and so much more. Let us nurture ourselves, those we care for, and our beautiful community this winter with God's warm words of Torah so we can emerge anew in the spring journeying from slavery to freedom from the depths to new heights from our despairs to our greatest joys. L'Chaim!

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND SERVICE TIMES

COMMUNITY SHABBAT — Friday, Feb. 6, at Kesher Zion. Service at 6 p.m.; dinner at 7. Please RSVP to Federation office for dinner.

KESHER ZION SYNAGOGUE (610) 374-1763
Sunday, Feb. 8: Tu B'Shevat Seder, 1 p.m.
Weekly services Saturdays: 9:30 a.m.; Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.
Friday Evening Service – Please call for service information
Babysitting available upon request with one week's notice

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM (610) 375-6034
Fridays, Feb. 13, 20 and 27 at 7:45 p.m.. Saturday, Feb. 21: Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.

CHABAD CENTER OF BERKS COUNTY (610) 921-0881
Saturday mornings: 9:30 a.m.; Friday evenings: 6:30 p.m.

CONGREGATION SHOMREI HABRITH

KZ Tuesday night minyan celebration

Kesher Zion Tuesday night minyan lights candles together on the eighth night of Hanukah. May the light of the candles continue to illuminate our way as we enter the secular new year.
1st row: Sy Youngerman, Jennifer Koosed, Harvey Goldstein, Myron Kabakoff.
2nd row: Elliot Leisawitz, Alan Mann, Eileen Knoblauch Wagner, Lisa Levine, Rochelle Mann, Leonard Levey, Rachel Schwartz, Irv Ehrlich, and Janet Kaplan

World Wide Wrap

Sunday, Feb. 1, 9:30 a.m.
Kesher Zion Synagogue

Join other Conservative congregations around the country in minyan and the mitzvah of wearing tefillin.
More details coming soon!

Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Rachel Schwartz

All classes at noon at Kesher Zion Synagogue

Jewish Potpourri

Feb. 3 — Judaism and the environment
Feb. 10 — The Temple Mount, the Western Wall and Robinson's Arch
Feb. 17 — Women and Men and Mitzvot
Feb. 24 — Jewish views on assisted suicide

All are welcome to join.

Please rsvp at kzsecretary@entermail.net
or call 610-374-1763

Save The Date!

Musical Shabbat & Oneg
Friday, March 20, 2015
7:00pm

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing

Please join us as we celebrate Shabbat with Rabbi Brian Michelson and student Cantor Jordan Shaner as they lead a special service featuring the musical talents of our congregants.

Members and Non-members are welcome

No matter what you call it, stuffed cabbage is delicious

By Rochel Leah Goldblatt

In France they call it Chou Farci. It's Golubtsy in Russia and Charuto de Repolho in Brazil. You can order some Lahana Dolmosi in Turkey and some Bai Cai Juan in China.

In English, it's called stuffed cabbage, and for about two dozen women in Berks County, it's simply called a delicious new recipe.

The women learned how to make the international dish Jan. 11 during the Chabad Center of Berks County's second kosher cooking class led by Chana Lipsker, an accomplished cook.

When the women arrived, they were greeted by the tantalizing smell of ready-made stuffed cabbage as they took their seats before a tray filled with cabbage leaves, a bowl with raw meat and rice, and a recipe card.

After the participants settled in, a hush went over the room as Lipsker pulled out a full head of cabbage and demonstrated how to get the leaves off in the easiest manner (hint: freeze the cabbage at least two days before cooking and then let defrost).

From there, she demonstrated how to make the stuffing, using meat, raw rice, an egg and spices.

The sauce was ready-made, since stuffed cabbage takes about two hours on low heat to cook, so each lady ladled out a bowl of sauce to complete the dish at home.

From there it was a matter of rolling the stuffing into the leaves and discussing how to get the best shape out of the cabbage.

Lipsker entertained with anecdotes about her own stuffed cabbage experiences.

When all was said and done and everything was ready to go, Lipsker treated the women to delicious stuffed cabbage that she had prepared prior to the class.

Ella Polonoski was the lucky winner of the door prize, a very fancy wine-bottle opener.

Overall, all the women had fun, learned a new dish and were able to spend some time bonding with each other.

The next cooking class will take place Feb. 1 at Chabad. Don't miss out on learning how to make chicken soup with multi-colored matzo balls.

New history book recounts 150 years of Oheb Sholom history

By Mike Pardo

In 2014, Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom celebrated its 150th anniversary as a Jewish congregation in the Reading area. To commemorate this important milestone, I volunteered to design and edit a 208-page, hardcover book detailing the complete 150-year history of "The Temple." It was a labor of love, to be sure, but a daunting task.

Fortunately for me, the hardest part of the project was already done! Past RCOS president Dr. Ellis Friedman wrote an article for the Spring 1964 issue of *Historical Review of Berks County* entitled "History of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom: 1864–1964." This comprehensive piece was reprinted in RCOS' 100th anniversary booklet, updated for its 125th anniversary booklet, and updated again for the 2000 dedication of our Temple's Wyomissing building. With Ellis' research as a solid foundation upon which to build, I felt confident that we could create a memorable and lasting tribute to our Temple.

"Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom: 150-Year Illustrated History" is crammed with more than 350 photos depicting all aspects of our Temple's existence—from the founders who established this religious institution and all those who followed in their footsteps, the construction of two major Temple buildings in the Reading area, and all other parts of life at RCOS. The book details how we celebrate Jewish holidays and how we travel through the Jewish Cycle of Life — baby namings, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs and weddings. It also spotlights our religious school students and details our congregation's long history of Tikkun Olam — "repairing the world" — through social action.

Once the editorial content was selected and the book outline approved, I had to begin the arduous job of selecting the images to tell the story of our congregation. Many weeks were spent going through boxes and boxes of old photos, documents and newspaper clippings in the Temple archives. I then visited the file cabinets of the Jewish Cultural Center of Reading to see what goodies they had. Finally, I made an impassioned plea to the members of RCOS and begged them to peruse their family albums and lend me any photos that depicted life at Oheb Sholom.

Coming up with a design scheme for the book was my next big challenge. RCOS member Jack Gernsheimer of Partners Design had already created a 150-year logo to help promote our Temple's year-long anniversary events. This logo incorporated the number "150" with a stylized rendition of our building's historic stained glass windows. Our windows (which were created for the Perkiomen Avenue building and were then removed and installed into our present Wyomissing facility) became the perfect visual symbol of our congregation's long history and our continued presence in the Reading area. In addition to featuring the anniversary logo on the book cover and all the chapter leads, the "window icon" was used as a graphic devise on the page numbers and the section intros, as well.

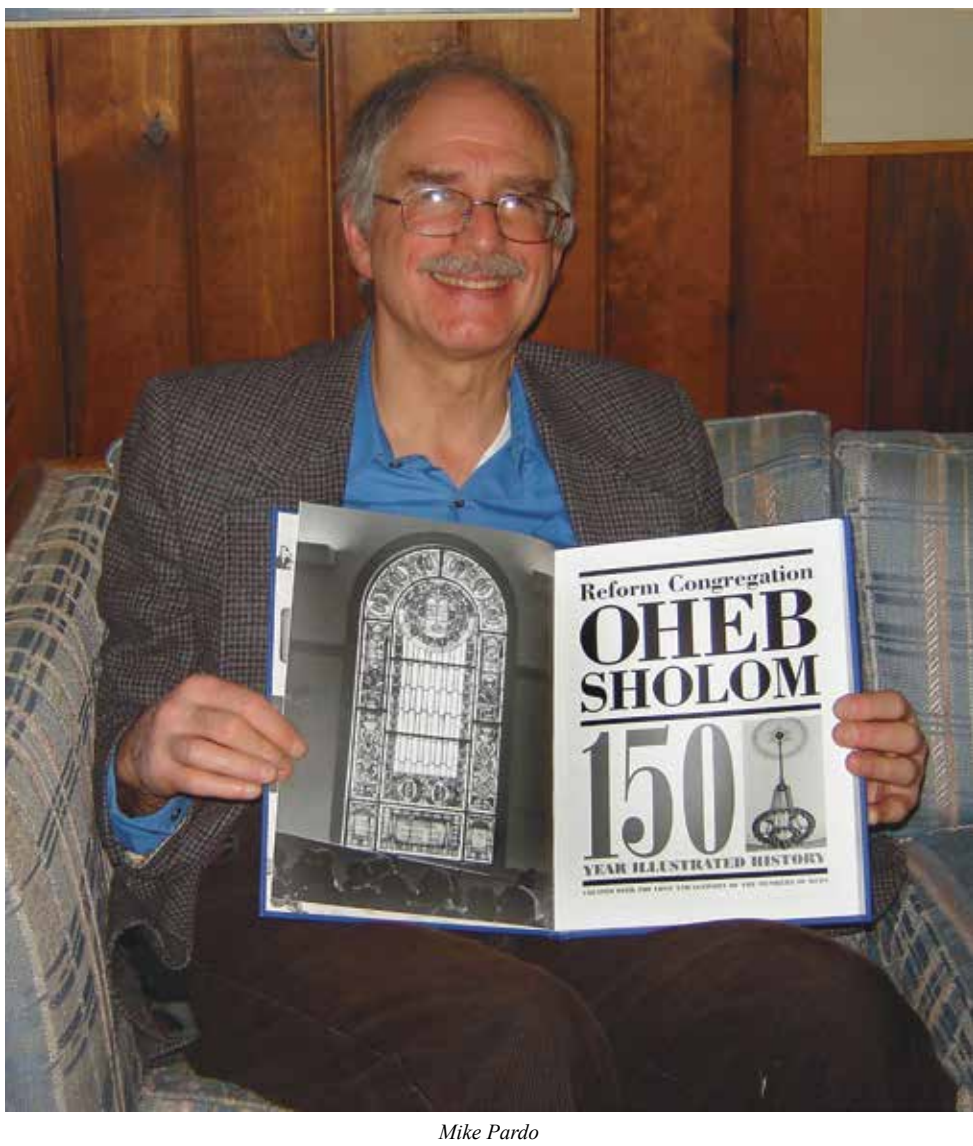
With the book outline firmly established and a design format in place, the actual page layouts went fairly smoothly. The pictures tended to "tell me" the proper way to arrange them on the page. However, as new photographs and illustrations became available, layouts had to be revised. Chapter One, in fact, was redone more than a dozen times before I was finally satisfied with the results!

Even though the book was scheduled to be delivered to the printer on Oct. 15, I was still adding new stories and photo features WAY PAST our original editorial deadline.

For example, at a Friday night Temple service on Sept. 5, 15-year-old RCOS member Alexa Chronister gave an exciting talk about her month-long summer program working with underprivileged children with the Urban Mitzvah Corp in New Brunswick, N.J.. I was so inspired by her speech that I asked her if she would allow me to include it in our chapter on social action. Two days later, history was made when Rabbi Brian Michelson officiated at Oheb Sholom's first same-sex wedding — an occasion that was captured for our chapter on Jewish Life Cycles.

And on Saturday morning, Oct. 11, RCOS formally dedicated its new History Walls in the central rotunda. I was emailed the digital photos of the event that night, plopped them into the spots reserved for them in the layout, and delivered the book files to the printer four days later!

After almost a year of hard work, the printed books were presented to the members of Oheb Sholom Dec. 19 at our Temple's annual Hanukkah service and dinner. The reviews so far have been very gratifying. One person sent me a very sweet card in the mail that said, "I saw a copy of the RCOS 150th Anniversary Book. All I can say is WOW!! You did an amazing job. Thanks so much for spending so much time to ensure future generations will be able to share in the history of RCOS."



Mike Pardo

I want to emphasize that I could not have successfully completed this huge project without the help of a lot of very dedicated Temple members who shared their family photos and personal anecdotes to help tell the story of Oheb Sholom. Special thanks go to RCOS president Michelle Mart who served as my assistant editor and to Claudia Strauss whose dedicated research helped correct errors and add valuable information to our history. I am also deeply indebted to the Reading Eagle Company for allowing me unlimited access to their archives in reprinting past articles concerning our congregation.Without the Eagle's generosity, this book would not have been possible.

Book available to purchase

The Temple still has copies of the book available for purchase. You don't have to be a Temple member to buy a book. You don't even have to be Jewish! (Remember the old ads for Levy's Rye Bread?)

Books are available at the Oheb Sholom office and may be purchased for $25 a copy. The synagogue office can be reached at 610-375-6034. Quantities are limited, and the book will not be reprinted—the very definition of a "collector's item."

I am honored that the Temple Board entrusted me to spearhead this very special assignment. It has been a wonderful journey of discovery for me — one that has helped me appreciate my Jewish heritage and my Temple in new and enlightening ways.

I hope this book instills similar feelings of pride in those people who read it.

Israeli technology economy reaches new heights in 2014

Courtesy of Nocamels.com

It's safe to say that 2014 may have been the best year yet for Israeli tech. From the largest number of Israeli Initial Public Offerings since the dot com boom, to the faith placed in Israel's breakthrough cybersecurity and big data sectors by governments and multinational companies, this was a year of unprecedented progress and earnings for the Startup Nation.

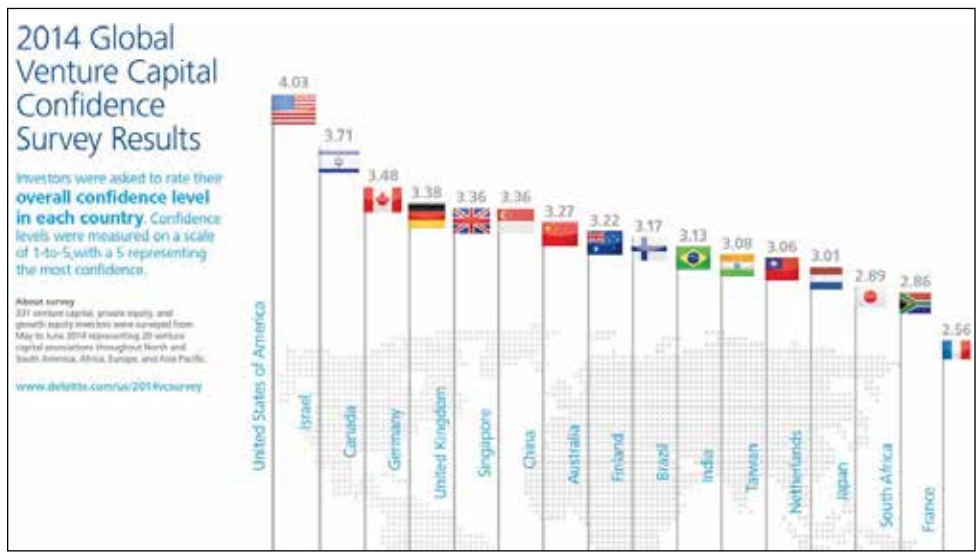
In 2014, Israel still boasts the largest concentration of startups per-head in the world, with almost 1,000 new firms launched every year.

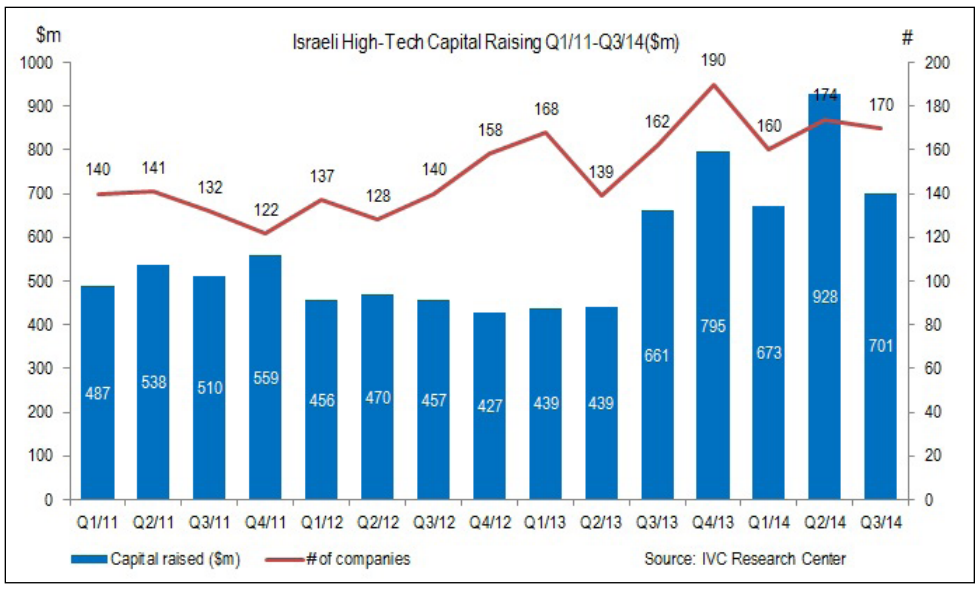
And, according to Deloitte, international investors place nearly as much faith in their Israeli investments as they do in their American counterparts, a notable achievement for an economy 301 times smaller than the U.S.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) partner Rubi Suliman, like many industry experts, believes Israeli tech reached a new peak in 2014: "The stars seemed to be aligned just perfectly this year for the local industry, and brought about such unprecedented success."

The hard numbers:

- According to PwC, the year saw a total of 70 exits and IPOs worth approx. $15 billion. This is despite the fact that one of the biggest acquisition in Israel's history, the sale of Waze to Google for $966 million, occurred in the previous year.
- By September, the famed 100 club (Israeli companies worth more than $100 million) had already garnered a combined revenue of $3.6 billion, according to data by TheTime. In addition, 15 companies reached the $100 million mark in 2014, compared with six in 2013.
- Eighteen Israeli companies went public this year (13 in the U.S. and five in the UK), raising a total of $9.8 billion in their offerings, compared to $1.2 billion in 2013. Mobileye, the world leader in car-collision avoidance systems, was the real star on this front, raising $890 million.
- Israeli startups were acquired at a faster pace than ever, within an average of 3.95 years, according to Dow Jones VentureSource. This is compared with a period of 5.5 years before acquisition last year and 8.59 years in 2009. In addition, investors in Israeli startups that were acquired saw a 6.2 times return on their investment, compared to just 2.2 over the same time period in Europe.
- The number of jobs in Israeli high tech went up by 3.2 percent in 2014, compared to to 1.5 percent in 2013, according to Ethosia human resources.
- According to financial advisory firm Deloitte, global investor confidence levels waned over Brazil and China, while Canada, Israel and the UK showed increased investor confidence levels. According to the overall confidence levels of venture capital investors, Israel was second only to the U.S. in venture capital confidence.
- The year saw the largest-ever foreign investment in Israeli tech, with Intel injecting nearly $6 billion into upgrading its Kiryat Gat chip plant and promising to spend up to $550 million in the Israeli economy in the next five years.





The leading sectors:

Automotive: Though Israel doesn't have its own auto industry, it excels in automobile technology. The most notable achievement this year goes to the inventors of the collision alert system Mobileye, used by major automotive brands such as General Motors and Honda. It issued the largest IPO in Israel's history, raising $890 million at a company valuation of $7.5 billion. Now other leading automotive brands such as BMW, Fiat, and Toyota are turning to Israel to develop cutting-edge auto parts and cool technology to deck out their latest models. Another up-and-coming Israeli company, Argus Cyber Security, is taking two industries Israel excels in — automotive and cybersecurity — and combining them into one, providing protection against attacks on the web-connected cars of the future.

Mobileye's technology warns the driver before an imminent collision.

Cybersecurity: As companies and governments shift the bulk of their data online, their information becomes more vulnerable to cyber attacks (the recent attack on Sony is just one example). Israel has long been at the forefront of defense technologies, which is why its cybersecurity industry is more mature and diverse than that of many other countries. As the CEO of CyberArk, one of this year's most successful cybersecurity companies that also held an impressive IPO, Udi Mokady summed it up, "Everybody understands that you buy Swiss watches from Switzerland and information security from Israel."

Wearable technology: Connecting wearable devices to the Internet is a booming sector still only in its infancy, and Israel is making some important contributions. Companies such as Omek, creating gesture recognition software and acquired by software-giant Intel for $40 million, and LifeBEAM, connecting helmets and hats to the Internet to track your workout progress, are changing the way inventors worldwide think about wearable technology. Others, such as OrCam, are innovating with a social cause, bringing the first smart glasses that can identify objects for the visually impaired to the market.

Other sectors: Israel also reached unprecedented heights in other sectors this year, including big data analytics, with companies such as SiSense and BigPanda leading a lucrative industry that has taken on the task of storing all of our online data. Israel is also behind some major innovations in online marketing, with companies such as Outbrain and Taboola thinking up creative new ways to promote content on the Internet. Finally, 'FinTech' (Financial Tech), a sector breaking down the barriers of the internet economy, is starting to welcome some major players in Israel, with companies such as BillGuard and FeeX helping to reduce fraud, ease payment processes and save users money.

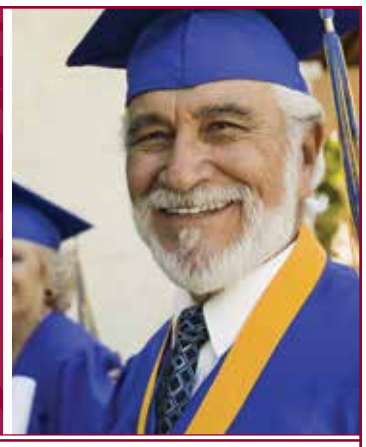
Some words of caution

Despite the stellar startup activity in Israel, a number of serious challenges to the country's 'Startup Nation' title remain. For one, there are still not enough jobs being created for the country's growing population. This is due in part to the lack of big companies that contribute to Israel's native stock exchange, the TASE. Many multinational companies come to Israel to get the best of its brainpower (Intel, Microsoft and Google) while many large Israeli companies, Isuch as Teva Pharmaceuticals and CheckPoint, choose to move their business abroad. Despite the large number of startups, many still decide to exit early or go public overseas, lowering their real value for the Israeli economy as well as threatening the longevity of the Israeli high tech sector.

Data collected by Dow Jones VentureSource suggests Israeli startups still decide to exit quickly because of the impressive acquisition offers they are able to attract. Analyzing data from eight companies acquired during the third quarter of 2014, it was found that companies were acquired within 3.95 years after raising a median of $5.5 million in total. It may be easy to understand why these companies favored acquisition, with the acquisition median amount totaling $34.10 million, meaning that investors saw a 6.2 times return on their investments in companies acquired this year. Add this to the fact that most venture capital goes to young startups (80 percent of venture capital funds in comparison to 52 of similar funds in the U.S.), it's no wonder that the infamous Israeli exit has yet to go out of style, for better or worse.

"Commit Yourself to Lifelong Learning. The Most Valuable Asset You'll Ever Have is Your Mind and What You Put Into It."

– Brian Tracy



Our residents agree. That's why we're proud to announce that The Highlands has started an exciting new partnership with Alvernia that allows our residents to attend free Seniors College courses at the University. And for those who don't want to travel, select courses are offered on The Highlands' campus!

Lifelong Learning . . .

It's just one more way The Highlands is redefining retirement living!

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A member of Reading Health System

Youth News

It's a wrap! BBYO gives back with holiday fundraising activity

By Chase Weizer

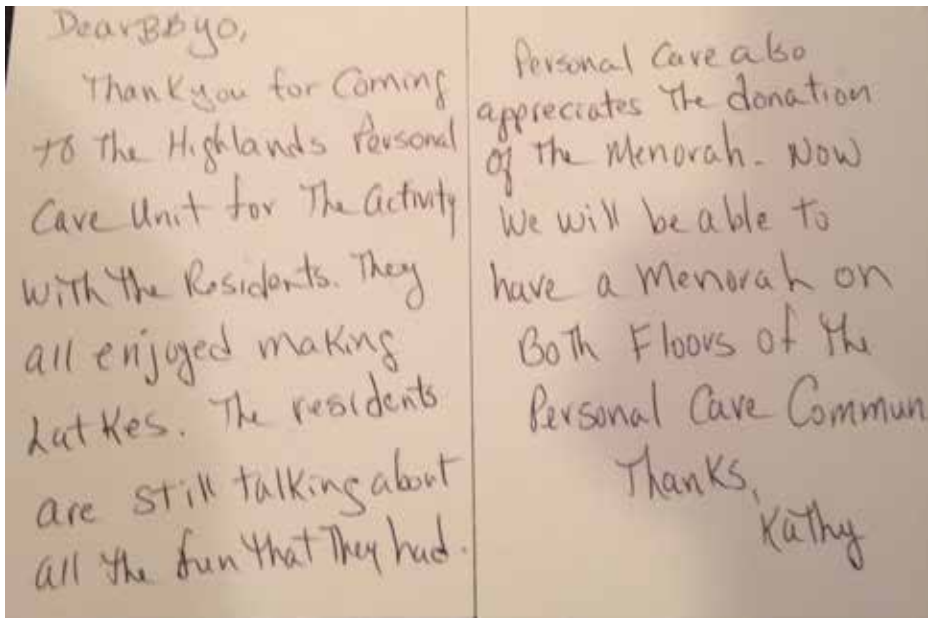
Part of Berks Chai BBYO's mission is to give back to the community. We decided to return the favor during the holidays by gift-wrapping in the Berkshire Mall.

All profits made were donated to The Children's Home of Reading and go toward providing foster care, adoption services, and academic programs to children and families.

Gift-wrapping proved to be a wonderful way to enjoy ourselves while helping out the less fortunate indirectly. Most of us also went from not knowing anything about gift-wrapping to expertly helping the community with our newly found skills. We wrapped gifts ranging from American Eagle clothing to oddly-shaped Thomas the Train packages.

This Christmas, the children of Reading were able to enjoy waking up on Christmas morning and opening their gifts thanks not only to the many volunteers that signed up to gift wrap, but also the community for giving us their presents to wrap as well as their multiple donations.

Teens bring Hanukkah joy to Highlands at December event



Dear BBYO,
Thank you for Coming to the Highlands Personal Care Unit for The Activity with the Residents. They all enjoyed making Latkes. The residents are still talking about all the fun that they had.

Personal Care also appreciates the donation of the Menorah. Now we will be able to have a Menorah on Both Floors of the Personal Care Commun
Thanks,
Kathy

By Megan McIntosh

The Berks Chai BBYO Chapter sponsored a Hanukkah event at The Highlands of Wyomissing on Dec. 14. The teens made latkes and played dreidel with the residents while listening to Hanukkah songs. We made the batter right at the table using only a few ingredients: shredded potatoes, onions, flour, eggs, salt and pepper. The residents helped us measure and mix the ingredients.

There were about a dozen ladies in attendance, and not all were Jewish. I taught two non-Jewish women how to play driedel. One was from Munich, Germany, and the other one said her parents came to America from Ireland. I really enjoyed spending time with these ladies. It was a lot of fun, they were telling me stories and we were making jokes.

Our chapter plans to do more activities with the residents at the Highlands. Thank you to Janine Ure, BBYO Advisor, and Kathy Marabella, Activity Coordinator at The Highlands for helping us plan this activity. Our chapter donated a menorah for the residents to enjoy.

Making memories with Matisyahu

By JoJo Ure

On the last night of Hanukkah Berks Chai BBYO experienced a "true miracle" and saw Matisyahu in concert! Thanks to support from the Federation, Rubin Family Educational Fund and Jayne Kleinman, Reading teens headed off to Philadelphia in a comfy bus and had an amazing time. Before the concert we met in the JCC, had some pizza, and lit the menorah!

Matisyahu is a Jewish-American rapper and singer. His songs are really popular in BBYO especially Liberty Region. We always sing his song "One Day" during Havdalah, so it was extra special to see him perform it live. The best moment of the night was when Matisyahu lit a giant menorah on stage as he sung the prayers and his song Aish Tamid, eternal flame. It was like nothing I've experienced, and being with my Reading Jewish friends made it a moment I will never forget.

At the end of the concert Matisyahu invited the crowd on stage to sing his last song! I had such a good time with all my friends and want to thank the Federation for supporting BBYO and helping us make this memory!

Lighting the menorah before heading out to see Matisyahu.

Want to learn more about Jewish youth groups?
For BBYO,
contact Janine Ure via the Jewish Federation, 610-921-0624.
For National Federation of Temple Youth,
contact Scott Stein via Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, 610-375-6034

A love story

By Anne Seltzer

He was madly in love with her. He was her whole life. They met on a blind date. Both were in their early 30s, a time when most people of their era were already married with children. They married and lived blissfully together for 41 years. He proposed to her, saying "the weather is going to get really bad this winter and I don't want to keep driving over the mountain, so I want to take you back with me." Or something to that effect. Always respectful, I never heard them utter an unkind word to each other. He really kissed her when he came home from work every night. They were my parents, Betty and Leonard Pariser. For some reason I have been thinking about them a lot more lately. Perhaps it is because Matt just got married, or because this month would be their 59th anniversary.

It is true that my parents did not meet until they were 34 and 35. They married, and the next year I came along, and three years later my brother, David.

Mom and Dad were excellent examples of how to be a spouse. As was typical of that generation, they had clearly defined roles. Dad was the breadwinner, and Mom took care of us and the house. But Dad read us bedtime stories and was totally present when he was home. I'm quite certain he did diapers and bottles, too. Saturday night was date night for them. We always had a babysitter.

They rarely went out with others, seeming to prefer each other's company to anyone else. She taught him that not all chicken tasted bad. He was never able to teach her to drive.

Every Sunday my grandfather would take the bus from Morgantown, W.Va., to Uniontown to visit. Though I'm sure my dad would have liked a Sunday to vedge or to just spend with my mom and us, he never seemed to complain. He'd pick Pop up at the bus and take him back in the evening.

I don't really recall them doing things separately, besides dad going to work and meetings, and mom getting her hair done and going to meetings. Because mom didn't drive, she had to depend on him to take her grocery shopping or to the mall. Every Friday night they attended services at their Temple. They were both very involved there.

As they got older and the typical ailments popped up, they were truly there for each other. When my dad had a stroke, my mom seemed to slip away too. It became difficult for her to get around, which had not been a problem up until that point. We were concerned about leaving her alone. She was unbelievably lonely when he passed away. He was her entire life. Mom really tried. It was no surprise, though it was a shock, when she passed away a year and a half later.

Since they both liked chocolate, especially mom, this is for her. Mom, I hope you are having it every day wherever you are.

Triple Chocolate Cupcakes

6 oz. bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

½ c. granulated sugar

2 oz. unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped

¼ c. packed light brown sugar
2 tsp. instant espresso powder
2 eggs
¼ c. plus 2 T. flour
2 tsp. vanilla
¼ tsp. baking powder

1 c. toasted pecans, coarsely chopped

¼ tsp. fine salt
½ c. semisweet chocolate chips
¾ stick (6 T.) unsalted butter, slightly softened
½ c. white chocolate chips

Melt bittersweet and unsweetened chocolate and espresso together until smooth. Sift together flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside. Beat butter and sugars in a mixer until light and fluffy, about 2 min. Add eggs one at a time, then vanilla. Beat on high 1 min. On low speed beat in melted chocolate. Fold in flour mixture with a rubber spatula until combined. Stir in pecans and chips. Refrigerate until just firm, about 30 min.

Scoop T. onto parchment-lined pans. Bake at 350° for about 10-11 min. The surface will be dry and shiny but the tops and insides will still be soft. Enjoy!

"Hey, I didn't know they had kiddish at the zoo!"

Gardening with Vicky

Seeds vs. seedlings

By Vicky Sokoloff

Now that you have narrowed your choices for next spring's garden, you have to decide if you want to start seeds or purchase seedlings. Annuals that need a long growing season (marigolds, petunias, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers) have to be started indoors six to eight weeks before last frost (typically May 15). If you don't have space for this, the decision is easy.

Why would you consider starting your own seeds? The major reason is that there are far more varieties available as seed than you will find as seedlings at the local garden centers.

Some vegetables can be started indoors, planted directly in the garden, or purchased as seedlings. These include cucumbers, melons and squash. My choice is to plant seeds directly in the garden in early June. While they get a slightly later start than seedlings, they will not need to readjust to a new home and will therefore grow faster and be a bit hardier. By using seed you have still have more choices than you would have buying seedlings. It allows you start a few plants every two weeks to keep the plants growing strong over a longer period of time. You can also plant a few extra seeds and thin to the best plants.

How much space do you need for a vegetable garden? That depends on the number and type of vegetables you want to grow, the number of people you are feeding, and if you want to freeze or can in addition to eating fresh. Things such as corn and potatoes take a lot of space. Radishes or turnips can be tucked in among other plants and require little or no additional room. Stick to things you and your family enjoy.

Light is a crucial factor. Veggies such as cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, tomatoes and squash need at least six hours of sun. You might get by on four to six hours with beans, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, leek/onion, turnip. Leaf lettuce and spinach will be ok with as little as two to four hours. I usually plant spinach in a planter box on the porch, since I can get to it before the garden has warmed up and dried out enough for planting. It also keeps the spinach from bolting if we get an early hot spell.

Don't have a vegetable garden? No problem. Why not add some attractive varieties of leaf lettuce to your annual border, tuck some turnips around the tulips, or let cucumbers grow up your trellis.

If you are planning your first garden, start small so you are not overwhelmedby work or by having more produce than you can use. If you have a vegetable garden, remember the importance of rotating crops within that garden space. It's especially important to avoid planting a nightshade crop where there was one the previous year in order to minimize disease and insect problems. For that same reason, always remove plants at the end of the growing season. Do not dig them in or put them in the compost.

When thinking about tomatoes, there are a few major types: cherry/grape, plum, and large slicing tomatoes. I like to have a few of each. Sungold is a great cherry tomato.

Another term you will see is determinate/indeterminate. That has to do with how large the plant will get. One of the great debates among gardeners is whether or not to prune foliage. Some people love seeing huge plants. I normally do prune foliage so the plant will concentrate its energy, producing fruit rather than more leaves. Another matter of preference is hybrids vs heirloom (open pollinated) varieties. Again, both sides have their advocates. Having a garden that frequently gets more than an ideal amount of rainfall, I opt for hybrids with some resistance to disease.

But what if your only outdoor space is a patio or balcony? Does that mean no fresh veggies for you? Absolutely not. If you have enough sun and room for some pots, you can grow vegetables. A great source of information on that subject is Edward C Smith's book The Vegetable Gardener's Container Bible (Storey Press, $19.95) He has information on the wide variety of plants that can be grown in pots. The detailed information addresses pot selection and preparation, types of soil/fertilizer, plant varieties and combinations.

With no other options, try a pot of herbs on a sunny windowsill. Farm to table doesn't get any better than homegrown.

All Around the Town

Mazel tov to **Sari and John Incledon** on the birth of their grandson Ethan Henry Staniland, born to their daughter Rebecca and her husband, Paul, in Chicago Jan. 6.

***

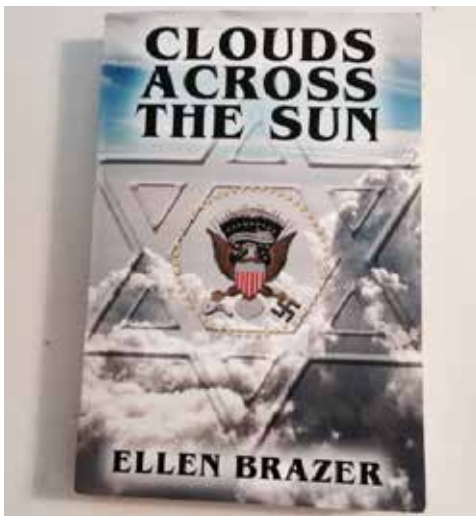
Mazel tov to **Al and Betsy Katz** on the arrival of their new granddaughter Ella Naomi, and to her parents, Beth Ann and Gadi.

We love good news about members of our community! Please share it by emailing Marknem@aol.com.

READERS' MARKET

By Joan G. Friedman

"Clouds Across the Sun" by Ellen Brazer (353 pgs, $14.95, available online at Amazon and other sites)



This bestselling author takes you into a Nazi plot to overtake the U.S. government. Set in New York, Washington, Israel, Russia, and Vilna, you will follow the life of a young woman with a Nazi father and, unbeknownst to her, a Jewish mother. She finds herself drawn to Judaism in a story of discovery, redemption, intrigue and romance. Filled with passion and hope, it is the kind of book you can't put down. This very enjoyable work of historical fiction is the perfect gift for everyone!

Jewish Family Service

United Way

A different approach to caregiving

By Sari Incledon

Roz Chast's graphic memoir, "Can't we talk about something more PLEASANT?" is a must-read for anyone caring about or for elderly parents. Chast's cartoons have appeared in the *New Yorker* since 1978. This, her 14th and most personal book, received the honor of being one of the *New York Times* 10 best books for 2014.

In her book Chast chronicles her parents' final years. George and Elizabeth lived independently in their own Brooklyn apartment until age 93, when their declining health forced their only child, Roz, to take charge and move them from their home of 50 years to an assisted living facility close to her home in Connecticut. She recalls the emotional roller coaster ride caregiving was for her. While brutally honest about the family's dysfunctional dynamics, she is absolutely hilarious in this touching account, which combines drawings, family photos and documents chronicling a very trying time in the family's life. I recommend it not only because it is fun — but there are definitely lessons here for both generations – the boomers and their elderly parents.

The book's title hints at the first lesson — the need to talk about difficult topics. The parents were not willing to talk about their declining health, their finances and what to do when they were no longer able to live independently. When a crisis arose, their daughter was forced to make all the decisions because her parents were never willing to engage in discussions that involved serious issues.

Families can't do everything themselves. There are professionals of all kinds who can help. Roz's friend recommended using an elderly care lawyer, and her parents' uncharacteristically agreed to meet him and complete wills and powers of attorney. Having their affairs in order was a great help as their health declined and their daughter got involved. Unfortunately Elizabeth Chast had a strong aversion to doctors and hospitals, and that was not helpful. Both parents did not avail themselves of appropriate medical treatment because of their fears. Roz probably would have benefited from attending family caregiver sessions from the Alzheimer's Association, and a geriatric case manager would have helped all three of them. Families and their needs are complex, and the complexity is compounded when the caregiver doesn't live nearby. "Can't we talk about something more PLEASANT?" tells a serious story in an entertaining way. I highly recommend it.

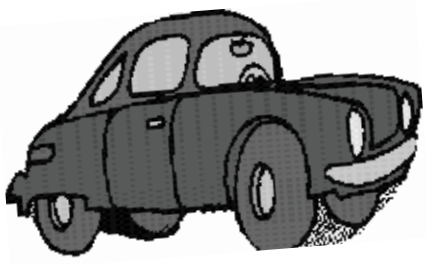
If eldercare issues are a concern to you now or if you are interested in help planning for the future, please call Jewish Family Service at 610-921-0624. Carole Robinson and I are very familiar with our local resources and are happy to share our knowledge and experience with you.

Food pantry plays valuable role

Volunteers finish setting up the Jewish Family Service food pantry at Kesher Zion Synagogue. Please bring donations of canned tuna, soup, fruits and vegetables to Kesher Zion or the JCC. We also need plastic and paper grocery bags,

Enjoy Tax Benefits While Contributing to

Jewish Family Service Vehicle Donation Program



Call Sari at 610-921-0624,
e-mail sari@jfreading.org
or go to
www.charitableautoresources.com

Living with Loss

Mondays, Feb. 9 and 23,
3 - 4:30 p.m. at the JCC
For more information, call Sari at 610-921-0624

The Benefit Bank

A Jewish Family Service Program

Find out your eligibility and apply for benefits online with a counselor in a confidential setting.

Food Stamps *Medical Benefits*
Cash Assistance *LIHEAP and more*

To find out if TBB can help you,
call Sari or Carole at 610-921-0624

Did You Know Jewish Family Service:

- **offers discounted taxi transportation to seniors and the disabled?**
- **has a monthly need-based food pantry?**
- **offers counseling and information and referral services?**

Gratz JCHS News

Growing your own Etrog tree to celebrate Tu B'Shevat

By Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner
Branch Director, Gratz JCHS

The students of the Gratz JCHS will have a short lesson in agriculture when we celebrate the holiday of Tu B'Shevat, occurring this year on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015. Tu B'Shevat is the Israeli Arbor Day.

Each student will plant an Etrog tree (Citrus medica L.) Rabbi Dov has saved etrog fruits for this project from his family's celebration of Sukkot in the fall, and it will be his third attempt to plant trees.(The first was a learning experience; the second consisted of giving away trees that succeeded, although his were killed with an early frost out of doors.) One tree was given to the JCC a year ago and it looked fine when last seen!

Why the Etrog? It is an appropriate fruit tree to learn about for the Jewish holiday of Tu B'Shevat, also remembered as the New Year of Trees. The name is derived from the Hebrew date of the holiday, which occurs on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat. "Tu" stands for the Hebrew lettersTet and Vav, which together have the numerical value of 9 and 6, adding up to 15.

In previous years, the Gratz students celebrated Tu B'Shevat with a short history of the first seven fruits of Israel and the course of bringing new fruits to Israel, a literal footpath between Africa, Europe and Asia. Then we created smoothies with recipes based on an historical period — a Second Temple smoothie, a Medieval smoothie — all delicious and appreciated as a special snack for our break.

We've also distributed carob fruits, also known as St. John's Bread or in Yiddish "boksor."

Perhaps next year we can learn about scarification and plant boksor trees — which Rabbi Dov has also planted successfully in the past.

Some Jews pickle or candy the etrog (citron) from Sukkot and eat it on Tu B'Shevat, but we were warned against that several years ago for health reasons. Because for religious purposes observant Jews search out the most beautiful and "perfect" etrog, the farmers use an especially large dose of insecticides that remain in the fruit, making the cooking with or baking with the etrog potentially harmful. Be careful.

We share with the community the information being given out to our students collected and edited by Rabbi Dov.

Our Federation's Etrog tree

Growing Your
גורתא Etrog Citron
www.keithbrooks.com/caring.html

This is some basic information about growing and caring for your tree. Please be aware that agricultural Halachot must be considered when you transplant or repot the tree.

The following tips relate to the maintenance of an Etrog tree as a potted plant or tree. Like other citrus varieties, Etrog trees are VERY susceptible to cold while young and should only be planted in the ground in suitable climates.

Location: Keep warm during winter or any time low temperatures in the 40's or lower are expected. Either keep the plant indoors in a warm place that has light or protect it from the cold on the outside through a cover or some other protective shielding. Natural sunlight is best, but you can use artificial light.

In spring, move your tree outside, gradually from a shaded to a more sunny location. The trees should not be in a position where they will be in the sun all day long as too much direct sunlight will burn them up while they are young. Always protect your younger trees from strong winds and storms.

Container: Given light and nutrients your Etrog tree will grow to the size of the container in which it is placed. Once your tree has grown about 6 inches tall it may be transferred to a 8-10" diameter planter. Make sure it has holes in the bottom for drainage. The largest pot for indoors I would use is 24" diameter. After several years they may grow up to 10 feet like this. You can also prune them. Note the Laws of Orlah regarding replanting — check with your Rabbi.

Celebrating Tu B'Shevat at Gratz JCHS in 2014.

Potting soil and fertilizer: Use regular good quality potting soil and commercial fertilizer (Miracle-Gro or citrus soil).

Watering: Do not overwater your Etrog tree. If you will keep the tree indoors, water the tree once or twice a week. If the tree will be outdoors, especially during the hot summer, three or more times a week may be required. In winter two to three times a week should suffice.

Insects and pests: As with any fruit bearing tree, spider mites, scales, caterpillars and other insects are common.

Spraying dishwashing detergent (about a teaspoonful in a spray bottle or 2 tablespoons in a gallon of water) should keep the insects away.

Pollination and flower buds: Citrus trees are self-fruitful, meaning they will produce fruit without having another tree nearby.

Citrus trees require a period of cold weather in order to induce flower budding. For most citrus trees, it takes about four to six weeks in the 50 to 68 degree range to get reasonable flowering. Be very careful if temperatures drop below 40 degrees for more than two weeks.

If the trees bear fruit: Etrog trees should bear fruit within four to seven years (in theory, my tree took seven). If you want to use your Etrogim for Succot then you must be sure there are no defects in your fruit (that did not come from the tree itself). You should have your Etrog checked by a competent rabbinical authority on these matters. Also please note the special laws regarding Orlah and Neta Revai — check with your Rabbi.

Safety: Citrus trees produce VERY sharp thorns. Please be careful when handling the tree, pruning it or if young children are present.

EVERYTHING'S RELATIVE

by Jordan B. Gorfinkel • www.jewishcartoon.com

BECCA The Altruist · BETH The Realist · BERNIE The Idealist · YAEL The Perplexed · LOUIS The Rebel · ZAYDS The Traditionalist · BUBS The Bubbe

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The "MY KIDS" Effort

As a new effort in the 2014 Campaign, we gave parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles an opportunity to honor their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews by making gifts in their name to the Campaign. The following individuals were honored.

Person Honored	By	Relationship
Lior S. Ages	Al and Betsy Katz	Grandparents
Brandt Beck	Ivan Gordon	Grandfather
Luke Berger	Lee Berger	Father
Caroline Blum	Susan and Mel Blum	Grandparents
Margot Blum	Susan and Mel Blum	Grandparents
Abigail Cohn	C. Harold Cohn	Grandfather
Tessa Cohn	C. Harold Cohn	Grandfather
Elizabeth Goodman	Debbie Goodman and John Moyer	Grandparents
Max Goodman	Debbie Goodman and John Moyer	Grandparents
Violet Goodman	Debbie Goodman and John Moyer	Grandparents
Calem Harris	Jan and Jonathan Simon	In-Laws
Aidan Incledon	Sari and John Incledon	Grandparents
Amy Incledon	Sari and John Incledon	Parents
Rebecca Incledon	Sari and John Incledon	Parents
Charlie Jacobs	Susan and Mel Blum	Grandparents
Mia Jacobs	Susan and Mel Blum	Grandparents
Mia Jacobs	Marc Jacobs	Uncle
Marissa Jacobs	Susan and Mel Blum	Grandparents
Marissa Jacobs	Marc Jacobs	Uncle
Gabriel Meir Katz	Al and Betsy Katz	Grandparents
Adam Leisawitz	Ben and Michele Leisawitz	Parents
Leah Leisawitz	Ben and Michele Leisawitz	Parents
Emily Levine	Lisa and Allen Levine	Parents
Gabrielle Levine	Lisa and Allen Levine	Parents
Andrew Mitgang	Tammy and Jeff Mitgang	Parents
Liza Mitgang	Tammy and Jeff Mitgang	Parents
David Rotenberg	Larry and Allison Rotenberg	Parents
Eli Rotenberg	Larry and Allison Rotenberg	Grandparents
Jonathan Rotenberg	Larry and Allison Rotenberg	Parents
Joshua Rotenberg	Larry and Allison Rotenberg	Grandparents
Leah Rotenberg	Larry and Allison Rotenberg	Parents
Lucy Rotenberg	Larry and Allison Rotenberg	Grandparents
Max Rotenberg	Larry and Allison Rotenberg	Grandparents
Talia Rotenberg	Larry and Allison Rotenberg	Grandparents
Adin Schickler	Scott & Kathy Schickler	Parents
Alex Schickler	Scott & Kathy Schickler	Parents
Simon Seesengood	Jennifer Koosed and Rob Seesengood	Parents
Sarah Simon	Jan and Jonathan Simon	Parents
Zach Simon	Jan and Jonathan Simon	Parents
Ari Spillerman	Sidney and Cheryl Spillerman	Grandparents
Talia Spillerman	Sidney and Cheryl Spillerman	Grandparents
Leah Staffeldt	Frank and Judy Synnamon	Grandparents
Isaac Staffeldt	Frank and Judy Synnamon	Grandparents
Paul Staniland	Sari and John Incledon	In-Laws
Abigail Waxler	Andy and Laurie Waxler	Parents
Emily Waxler	Andy and Laurie Waxler	Parents
Eric Waxler	Andy and Laurie Waxler	Parents
Harison Weiss	Jack and Teri Lefkowith	Grandparents
Maxwell Weiss	Jack and Teri Lefkowith	Grandparents
Samuel Weiss	Jack and Teri Lefkowith	Grandparents
Anika Yadau	Jim Rothstein and Sharon Scullin	Grandparents
Naomi Yadau	Jim Rothstein and Sharon Scullin	Grandparents

Project seeks to create Jewish equivalent to UNESCO, TripAdvisor

By Jeffrey F. Barken
JNS.org

Standing between a display table full of touch-screen tablets and a colorful spread of Israeli cuisine favorites, World Jewish Heritage Organization (WJH) founder Jack Gottlieb delivers a toast.

"Israelis like projects," he says. "We wanted to create a Jewish UNESCO and Jewish TripAdvisor in a combined application."

Gottlieb's references to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the popular travel website combine to describe a new interactive mobile app being launched by WJH, which is also rolling out an eBook on Jewish and new Israeli cuisine titled "Israel's Top 100 Ethnic Restaurants."

On. Jan. 14 in New York, WJH hosted a "Celebration of Jewish Ethnic Flavors" to launch the eBook. The organization sees a rapid global decline in what it calls a "Jewish voice." That trend is marked by the disappearance or repurposing of cherished cultural sites such as synagogues in countries where the Jewish population has decreased or faced rapid assimilation, resulting in a loss of shared history for the nation and the Jews calling it home. WJH, therefore, is "attempting to promote tourism to a variety of sites and cultural events around the world that are of great importance to Jewish heritage continuity," Gottlieb said.

The goal is to encourage tourists to venture off the beaten path.

"Given the growing interest in food in Israel and around the world, and the fact that it can appeal to anyone, we decided to start [this initiative]," Gottlieb said of the app and the eBook, which will work together to inform travelers about hidden treasures they might otherwise miss. The app provides up-to-date information based on viewer location and is capable of generating tours that highlight dining, museums, and other culturally relevant sightseeing attractions. Did you discover something unique on your own that's not listed in the app's database? Users can upload articles to the app's server.

"This [new resource] is so special," said Gil Hovav — a noted Israeli food critic, chef, and TV personality who wrote a foreword to the "Israel's Top 100 Ethnic Restaurants" eBook. "I've been in the restaurant business for 27 years. Israeli food is booming and in Tel Aviv you can find everything. But this is about the real people, where the soul is, where the Jewish grandma serves you Kubbeh soup and says, 'This time it really works!"

Despite his admitted affection for "posh restaurants" and his interest in the worldly fusion of flavors influencing modern Israeli cooking, Hovav notes the unique respect that old-style cuisine still receives in Israel.

Hungry tourists, he advised, should either look for the taxis parked out front of a restaurant or trust the WJH travel app. The new eBook — authored by Gottlieb and curated by Omri Negri, with the help of bloggers and "foodies" from around Israel — also steers travelers through Israel's famous open markets in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, home to the colorful fresh produce that characterizes the Israeli diet.

"The changing point [in the history of Israeli cuisine] was during the 1980s, when our kitchen became much richer," Hovav says.

During the early days of the Jewish state, a scarcity of ingredients hampered culinary creativity, and Israel's humble settlers were simply thankful for whatever they had to eat. But now, the doors are wide open for experimentation, and anything is possible.

"In two words: everything goes!" says Hovav, describing the range of culinary fusion taking place in Israel. "You [will] see a combination of Arab, Russian, and Moroccan [cuisine] all on the same plate."

Despite access to the world's smorgasbord, Israelis aren't likely to forget their past. Hovav is conscious of a popular throwback trend guiding contemporary cooking in Israel.

"I think everybody [is] trying to become more 'Israeli,'" he says, explaining that Israelis are "going back to old ingredients that were used in harder times… trying to recreate something local, fresh and modern."

For example, Hovav describes a salad made of the mallow plant ("hubeza" in Hebrew).

"This is what my family survived on during [the siege of Jerusalem during the 1948 War of Independence]," he said.

Fittingly, new twists define the menu at New York's Balaboosta, scene of the WJH eBook launch.

"We're making cauliflower fried like Bamba," said Einat Admony, the restaurant's owner and chef, referencing the popular peanut butter-flavored Israeli snack. "There's couscous served with short rib in a Persian lime and herb sauce, crème brulee made with halva, and fried baklava, [the latter consisting of] pistachio ice cream wrapped in nuts [and] wrapped again] in phyllo dough and fried."

Celebrating Hanukkah in the city

Reading City Councilwoman Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz, second from left, helps the community celebrate Hannukah at the ceremonial menorah set up at Fifth and Penn streets in December. Each year the city of Reading recognizes the Jewish community in its downtown holiday display.

Save the Date

2015 RCOS Supper Club presenting the 4th Annual Ruth & Irvin Balis Volunteer Appreciation Award
to Eve & Mike Pardo

Saturday, April 18

6:00 p.m. Dinner **7:00 p.m. Cocktails**

JCC PURIM CARNIVAL

Sunday, March 1, 2015

12:00 to 2:00 PM

Being Held at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

555 Warwick Drive, Reading

Hamantashen

Hot Dogs

Carnival Games

Prizes

Admission to Carnival is FREE. Purchase 25¢ tickets for food & games.

History comes alive at Israel's Beit She'an archaeological park

Israel21c.org

Romans once flocked to Beit She'an for entertainment such as blood sports. (Itamar Grinberg/Israel Tourism Ministry)

If you're into archaeology or history, the Israeli city of Beit She'an ("House of Tranquility") is a not-to-be-missed itinerary item for any tour of Israel — especially during the winter months, as during the summer this part of Israel is one of the hottest places on the planet.

Thanks to the Roman penchant for grand building projects, you can easily spend a few hours exploring the vast Beit She'an national archaeological park with restored ruins of the 7,000-seat Roman theater, Byzantine bathhouse, decorative fountain, colonnaded streets and gladiator amphitheater.

"Like the Coliseum in Rome, this oval structure was used only for blood sports to keep the Roman troops entertained while they were stationed in Beit She'an during the Second Temple Period," says licensed tour guide Moshe Friedman.

In modern times, Beit She'an is a quiet provincial municipality of 17,000. But back in its Roman heyday, it attracted perhaps 40,000 residents due to its strategic, fertile and picturesque location at the crossroads of the Jordan and Jezreel valleys.

Friedman says Beit She'an has been continuously inhabited since the Egyptian period. "Beit She'an sits on 'Kings Way,' a natural roadway from Egypt to Damascus, so it was important during the Crusader period as a connection point between the culture center of Egypt and the mercantile center in Damascus," he says.

Plenty of grisly history took place here, too. This is where, according to the book of Samuel, the Philistines hung King Saul's body on a wall after the biblical battle on nearby Mount Gilboa (see below). And this is where a monumental act of arson — probably ordered by the king of Assyria in 732 BCE — destroyed the city that was strategic to the kingdoms of David and Solomon.

Under Roman rule, Beit She'an expanded southward and reached its peak of greatness in the fifth century CE. It was the capital of a group of 10 city-states and even minted its own coins.

"During the second revolt, the Jews of Beit She'an didn't side with the rest of the country against the Romans," Friedman tells ISRAEL21c. Nevertheless, these local Jews were murdered by their pagan neighbors, perhaps with the complicity of the Roman authorities.

All of this comes alive in the "Beit She'an Nights" sound-and-light show produced by Israel's renowned Disk-In Pro, the same company behind the Olympic Experience Museum in Tel Aviv. Groups can reserve a showing for Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays; call 972-4-648-1122.

Tour guide Shalom Pollack says Beit She'an National Park is "a big wow for anyone above 7 or 8 years old."

Bear in mind that the Beit She'an Valley is consistently cited as one of the hottest places on earth. But if you cannot schedule your visit for the cooler winter months, plan on taking an air-conditioned break at a nearby mall with stores and restaurants.

The peaks of Mount Gilboa

While you are in the Beit She'an Valley, it's worthwhile to explore nearby Mount Gilboa, with its 11 peaks and lots of picnic spots.

In Kibbutz Heftziba, at the foot of the northern slopes of Gilboa, Beit Alfa Synagogue National Park houses Israel's best-preserved synagogue mosaic floor from the sixth century.

A Roman-era bridge, a Crusader fortress, a mosque from the Mamluk period, a Turkish government house, an Ottoman fort and several basalt stone houses from the period of Arab conquest of Beit She'an are all open to tourists.

The Belvoir (or Kochav HaYarden — Star of the Jordan) National Park is dominated by a Crusader castle, built around 1140, perched high above the Jordan valley. Just north is a feeding station set up to strengthen Israel's Griffon vulture population.

Kibbutz attractions

The Beit She'an Valley houses several kibbutzim that offer attractions of their own.

Kibbutz Nir David operates the popular nature and wildlife sites Sachne-Gan Hashlosha and Gan Garoo.

Sachne has natural pools fed by hot springs and a stream with mini waterfalls. "It's very refreshing, when it's warm outside, to take a dip in the stream, and the picnic area is great for families especially in summertime," says Pollack.

Gan Garoo, a unique Australian park, lets visitors feed and pet the free-roaming kangaroos and cockatoos, and watch the koalas, cassowaries and flying foxes.

Kibbutz Nir David was one of 52 tower-and-stockade settlements built by Zionist immigrants during the British Mandate in the late 1930s to early 1940s, and a museum on the grounds is devoted to this historical era. "This gives you a feeling of what it was like to be a pioneer in the valley," says Pollack.

He recommends the Bio-Tour at Kibbutz Sde Eliyahu, where an industry called Bio-Bee Biological Systems sells specially bred fruit flies, bees, and other insects, as well as nesting owls, to farms in 30 countries as natural pest control.

Overnight accommodations are available at Kibbutz Nir David, Kibbutz Tirat Zvi and Kibbutz Shluchim, as well the Beit She'an Guest House and Ma'ayan Harod Guest House at the foot of the Gilboa Mountains.

Tot Shabbat

Introduce your children to the joy of Shabbat. Tot Shabbat is a musical, story-filled Shabbat morning experience geared towards families with young children through grade 2. Bring your family and friends to celebrate with Rabbi Brian Michelson and stay for a pint-size Oneg offering grape juice, challah, and child friendly treats.

February 21, 2015
March 21, 2015
April 18, 2015
May 16, 2015
June 20, 2015

Tot Shabbat services are held Saturday mornings at 10am at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom located at 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing, PA 19610. No registration is required. Please call the Temple office with any questions: 610-375-6034.

150 REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM 1864 • 2014

Obituaries

Michael Levy,64, of Muhlenberg Township. Michael was well known for his love of food and cooking, he had worked at various Philadelphia and Berks County restaurants as a Sous Chef. He had also worked at Singer Equipment. Michael is survived by his mother, his wife Jeanine and his daughters Alison of Philadelphia and Jessica of Muhlenberg Township. He is also survived by his sister, Ellen Sosin and her husband, Michael, of Arizona.

Trina M. (Daniels) Rudolph, 84 of Reading. Trina retired from Oscar Daniels Company Inc. in 1996, where she was part owner/operator. She was a member of Kesher Zion Synagogue and was very active in the Sisterhood.

Trina is survived by son Alan and his wife, Victoria, of Colorado; and daughter Amy and her husband, Marcus Besser, of Havertown. She is also survived by her five grandchildren.

B"H

Chabad Lubavitch invites you to
A Kosher Cooking Class for Ladies!

Traditional Foods

WITH A MODERN TWIST

CLASS #3:
Chicken Soup with 3-color Matzah Balls

Join us as we make chicken soup
and learn the secret to colored matza balls

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2015 • 6:30 PM
At Chabad Lubavitch
2320 Hampden Blvd

SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 8 Mega Challah Bake

COST: $10
RSVP is a must by January 25. 610-334-1577 or lipskerreading@aol.com

Questions raised about Turkish regime in wake of Paris attacks

By Alina Dain Sharon
JNS.org

The European Union recently announced that it is partnering on counter-terrorism projects with Middle East countries — including Turkey, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, and the Gulf states—in the wake of the Islamist terror attacks in Paris at the Charlie Hebdo magazine and a kosher supermarket. But is Turkey a suitable partner for that initiative?

Turkey's inclusion in the EU's counter-terrorism plan comes despite long-standing reports of jihadists using the Turkish border to cross into countries where they join Muslim terrorists. In particular, a Turkish official recently admitted that Hayat Boumeddiene — the girlfriend of Amedy Coulibaly, the terrorist who took nearly 20 hostages at the Paris kosher supermarket — had crossed into Syria through Turkey. Boumeddiene was being pursued by authorities as a suspected accomplice in the attack.

Since Boumeddiene was not listed on any no-fly list, there is no way Turkey could have known to watch her, according to Michael Koplow, program director of the Israel Institute think tank. But at the same time, Koplow said, "There's no question that Turkey has turned a blind eye in a lot of ways to the rise of ISIS (Islamic State) in Syria… and jihadists who [are] crossing into Syria over their border."

"In the past few months it seems that Turkey has tried to crack down on [these] jihadi highways to Syria a bit, but it's difficult," Koplow said. "Turkey has an extremely long border with Syria. It's nearly impossible to police all things, so people are going to get through."

Turkey, Koplow added, "doesn't seem to recognize the extent of the [border] problem, or at least doesn't want to acknowledge it."

Western nations, and Israel in particular, should be concerned that Turkey is "clearly supporting radical extremist groups in the Middle East, be it in Syria, in Libya, among the Palestinians, [or] of course, helping Hamas," said Efraim Inbar, a professor of political studies at Israel's Bar-Ilan University and director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

Turkey is hosting the new Istanbul headquarters of Hamas, the Palestinian terrorist group that governs Gaza. Additionally, the Paris terror attacks have elicited a series of inflammatory comments about the Jewish state by Turkish officials.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of committing crimes against humanity equivalent to the Paris attacks, citing Israel's Operation Protective Edge against Hamas last summer and the 2010 Gaza flotilla incident (in which Israeli forces were attacked by Turkish militants aboard the Mavi Marmara vessel and subsequently killed nine of those militants).

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan slammed Netanyahu for attending the Jan. 11 mass anti-terrorism rally in Paris, accusing the Israeli prime minister of carrying out state terrorism. A member of Erdoğan's ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP, promoted an anti-Israel conspiracy theory when he told a gathering of youths that because Israel is angry with France for supporting a recent Palestinian statehood resolution at the United Nations, Israel's Mossad spy agency must have been behind the Paris attacks.

Israel is "bewildered that the U.S. and the Europeans allow a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member [such as Turkey] to behave in such a way, but we see the inability of the Americans and Europeans to call a spade a spade," Inbar said.

The Israeli-Turkish relationship has been deteriorating since Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza from 2008-09. Erdogan publicly chastised Israeli president Shimon Peres in 2009 during a panel at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland.

Yet despite their diplomatic dysfunction, trade between Israel and Turkey is at an all-time high. Neither Israel nor Turkey has an interest to stamp out trade between the two countries because it benefits both economies, Koplow said.

On the political level, Inbar believes there is "a struggle over the soul of Turkey within Turkey."

"This is an issue of identity, [of] where Turkey is going," he said. "I am not optimistic, but there is a possibility that maybe the more Western elements of Turkish society will gain the upper hand, and then of course we will see entirely different relations between Turkey and Israel, and Turkey and the West."

Israeli ambassador delivers powerful speech to United Nations

Delivered to UN General Assembly Nov. 24 by Ambassador Ron Prosor:

I stand before the world as a proud representative of the State of Israel and the Jewish people. I stand tall before you knowing that truth and morality are on my side. And yet, I stand here knowing that today in this Assembly, truth will be turned on its head and morality cast aside.

The fact of the matter is that when members of the international community speak about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a fog descends to cloud all logic and moral clarity. The result isn't realpolitik, its surrealpolitik.

The world's unrelenting focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an injustice to tens of millions of victims of tyranny and terrorism in the Middle East. As we speak, Yazidis, Bahai, Kurds, Christians and Muslims are being executed and expelled by radical extremists at a rate of 1,000 people per month.

How many resolutions did you pass last week to address this crisis? And how many special sessions did you call for? The answer is zero. What does this say about international concern for human life? Not much, but it speaks volumes about the hypocrisy of the international community.

I stand before you to speak the truth. Of the 300 million Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa, less than half a percent are truly free — and they are all citizens of Israel.

Israeli Arabs are some of the most educated Arabs in the world. They are our leading physicians and surgeons, they are elected to our parliament, and they serve as judges on our Supreme Court. Millions of men and women in the Middle East would welcome these opportunities and freedoms.

Nonetheless, nation after nation, will stand at this podium today and criticize Israel — the small island of democracy in a region plagued by tyranny and oppression.

A fight for existence

Our conflict has never been about the establishment of a Palestinian state. It has always been about the existence of the Jewish state.

On Nov. 29, 1947, the United Nations voted to partition the land into a Jewish state and an Arab state. Simple. The Jews said yes. The Arabs said no. But they didn't just say no. Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon launched a war of annihilation against our newborn state.

This is the historical truth that the Arabs are trying to distort. The Arabs' historic mistake continues to be felt — in lives lost in war, lives lost to terrorism, and lives scarred by the Arab's narrow political interests.

According to the United Nations, about 700,000 Palestinians were displaced in the war initiated by the Arabs themselves. At the same time, some 850,000 Jews were forced to flee from Arab countries.

Why is it, that 67 years later, the displacement of the Jews has been completely forgotten by this institution while the displacement of the Palestinians is the subject of an annual debate?

The difference is that Israel did its utmost to integrate the Jewish refugees into society. The Arabs did just the opposite.

The worst oppression of the Palestinian people takes place in Arab nations. In most of the Arab world, Palestinians are denied citizenship and are aggressively discriminated against. They are barred from owning land and prevented from entering certain professions. And yet none — not one — of these crimes are mentioned in the resolutions before you.

If you were truly concerned about the plight of the Palestinian people there would be one, just one, resolution to address the thousands of Palestinians killed in Syria. And if you were so truly concerned about the Palestinians there would be at least one resolution to denounce the treatment of Palestinians in Lebanese refugee camps.

But there isn't. The reason is that today's debate is not about speaking for peace or speaking for the Palestinian people — it is about speaking against Israel. It is nothing but a hate and bashing festival against Israel.

Europe fails to meet its ideals

The European nations claim to stand for Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité — freedom, equality, and brotherhood — but nothing could be farther from the truth.

I often hear European leaders proclaim that Israel has the right to exist in secure borders. That's very nice. But I have to say — it makes about as much sense as me standing here and proclaiming Sweden's right to exist in secure borders.

When it comes to matters of security, Israel learned the hard way that we cannot rely on others — certainly not Europe.

In 1973, on Yom Kippur — the holiest day on the Jewish calendar — the surrounding Arab nations launched an attack against Israel. In the hours before the war began, Golda Meir, our Prime Minister then, made the difficult decision not to launch a pre-emptive strike. The Israeli government understood that if we launched a pre-emptive strike, we would lose the support of the international community.

As the Arab armies advanced on every front, the situation in Israel grew dire. Our casualty count was growing, and we were running dangerously low on weapons and ammunition. In this, our hour of need, President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger agreed to send Galaxy planes loaded with tanks and ammunition to resupply our troops. The only problem was that the Galaxy planes needed to refuel en route to Israel.

The Arab states were closing in and our very existence was threatened — and yet, Europe was not even willing to let the planes refuel. The U.S. stepped in once again and negotiated that the planes be allowed to refuel in the Azores.

The government and people of Israel will never forget that when our very existence was at stake, only one country came to our aid — the United States of America.

Israel is tired of hollow promises from European leaders. The Jewish people have a long memory. We will never ever forget that you failed us in the 1940s. You failed us in 1973. And you are failing us again today.

Every European parliament that voted to prematurely and unilaterally recognize a Palestinian state is giving the Palestinians exactly what they want — statehood without peace. By handing them a state on a silver platter, you are rewarding unilateral actions and taking away any incentive for the Palestinians to negotiate or compromise or renounce violence. You are sending the message that the Palestinian Authority can sit in a government with terrorists and incite violence against Israel without paying any price.

The first E.U. member to officially recognize a Palestinian state was Sweden. When it comes to other conflicts in our region, the Swedish Government calls for direct negotiations between the parties – but for the Palestinians, surprise, surprise, they roll out the red carpet. State Secretary Söder may think she is here to celebrate her government's so-called historic recognition, when in reality it's nothing more than an historic mistake. The Swedish Government may host the Nobel Prize ceremony, but there is nothing noble about their cynical political campaign to appease the Arabs in order to get a seat on the Security Council. Nations on the Security Council should have sense, sensitivity, and sensibility. Well, the Swedish Government has shown no sense, no sensitivity and no sensibility. Just nonsense.

Israel learned the hard way that listening to the international community can bring about devastating consequences. In 2005, we unilaterally dismantled every settlement and removed every citizen from the Gaza Strip. Did this bring us any closer to peace? Not at all. It paved the way for Iran to send its terrorist proxies to establish a terror stronghold on our doorstep. I can assure you that we won't make the same mistake again. When it comes to our security, we cannot and will not rely on others — Israel must be able to defend itself by itself.

Holy places should be open to all

The State of Israel is the land of our forefathers — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is the land where Moses led the Jewish people, where David built his palace, where Solomon built the Jewish Temple, and where Isaiah saw a vision of eternal peace.

For thousands of years, Jews have lived continuously in the land of Israel. We endured through the rise and fall of the Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek and Roman Empires. And we endured through thousands of years of persecution, expulsions and crusades. The bond between the Jewish people and the Jewish land is unbreakable. Nothing can change one simple truth — Israel is our home and Jerusalem is our eternal capital.

At the same time, we recognize that Jerusalem has special meaning for other faiths. Under Israeli sovereignty, all people — and I will repeat that, all people — regardless of religion and nationality can visit the city's holy sites. And we intend to keep it this way. The only ones trying to change the status quo on the Temple Mount are Palestinian leaders. President Abbas is telling his people that Jews are contaminating the Temple Mount. He has called for days of rage and urged Palestinians to prevent Jews from visiting the Temple Mount using "all means" necessary. These words are as irresponsible as they are unacceptable.

You don't have to be Catholic to visit the Vatican, you don't have to be Jewish to visit the Western Wall, but some Palestinians would like to see the day when only Muslims can visit the Temple Mount.

You, the international community, are lending a hand to extremists and fanatics. You, who preach tolerance and religious freedom, should be ashamed. Israel will never let this happen. We will make sure that the holy places remain open to all people of all faiths for all time.

Peace with security

No one wants peace more than Israel. No one needs to explain the importance of peace to parents who have sent their child to defend our homeland. No one knows the stakes of success or failure better than we Israelis do. The people of Israel have shed too many tears and buried too many sons and daughters. We are ready for peace, but we are not naïve. Israel's security is paramount. Only a strong and secure Israel can achieve a comprehensive peace.

In recent weeks, Palestinian terrorists have shot and stabbed our citizens and twice driven their cars into crowds of pedestrians. Terrorists armed with axes and a gun savagely attacked Jewish worshipers during morning prayers. We have reached the point when Israelis can't even find sanctuary from terrorism in the sanctuary of a synagogue. These attacks didn't emerge out of a vacuum. They are the results of years of indoctrination and incitement. A Jewish proverb teaches: "The instruments of both death and life are in the power of the tongue."

As a Jew and as an Israeli, I know with utter certainly that when our enemies say they want to attack us, they mean it. Hamas's genocidal charter calls for the destruction of Israel and the murder of Jews worldwide. For years, Hamas and other terrorist groups have sent suicide bombers into our cities, launched rockets into our towns, and sent terrorists to kidnap and murder our citizens.

And what about the Palestinian Authority? It is leading a systemic campaign of incitement. In schools, children are being taught that 'Palestine' will stretch from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. In mosques, religious leaders are spreading vicious libels accusing Jews of destroying Muslim holy sites. In sports stadiums, teams are named after terrorists. And in newspapers, cartoons urge Palestinians to commit terror attacks against Israelis. Children in most of the world grow up watching cartoons of Mickey Mouse singing and dancing. Palestinian children also grow up watching Mickey Mouse, but on Palestinians' national television, a twisted figure dressed as Mickey Mouse dances in an explosive belt and chants "Death to America and death to the Jews."

I challenge you to stand up here today and do something constructive for a change. Publicly denounce the violence, denounce the incitement, and denounce the culture of hate. Most people believe that at its core, the conflict is a battle between Jews and Arabs or Israelis and Palestinians. They are wrong. The battle that we are witnessing is a battle between those who sanctify life and those who celebrate death.

Following the savage attack in a Jerusalem synagogue, celebrations erupted in Palestinian towns and villages … The terrorists were hailed as "martyrs" and "heroes." This isn't the first time that we saw the Palestinians celebrate the murder of innocent civilians. We saw them rejoice after every terrorist attack on Israeli civilians and they even took to the streets to celebrate the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center right here in New York City.

Imagine the type of state this society would produce. Does the Middle East really need another terror-ocracy? Some members of the international community are aiding and abetting its creation.

A message to the world

As we came into the United Nations, we passed the flags of all 193 member states. If you take the time to count, you will discover that there are 15 flags with a crescent and 25 flags with a cross. And then there is one flag with a Jewish Star of David. Amidst all the nations of the world there is one state — just one small nation state for the Jewish people.

And for some people, that is one too many.

As I stand before you today I am reminded of all the years when Jewish people paid for the world's ignorance and indifference in blood. Those days are no more.

We will never apologize for being a free and independent people in our sovereign state. And we will never apologize for defending ourselves.

To the nations that continue to allow prejudice to prevail over truth, I say "J'accuse."

I accuse you of hypocrisy. I accuse you of duplicity.

I accuse you of lending legitimacy to those who seek to destroy our state.

I accuse you of speaking about Israel's right of self-defense in theory, but denying it in practice.

And I accuse you of demanding concessions from Israel, but asking nothing of the Palestinians.

In the face of these offenses, the verdict is clear. You are not for peace and you are not for the Palestinian people. You are simply against Israel.

Members of the international community have a choice to make.

You can recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, or permit the Palestinian leadership to deny our history without consequence.

You can publically proclaim that the so-called "claim of return" is a non-starter, or you can allow this claim to remain the major obstacle to any peace agreement.

You can work to end Palestinian incitement, or stand by as hatred and extremism take root for generations to come.

You can prematurely recognize a Palestinian state, or you can encourage the Palestinian Authority to break its pact with Hamas and return to direct negotiations.

The choice is yours. You can continue to steer the Palestinians off course or pave the way to real and lasting peace.

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.

Honorials and Memorials

Contributions may be made to the following Funds:

Federation Jewish Community Campaign	**$10**
Jewish Family Service	**$10**
Leo Camp Lecture Fund	**$10**
JFS Food Bank	**$25**
JFS Taxi Transportation Program	**$20**
Holocaust Library & Resource Center	**$18**
Doris Levin Fund	**$10**

Contributions as of Jan. 16

Holocaust Library & Resource Center

In honor of:

50th anniversary of Robert Hammel's Bar Mitzvah

Jewish Family Service

In honor of:

Birth of Sari and John Incledon's new grandson Ethan Henry Staniland – Dena and Vic Hammel, Andy and Corinne Wernick, Barbara Nazimov, Ruth Isenberg

In memory of:

Sandra "Honey" Youngerman – Miriam Youngerman Miller

Evelyn Goodman – Edith Mendelsohn, Sid and Esther Bratt, Irene Levin, Sharon Murphy, Judy and Bob Miller

Leonard Rosenzweig – Andy and Corinne Wernick

Trina Rudolph – Dr. Sandra K. Rowan, Edith Mendelsohn, Andy and Corinne Wernick

Pearl Baker – Marsha Adelman

Federation Jewish Community Campaign

In honor of:

Birth of Sari and John Incledon's new grandson Ethan Henry Staniland – The Driben family

Birth of Carol and Gordon Perlmutter new grandson Jacob Ethan – Lynn and Richard Gordon

Birth of Al and Betsy Katz's new granddaughter Amalia Aliza Katz – Lynn and Richard Gordon

Brian Wernick's engagement – Lynn and Richard Gordon

Joey Abramson's engagement – Lynn and Richard Gordon

In memory of:

Sandra "Honey" Youngerman – Barbara and Seth Rosenzweig, Mindy and Richard Small

Trina Rudolph – Marlene and George Weiss, Meyer Lewis

Leonard Rosenzweig – Al and Betsy Katz

Evelyn Goodman – Spencer and Mary Ann Watts, Mary Jo and John Weishampel

Pearl Baker (Sharon Syret's mother) – Lynn and Richard Gordon

JFS Taxi Transportation Program

In honor of:

Birth of Sari and John Incledon's new grandson Ethan Henry Staniland – Dr. Sandra K. Rowan

Friendship Circle Fund

In honor of:

Birth of Sari and John Incledon's new grandson Ethan Henry Staniland – Herb Schneider

In memory of:

Leonard Rosenzweig – Alice Botvin and Ned Littlehales

William Hashinger (Ruth Isenberg's son-in-law) – Herb Schneider

Dear friends,

Thank you very much for the heartfelt support you showed Alex and me in time of our loss.

Although we were not able to sit Shiva with our family in Jerusalem, we felt like we were with family because we were surrounded by our friends from KZ, from Reading Jewish community, and from Lancaster.

The warmth that emulated from all directions was really comforting.

Thank you also Rabbi Rachel.

We'll see you all soon, hopefully only on happy occasions,

Naomi and Alex Knoll.

Kibbutz produces women's gym apparel that's popular worldwide

Israel21c.org

Neon stripes, splashy flowers and psychedelic tie-dye prints on your workout wear might not make your more fit, but might make your workout more fun. And that's why women around the world – including celebrity customers such as Paris Hilton — have turned the small kibbutz-based Margarita Activewear into a success story without any advertising at all.

"We use a lot of colors, not like classic Adidas or Nikes," says Dorit Zimmerman, who founded Margarita in 2002 with her spouse, fellow aerobics instructor Gerardo Clavijo. "It's not for everybody. Not all girls and women like to wear strong colors and designs, but this is what makes us different."

Margarita employs 18 people and sells around 2,500 items a month – yoga pants, tights, capris, shorts, skirts, jackets and bra tops – online and through retailers in the United States, Canada, France, England, Asia and Lichtenstein.

Spreading the word

The business started out in Israel and spread globally through word of mouth, Zimmerman tells ISRAEL21c.

"During the second Lebanon war [in the summer of 2006], we were closed because our kibbutz is near the border, but a girl from Canada saw our stuff in a store in Tel Aviv and asked the owner to give her my number," she relates.

"I was in the South, in the Arava, trying to sell our line, and this girl came to the Arava and bought 40 or 50 items to bring home and sell. Then someone from New York saw our stuff. And then a few years later we had a good customer in San Diego that has an interesting website for aerobic sportswear, and all his competitors saw Margarita there and

contacted us. That's how it grew. We really never did a big push on Facebook."

Geography inspires creativity

Zimmerman is a 13th generation Israeli living in Uruguay when she met and married Clavijo 24 years ago. After 18 years in South America, Zimmerman was eager to come home, and she and Clavijo – who speak to one another in Spanish — decided to move to Kibbutz Saar in the Western Galilee.

Using two sewing machines, they began designing and sewing exercise apparel branded Margarita.

Zimmerman explains that their first instinct was to call the company Oxygen, but they didn't like how that sounded in either English or Hebrew (chamtzan). Drawing on his background in graphic design, Clavijo came up with a logo picturing a daisy (margarita in Spanish) with the letter O in the center of the flower and a little number 2 to the right of the petals – a creatively different way of depicting O2, the chemical symbol for oxygen.

Margarita children's workout togs.

Given her affinity for flowers, it's not surprising that Zimmerman's favorite design in the Margarita line is accented with bold daisies. "That style is very typical of us; like our logo, with a lot of colors."Attention is lavished not only on the graphics but also on construction. Margarita garments are all made of "very good quality Supplex that doesn't lose its color and wicks sweat away from the body. The quality is very important to us," says Zimmerman.Over the past decade, Margarita has doubled its rate of production every year, added a line of items for girls, and claims customers on five continents. The company now has a large space on the kibbutz to accommodate about 50 sewing machines.

Zimmerman says their location — surrounded by the Carmel mountain range and the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea — inspires their imagination.

"It makes us proud to know that today one can see women in the streets of Singapore, Johannesburg, Los Angeles, Sydney or Paris dressed with Margarita's fabulous design," Zimmerman says.

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