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**5** AJC CEO, Philadelphia leaders meet to address antisemitism



**6** What makes for a good spiel?



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## Neo-Nazis Rally Outside Broadway Preview of 'Parade,' About an Antisemitic Murder

Members of a neo-Nazi group rallied the night of Feb. 21 outside the Broadway theater that is hosting "Parade," a play about the 1915 lynching of a Jewish man in Georgia.

"It was definitely very ugly and scary, but [also] a wonderful reminder of why we're telling this particular story, and how special and powerful art and particularly theater can be," star Ben Platt said in a statement on Instagram after the performance, the first preview in the revival's Broadway run.

Platt stars as Leo Frank, the Jewish manager of an Atlanta pencil factory who was accused of murdering a girl whose body was found there in 1913. Despite little evidence, Frank was found guilty of killing Mary Phagan, who had worked at the factory, and was sentenced to death. In 1915, when Frank's sentence was commuted to life in prison, he was kidnapped by an armed mob and lynched. The case spurred both the creation of the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish civil rights group whose activities include monitoring neo-Nazi activity, and the revival of the Ku Klux Klan white supremacist hate group.

The protesters, who identified with the National Socialist Movement, a neo-Nazi group headquartered

in Florida that has a swastika in its logo, carried a poster that accused Frank of being a pedophile, according to videos shared from the incident. That allegation is frequently made by neo-Nazis who reject the consensus that Frank was innocent of the crime. They see the advocacy on his behalf as evidence of Jewish control of the media, a longstanding antisemitic trope.

The "Parade" protesters also distributed antisemitic literature and criticized the ADL, according to videos shared on social media from the scene. One video shared on Twitter suggested that at least some people present jeered the neo-Nazis. The protesters held a white banner with red capital letters reading "Leo frankly was a pedo."

"Are you really doing the real work of an artist if you aren't be[ing] protested by Neo Nazis?" a cast member, Prentiss Mouton, posted on Instagram, over a clip of the incident filmed from above. "If I wasn't proud enough to be a part of this production it was solidified today."

Platt, who is Jewish, said the incident underscored the need for "Parade" at a time when watchdogs say



Micaela Diamond and Ben Platt during the opening night for "Parade" at New York City Center on Nov. 1, 2022

antisemitism is on the rise in the United States.

"I just think that now is really the moment for this particular piece," he said. "I just wanted the button on the evening, at least for me personally, to be to celebrate what a beautiful experience it is and what gorgeous work all of my wonderful colleagues did tonight. Not the really ugly actions of a few people who are spreading evil."

Platt thanked the Bernard Jacobs Theater for keeping cast and audience members "super safe and secure — as you will be, too, when you come see the show."

"Parade" first played on Broadway in 1998. The musical written by Jason Robert Brown and Albert Uhry won Tony awards for best book and best score. The revival, which officially begins March 16, follows a seven-performance off-Broadway run last year.

— Philissa Cramer | JTA

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# AJC CEO, Philadelphia Leaders Meet to Address Antisemitism



Community and AJC leaders at the antisemitism press conference



AJC CEO Ted Deutch speaks at AJC Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey's press conference on the "2022 AJC State of Antisemitism in America Report."

**Sasha Rogelberg** | Staff Writer

**P**hiladelphia leaders, Jewish and not, came together last week to address growing antisemitism.

American Jewish Committee Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey hosted a press conference on Feb. 22 at City Hall to review its "2022 AJC State of Antisemitism in America Report" and address how to build solidarity with the Philadelphia Jewish community.

AJC CEO Ted Deutch spoke at the event and was accompanied by AJC Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey Regional Director Marcia Bronstein, city council members and other local leaders. Deutch plans to gather with community leaders and AJC regional offices across the country to discuss the report's findings.

"Nobody should have to make decisions about how they feel, where they go, or if they feel secure because of who they are, as Jews or as members of any community, and too often that's the case," Deutch said.

The AJC report, released on Feb. 13, confirmed Jewish leaders' concerns about growing anti-Jewish hate in the U.S., with the survey reporting that 89% of surveyed Jews believe that antisemitism is a problem in the U.S. One in four American Jews surveyed reported that they were personal targets of antisemitism over the past year, and 67% of those surveyed reported having seen antisemitism online or on social media.

Most alarming to AJC was the 10% increase — from about 30% to 40% — from 2021 to 2022 of respondents saying that the status of Jews is less secure than a year ago.

AJC reported that in the Northeast, 46% of Jews surveyed reported that the status of Jews was less

secure, five points above the national average.

However, among the stark numbers were a couple of silver linings. According to Randy Duque, deputy director of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations who spoke at the press conference, of the 111 reported incidents of hate in 2022, 7% were antisemitic. These numbers are down from the previous year, even with more reported incidents in 2022, Duque said.

"It's the opposite trend of what we saw nationally," he said.

However, these reports are confounded by underreporting of all instances of hate, Duque admitted.

"It might look like it's trending downward here in the city, but chances are people just are not reporting," he said.

According to Bronstein, though about 90% of survey respondents, both Jewish Americans and the general public, reported antisemitism as a problem in the country, which also means there is a growing awareness of anti-Jewish sentiments.

"The glimmer of hope is that the majority of Americans are understanding what antisemitism is," Bronstein said. "They can see it. They see it online; they see it when people say things, so they're aware of it, and the awareness gives us a chance to make sure that we can crush it."

Leaders outside of the Jewish community were interested in how to address antisemitism in Philadelphia in the future.

City Council member Michael Driscoll, who drafted the council's resolution against antisemitism which passed unanimously in November, renewed his commitment to address hate.

"We have to use educational opportunities. We have to use community outreach. We have to use advocacy," Driscoll said.

Pennsylvania state Sen. Sharif Street and Pennsylvania Asian Pacific American Jewish Alliance co-founder Stephanie Sun spoke of the importance of other racial and ethnic groups allying with the Jewish community to combat antisemitism. Circle of Friends, Philadelphia's Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council chapter of which Street is a part, as well as PAPAJA, are both organizations partnered with AJC.

"Those who hate and who are looking for scapegoats because of all the problems in their lives invariably will come from all of us if we don't stand together," Street said.

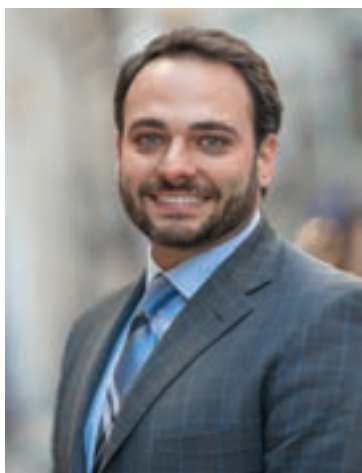
"We as a minority need to band together and work together," Sun added. "Those of us who oppose hate and bigotry are the many. We, as a group, can build bridges to educate the majority and discourage tacit acceptance of hateful rhetoric of the few and build a better world for the many."

In the AJC's report, the organization outlines next steps and ways to address antisemitism for local government officials, including unequivocally condemning and depoliticizing antisemitism, encouraging reporting of hate crimes and investing in security for the Jewish community. The AJC's Call to Action also provides resources for law enforcement, social media companies and educational institutions on how to address antisemitism.

"Everyone has a role to play," Deutch said. ■

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# What Makes for a Good Spiel?

## Clergy Members Prep for Purim

Sasha Rogelberg | Staff Writer

For the Jewish month of Adar, the Talmud encourages Jewish people to greet the month with an increase of joy and celebration, culminating with the celebration of Purim, this year on March 6-7.

While many Jews may celebrate the auspicious month with *mishloach manot* and hamantaschen, Philadelphia rabbis and cantors are hard at work with last-minute additions to their Purimspiel scripts and costumes. Ahead of the holiday — commemorating the resilience of the Jewish people, led by Mordechai and Esther against the oppressive Haman — a few clergy members shared their thoughts on what makes a Purimspiel meaningful.

### Pick a memorable theme

“Every year, people ask me, ‘What’s the theme going to be?’ And I always say, ‘Well, the theme is going to be Purim,’” joked Cantor Jessi Roemer of Society Hill Synagogue.

In truth, Roemer picks a different musical inspiration annually to set the music for the Purimspiel. This year, Society Hill Synagogue is presenting “Nothing Compares: A Purple Persian Pan-Gen Explosion” parodying the songs of Prince.

Roemer tries to pick musical inspiration that spans across generations. Though writing parody is challenging and is “the most derivative form of songwriting,” it also means that a good chunk of the congregation will already know the tunes.

“It’s an easy way to get everybody in the room to sing along,” she said.

If picking an artist or album to parody, be sure to remember that the congregants singing along, though

enthusiastic, may be unable to match the vocal prowess of, say, Mariah Carey or Celine Dion.

### Know your audience

Congregations are diverse communities, and kids and adults have different attention spans and interests. As a result, some synagogues plan to hold different spiels for the two groups.

At Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Cantor Bradley Hyman has two Purimspiel offerings: A “Sesame Street”-themed play for children and an Elton John spiel for adults. In addition to differences in music and the length of the productions, the two shows will also tell the Purim story differently, accounting for the dark themes and violence present in the original story — such as Ahashverosh’s sexual exploitation of Vashti — that may not be appropriate for children.

“Something, for example, that’s designated for children and families should be shorter, should have a lot of accessible music or music parody, but effectively tells that story of Esther without skipping the main messages, which should be bravery, self respect and survival,” Hyman said.

Adult spiels can focus on the broader themes of the Purim story, according to Hyman, but should look past the seriousness of them and, like a children’s spiel, should focus on values of resilience, survival and celebration.

“If you can do all of that, and still laugh at yourself, then maybe it’s good,” he said.

### Involve the community

Though a cantor or rabbi is often in charge of writing a spiel’s lyrics and scripts, the performance is often a community affair. At Society Hill, about 50 people are involved in the produc-

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Congregation Rodeph Shalom congregants and clergy dress up for Purim.

tion, according to Roemer. At Rodeph Shalom, 40 are involved.

With congregant participation, Purimspiels take on a life of their own. At Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel, in addition to the traditional spiel, congregants create a video twice annually about a Jewish village with the same cast of characters for the past 10 years. Over the decade, interest in the project has grown, with more members of the village being added.

The synagogue staff also creates a spiel with inside jokes about BZBI's culture, such as the tendency for the bar or bat mitzvah kid to leave their bag of gifts, created by the synagogue's Sisterhood, at the shul. The jokes, though specific, should never target an individual or be mean-spirited.

"You want everyone to be in on the joke," Rabbi Abe Friedman said.

### Remember the Purim story

At the end of the day, Purim is a story

of Jewish history, and spiels are an opportunity for learning. But Jews have long balanced joy and sorrow, which Rabbi Eric Yanoff of Adath Israel on the Main Line believes is the key to finding meaning in the holiday.

"One of the ways that people respond to such turns of fate is through laughter and satire and irony and other forms of humor, and Jews have really embraced that throughout our history," Yanoff said.

Humor can offer catharsis and a way to process difficult themes. Purimspiels, with a different theme every year, also let congregations use a Jewish story to connect with the issues of the day in a more accessible way.

"The story is not a one-time flash in the pan in history," Yanoff said. "But rather, it becomes generalized to other moments." ■

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# Is Josh Shapiro's Rejection of the Death Penalty in Line with Jewish Law?

Jarrad Saffren | Staff Writer

About two weeks ago, on the Sabbath that began on Feb. 17 and ended on Feb. 18, religious Jews read Parshat Mishpatim. The Torah portion lays out God's "Covenant Code," or a series of laws outlining just punishments for serious crimes. Many times over, God makes one detail clear.

The death penalty is just.

It is just against "one who strikes a man so that he dies," against one who "deliberately plots against his friend to slay him" and against "one who strikes his father or his mother," among other types of offenders.

"If there is a fatality, you shall give a life for a life," the text reads. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise."

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, a religious Jew who uses his faith as part of his political identity, is rejecting that principle. On Feb. 16 at the Mosaic Community Church in West Philadelphia, the longtime Montgomery County resident announced that he would not sign any execution warrants during his term. He also called on the Pennsylvania General Assembly to abolish the death penalty.

"This is a fundamental statement of morality. Of what's right and wrong,"



Josh Shapiro

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Rabbi Isaac Leizerowski

he told the church audience.

But it was not a fundamental statement of Jewish law, according to a couple of local Orthodox rabbis. Rabbi Isaac Leizerowski of Congregation Beth Midrash HaRav B’Nai Jacob in Philadelphia and Rabbi Yonah Gross of Congregation Beth Hamedrosh in Wynnewood both argued that the Torah supports the death penalty.

Leizerowski explained that, in the Torah, the death penalty is not a punishment for a sin. It is “an atonement on the soul of the sinner.” Citing Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, a foremost scholar of Jewish law in the 20th century, Gross said that capital punishment helps us recognize “how stringent the prohibition is” on killing someone. The death penalty is just, according to Gross. But to impose it is “an indictment of the generation in some ways more than the perpetrator,” he said. The generation was “not strong enough in setting up the guardrails that would keep anybody from violating that prohibition.”

“It’s the sign of a civilization in decay,” he said.

Capital punishment was perhaps never more justified than in the case of the Pittsburgh synagogue shooter in 2018. Even Shapiro, then the state’s attorney general, believed so at the time, he said in his Feb. 16 speech. As the governor put it, the shooter killed 11 praying Jews at the Tree of Life synagogue complex, the deadliest act of antisemitism in American history. Yet it was the family members of those victims who convinced Shapiro that

the killer did not deserve the death penalty.

“That moved me,” the governor said, although many family members have since said that they support the death penalty.

But in that case, it probably would have been a just punishment. As Jews, Gross explained, we assume that “the Torah is eternal.” Therefore, if you have to indict the generation by using capital punishment, you do. He said he is uncomfortable with removing it entirely.

But while it may have been just under Jewish law to put the Pittsburgh shooter to death, that is not always the case. A Pittsburgh Post-Gazette article applauding the governor’s decision mentioned that 10 Pennsylvania death row prisoners and 185 death row prisoners nationwide have been exonerated since 1973. If even one of them had faced the death penalty, it would have been a moral failing beyond that of letting a killer stay alive, according to Leizerowski, citing the great Jewish philosopher Maimonides.

“Better that 1,000 murderers be set free than one innocent man be put

to death. And that is our approach to this,” the rabbi said. “Only with the greatest judicious eye would we use the death penalty.”

“The system is fallible, and the outcome is irreversible,” Shapiro said during his speech.

It is also not the job of a politician to consider capital punishment from the perspective of Jewish law, according to Leizerowski. The United States is a secular society that does not view the death penalty as a matter of redeeming the soul, he explained. Therefore, it is only Shapiro’s job to think of it from a practical perspective.

“When Josh Shapiro speaks of abolishing the death penalty, then we have to see, is the death penalty indeed a deterrent which in some way would benefit society in lessening crime?” Leizerowski asked.

The charges that alleged Tree of Life shooter Robert G. Bowers faces are federal and outside of Shapiro’s jurisdiction, meaning the death penalty is still on the table in the trial slated to start in April. ■

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# Jewish Federation Launches Israel 75 Celebrations

In 1948, despite all odds, Israel became a state. Fast forward 75 years, the Jewish homeland has become a central hub of history, culture and innovation. In commemoration of this major milestone, the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia is hosting four exciting, area-wide events: a Community Mitzvah Day, Shabbat Gatherings, a Taste of Israel Festival and an Israel 75 Mission.

“Even when not physically being in Israel, the Jewish people have an intrinsic connection to the Land of Israel,” said Jeffrey Lasday, the Jewish Federation’s senior chief of external affairs. “When we celebrate Israel 75 in Greater Philadelphia, we are celebrating our historic connection to our Jewish homeland, the amazing accomplishments of a country that is only 75 years young, and the promise and possibilities of the future.”

One way that local community members can help shape “the promise and possibilities of the future” is with Community Mitzvah Day, a day of good deeds and giving back. On April 23, there will be over 25 hands-on volunteer opportunities offered by organizations throughout the Greater Philadelphia area, in collaboration with the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia’s neighborhood Kehillot, for people of all ages and abilities. Each volunteer project focuses on one or more of the following seven interest areas: social justice, food insecurity, poverty, older adults, conservation and restoration, arts and culture and lone soldiers.

**“Even when not physically being in Israel, the Jewish people have an intrinsic connection to the Land of Israel.”**

*Jeffrey Lasday, the Jewish Federation’s senior chief of external affairs*

participate in a Shabbat Gathering: attend a public Community Shabbat Experience – led by local synagogues, organizations, and schools with the Jewish Federation’s neighborhood Kehillot – host a private Shabbat Gathering in one’s own home, or, for those ages 20 - 40, join a young adult Shabbat Gathering in partnership with OneTable.

“I am so proud that we are going to be able to celebrate this major milestone, and all that it symbolizes, within Greater Philadelphia,” expressed Margie Honickman, Israel 75 event co-chair. “Israel is more than a geographical location, it is a peoplehood and a testament to Jewish perseverance.”

Exploring this deeper understanding of Israel is the goal of the Taste of Israel Festival on May 7, which aims to showcase Israeli culture through the history of the country’s cuisine. The afternoon at the Saligman Campus will include a tasting area and cooking demonstrations by five-time James Beard Foundation Award-Winning Chef Michael Solomonov and other top local chefs, a number of food and craft vendors, performances by the renowned male a cappella group Six13, and plenty of family-friendly activities.

All food that is prepared and presented by Michael Solomonov and other vendors in the main demonstration tent will be under the supervision of Keystone-K Community Kashrus of Greater Philadelphia and certified as Glatt kosher. Food provided by other vendors outside of the main demo tent will be clearly marked indicating their level of dietary observance.

“The Greater Philadelphia Jewish community is one of the strongest in America,” noted Tamar Silberberg Shiffman, Israel 75 event co-chair. “We

“All of the celebrations are representative of each of the ways that we build community,” explained Gail Norry, board co-chair of the Jewish Federation. “These are amazing opportunities to reconnect after the nationwide lockdown and bring more people closer to the work of the Jewish Federation and to each other.”

This sense of reconnection will surely be felt on April 28-29, when community members are invited to attend various Shabbat Gatherings with their families and friends. There are three ways to

Greater Philadelphia Celebrates

# Israel 75



**Jewish Federation**  
of Greater Philadelphia

have faced challenges and now have the opportunity to celebrate and travel to Israel. It is time to show our strength.”

Over 150 community members will demonstrate that strength by traveling to Israel from May 14-21. A meaningful, eight-day trip, the Israel 75 Mission features four personalized tracks to guide their journeys in the Jewish homeland: adventure, food, wine and culture, tech and business, and people, places and politics.

“I’m excited to honor Israel’s achievements and get to know more of our local community members at these festivities,” said David Adelman, Jewish Federation board co-chair. “Whether you’re looking to strengthen your sense of community, show your pride for Israel or learn something new about the Jewish state, there’s a way for every person and their family to participate in these celebrations.”

**Learn more about Israel 75 at [israel75.jewishphilly.org](http://israel75.jewishphilly.org)**

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# YOU SHOULD KNOW ...

## Paul Farber



Sasha Rogelberg | Staff Writer

**A**s co-founder and director of Monument Lab, a Philadelphia-based public art and history studio nonprofit, Paul Farber is concerned with memory.

According to Farber, 40, memory can be consecrated in large forms, such as Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, and small forms, such as cookbooks or his childhood handprints and footprints that are stamped on the playground of the Germantown Jewish Centre, the synagogue where he grew up.

Most recently, Farber studied the memorial of one of Philly's great fictional heroes, Rocky Balboa, as the host of WHY?Y's "The Statue." The six-part podcast wrapped up on Feb. 14.

"To tell the story of Rocky in this city and the Rocky statue is actually to tell the story of a city, of its people, of its immigrants, of the way that history moves, inspires and pushes us," Farber said.

"That would be an approach to thinking about a monument — not

just to look up at it, but to kind of place yourself there and look around and see what you can learn from the perspective of the statue," he added.

The Rocky statue is, to Farber, the epitome of what makes monuments unique: They do not just represent a person and ask an audience to explore what makes this person worthy of public memory; monuments also contain the history and stories of those who interact with them.

Farber is just one of many Philadelphians with loose ties to the statue and the man it represents. His great-great-grandmother and great-grandparents immigrated to the U.S. and became naturalized citizens at the Washington Avenue Immigration Station. Like many Jewish immigrants, the family operated a pushcart and then a small store. Farber's grandfather attended South Philadelphia High School and became a member of the boxing club there.

Farber's family's roots in Philadelphia are what made him interested in exploring memory in the first place. He often heard stories from his mother about visiting his family's store. A photo of the Washington Avenue Immigration Station hangs on Farber's wall.

"Memory lives in our family histories because it's not often in monument form," he said. "It's often our customs and our books and our photo albums and our recipes. And there's a way in which those who have come before us are kept — their spirit is kept alive — in really meaningful ways."

With the preservation of memories comes with it the knowledge that memories are also lost and forgotten, through trauma or assimilation.

"What could we know that was brought forward with us? But also how do you deal with very real gaps?" Farber asked.

Born and raised in Mount Airy, where he lives now, Farber grew up in a multi-faith community, "where to be Jewish was both about honoring tradition and pushing to build bridges," a foundation that shaped his upbringing and path.

Farber attended Quaker school and

later worked with Baptist ministers. After receiving a bachelor's degree in urban studies at the University of Pennsylvania, Farber left his hometown to get a master's degree and doctorate in American culture from the University of Michigan.

His dissertation took him to Berlin to study how American writers and artists documented the Berlin Wall. The paper, and later a book, "A Wall of Our Own: An American History of the Berlin Wall," was inspired by a Jewish photographer who, in 1961, took pictures of an African American soldier guarding the wall, capturing the complexities of America's role in protecting global democracy while also grappling with its own racism.

The research made Farber curious about how Jewish history was honored and preserved for other visitors of Berlin, Jewish or not.

"How do we honor the past and make room for ways that we persist into the future?" Farber said. "I'm constantly interested in the ways that people make memories in big and small ways, in ways that are official and unofficial."

Farber returned to Philadelphia and founded Monument Lab in 2012 with Ken Lum as a series of classroom conversations at Penn that evolved into a nonprofit.

Today, Monument Lab uses its definition of monuments as "statements of power and presence in public" to look at the implications and meanings of monuments around the country and internationally. This spring, Monument Lab will launch another podcast series called "Plot of Land," exploring how land ownership and housing has changed in the U.S. as a result of public memory and racist policies.

"Not just in Jewish culture, but kind of across boundaries, is the idea that the past, present and future are not so separated," Farber said. "There's not a linear history ... We carry forward with us traces of the past, and we're constantly renewing and reimagining it." ■

[srogelberg@midatlanticmedia.com](mailto:srogelberg@midatlanticmedia.com)

# Israel's Judicial Reform Showdown

For the past two months, the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee has held almost daily meetings to discuss the government's blockbuster judicial reform proposal. The reform package seeks to limit the power of the Supreme Court to review Knesset legislation; grant control to the ruling coalition over Supreme Court appointments; reduce the authority of the attorney general and the government's legal advisers; and change the standards for Supreme Court review of executive branch decisions.

Notwithstanding intense lobbying and protests against the proposals from both within and outside Israel, the legislation is moving forward. On Feb. 20, two aspects of the package passed a first vote of the Knesset, in what is projected to be a long but steady adoption process. Those moving the legislation along are doing so with a single-minded focus on passing the reforms with the 64-vote majority of the governing coalition and ignoring the opposition.

But it is not just the parliamentary opposition that is raising concerns. Cautionary flags have been raised by jurists, academics, politicians, diplomats and hundreds of thousands of citizen protesters who have taken to the streets week after week. And perhaps the most prominent voice of concern has come from Israeli President Isaac Herzog, who urged the government to suspend the legislative process and enter negotiations with the opposition or consultations with



President of Israel Isaac Herzog

the president of the Supreme Court and the attorney general about the reform issues in an effort to reach consensus for change rather than to impose it through brute force.

The focus of Herzog's message is on process — using dialogue and engagement to work toward consensus. Neither Herzog nor most others who have raised concern about the government's rush to enact judicial reform are saying that the current system is perfect. They acknowledge that there are problems. And they have advanced a variety of approaches and solutions ranging from tinkering with the number of

votes needed to get things done to a comprehensive restructuring of the country's judicial system, including new rules regarding Israeli basic laws, establishing an Israeli bill of rights, establishing intermediate appellate courts and much more. Working through those issues will take time. But Israel's newly empowered leaders are impatient.

Having already ignored Herzog's plea to pause, it seems clear that without significant intervention the managers of the legislation intend to power forward, even as opposition grows, massive voter protests continue and Israel moves toward a worrisome crisis that threatens confidence in the judiciary, raises concerns about democracy in the Jewish state and tears at the country's social contract.

The person best positioned to step in to calm the growing chaos is Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Yes, he is conflicted because of his own legal complications. But he doesn't have to address the merits of the proposals or even become involved in the negotiations. All he needs to do is bring order to the process by exerting his influence, exercising his well-developed deal-making skills and influencing the leaders on both sides to engage in meaningful discussion on the issues. Unfortunately, Netanyahu appears reluctant to play that role. That's a shame, because this is an opportunity for him to show singular leadership. ■

Photo courtesy of Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs

# Should Tech Giants Be Protected?

In the run-up to last week's Supreme Court hearing in the closely watched case entitled *Gonzalez v. Google*, we were told that the court's decision had the potential to wreak havoc with the internet as the justices were called on to decide how online platforms are supposed to handle speech and content moderation.

The case focuses on Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which provides protection from liability to tech platforms for most content contributed to their sites by third parties. That means that when users post defamatory tweets or inciting comments on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and similar platforms, the platforms themselves aren't deemed legally responsible for that content. But what happens when the platform's own algorithm promotes offensive tweets, comments or videos? Does the Section 230 protection continue, or does it disappear?

The Gonzalez case was brought by the family of a 23-year-old American college student who was killed in a Paris restaurant attack by Islamic State followers. The family argues that YouTube has some

responsibility for the death, since YouTube's "Up Next" algorithm promoted radicalizing material to viewers who viewed similar radicalized posts, and that process further influenced the viewers to engage in terror attacks.

There is appeal to the Gonzalez theory. It makes sense to distinguish between material that a platform merely hosts from material that the platform itself promotes. But if platforms will be liable for algorithmically "recommended" content — which is a process that simply provides links based upon what the viewer has already selected to watch — the ramifications could be monumental. It would change the way the internet operates and would likely cause platforms to abandon any systems that recommend or prioritize material based upon a user's inquiry or viewing history. Instead, as asserted by one of Google's lawyers, the internet would be rendered a useless jumble.

In the near three hours of argument on the case, we saw very little of the "activist" court so many have complained about. None of the justices seemed anxious to take this one on. Instead, we heard practical,

thoughtful and challenging questions along with palpable frustration with the court being called upon to decide an issue that requires legislative clarification and guidance.

Although we sympathize with the Gonzalez family and others who have been so brutally impacted by horrific internet posts, it is not the responsibility of the courts to rewrite legislation. Section 230 and its 26 words that are the focus of the debate in the Gonzalez case were created by Congress in 1996, when the internet was in its infancy. A lot has changed since then, including the advent of the algorithms that are at issue in the case and developing artificial intelligence that impacts our internet interactions and our daily lives.

Congress needs to address these issues in a comprehensive manner. Congress needs to develop new laws, standards and guidance to deal with today's ever-expanding technological development and use. That is the job of the legislature, not the courts. ■



# Beyond the 'Day of Hate': How to Keep American Jews Safe Over the Long Term



**Yehuda Kurtzer**

**M**y synagogue sent out a cautiously anxious email last week about an event this past Shabbat, a neo-Nazi "Day of Hate." The email triggered fuzzy memories of one of the strangest episodes that I can remember from my childhood.

Sometime around 1990, in response to local neo-Nazi activity, some Jews from my community decided to "fight back." I don't know whether they were members of the militant Jewish Defense League, or perhaps just sympathetic to a JDL-style approach. When our local Jewish newspaper covered the story, it ran on its front cover a full-page photo of a kid from my Orthodox Jewish high school. The photo showed a teenage boy from behind, wearing a kippah and carrying a baseball bat that was leaning threateningly on his shoulder.

As it happens, "Danny" was not a member of the JDL; he was a kid on his way to play baseball. Sometimes, a baseball bat is just a baseball bat. But not for us anxious Jews in America: We want to see ourselves as protagonists taking control of our destiny, responding to antisemites with agency, with power, with a plan. I'm sorry to say that as I look around our community today, it seems to me that we have agency, and we have power — but we certainly don't seem to have a plan.

The tactics that the American Jewish community uses to fight back against antisemitism are often ineffective on their own and do not constitute a meaningful strategy in the composite. One is that American Jews join in a partisan chorus that erodes our politics and fixates on the antisemitism in the party they don't vote for. This exacerbates the partisan divide, which weakens democratic culture, and turns the weaponizing of antisemitism into merely a partisan electoral tactic.

Another tactic comes from a wide set of organizations who declare themselves the referees on the subject and take to Twitter to name and shame antisemites.

A third tactic is to pour more dollars into protecting our institutions with robust security measures, which no one thinks will defeat antisemitism, but at least seeks to protect those inside those institutions from violence, though it does little to protect Jews down the street.

A fourth tactic our communal organizations use to fight antisemitism is to try to exact apologies or even fines from antisemites to get them to retract their beliefs and get in line, as the Anti-Defamation League did with Kyrie Irving, an approach that Yair Rosenberg has wisely argued is a no-win proposition. Yet another tactic is the insistence by some that the best way

to fight antisemitism is to be proud Jews, which has the perverse effect of making our commitment to Jewishness dependent on antisemitism as a motivator.

And finally, the most perverse tactic is that some on both the right and the left fight antisemitism by attacking the ADL itself. Since it is so hard to defeat our opponents, we have started beating up on those that are trying to protect us. What could go wrong?

Steadily, like a drumbeat, these tactics fail, demonstrating themselves to be not a strategy at all, and the statistics continue to show a rise in antisemitism.

Instead, we would do well to recall how we responded to a critical moment in American Jewish history in the early 20th century. In the aftermath of the Leo Frank lynching in 1915, Jewish leaders formed what would become the ADL by building a relationship with law enforcement and the American legal and political establishment. The ADL recognized that the best strategy to keep American Jews safe over the long term, in ways that would transcend and withstand the political winds of change, was to embed in the police and criminal justice system the idea that antisemitism was their problem to defeat. These Jewish leaders flipped the script of previous diasporic experiences; not only did they become "insiders," they made antisemitism anathema to America itself. (And yes, it was the Leo Frank incident that inspired "Parade," the forthcoming Broadway musical that last week attracted white supremacist protesters.)

For Jews, the high-water mark of this strategy came in the aftermath of the Tree of Life shooting in Pittsburgh. It was the low point in many ways of the American Jewish experience, the most violent act against Jews on American soil, but it was followed by a mourning process that was shared across the greater Pittsburgh community. The words of the Kaddish appeared above the fold of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. That is inconceivable at most other times of Jewish oppression and persecution. It tells the story of when we are successful — when antisemitism is repudiated by the public.

A strategic plan to defeat antisemitism that must be collectively embraced by American Jews would build on this earlier success and invest in the infrastructure of American democracy as the framework for Jewish thriving and surviving, and continue the historic relationship-building that changed the Jews' position in America. It would stop the counterproductive interne-cine and partisan battle that is undermining the possibility of Jewish collective mobilization.

It means more investment, across partisan divides, in

See Kurtzer, page 12

letters /

## Remaining Inclusive Online

I am a founding and continuing member of Congregation Tifereth Israel of Lower Bucks County. I am shocked at and appalled by the closing paragraph of Jarrad Saffren's Feb. 16 article entitled, "Are Area Jews Returning to Synagogues Post-COVID?", which misrepresents both the policy and the practice of our congregation.

The policy of our congregation is to be as inclusive as possible. The practice is that online attendees can participate in, but not lead, all parts of a Shabbat or holiday service. Weekday minyanim (hybrid or totally Zoom) are often led by online participants. The congregation expects to offer hybrid and Zoom services into the future.

**Blythe Hinitz, Bensalem**

## A Message to Democrats

Jonathan Tobin hits the nail on the head with "There's More to Rising Antisemitism Than Joe Rogan's Rants" (Feb. 22).

Part of the problem we face has nothing to do with us. Antisemitism has always existed and always springs back to life. Part of it is due to our own inactions.

Jews are a big part of the support for the Democratic Party. The squad composed of the Omars, Tlaibs and AOCs, among others, are virulently anti-Israel and veiled antisemites and should be called out for their hate by Jewish groups set up for that purpose. The sad fact is that these groups, with some exceptions, have been politicized and neutered in this role by their unflagging loyalty to the Democratic Party.

The hard reality is antisemitism exists on both sides of the political divide, and attacking one side while ignoring its more virulent cousin on the other, provides the latter with a green light to push its venom. The message to Democrats should be simple: Fight Jew hate with us or we'll find someone else who will. ■

**Steve Heitner, Middle Island, New York**

## SEND US LETTERS

Letters should be related to articles that have run in the print or online editions of the JE, and may be edited for space and clarity prior to publication. Please include your first and last name, as well your town/neighborhood of residence. Send letters to [letters@jewishexponent.com](mailto:letters@jewishexponent.com).



# A Snapshot of American Jew Hatred

Melissa Langsam Braunstein

Headlines reverberate with news of rising antisemitism. But how widespread is Jew hatred in the United States?

The Anti-Defamation League has queried Americans about antisemitism since 1964. Its latest survey captured changes, including the virtual disappearance of the gap between traditionally tolerant young adults (ages 18 to 30) and older Americans.

Beyond that, 39% of respondents believed American Jews are “more loyal to Israel than America.” Some 36% said “Jews do not share my values.” A total of 26% thought that “Jews have too much power in the business world,” and 20% believed “Jews have too much power in the United States today.”

Overall, the number of Americans agreeing with at least six of 11 tropes jumped from 11% to 20% between 2019, when ADL last conducted this survey, and 2022. Is a near-doubling possible?

“It is too soon to say that antisemitism has doubled,” said David Hirsh, senior lecturer in sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London and Academic Director of the London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism. “We’ll see what the next survey says, and the one after that. But this figure is coherent with my own experience and judgment.”

Jay Greene, a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation’s Center for Education Policy, doesn’t believe that antisemitism has doubled. Greene noted the American population has remained fairly constant; no particular incident between 2019 and 2022 should have multiplied antisemitism; and people’s opinions remain “stable over time.” However, “what has dramatically changed is that people are willing to tell the surveyor” — in this case, a faceless Internet poll — that they view Jews negatively.

America’s experienced a “cumulative deterioration [of restraint] in polite society,” observed Greene. The

pandemic also “broke [Americans] a bit. ... [It] broke down norms of civil discourse that would stop people from saying impolite things out loud.” Put differently, Americans with hateful opinions now feel emboldened to tell strangers. These individuals “may feel like they’re winning, have support and are part of a group.”

So, what is the reality of American antisemitism? Alvin Rosenfeld, professor of Jewish Studies and director of the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism at Indiana University, said, “We live in a time when anti-Jewish hostility has been on the rise, at least since the turn of the millennium.”

Explaining younger Americans’ increased animosity towards Jews, he pointed to social media, where “many sites are antisemitic and anti-Israel, and they imbibe that.” Additionally, many college campuses “expose students to prejudicial views about Israel and Jews.”

Then there is the far-left congressional “Squad” of progressives and celebrities, who have also modeled anti-Israel invective as the socially acceptable way to express anti-Jewish sentiment. Relatedly, ADL’s survey found 21% of young adults “agree[d] with five or more anti-Israel statements,” while only 11% of older Americans did.

ADL’s survey “adapted questions from [Daniel] Allington and Hirsh’s Antizionist Antisemitism Scale,” which Hirsh explained looks at “the relationship between ‘classic’ antisemitism or antisemitism that would be widely recognized as such, and antizionist antisemitism that is hotly contested.”

Some 40% of respondents adopted Holocaust inversion, agreeing that “Israel treats the Palestinians like the Nazis treated the Jews.” A total of 24% believed that “Israel and its supporters are a bad influence on our democracy,” accepting “Jews as a universal evil,” elucidated Hirsh. Another 23% leaned into the myth of Jewish media control, agreeing that “Israel can get away with anything because its supporters control the media.” And 18% were “not

comfortable spending time with people who openly support Israel,” namely, the vast majority of Jews. And 10% are so antagonistic they agree that “Israel does not have a right to defend itself against those who wish to destroy it.”

Hirsh observed, “What we know for sure is that if you hate Israel, you’re more likely to hate Jews, and if you hate Jews, you’re more likely to hate Israel.”

Or as Izabella Tabarovsky, senior advisor at the Wilson Center’s Kennan Institute, reflected: “This survey illustrates once again how tightly demonization of the Jewish state, which is becoming increasingly normalized in American progressive discourse, is intertwined with the demonization of the Jewish people (which is typical of right-wing antisemitism) — and how increasingly meaningless is the distinction between the two.”

Based on these findings, 20% to 25% of the American population embraces Jew hatred. Greene said “the true rate of antisemitism has to be higher than the revealed rate” because some respondents adjust their responses to direct questions about bigotry.

Rosenfeld suggested education and more organized Israel trips so that Americans can see Israel’s reality firsthand.

For her part, Tabarovsky advised American Jewish leaders to learn about the demonization of Israel and Zionism; devise strategies to counter it; and teach all of the broader American Jewish community, which currently finds itself defenseless against this form of defamation and hate.

ADL’s forthcoming reports on its 2022 survey should provide more granular data about the contours of American antisemitism. In the meantime, though, it’s clear that much work remains for those wishing to combat antisemitism. ■

*Melissa Langsam Braunstein is an independent writer based in metro Washington, D.C.*

## Kurtzer

Continued from page 13

relationships with local governments and law enforcement, using the imperfect “definitions of antisemitism” as they are intended. It means supporting lawsuits and other creative legal strategies, like Integrity First for America’s groundbreaking efforts against the Unite the Right rally organizers, which stymie such movements in legal gridlock and can help bankrupt them.

It means practicing the lost art of consensus Jewish

collective politics.

It means supporting institutions like the ADL, even as they remain imperfect, even as they sometimes get stuck in some of the failed strategies I decried above, because they have the relationships with powerful current and would-be allies.

It means real education and relationship-building with other ethnic and faith communities that is neither purely instrumental nor performative.

And most importantly, it means investing in the plodding, unsexy work of supporting vibrant American

democracy because stable liberal democracies have been the safest homes for minorities, Jews included.

The real work right now is not baseball bats or billboards; it is not Jewish pride banalities or Twitter refereeing: It is quiet and powerful and, if done right, as American Jews demonstrated in the last century, it will serve us for the long term. ■

*Yehuda Kurtzer is the president of the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America and host of the Identity/Crisis podcast.*



# Purim in Okinawa: A Chaplain Realizes He Almost Missed His Calling



**Rabbi Zevi Lowenberg**

Just like millions of Jews around the world, I am immersed in Purim preparations, both spiritual and logistical. I am taking stock of the stock of groggers and hamentaschen, finding charities and organizations for *matanot l'evyonim*, gifts to the poor, and organizing a megillah reading. I am contemplating the ancient story of vulnerability and courage in which a Jewish community saved itself.

The Book of Esther has special resonance for me this year. It's my first at Kadena Air Base on Okinawa, the tiny tropical island that's home to more than 26,000 American service members and their families. I serve as chaplain to the Jewish community, about 50 strong.

Life here is entirely colored by the experience of being at the "tip of the spear" in the Pacific. We sit closer geographically to both China and North Korea than we do to Tokyo, the capital of Japan. Deployments both off island and to the island are numerous and constant. The constant ear-splitting noise of fighter jets reminds us of the freedom we enjoy and the threat that looms across the sea. These aren't air shows the pilots are training for: It's the ever-present potential of conflict. When we go through a base-wide exercise, it's not just for play, it's for the worst-case scenario that is a constant prick in the back of our minds.

The approach of Purim heightens our sense of the incredible responsibility to be the protectors, not just of ourselves, but of our community and our neighbors. Serving side-by-side with the Japanese forces, on deployments with allies in the region and from around the world, traveling to different bases in the Indo-Pacific region, each of these moments has caused me to reflect on my opportunity as a rabbi to be the calming presence and to be the vessel into which people are able to pour their deepest worries, their darkest moments, and find light. Mordechai's act of heroism started with one simple action: listening.

Yet for the 10,000 Jews serving in the U.S. armed forces around the world, there are only 37 chaplains. What's more, in the Indo-Pacific region, which is increasingly important as the United States contends with China, we have 400 Jewish service members and only two chaplains. I am one, and the other, based in Korea, is scheduled to leave in the next six months. When Jewish military communities don't have access to a Jewish chaplain, they are vulnerable. Some have

suffered from an inadequate supply of ritual foods and objects at holiday times. Others are scared or anxious and seek in-person counsel, not a Zoom session. Until recently, the military Jewish community of Djibouti in the Horn of Africa was conducting Shabbat services in a shipping container after being ejected from the chapel.

Jews like these are in deep need of a Mordechai, someone who will sit, listen, care. Mordechai's service became an essential element in saving not just the life of the king, but the lives of so many members of the Jewish communities of Persia. I am so grateful to do this work. Yet even my service as chaplain almost didn't happen.

*We need more Jewish chaplains to keep creating places of community for Jewish military families in this ever-changing landscape of military life.*

Growing up in Baltimore, I knew that Jews had been serving in the military since the founding of our nation, taking part in the battles and wars that defined each generation. I cherished the stories of my grandfathers in World War II, serving both at home and overseas, the stories of my great-uncles in Korea, my dad's generation and their experiences surrounding Vietnam. I too wanted to serve in the military, wherever that path would lead. Unlike most of my high school friends who chose to go to schools with large Jewish communities, I chose West Virginia University in the hills of Morgantown, where I joined the Air Force ROTC program, completely unaware of the chaplaincy and rabbis who served alongside the soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen.

I found Jewish life at Hillel and, at Hillel, I found a siddur, a prayer book published by the JWB Jewish Chaplains Council in the World War I era. Now a signature program of the JCC Association of North America, JWB was founded in 1917 to serve Jewish soldiers fighting in that conflict. The book's black cover had grayed, its white pages yellowed with time, the whole thing one strong breeze from simply turning to dust. There was no saying how it had ended up on the bookshelves there, but it spoke to me, its history and heritage. That book planted a seed, which flowered when I met an actual chaplain in person and it dawned on me that not only could I

pursue that same career, but that being a rabbi in the military was exactly what I was being called to do.

It was JWB, for example, who intervened to find the Djibouti Jews an alternative to their shipping container. And it was JWB that "endorsed" me to the Department of Defense after I was ordained in 2020 by the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Conservative Movement's flagship institution. Since 1945, when Americans first took Okinawa during the waning months of World War II, there has been a continued rabbinic presence on the island. I am proud of the lineage I now inherit as the senior active duty rabbi in the region, especially as the eyes of the world turn towards us and the growing threats in the region.

Mordechai understood that to speak is essential, but only if he was able to listen first. I write this article because I want other young people to understand, as I did after finding that prayer book and meeting that chaplain, that this holy work is an option for them, too.

We need more Jewish chaplains to keep creating places of community for Jewish military families in this ever-changing landscape of military life. The Jewish community is better served when families and kids know that this job exists and that we as military rabbis exist, when it's spoken of in the community not as a job that was once done, but that is currently being done around the world, by Jewish clergy from the Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and Chabad movements, when kids know all their options. Representation matters — in sports, in politics, in media and in the clergy, and it is my hope that one day kids will grow up knowing that they can be authentically Jewish, that they can serve their country as both military leaders and Jewish community leaders, in the same incredible job that I am so privileged to have today. ■

*Rabbi Zevi Lowenberg, an Air Force captain, is a Baltimore native and a chaplain serving the Jewish community at the Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan.*



Eddy Portnoy

# Richard Belzer Was a Jewish Comedian. Why Didn't His Obituaries Say So?

Ever hear Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone" sung in Yiddish dialect? It used to be a regular bit performed by comedian and actor Richard Belzer, who died last week at 78. He also used to do a routine about Bob Dylan's bar mitzvah in which he recited a Hebrew prayer in the singer's distinctive tone. A similar Elvis bar mitzvah bit was also part of his routine.

Surprisingly, Belzer performed these niche routines in numerous comedy venues and even on the nationally televised "The Late Show with David Letterman." In addition to a variety of other Jewish references embedded in his act, Belzer also performed Yiddish-inflected parodies of Prince's "Let's Go Crazy" and "When Doves Cry."

But like so many American comedians of the Hebraic persuasion, Belzer didn't really work Jewish. The bulk of his act was general and observational. But to have thrown bits like Dylan's bar mitzvah into routines for venues as broad as Letterman is an indication that he was truly dedicated to his Jewish material.

Moreover, he enjoyed it. Around 2003, after he'd snagged a contract to do a special on a cable network, he approached Letterman's legendary bandleader, Paul Shaffer, and told him he wanted to do something "Jewish" for the show. Shaffer suggested The Barton Brothers' risqué Yiddish radio ad parody song "Joe and Paul." Belzer loved the idea. The duo learned the Yiddish lines and performed the tune, which, in veiled Yiddish tones, talks about masturbation and going to a prostitute named "Cock-eyed Jenny." It was so well-received and the two enjoyed it so much, they began to do it in other venues. It eventually wound up on a 2008 album titled "The Jewish Songbook."

This is why it's been strange to read obit after obit in outlets like The New York Times, The Guardian and The Hollywood Reporter, among others, that didn't bother to mention that Belzer was Jewish — even when, as the Jewish Telegraphic Agency pointed out, the character for which he was best known, Det. John Munch on "Homicide: Life on the Street" and "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit," identified as Jewish. Obituaries, after all, are meant to be the final stock-taking of a person's life. They should include the basics of who they were. And one of the basics of Richard Belzer is that he was a Yid.

Moreover, according to Paul Shaffer, he was a proud one. I should also point out that I don't mean Jewish in a religious sense. Belzer, after all, appears to have been an atheist, so what is meant here is Jew as an ethnic category, one that apparently confounds a lot of people and which results in many Jewish artists being described



A caricature of Richard Belzer and his dog from "Even More Old Jewish Comedians," by Drew Friedman

as anything but Jewish.

The notion that "Jewish" is something more than a religious denomination — that it's a wide-ranging culture that includes art, literature, music, food, folkways and languages — is terribly difficult to grasp for some people.

One case in point is an excellent book by Kliph Nesteroff that appeared in 2015 called "The Comedians," which richly details the history of stand-up comedy in America. Assiduously researched, it's become the definitive work on the topic. The book, however, deracinates the history of the field. From reading it, you would never know that 20th-century American comedy was largely a Jewish enterprise. In fact, you'd hardly know that Jews were involved at all. You will read about comedians such as Milton Berle, Joan Rivers, Lenny Bruce and Jerry Seinfeld, but you'll have no idea that any of them are Jews.

The matter of the mysteriously disappearing Jew occurs in other industries as well. It's particularly egregious in the art world and popped up last year at the opening of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, a lavishly funded new institution that celebrated the diversity of Hollywood, touting the contributions of minorities involved in the film industry. However, the one minority they initially left out was the one that was instrumental in building that very

industry. It's all part of a phenomenon comedian David Baddiel describes as "Jews don't count." They're not considered a minority among the many others and have apparently become white people who don't believe in Jesus. As such, they're not worthy of distinction.

History, however, tells a different story. When Jews began to come to this country en masse at the end of the 19th century, the culture they met often mocked and derided them. Suffering discrimination in multiple realms, they were excluded from certain neighborhoods, clubs and a variety of occupations. Universities placed quotas on them. Many hotels denied them entry, a fact that led to the creation of hundreds of Jewish hotels in New York's Catskill Mountains. While American attitudes toward Jews eventually changed, a fact that allowed them to become full participants in society, they still find themselves victimized by Jew hatred. Even though it's often denied, the mystery of Jewish difference, apparently, is still a thing.

And for Richard Belzer, it was a thing he obviously enjoyed. Comedy writer and novelist Seth Greenland, who worked on numerous projects with Belzer and whose first novel was based on him, told me, "Something about Richard was quintessentially Jewish. He was kind, disputatious, intellectually curious and hilarious. Although he wasn't at all religious, he was proud to be Jewish and embraced that identity."

"Belz and Gilbert Gottfried would always do Jewish shtick and saw themselves in a long line of Jewish comics," said author Ratso Sloman. "And one time I was at Catch [A Rising Star], probably in the mid '80s and at the end of the night, Belz and Gilbert went on stage and did dueling old Jewish weather forecasters. It was so hilarious, I almost pissed my pants."

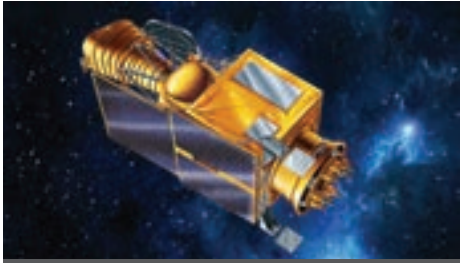
Paul Shaffer also recalled how Belzer once accompanied him to say Kaddish for Shaffer's father at the Carlebach Shul on the Upper West Side. "I didn't know what kind of Jewish education he had," Shaffer told me, "but the cat could daven [pray]." Paul added that he and Belzer once bonded over old cassettes of Friars Club roasts.

One of the tapes was of a roast emceed by DJ and Sinatra expert William B. Williams (born Velvel Breitbard), who, whenever someone's joke bombed, would begin to utter the Jewish prayer for the dead — "Yisgadal, yisgadash, shemey rabo..." — and get big laughs. Belzer loved it so much, he stole it and would recite the prayer onstage at subsequent roasts whenever a comic bombed, and even when his own jokes died.

Yisgadal, yisgadash, Belz. You will be missed. ■

Eddy Portnoy is an academic adviser and exhibition curator at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.





The future Ultraviolet Transient Astronomy Satellite, or ULTRASAT

### NASA to Launch Israel's First Space Telescope

Israel's first space telescope will enter geostationary orbit in 2026, where it will scan the universe for events such as stars colliding or exploding and the impact of giant black holes, the Weizmann Institute of Science announced on Feb. 21, JNS.org reported. It will cost about \$90 million.

The Ultraviolet Transient Astronomy Satellite, or ULTRASAT — which will be launched as part of a newly signed partnership between NASA and Israel's Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology — is expected to revolutionize scientists' ability to detect and analyze transient events in the universe such as neutron star mergers and supernova explosions, the institute said.

It is the premier project of the Israel Space Agency in the ministry and the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot.

According to the agreement, NASA partnered in ULTRASAT and will provide the launch opportunity, Flight Payload Adapter and other launch-related needs for the project. The Israel Space Agency will deliver the completed observatory to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida for the launch.

### Gene Simmons of Kiss Fame Unveils Mural of Polish Catholic Holocaust Hero

Artists 4 Israel expanded its series of murals honoring Righteous Among the Nations. It did so with a "kiss" this time, JNS.org reported.

The collective, which enlists artists to combat antisemitism and anti-Israel bigotry through their work, unveiled its fourth mural on Feb. 26 paying homage to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

The downtown Los Angeles celebration honors Irene Gut Opdyke, a Polish Catholic who saved 12 Jews from certain death, stowing them away in the basement of a Nazi commander's home. (She died in 2003.)

The artist Andrew Hern created the 60-foot-by-15-foot mural for the city's arts district. Guest speakers included Jeannie Opdyke Smith, daughter of the heroic mural subject, and Elan Carr, former State Department special envoy for monitoring and combating antisemitism.

Gene Simmons, the Israeli-American rock star of the band Kiss appeared as a special guest. Born Chaim Witz, the singer comes from a family deeply affected by the Holocaust. His mother and brother were the only members of the family to survive the Shoah.

### Catholic School Soccer Team That Brawled With Miami Jewish School Forfeits State Semifinal

A Catholic high school in Miami forfeited its semifinal game in a state soccer tournament on Feb. 18, days after players fought in an on-field brawl with a Jewish school's team, JTA.org reported.

The Catholic school, however, did not offer additional comment on eyewitness accounts claiming that the fight was fueled by antisemitism.

Archbishop Coleman Carroll High School was set to play in the semifinals on Feb. 18, beating Scheck Hillel Community School in their regional final on Feb. 15. But the school's players came under scrutiny after video emerged of students and spectators fighting following the game. Some Scheck Hillel parents told local news outlets that students had uttered antisemitic slurs, including "Hitler was right." Those accounts have not yet been confirmed by either school, by video or by law enforcement.

The athletic director of Archbishop Carroll's slated opponent in the semifinal told local news outlets that the school had forfeited following its role in the brawl but did not provide further details. ■

— Compiled by Andy Gottlieb



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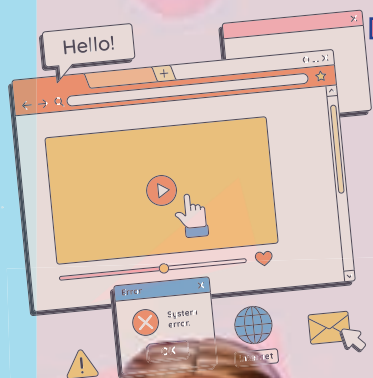
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# Meet the Real-Life Sister Act Behind the Two New '90s Jewish American Girl Dolls



Jackie Hajdenberg | JTA

As children in upstate New York, twin sisters Julia DeVillers and Jennifer Roy went to Hebrew school three days a week, spent their summers at a JCC summer camp and got to know local Holocaust survivors through their father, who survived the Nazis as a child in Poland. They also celebrated Christmas with their mother's family.

Aware of their dual religious and cultural backgrounds from a young age, DeVillers and Roy personally sent their public elementary school principal a letter asking to place a menorah next to the school Christmas tree. The girls gathered a couple of the other Jewish students together to present the letter to the principal, to resounding success: A real menorah was added to the school's holiday display.

It was something straight out of an American Girl story. And as of this week, in a sense, it is one.

Last week, American Girl released its first twin dolls, Isabel and Nicki Hoffman, who are also the first characters from an interfaith family. Their stories take place in the late 1990s and were written by DeVillers and Roy, inspired by the sisters' own childhood experiences. The twin dolls' parents are, respectively, Jewish and Christian, and their mother, Robin, is named after the authors' mother.

"It's incredibly special to us that the twins bring this Jewish and interfaith representation that so many kids will relate to," DeVillers said.

Roy added, "People are not necessarily one thing or another these days. And while we are Jewish, we did grow up with both holidays and both cultures in our family. And that's how we wanted our characters to be and to feel."

The dolls are a milestone in how the lived experience of many American Jews is reflected in popular culture. Recent surveys of Jewish Americans consistently note high rates of interfaith marriage, and show that a significant portion

Above: Isabel and Nicki Hoffman are the two newest American Girl dolls in the historical collection.







"Meet Isabel and Nicki," the first novel in the series about the Hoffman twins, will be released in August.

of those couples raise their children either fully or partly Jewish.

Isabel and Nicki are the second and third historical Jewish American Girl dolls, joining Rebecca Rubin. Rebecca's story reflected an earlier generation's perception of normative American Jewish identity: Her family immigrated from Russia and lives in New York's Lower East Side in 1914, while navigating issues of assimilation and religion.

Stories of joint Chanukah-Christmas celebrations are not exactly new. A TV episode Isabel and Nicki's character's might have watched as teenagers, "The Best Chrismukkah Ever" from the drama "The O.C.," aired nearly two decades ago. But the dolls and their stories are "super innovative and relevant for 21st-century Jewish interfaith families," said Keren McGinity, the interfaith specialist for the Conservative movement of Judaism and a professor of American studies at Brandeis University.

"Anytime there's cultural representation that depicts real life, it's a good thing," McGinity said, though she added that some depictions of interfaith families are more robust than others.

"On the one hand, it's terrific that they're reflecting contemporary American Jewish life by depicting an interfaith family through these characters and reinforcing the fact that it only takes one Jewish parent to raise Jewish children," she added. "And it remains to be seen how they are Jewish beyond celebrating the December holidays, and how they're interfaith beyond celebrating the December holidays, plural."

The new twin dolls are the latest in American Girl's iconic series of dolls, which hail from different eras of American history and come with novels about their lives. American Girl has historically aimed to present a diverse set of dolls. Other recent offerings include Evette Peeters, a biracial girl who cares for the environment, and Kavi Sharma, an Indian-American girl who loves Broadway musicals.

The new historical characters, Isabel and Nicki, retail for \$115 each. Their stories are written by DeVillers and Roy, respectively, and begin on Dec. 11, 1999, when they receive their journals as a gift for the last night of Chanukah.

They have their own distinct personalities, which the authors say somewhat resemble what they were like as kids: Isabel has a preppy style and loves dancing, and is advertised wearing a pink cable-knit sleeveless sweater over a pinstripe shirt, with a plaid skirt, platform shoes and a beret. Nicki likes skateboarding and writing song lyrics, and appears on the American Girl website wearing a backwards

# 90's

baseball cap, choker necklace, blue T-shirt dress and sneakers, with a flannel shirt tied around her waist.

Isabel's book begins with a nod to a late-1990s fad: "Hi, New Journal! You're my present for the last night of Hanukkah!! I was going to save you for after Christmas and New Year's, but we also got NEW GEL PENSI!"

In Nicki's book, her interfaith identity is mentioned two weeks later: "Did I mention my family celebrates Hanukkah AND Christmas? Well, we do."

The two journals, "Meet Isabel" and "Meet Nicki" are filled with text and sold with the dolls. The stories take place during the same time frame, as the girls celebrate the winter holidays, face their fears, make new friends and worry about Y2K. A longer novel, "Meet Isabel and Nicki" is set for release in August as the first in the Isabel and Nicki historical series. It will take place during the same month as the shorter journals, but will delve further into the time period. Readers will get to spend the last night of Chanukah with the Hoffmans, lighting the menorah and playing dreidel.

McGinity said she would have to wait until the new book comes out to see what the girls' representation looks like, given that the journals are so short.

"I feel like we don't have enough intel other than 'OK, the authors are Jewish, the characters are Jewish, they grew up in an interfaith household,'" she added.

The crowded flagship American Girl store in New York City has already begun promoting Isabel and Nicki by showcasing the twins' different outfits and bedroom and accessory collections, with dozens of the dolls positioned throughout the store.

"While we're not able to provide specific sales information, I can say we've been happy to see the positive response for the new characters," a representative for the company said.

Roy and her sister have previously written a series of children's novels about twins, and Roy also authored "Yellow Star," a 2006 children's book about her aunt's remarkable survival as one of the only children to be liberated from the Lodz Ghetto. Roy said she and her sister are grateful for the chance to tell their family's story in a new way.

"So we don't know what cultures, faiths, religions are coming beyond this," said Roy, referring to future American Girl products. "But what we did know was that if we were writing in the holiday season, we really wanted to include parts of ourselves and that's what American Girl editors all said: 'We'd love to have you remember from your childhood.' And this was our childhood." ■

Top, right: Isabel and Nicki's stories are loosely based on the childhood experiences of authors and real-life twins Julia DeVillers (right) and Jennifer Roy.



# Drunken Chocolate-Cherry Hamantaschen for Purim

Naomi Ross | JNS

As a kid in my mother's house, I'd use a drinking glass to cut out my rounds of dough for hamantaschen, those triangular Jewish cookies made for the holiday of Purim. Dipping the rim in flour, it was a careful practice of cutting as close together as possible, leaving the least amount of scraps behind (the fewer scraps to reroll, the better; the dough tends to get tougher with each redo).

The tradition to give *mishloach manot* (festive food gifts to neighbors and friends) on Purim spurred my desire for

fun after-school projects in the days leading up to the holiday. For a young person, taking ownership of preparing a package to give to others was a momentous experience. It required me to think about someone else and how to make it special for them.

We kept it simple — traditional apricot or prune-filled. No frills but delicious all the same. Now, as an adult with my own family, I have fun playing with different versions and more sophisticated flavors. One year, I used guava paste and lime. Each year, my family prepares and gives several packages to friends and



Drunken chocolate-cherry hamantaschen

neighbors, but lately, I also try to think of someone who in particular needs a lift or smile and make sure they get one, too. That extra attention and loving touch make a difference, especially when cooking for others. Those pesky, sealed edges of the hamantaschen can reopen when baking, so always pinch twice!

As per the recipe below: No, it's not alcoholic. Yes, the alcohol cooks out, leaving a lusciously decadent filling. Yes, cherries and chocolate need to be together. And yes, give some to your friends—if there are any left.

The dough can be prepared up to three days in advance. The filling can be made up to a week in advance.

## DRUNKEN CHOCOLATE-CHERRY HAMANTASCHEN

(From "The Giving Table" by Naomi Ross, November 2022)

Makes about 5 dozen hamantaschen

### For the dough:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup milk or soy or oat milk
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour, plus more for flouring
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup Dutch-process cocoa (pareve)
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt

### For the filling:

- 1 (12-ounce) bag frozen dark pitted cherries, thawed
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup dry red kosher wine
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cinnamon

Cream the oil and sugar together in an electric mixer until a grainy paste

forms. Beat in eggs, milk and vanilla until well-blended.

In a separate large bowl, sift together the flour, cocoa, baking powder, and salt. Slowly add the flour mixture to the batter, a little at a time, mixing at low speed until the dough comes away from the sides of the bowl and forms into a ball. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least two hours or overnight. While the dough chills, prepare the filling.

Combine all filling ingredients in a medium saucepan and stir to blend until all cornstarch is dissolved and no lumps are visible.

Place saucepan over medium heat and bring to a simmer. Cook for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring often until the mixture is thickened and bubbly. Remove from heat to cool; chill to thicken.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line three baking sheets with parchment paper. Divide dough into four parts. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured board (it helps to flour the rolling pin as well) into a very thin round, about  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick. Using a 3- $\frac{3}{2}$ -inch diameter cookie cutter or glass, cut circles in the dough. Place one cherry with a little of the sauce in the center of each circle. Shape into a triangle by folding the three sides inwards toward the center (leaving space for the filling to be open and visible); pinch the sides together tightly.

Place hamantaschen 1 inch apart on prepared baking sheets (pinch again to secure folds). Bake for 12 to 14 minutes. Be careful not to overbake. Repeat with the remaining dough, using up dough scraps as well. Transfer baked hamantaschen to racks to cool. For a pretty look, drizzle with a little melted white chocolate (or dip one-half of the hamantasch into white chocolate). ■

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# Life After a Stroke

## 5 Tips for Recovery and Daily Living

### Family Features

In the weeks and months immediately following a stroke, an early rehabilitation program offers the best possible recovery outcomes. While each person's stroke recovery journey is unique, starting the path toward rehabilitation as soon as it's medically safe allows stroke survivors to mitigate the lasting effects.

According to the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, each year, approximately 800,000 people in the United States have a stroke. Strokes can happen to anyone, at any age. In fact, globally about 1 in 4 adults over the age of 25 will have a stroke in their lifetime.

### Early Intervention

The rehabilitation and support a survivor receives can greatly influence health outcomes and recovery. The first three months after a stroke are especially critical. Although recovery may continue for years after a stroke, this time in the immediate aftermath of a stroke is when the brain is most able to adjust to the damage done by the stroke so the survivor can learn new ways to do things.

Following a stroke, a survivor may experience physical changes, such as fatigue, seizures, weakness or paralysis on one side of the body or spasticity, stiff or rigid muscles which may cause difficulty with completing daily activities and tasks. If experiencing fatigue, speak with your health care provider about ways to reduce it. Your care team may also be able to provide medications to help with

seizures and spasticity. Physical therapy is also an option.

Challenges after a stroke depend on the severity and location of the stroke. In addition to various physical disabilities, stroke survivors may experience aphasia, communication and thought problems related to speaking, listening, understanding or memory. Planning, organizing ideas or making decisions can also be harder.

"Remember to be patient when communicating with a stroke survivor," said Elissa Charbonneau, M.S., D.O., chief medical officer of Encompass Health and an American Stroke Association national volunteer. "The impact of a stroke on cognitive, speech and language can be significant and isolating. When connecting with a stroke survivor, some helpful



practices include demonstrating tasks, breaking actions into smaller steps, enunciating, asking multiple choice questions and repetition."

### Customized Rehabilitation

Once a stroke survivor's medical condition is stabilized and he or she is ready to leave the hospital, rehabilitation can help restore function and teach new ways to complete everyday tasks. Rehabilitation may take place in an inpatient facility, skilled nursing facility or long-term acute care facility. Outpatient clinics and home health agencies can also provide rehabilitative care in certain circumstances.

One patient's rehab journey might include therapy to improve balance, strength or mobility while another might need speech or other therapies. A rehabilitation designed for the individual is critical.

### Preventing a Recurrence

After a first stroke, nearly 1 in 4 survivors will have another. Stroke survivors can help reduce their risk of having another stroke by working with their health care team to identify what caused the stroke and uncover personal risk factors.

Taking steps such as healthy eating, reducing sedentary time and taking medications as prescribed can help your brain and reduce your risk of a repeat stroke. Controlling conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and sleep apnea also reduce your risk of having another stroke.

### Support During Your Journey

Caregivers and other loved ones can provide important long-term support during your recovery and rehabilitation.

Find resources for stroke rehab and recovery including the "Life After Stroke" guide, "Simply Good" cookbook and a support network to connect with other survivors at [Stroke.org/Recovery](https://stroke.org/Recovery). ■

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# 'I'll Have What She's Having'

## A very 2023 history of Jewish delis in America

Fran Kritz

There's a lot of nostalgia to behold on a tour of "I'll Have What She's Having," a historical view of Jewish delicatessens in America, now on exhibit at the New York Historical Society in New York City through April 2.

I could explain the title but why not just let anyone not in on the joke laugh at the clip from "When Harry met Sally" about two thirds of the way through the exhibit.

"I'll have What She's Having" is the creation of curators at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles and takes about an hour. (You'll leave hungry.) Photos, signage, artifacts and film clips make up the exhibit, and an interactive kiosk lets you design your own sandwich.

Placards next to artifacts explain the deli's history as the food of immigrants, and marvel (maybe too much) at the popularity of the genre. The exhibit's curators include a specialist in immigrant food cultures and explain that the waves of Jewish immigrants, first from German and then from eastern Europe from the 1880s to the 1920s, brought their own foods from their own cities and countries resulting in the amalgamation of foods we now call deli cuisine — including smoked meats, smoked fish, bagels, pickles, chicken soup and rugelach.

The history speaks to the difficult beginnings of immigrants, and is worth noting now that D.C.'s Call Your Mother Café, which labels itself "Jew-ish" sports a \$14 tuna sandwich. With delis on the wane in some parts, ingredient explanations for such items as rye and pumpernickel bread are, sadly, helpful.

The Yiddish glossary, literally writ large, doesn't come with phonics, so stand near a native speaker if you don't speak the language to learn how to pronounce "tsuris" (trouble), "mishpucha" (family) and "bissel" (a small amount, and an



The protected in a glass case blue seltzer bottle with silver spigot will make any grandparents in the group misty.

odd choice for a word in a Jewish deli exhibit.) Plastic models of hot dogs and noodle kugel don't add to the appeal but the (protected in a glass case) blue seltzer bottle with silver spigot will make any grandparents in the group misty.

Youngsters, including those in their 40s and 50s, may be surprised by the smoking paraphernalia, but smoking and Jewish delis shared a heyday. Matchboxes from the leading delicatessens adorn a wall, and the cigarette vending machine on display has packs still in the slots.

Plan to spend some time on the history of non-Jewish hawkers of Levi's Jewish rye bread — including Malcolm X. And photos of political candidates, including Hillary Clinton during her successful New York run for Senate, help explain the prominence of delis in many urban centers.

The exhibit asks, and attempts to answer, the question of why delis inspired artists, writers, comedians and film makers. One possibility: "It is a place where characters can demonstrate or celebrate their Jewish identity outside of private or religious spheres." That's

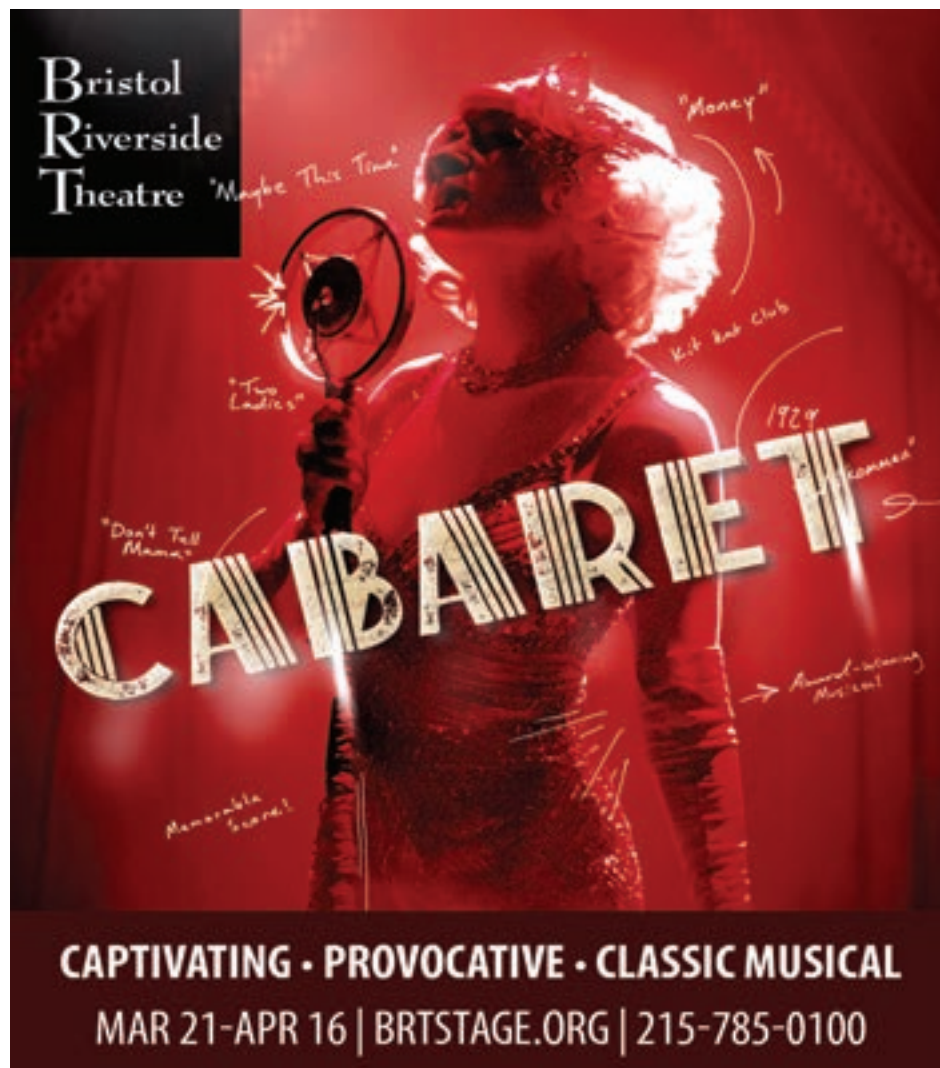
certainly a "Discuss" opportunity for the trip home.

Far harder to reconcile is the exhibit's take on the Holocaust. In an exhibit about Jews and their contribution to the culture of the world, a placard about the Holocaust informs viewers that "More than eleven million people, including six million Jews, were systematically murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators." Asked about why the murder of Jews doesn't come first in an exhibit about Jewish culture, Cate Thurston, one of the Skirball curators, explains that Skirball believes it needs to teach within the context of Jews being a part of the larger world around them. To me, it diminished the catastrophe that was the Holocaust, as well as the importance of the exhibit.

The last placard in the exhibit Fran Kritz is a freelance writer.

celebrates the reimagining of delis by emerging restaurants like a "pastrami hash in a jar" at one new Brooklyn café. Despite the photo, the museum seems unconvinced. The first floor restaurant has three (non-kosher) deli items on its menu for the duration of the exhibit including pastrami on rye, chicken soup and a smoked fish platter. No hash. No jar. ■

"I'll Have What She's Having" at the New York Historical Society through April 2, at 170 Central Park West in New York City. For tickets and hours call 212-873-3400, or order online at [nyhistory.org/](http://nyhistory.org/). Tickets range from free to \$22.



# Transportable Dinners

Keri White

Whether due to cold and flu season, bad luck, general socializing or a desire to carry out mitzvot, I spent a goodly amount of the last month ferrying meals to people who were injured or ill or for a variety of other reasons.

That included stocking a neighbor's fridge when she returned from a vacation trip to what turned out to be a disaster area, attending a community potluck, dropping a meal to a bereaved friend and bringing dishes to an Eagles watch party.

During these deliveries, I learned quite a bit about the best practices for transporting food and also how to avoid significant pitfalls.

## Some general tips:

- The recipient of this kindness should not be burdened in any way — that means avoid delivering food in a container or pan that you want back. Save takeout containers for this purpose and/or buy foil pans, so you won't sacrifice your favorites or have to stalk your neighbor for your Pyrex as he recuperates from open-heart surgery!
- Provide foods that require a minimum of effort on the part of the recipient/host. One-dish, heat-and-eat or microwavable meals are

optimal choices. Think casseroles, soups or stews.

- Be sure to check on dietary restrictions, allergies or preferences before you stir up something spicy that will go uneaten or complicate their symptoms.
- Freeze the items before transporting. If something jiggles in your car, this prevents a messy spill.
- Be sure to put the food on the floor of your car or in the trunk. Stopping short with a lasagna on the passenger seat is not recommended.

The lentil stew below is a good, nourishing option for a drop-and go dinner — it contains a bunch of vegetables, is vegan and gluten free, and can be spiced up or down depending on preference. Other good choices for transporting food, whether for an individual who is ill, or for a potluck or party, include the following, which can be found online in Jewish Exponent archives at [jewishexponent.com/category/lifestyle/food/](http://jewishexponent.com/category/lifestyle/food/). (Note: Many of these have more spice than the average convalescent might need, but they can be simplified by eliminating the zestier ingredients.)

- Gumbo
- Soup, such as posole or roasted vegetable soup
- Russian winter vegetable soup



Curried Lentil and Vegetable Stew

- Thai turkey meatballs
- Macaroni and cheese
- Braised chicken
- One-pan chicken quinoa dinner
- Stew

## Curried Lentil and Vegetable Stew | Pareve

Serves 4

This stew takes on a decidedly curry vibe; I used a bunch of Indian spices and blends, but the result is more aromatic than spicy.

If this flavor profile is not suitable for the intended eaters, omit them and opt for something else — rosemary/thyme? Fresh dill and lemon zest/juice? Or just add salt and pepper, and let the vegetables speak for themselves.

If the dish does not have to be vegan, consider tossing in a smoked turkey hock to deliver a big burst of flavor. Like most recipes of this type, view this as a guide and swap in whatever vegetables you have on hand.

- 1 **tablespoon canola or vegetable oil**
- 1 **onion, chopped**
- 2 **tablespoons grated ginger**
- 1 **teaspoon turmeric**
- 1 **teaspoon ground cumin**
- 3 **cloves garlic, crushed**

- 1 **teaspoon garam masala or curry powder**
- 1 **teaspoon salt**
- 2 **carrots, sliced**
- 2 **potatoes, chopped**
- 1 **pound lentils**
- 1 **bunch collard greens, coarse stems removed, and coarsely chopped**
- 1 **bunch parsley, chopped**
- Cayenne pepper to taste, optional**
- 2-3 quarts water or vegetable broth**

In a large pot, heat the oil and sauté the onions with ginger until fragrant. Add the remaining ingredients, and sauté until coated and beginning to soften, about 8 minutes.

Add water or broth; it should cover the mixture by about 4 inches. Bring it to a boil, lower the heat to a simmer, cover and cook for about 45 minutes until the lentils and vegetables are soft. Check the stew every so often to ensure that there is sufficient liquid; if not, add more during the cooking process.

This keeps for several days in the refrigerator and generally tastes better after it sits overnight. It also freezes well. ■

*Keri White is a Philadelphia-based freelance food writer.*

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# Congregation Adath Jeshurun Searches for New Way Forward

Jarrad Saffren | Staff Writer

To a woman or man, Congregation Adath Jeshurun members seem to enjoy walking in the doors of their Old York Road synagogue.

"I absolutely love the people," said Judy Stutman Izes, 60, a congregant for 18 years.

"It's the place I'm most comfortable," added Sima Sussman, 82, a member since 1976. "It reflects the rhythm of my Jewish life."

"It's really our community," said David Reibstein, 48, a lifelong congregant.

But it's a question as open as Adath Jeshurun's doors whether the Conservative shul will still be there in a generation or two. At 48, Reibstein is one of the congregation's youngest members. A community that once counted about 1,200 households is now down to less than 400, and 80% of them are older and without children in the pre- and religious school programs, according to synagogue leaders.

Rabbi Shai Cherry, Hazzan Howard Glantz and President Howard Levin are doing what many shuls in the Philadelphia area are doing in this era: trying to figure out how to attract young members. Glantz believes that Adath Jeshurun leaders at least understand the approach they need to take. Synagogues used to be able to say, "We're here, come meet us where we are," recalled the cantor, now in his 19th year at the Elkins Park shul. "And that's not necessarily working for everybody, so we want to meet them where they are," he added. "And be there for them."

"And it's not essential that we have 50-100 people at a program for it to be successful," Glantz said. "You have more time to interact and get to know them."

Cherry, who prefers to go by Rav Shai because Rav is Hebrew for teacher, stepped out of the higher education



Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Elkins Park

world to take his first pulpit position with Adath Jeshurun in 2019. He was inheriting the legacy of a synagogue with more than 160 years of history. He also was taking on the responsibility left to him by a trio of rabbis, Max Klein (1910-'60), Yaakov Rosenberg (1960-'78) and Seymour Rosenbloom (1978-2014), who each guided Adath Jeshurun through entire eras.

But Cherry wanted this challenge. After three decades of teaching, he was interested in a rabbi position at a shul with a long history, but also with an openness to 21st-century experimentation. Then he noticed on a job bulletin board for Conservative rabbis that the AJ position was open. With the synagogue going through a strategic initiative called "AJ New Way Forward," it seemed like the right fit.

Then he arrived and discovered that East Coasters held a reverence for their rabbi that he had not seen out west.

"They have a respect for the person of the rabbi, the position of the rabbi, that I was pleasantly surprised to discover," he said. "I think on the West Coast there is not the same relationship that most congregants have with their rabbi."

through." They even added prayer sessions that focus on how "themes of particular songs map onto themes of the liturgy," as Cherry explained it. Outside of services, Cherry has added hiking and environmentalist groups to the synagogue community.

"People want different things," Levin said.

The president, the rav and the cantor, though, were not shy about admitting that they do not have all the answers. They are just trying to meet people where they are and give them choices. And as long as there are still members like Stutman Izes, Sussman and



From left: Hazzan Howard Glantz, Rav Shai Cherry and President Howard Levin

But that also meant that members were looking to the rabbi to lead AJ's new way forward. And over his four years, even through COVID, he has attempted to do that. According to Glantz, the goal of the new strategic plan is to give people choices.

Cherry and the cantor started holding more "retro services" in the Conservative tradition, with a professional choir and organ, throughout the year. They also began to host more Friday night services at which Glantz played guitar and sang "all the way

Reibstein, it will be worthwhile to try.

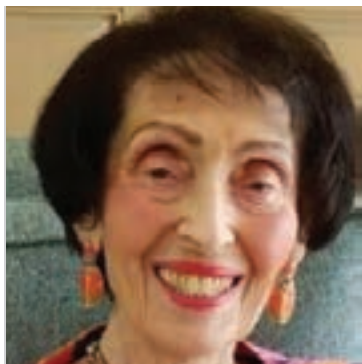
"They do know that we hear them; that we want to be there for them; and that we will work for them to make their spirituality enhanced," Glantz said.

Cherry mentioned that, after almost every event, two or three people will reach out to say how much it meant to them.

"We have a pretty good sense that we are helping people grow religiously and spiritually," he concluded. ■

[jsaffren@midatlanticmedia.com](mailto:jsaffren@midatlanticmedia.com)





## AICHENBAUM

LILLIAN LEIDERMAN, 91 of Haverford, Pennsylvania, formerly of West Bloomfield, Michigan, died February 15, 2023. Lillian was the devoted wife of 66 years to Milton Aichenbaum, who passed away in 2016. Lillian was the loving mother of Elaine Aldridge, Mike Aichenbaum (Ruth) and Rabbi Yaakov Aichenbaum. She was the loving grandmother of Brent (Catherine) Aldridge, David (Hannah Byland) Aichenbaum, Joshua Aichenbaum, Yonasan, Eliyahu, Yehoshua, Adina Miriam, Yair, Azriel and Shulamis Aichenbaum, and great-grandmother of Tessa Jean Aldridge and Sylvie Alana Byland. Lillian also leaves behind many close relatives from the US and Canada. She was predeceased by her parents Baruch and Ethel Leiderman, her brother, Allen Leiderman, and son-in-law, Rick Aldridge. Lillian was born in Detroit but spent her childhood summers with family in Montreal, as her mother had been the first of seven sisters who grew up there. When in Detroit, every Sunday Lillian would visit other relatives in Windsor, where her father's family lived. She instilled in her children a deep love for family. She also showed kindness to everyone and selflessly gave of herself to anyone in need of support. She was at home with her children while they were growing up and also occasionally helped out in the family jewelry business. In later years, she worked at a travel agency. She moved to Pennsylvania in 2016 so that she could live closer to family. Contributions in memory of Lillian may be sent to [hostsforhospitals.org](https://hostsforhospitals.org). Condolences would be most welcome and may be sent to: <https://obits.levinefuneral.com/lillian-aichenbaum>  
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## APTAKER

IRIT, February 23, 2023, of Allentown, PA. Loving wife of Robert (Reb Mendel) Aptaker; cherished mother of Chaya Margalit (wife of Shmuel) Hoffman, Jamey (Yonah) Roberti, and Yasmin Roberti; beloved sister of Michal Elkana Gibson and Eilat (wife of Nir) Elkana Ben Aharon; and devoted grandmother of Moshe, Yisrael, Esther, Devorah, and Mirjam. Contributions in Irit's memory may be made to Fox Chase Cancer Center, and Chabad of Lehigh Valley, in memory of Irit bat Yosef Orr.  
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## BALKIN

Dr. BURTON - February 21, 2023, of Bala Cynwyd, PA; beloved husband of Esther (nee Raboff); loving father of Harris Balkin and Jacqueline Balkin Hoffman (Michael); devoted brother of Shirley Zeserman and Penny Balkin Bach; cherished grandfather of Charles Jake Hoffman, Megan Balkin, Aaron Hoffman and Rebecca Hoffman. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Burton's memory may be made to the Kornberg School of Dentistry at Temple University (dentistry.temple.edu/about/giving), or a charity of the donor's choice.

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## BLACKMAN

MORRIS L. was known for Paintings with geometric objects, totem sculptures. When Morris Blackman moved to Queen Village in Philadelphia in 1978, he purchased a former stable and turned it into his art studio and living quarters. His three dimensional mixed-media paintings feature primary colors and incorporate themes from his travels and life experiences. Morris described his role as an artist is to show the world the way that he experienced and felt it, not to simply paint a pretty picture. His list of teaching appointments include Fleisher Art Memorial, University of the Arts, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and the University of Pennsylvania. He will be missed by his brother Henry Sol and wife Marlyne, and nieces and nephews.



## EDELMAN

WARMINSTER, PA-Phyllis Edelman, 88 years old, of Warminster, PA, passed away on February 18, 2023. Phyllis was born in Philadelphia, PA on June 5, 1934. She is pre-deceased by her loving husband, Bernard Edelman, and her parents, Claire and Jack Snyder, and her niece, Lori Erfer. She is survived by her daughters Alissa (and Irwin) Latner, Gwynne (and Alan) Feinstein, and her loving grandchild-

dren, Benjamin (and Arpita), Max, and Carly Latner, and Breanna and Morgan Feinstein, her sister, Carolyn Fuhrman, and niece, Janet Levine. In addition to being a loving daughter, sister, aunt, wife, mother and grandmother, Phyllis had many interests over her lifetime. She was a bookkeeper for Milstein Flooring, in Philadelphia PA, for several years before getting married. While raising her children Phyllis became deeply interested in several artistic endeavors, from making beaded flowers, to drying flowers from her garden, making paper weights with resin, decoupage furniture, mirrors, etc., making 3 dimensional frames with old time photos, to making a full miniature general store, 3 stories high, fully electrified. She sold many of her beautiful and original crafts at local arts fairs, and her biggest sale was to Macy's for her dried flower pictures. Phyllis also volunteered at Community General Osteopathic Hospital in Harrisburg, PA, as a Transportation Aide in the Nursing Division, providing vital services to the hospital, and was recognized for over 150 hours of service in March of 1987. At Phyllis' request, there will be no memorial service or funeral. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to any charity of your choice. Phyllis was a one of a kind personality, often making others laugh with her silliness, unusual wit, and unique sense of humor. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

## GOLDSTEIN

MARGARET "Maggie" (nee Miller), on February 20th, 2023. Loving wife of the late Samuel; adoring mother of Craig (Rachel); grandmother of Temma Leah and Samuel Zion. Sister of Shirley (Frank) Carbaugh, Katie (the late Calvin) Adams, Linda (Bernie) Wennener, and Jayne (Raymond) Hertz. Contributions in her memory may be made to Camp Ramah in the Poconos.

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## KALODNER

DEBRA COHEN of Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, died on February 20, 2023. For many years, she insisted that any woman who would tell her age or her weight could not be trusted with sensitive information, but in recent years she fessed up, and at the time of her death was ninety years old, having been born on September 20, 1932, in Port Chester, New York. A graduate of Emerson College, Kalodner was passionate about education, politics, and the Oxford comma. She always spoke the truth, as she saw the truth, and if you didn't follow her advice the first time she gave it, she was happy to repeat it again and again in the belief that you would eventually see that she was right. Which she often was. She did not suffer fools gladly, but was a great listener, a loyal friend, and a proud and devoted mother and grandmother. Kalodner is survived by her

brother, Joseph (Rosemary), daughter, Elizabeth, son, David, and his children, Isabel and Jacob. Donations in her memory may be made to Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia.

## LISS

PAULA D. (nee Surkin), February 23, 2023, of Egg Harbor Twp., NJ; beloved wife of Alan B. Liss; loving mother of Haylee Bernstein (Jordan) and Ira Liss (Svetlana); devoted sister of Marc Surkin (Sheryl), Howard Surkin (Ann Marie) and Kenneth Surkin; cherished grandmother of Sofia, Jackson, Alexander and Cameron. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Paula's memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association ([www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)), or to the Jewish National Fund, for trees in Israel ([www.jnf.org](http://www.jnf.org)).

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## MORTIZ

JUDITH RAE (nee Feldman) on February 19, 2023. Wife of Edward M., Mother of Marion Moritz, Tobi (Jason) Klaskin and Rena (Jeffrey) Klein. Grandmother of Max, Solomon, Rachel and Adina. Contributions in her memory may be made to the Samaritan Fund, c/o ACTS, 728 Norristown Road, Lower Gwynedd, PA 19002.

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## ORWITZ

DOROTHY M. (nee Moskowitz) on February 20th, 2023. Loving wife of the late Morton; adoring mother of Dr. Jonathan (Carol); grandmother of Matthew (Mandy) and Nina. Aunt of Theodore Stolman and Arline Cohn. Contributions in her memory may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

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## PEARLSTINE

SHIRLEY GOODMAN Boys Town Jerusalem mourns the loss of long-time supporter, Shirley Goodman Pearlstine, mother of our honored member of the Mid-Atlantic Friends, Bruce Goodman. Together with Boys Town Jerusalem's 900 students, we send our condolences to Bruce Goodman and the extended Goodman Pearlstine family.

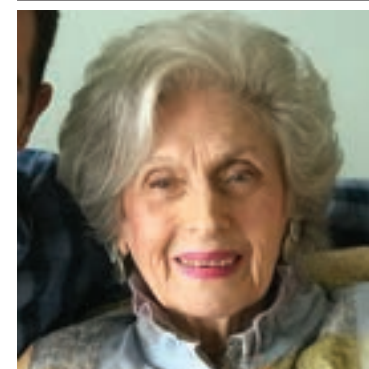
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Rabbi Ezra Berenholz, National  
Director of Development



## SCHNEIDER

EARL, February 22, 2023, born July 16, 1931 in Arverne, NY, long time resident of Havertown, PA. Beloved husband of the late Jean (nee Fishman); loving father of Jeffrey Schneider, Kenneth (Tina) Schneider, Melissa (Robert Reiner) Schneider and Jennifer (Ari) Goldberg; cherished grandfather of Adara, Ilana, Ellie, Jacob, Rebecca and Dina; adored brother-in-law, uncle, great uncle and friend. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Earl's memory may be made to Adath Israel or the charity of your choice.

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## SHERMAN

HARRIET (nee Schwartz) 93, passed away peacefully at home on Feb 15, 2023. She was born in Philadelphia and graduated from Overbrook High School. She worked throughout her adult life at various places until she was 79, including Einstein Medical Center and Congregation Beth David. Her family was everything to her. Her legacy is a family that was devoted to her and now remains equally devoted to one another. She loved meeting people and inquired about their lives because she was truly interested in what was important to them. These past few months she looked forward to seeing people from Silver Lining and Holisticare Hospice who took wonderful care of her. She is predeceased by her husband, Leonard and her great granddaughter, Eliana. She is survived by her daughters Eileen Sherman (Eric Singer) and Stacey Greenman (Allan) and her beloved grandchildren Scott (Caitlin), Allyson (Ryan Stewart), Michael, Asher Levinthal, Adam (Chrislyn), 5 great grandchildren, her brother Sonny Schwartz, and her loving companion Herb Paley. A graveside funeral was held at Roosevelt Cemetery. Donations in her memory can be made to The Exceptional Initiative Fund at Ramah Darom (see [Endowments.ramahdarom.org](http://Endowments.ramahdarom.org)).

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## SILBERSTEIN

Hon. ALAN, passed away on February 18, 2023. Beloved husband of Dveral Silberstein (nee Taylor). Devoted father of Marisa Shuter (David). Loving grandfather of Jesse and Grant. Alan was President Judge of the Philadelphia Municipal Court for over

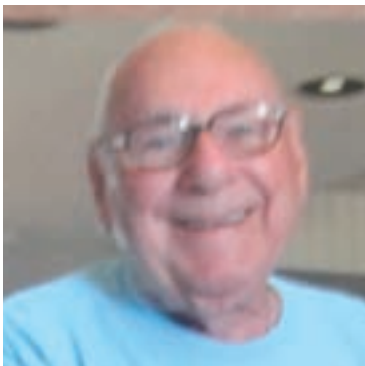


15 years. Contribution in his memory may be made to Northeast Community Center for Behavioral Health, 4641 Roosevelt Blvd., Phila., PA 19124 [www.necbch.org](http://www.necbch.org) or a charity of the donor's choice.

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**SNELLENBURG, JR.**  
MILTON H. on February 20, 2023. Beloved husband of Susan (nee Kesler); Loving father of Scott Elkins, Haylie Snellenburg, and Todd Snellenburg (Jamie); Dear brother of Roger Snellenburg; Devoted grandfather of Taylor, Max, Mia, and Sierra; Adoring great-grandfather of James. Also survived by loving nieces, nephews and dear friends. Contributions in his memory may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

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**VOLEN**  
SOLOMON, age 96 passed on 2/16/23 with his family by his side. A loving and devoted family man, he was predeceased by his wife Irma Volen z"l (nee Winneker), and is survived by his daughter Meryl Gerner (nee Volen). Sol grew up in Strawberry Mansion and was a WWII veteran in the Army from 1943-1947. He served in the Philippines. He owned a bar on Spring Garden Street for many years and later started a full line vending machine business and

branched out into office coffee services. Sol was always there to lend a hand. He never stopped his life of service and spent his retirement volunteering at various organizations such as Red Cross Disaster Services, the USO, the Reading Terminal, JRA, etc. He was a member of 3 war veterans groups, 3 ham radio clubs and 5 coin clubs. He was well read, very knowledgeable and had various collections. Sol passed from a sudden onset of leukemia. He was still driving (even at night) and active up until this past December. He always had a smile on his face and his motto was, "Be nice and nice things will happen to you." Everyone who met him fell in love, called him a hero and wished they could be like him. Sol was the poster boy for the quote, "The purpose of life is a life of purpose". If you wish to make a donation in Sol's memory, please choose a charity or cause close to your heart.

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**WEIZER**  
MARVIN on February 20, 2023. Husband of the late Harriet. Father of Jeffrey (Ilene) Weizer, Susan (Charles) Stewart and Paula Burns. Brother of Flora (Louis) Karasin, also survived by 8 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. Relatives and friends are invited to funeral services Sunday March 5th at 1:30 PM precisely at Goldsteins' Rosenberg's Raphael Sacks Suburban North, 310 Second Street Pike, Southampton, PA 18966. Interment Shalom Memorial Park. Shiva will be observed at the home of Paula Burns. Contributions in his memory may be made to Penn Medicine Beam of Life Fund, [www.pennmedicine.org/cancer/giving/ways-to-give/beam-of-life](http://www.pennmedicine.org/cancer/giving/ways-to-give/beam-of-life) or via mail payable to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, 3535 Market Street, Suite 750, Philadelphia, PA 19104 or Fox Chase Cancer Center, 333 Cottman Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19111.

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**ZASLOW**  
JERRY, 81, of Delray Beach, FL, formerly of Philadelphia, PA, and Ventnor, NJ passed away with his devoted family by his side on February 18, 2023 in Delray Beach, FL. A dedicated family man, he is survived by his loving wife Diane, his children, Valori and David (Lori), and his grandchildren, Erika, Jacob, Corey and Matthew. He shared his heart with the late Joan (nee Perlstein) for 45 years of marriage. Jerry, a Philadelphia attorney, Florida real estate broker and author, enjoyed practicing law, collecting stamps and coins, and photography. He was passionate about music and loved playing the saxophone, clarinet, flute, piano, and performing with local orchestras. To express condolences please visit <https://www.levinefuneral.com/obituaries>.

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# Dressing for the Occasion

Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner

Parshat Tetzaveh

**W**hen did “clothes make the man” come into our vocabulary and/or belief system?

Popular explanations attribute the expression to Samuel Langhorne Clemens, the pen name of Mark Twain. But that is unfortunately inaccurate. Yes, Twain did become a fashion statement when he began wearing white suits head to toe late in his career. But the words go back very far.

That maxim actually originated more than 400 years earlier during the Middle Ages, found in the works

of Erasmus, a Dutch philosopher and Catholic theologian, who created an annotated collection of 800 Greek and Latin proverbs, and years later an expanded version containing 4,251 essays — a proverbial encyclopedia of proverbs. Recorded in Latin, Erasmus wrote “*vestis virum facit*,” meaning “clothes make the man.”

Quintilian’s work “Institutions” cites his source as Homer, who wrote his epics about 7 or 8 B.C. In “The Odyssey,” the key lines are: “From these things, you may be sure, men get a good report,” meaning Ulysses made his impact — a good impression — by way of fine threads and bling.

Not to be one-upped by classical

writers, Shakespeare (who wore his fine Elizabethan white ruff with great pride and dignity) weighed in on the matter through Polonius: “The apparel oft proclaims the man” (“The Tragedy of Hamlet,” written c. 1600).

Professor Baruch J. Schwartz (Hebrew University) wrote that *four* of these priestly garments were exclusive for a High Priest, called *בגדי הקדש*, “the holy garments.” [Moses first places them upon Aaron at the consecration of the priests (Leviticus 8:7–9). Aaron wears them until his death, transferring them to his son and successor Eleazar immediately before he dies (Numbers 20:25–28). All successive High Priests are commanded to wear them as well (Exodus 29:30; see Leviticus 21:10).]

Four elaborate garments worn by the priests figure prominently in the Torah portion Tetzaveh, filling the entirety of Exodus 28. But it is the Kohen Gadol’s robe that has fascinated me for years. It is the first “real bell-bottoms” in fashion history. But, why “bells” on the hem?

There are multiple theories. The one most often heard: to let everyone know that the Kohen Gadol is alive hearing the bells move. Other theories of the original bell-bottoms include (1) signifying the teaching of the law by the high priest; (2) they were a musical praise

to God; (3) they symbolize royalty like kings in neighboring cultures; (4) and they call for priestly vigilance to all ritual details.

As he wrote: “Whether verbally or dramatically, to worship God apparently involves making Him (!) accessible, imaginable, familiar — in ancient times as in our own.”

However, I agree with Schwartz. The robe has bells to alert the Divine presence to Aaron’s approach as he enters the sanctuary so “that he does not die,” as the Torah records. Just that: Those were the instructions and the promise for Israel. ■

*Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner is retired and provides kosher supervision for Traditional Kosher Supervision in the Greater Philadelphia area, while teaching hands-on craft skills to make and use properly holiday ritual objects. The Board of Rabbis of Greater Philadelphia is proud to provide diverse perspectives on Torah commentary for the Jewish Exponent. The opinions expressed in this column are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Board of Rabbis.*



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## MARCH 3–9

## MONDAY, MARCH 6

**PURIM HOEDOWN**

Join Adath Jeshurun at 5 p.m. for a Purim Hoedown featuring the band Jacob's Ladder, a pizza party and Megillah reading. **For more information, contact Rachel Palitto at [rpalitto@adathjeshurun.info](mailto:rpalitto@adathjeshurun.info) or 215-635-6611. 7763 Old York Road, Elkins Park.**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 3  
HAMANTASCHEN FOR HUMANITY**

Our hearts are heavy for people around the world who have had their lives uprooted by humanitarian, climate and community crises. During March, Night Kitchen Bakery will bake its hamantaschen (chocolate, cherry, poppy seed and prune). Ten percent of sales will be donated to World Central Kitchen. **7723-25 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia.**

**'SERIOUSLY' EXHIBIT**

The Temple Judea Museum will exhibit a unique trio of artists: Marlene Adler, Diane Pieri and Dan Soslowsky. What joins this disparate group together? Find out at this exhibit, running through March 15 and open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. **For more information, contact Rita Poley at [tjmuseum@kenesethisrael.org](mailto:tjmuseum@kenesethisrael.org) or 215-887-8700. 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park.**

**PARSHA FOR LIFE**

Join Rabbi Alexander Coleman,

a Jewish educator and psychotherapist at the Institute for Jewish Ethics, at 9 a.m. for a journey through the Torah portion of the week with eternal lessons on personal growth and spirituality. **Go to [ijethics.org/weekly-torah-portion.html](http://ijethics.org/weekly-torah-portion.html) to receive the Zoom link and password.**

**MUSICAL KABBALAT SHABBAT**

Join Beth Sholom Congregation's Rabbi David Glanzberg-Krainin, Cantor Jacob Agar and the band at 6 p.m. for a musical Kabbalat Shabbat. The community is welcome to attend. **Call 215-887-1342 for information. 8231 Old York Road, Elkins Park.**

**KOL ZIMRAH**

"Kol Zimrah" means "the sound of singing." This musical service, offered online at 6 p.m., is led by Germantown Jewish Centre Rabbi Adam Zeff and Executive Director Nina Peskin and features original melodies and *kavanot* (short spiritual reflections). **[venue.streamspot.com/a79c0def](http://venue.streamspot.com/a79c0def).**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 5****FROM ODESSA WITH LOVE**

The Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History welcomes you to join us on Zoom at 2 p.m. to recognize one year since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Weitzman museum CEO Misha Galperin will be joined by journalist Vladislav Davidzon to discuss the relationship between Jewish people and Ukraine. **For more information, contact Isabella Orloff at [programs@theweitzman.org](mailto:programs@theweitzman.org) or 215-923-3811.**

**MONDAY, MARCH 6****MAHJONG GAME**

Melrose B'nai Israel Emanu-El Sisterhood invites the community to join our weekly mahjong game at 7 p.m. Cost is \$36 per year or free with MBIEE Sisterhood membership. **For more information, call 215-635-1505 or email [office@mbiee.org](mailto:office@mbiee.org). 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park.**

**MAMMA MIA MEGILLAH**

The Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel spiel is back! This year, we present the "Mamma Mia Megillah" at 7 p.m., retelling the story of Purim through the music of ABBA. Hamantaschen to follow. **Contact Brian Rissinger at [contact@kenesethisrael.org](mailto:contact@kenesethisrael.org) or 215-887-8700. 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park.**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8****METAPHORS OF THE DIVINE**

This series from Congregation Kol Ami, starting at 10:30 a.m. for two Wednesdays, is for anyone interested in increasing their awareness of the sacred. Our tool for discerning the Divine will be a metaphor. **Register at [kolaminj.shulcloud.com/event/divinepresence](http://kolaminj.shulcloud.com/event/divinepresence). For more information, contact [AdultEd@kolaminj.org](mailto:AdultEd@kolaminj.org) or call 856-489-0029. 1101 Springdale Road, Cherry Hill, New Jersey.**

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SCREENING**

Philadelphia Jewish Film and Media presents a screening at the Weitzman of "Valeria is Getting Married," about a Ukrainian woman arranging for her younger sister to marry an Israeli man, at 7 p.m. as part of International Women's Day. **For more information, contact Matthew Bussy at [mbussy@phillyjfm.org](mailto:mbussy@phillyjfm.org) or 215-446-3012. 101 S. Independence Mall East, Philadelphia.**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 9****CANASTA GAME**

Ohev Shalom of Bucks County Sisterhood invites the community to a weekly canasta game from 1-3 p.m. Open play is \$4. **Call 215-968-6755 for more information. 944 Second Street Pike, Richboro. ■**

## social announcements

**BIRTH****MIA JULIETTE SETZMAN**

Jenna Leibowitz and Rob Setzman of Gladwyne announce the birth of their daughter Mia Juliette on Oct. 3.

Sharing in their happiness are sister Emery Dorothy, grandmother Lynn Setzman of Richboro, and grandparents Karen Brodsky and Don Leibowitz of West Windsor, New Jersey. Also celebrating Mia's birth are aunt Jocelyn and uncle Scott Setzman and cousins Sydney and Payge, and aunt Mara and uncle Michael Fox and cousins Ethan and Lylah.

Mia Juliette is named in loving memory of her paternal grandfather Michael Jack Setzman.



Photo by Jessica Catherine Photography



Courtesy of Debbie Zlotnick



Courtesy of the Jewish Family Service of Atlantic & Cape May Counties

Courtesy of Hilary Levine



Courtesy of Beth Sholom Congregation

Courtesy of Sean Rochester



**1** Federation Housing residents at Annabel Gardens in Willow Grove celebrated Black History Month.

**2** Staff members at the Jewish Family Service of Atlantic & Cape May Counties cheered on the Eagles during the Super Bowl.

**3** American Jewish Committee Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey leaders met with H.E. Rytis Paulauskas, a representative of Lithuania to the United Nations.

**4** The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs embraced the mitzvah of wrapping tefillin at Beth Sholom Congregation in Elkins Park.

**5** Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy student-athlete Eden Singer scored her 1,000th career point in Barrack's 59-40 win over Cristo Rey in the PAISSA Commonwealth Cup quarterfinals.



# KLEINLIFE'S Victoria Faykin

## REFLECTS ON JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES

Jarrad Saffren | Staff Writer

Since immigrating to the United States in 1997, Victoria Faykin has built a reputation for helping immigrants and refugees like herself.

In the 2010s, the vice president of KleinLife in Northeast Philadelphia established a Sunday school program for Jewish kids from the former Soviet Union. It grew from 30 children to more than 70 in three years, according to a 2018 Jewish Exponent article. Then in 2022, Faykin started a free summer camp for refugees from the war in Ukraine. By the fall, it transformed into an after-school and job training assistance program for these families that had to leave their soldier patriarchs behind.

We know from past Exponent stories on her efforts that Faykin is a Russian immigrant. We are also aware that she faced the cultural and institutional antisemitism that so many Jewish children tackled in the former Soviet Union. But what we have not yet explored is her journey, and why it reminds her to appreciate her life in America.

### The Story

Faykin, 57, has told the story in the pages of the Exponent before. She did not know she was Jewish for the first six years of her life. But then on a vacation with her father at an all-inclusive resort, she was outside playing with the other children. Two women approached her and asked if she was the daughter of the man in room 10. Faykin said “yes,” and the women proceeded to use a word that was a slur toward Jews. Everyone around the young girl laughed; she ran back to her father in the room and started crying.

He told his daughter yes, they were Jews, and no, that was not a bad thing.



“Yes, I am Jewish; you’re Jewish; your brother is Jewish; your mom is Jewish.’ I cried and told him, ‘I don’t want to be Jewish,’” Faykin recalled. He told me, ‘It’s not your choice. You were born Jewish, and you will die Jewish.’”

But then he apprised her of all the historical figures who had been born Jewish and who had died Jewish.

“You know (Albert) Einstein? He was Jewish. You know (Karl) Marx? He was Jewish. You know (Marc) Chagall? He was Jewish,” Faykin said. “He told me I

needed to be the best in the class. ‘It’s a people of knowledge. It’s a people of the book. You need to be proud. And they’re just jealous.’”

Later, it dawned on the young girl that she wanted to immigrate to the United States. The desire did not come from her father. He never spoke about the U.S., according to Faykin. But when she met her husband as a young woman, she informed him that if he wanted to marry her, “we will go to the United States.”

### The Immigration Process

When you apply for immigration status, you get in a line. So in January 1987, that was what Faykin and her husband did. Since they had no relatives in the U.S., they would probably have to wait even longer, she recalled. But she was willing to wait as long as she needed.

They remained in line through the early and mid-1990s. In the meantime, the couple had a daughter, Yana, and then another, Rita. They had no way to get information about the United States, so they just waited. Finally, in 1996, they were told to come to Moscow for an interview. In the end, they got in, and the only tasks left were paperwork and health assessments. In 1997, they arrived in Philadelphia. Yana was 10 and Rita two. No one in the family knew English.

“Maybe when you’re young, maybe when it’s your dream and you want a better life ... you just do it,” Faykin said.

### The Early Days

The Jewish Family Service organization helped immigrants upon arrival to the country. For a JFS meeting, Faykin walked into KleinLife for the first time. The immigrants were offered a free membership and, as Faykin wandered the halls, she told her husband she wanted to work at the community center.

First, she volunteered for a year and a half. Then she was offered a job. She started on Sept. 1, 1999. Today, Faykin lives in Huntingdon Valley and serves as KleinLife’s second-highest-ranking official under President and CEO Andre Krug. Her older daughter, now 35, just got promoted by a pharmaceutical company. Her younger daughter, now 27, went to Temple University on a full scholarship.

“They’re happy. They don’t ask me about help. The oldest says, ‘Momma, I will buy you this,’” Faykin said. ■

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**Simply Cleaning** at 343 Maple Avenue,  
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Or to his Attorney:  
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John Yanoshak, Esq., 17 E. Front St.,  
P.O. Box 626, Media, PA 19063,  
Or to their Attorney:  
JOHN YANOSHAK  
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the same and all persons indebted to  
the decedent to make payment without  
delay to ROSANNE M. DEVLIN and  
DENNIS J. DEVLIN, EXECUTORS, c/o  
Daniella A. Horn, Esq., 2202 Delancey  
Place, Philadelphia, PA 19103,  
Or to their Attorney:  
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lay to NANCY RIVERA, EXECUTRIX,  
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Ste. 200, Conshohocken, PA 19428,  
Or to her Attorney:  
JODI L. GRIFFIS  
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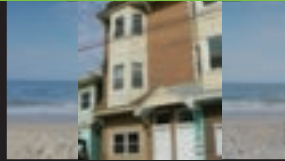
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## EARLY SPRING NEW LISTINGS

### NEW LISTING – Oak Hill Estates

CUSTOM BUILT/TOTALLY RENNOVATED; 1st Floor; 2 bedroom/2 bath; BEST LOCATION; living room with fireplace; expanded open kitchen with custom granite countertops and backsplash; Custom work station; Gas Thermador cooktop; stainless steel appliances; full size washer/dryer; upgraded lighting; lots of closets; parking in your door. Electric grill allowed on patio. Pool, gym, tennis courts, pickle ball, picnic & BBQ area, health club included. 2 small pets allowed. **\$389,900.**

### NEW LISTING – Oak Hill Estates

Mid-level Townhouse; 2 bedroom/2 bath; open granite kitchen; washer/dryer; fireplace; custom lighting; parking under covered balcony. Facing the woods!

**REDUCED & AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY: \$2,195.00 per month**

### NEW LISTING: FOR RENT – Tower at Oak Hill

Large corner 2 bedroom/2.5 baths; wood floors; washer & dryer in unit; lots of closets; balcony overlooking pool; 24 hour doorman; basement storage; 2 gyms. Heating & air conditioning included. SEPTA 44 & school bus at front door. **REDUCED & AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY: \$2,650.00 per month**

### NEW LISTING: TERRACES

All newly renovated, 1 bedroom/1 bath, new appliances, custom lighting, custom closets, washer/dryer, Sunny balcony with yard view. Electric grill allowed on balcony, pool, gym, tennis, & parking. No pets. **AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY! \$1,795.00 plus electric.**

### NEW LISTING: Tower at Oak Hill

2nd floor, 2 bedroom/1.5 bath; modern kitchen; custom lighting; custom generous closets; sunny balcony; washer/dryer in unit. **AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY**



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March 16

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March 23

Show readers you are the expert in your field by offering great advice to readers in your field of expertise.

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undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to SIERRA WALLACE, ADMINISTRATRIX, c/o Joseph D. Rutala, Esq., 1500 JFK Blvd., Ste. 1203, Philadelphia, PA 19102,  
Or to her Attorney:  
JOSEPH D. RUTALA  
RUTALA LAW GROUP, PLLC  
1500 JFK Blvd., Ste. 1203  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

ESTATE OF FRANK AARON WADE a/k/a FRANK WADE, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County  
LETTERS of ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to DANIEL COLEMAN, ADMINISTRATOR, c/o Benjamin L. Jerner, Esq., 5401 Wissahickon Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19144,  
Or to his Attorney:  
BENJAMIN L. JERNER  
JERNER LAW GROUP, P.C.  
5401 Wissahickon Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19144

ESTATE OF GARY IRONS, DECEASED.  
LETTERS of ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to CONCHETTA PARK, ADMINISTRATOR, 250 N. Columbus Blvd. Apt 1101, Philadelphia, PA 19106  
Or to her Attorney:  
David H. Lipow  
O'Brien, Belland & Bushinsky, LLC  
509 S. Lenola Rd  
Building 6  
Moorestown, NJ 08057

ESTATE OF HEYWOOD A. WOOD, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County, PA  
LETTERS of ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to LINDA E. WOOD, ADMINISTRATRIX, c/o Jay E. Kivitz, Esq., 7901 Ogontz Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19150,  
Or to her Attorney:  
JAY E. KIVITZ  
KIVITZ & KIVITZ, P.C.  
7901 Ogontz Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19150

ESTATE OF JAMES E. McCLELLAND, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to LYNN H. MILLER, EXECUTRIX, 604 S. Washington Square, Apt. 2616, Philadelphia, PA 19106-4130,  
Or to her Attorney:  
LAWRENCE F. MEEHAN  
604 S. Washington Square, #2602  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-4130

ESTATE OF JoANN M. PALMA a/k/a JO-ANN M. PALMA, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County, PA  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to ANTHONY CIMINI, EXECUTOR, c/o John Philip Crampton, Esq., 1500 Market St., Ste. 3500E, Philadelphia, PA 19102,  
Or to his Attorney:

JOHN PHILIP CRAMPTON  
DILWORTH PAXSON LLP  
1500 Market St., Ste. 3500E  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

ESTATE OF JOEY WAI HO MAK, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County, PA  
LETTERS of ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to LISAMAK, ADMINISTRATRIX, c/o Daniella A. Horn, Esq., 2202 Delancey Place, Philadelphia, PA 19103,  
Or to her Attorney:  
DANIELLA A. HORN  
KLENK LAW, LLC  
2202 Delancey Place  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

ESTATE OF JULES DORNBERG, DECEASED.  
Late of East Norriton Township, Montgomery County, PA  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to ADAM H. KENNY, EXECUTOR, c/o Neal G. Wiley, Esq., 1880 JFK Blvd., Ste. 1740, Philadelphia, PA 19103,  
Or to his Attorney:  
NEAL G. WILEY  
ALEXANDER & PELLI, LLC  
1880 JFK Blvd., Ste. 1740  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

ESTATE OF KATHLEEN ETRI BURNETT, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County  
LETTERS of ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to MARIE L. HOLDER, ADMINISTRATRIX, c/o Angela D. Giampolo, Esq., 1221 Locust St., Ste. 202, Philadelphia, PA 19107,  
Or to her Attorney:  
ANGELA D. GIAMPOLO  
GIAMPOLO LAW GROUP, LLC  
1221 Locust St., Ste. 202  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

ESTATE OF KENNETH M. ALGAZY a/k/a KENNETH MARK ALGAZY and KENNETH ALGAZY, DECEASED.  
Late of Haverford Township, Delaware County, PA  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to LORRAINE EVE ALGAZY (NAMED IN WILL AS LORRAINE E. ALGAZY), EXECUTRIX, c/o Lawrence S. Chane, Esq., One Logan Square, 130 N. 18th St., Philadelphia, PA 19103-6998,  
Or to her Attorney:  
LAWRENCE S. CHANE  
BLANK ROME LLP  
One Logan Square  
130 N. 18th St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-6998

ESTATE OF LOIS KYLER, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County, PA  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to DEBORAH A. SCHWARTZ and BRUCE M. WARREN, EXECUTORS, c/o Kenneth F. Cohen, Esq., 1515 Market St., Ste. 1200, Philadelphia, PA 19102,  
Or to their Attorney:  
KENNETH F. COHEN  
1515 Market St., Ste. 1200  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

ESTATE OF MARGARET JASKULEK a/k/a MARGARET JASKULEK BOEHNER, DECEASED.  
Late of Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County, PA  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to KURT BOEHNER, EXECUTOR, c/o Rachel Fitoussi, Esq., 62 W. Princeton Rd., Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004,  
Or to his Attorney:  
RACHEL FITOUSSI  
62 W. Princeton Rd.  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

ESTATE OF MARIA KING, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County, PA  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to TRACEY HAMILTON, EXECUTRIX, c/o Daniella A. Horn, Esq., 2202 Delancey Place, Philadelphia, PA 19103,  
Or to her Attorney:  
DANIELLA A. HORN  
KLENK LAW, LLC  
2202 Delancey Place  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

ESTATE OF MARY M. WRIGHT, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County  
LETTERS of ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to GLADYS BAKER, ADMINISTRATRIX, 6911 Ardleigh St., Philadelphia, PA 19119,  
Or to her Attorney:  
MARK J. DAVIS  
CONNOR ELDER LAW  
644 Germantown Pike, Ste. 2-C  
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

ESTATE OF MELODY THERESA DIAZ a/k/a MELODY LICOLLI, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County  
LETTERS of ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to REINOL DIAZ, JR., ADMINISTRATOR, 4714 Edgemont St., Philadelphia, PA 19137,  
Or to his Attorney:  
JOSEPH J. CONSOLE  
CONSOLE MATISON, LLP  
1 W. Third St., Ste. 204  
Media, PA 19063

ESTATE OF MYRNA SHURE a/k/a MYRNA BETH SHURE, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to WARREN JAY KAUFFMAN, EXECUTOR, 1650 Market St., Ste. 1800, Philadelphia, PA 19103,  
Or to his Attorney:  
WARREN J. KAUFFMAN  
WHITE AND WILLIAMS LLP  
1650 Market St., Ste. 1800  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

ESTATE OF PATRICIA J. BROWN, DECEASED.  
LETTERS of ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to



the decedent to make payment without delay to ARCELIE WILLIAMS, ADMINISTRATOR, 6735 AKRON ST, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19149  
Or to her Attorney:  
David H. Lipow  
O'Brien, Belland & Bushinsky, LLC  
509 S. Lenola Rd  
Building 6  
Moorestown, NJ 08057

ESTATE OF PHYLLIS ANN ALLEN, DECEASED.  
Late of Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County, PA  
LETTERS of ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to JEFFREY ALLEN, ADMINISTRATOR, c/o Adam S. Bernick, Esq., 2047 Locust St., Philadelphia, PA 19103,  
Or to his Attorney:  
ADAM S. BERNICK  
LAW OFFICE OF ADAM S. BERNICK  
2047 Locust St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

ESTATE OF RANDALL G. VALE, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to RANDALL J. VALE, ADMINISTRATOR, c/o Angela D. Giampolo, Esq., 1221 Locust St., Ste. 202, Philadelphia, PA 19107,  
Or to his Attorney:  
ANGELA D. GIAMPOLO  
GIAMPOLO LAW GROUP, LLC  
1221 Locust St., Ste. 202  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

ESTATE OF STANLEY DOBREN, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia, PA. Letters Testamentary on the above estate have been granted to the undersigned. All persons having claims against or indebted to the estate should make claims known or forward payment to, Janice Wigman, Executrix, 140 Meetinghouse Road, Hatboro, PA 19040.

ESTATE OF TERESA M. SUAREZ-SEMOLA a/k/a TERESA M. SEMOLA, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County, PA  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to MARTIN A. SEMOLA, EXECUTOR, c/o Paul L. Feldman, Esq., 820 Homestead Rd., Jenkintown, PA 19046,  
Or to his Attorney:  
PAUL L. FELDMAN  
FELDMAN & FELDMAN, LLP  
820 Homestead Rd.  
Jenkintown, PA 19046

ESTATE OF THELMA LINDER, DECEASED  
LATE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
DATE OF DEATH: DECEMBER 15, 2022  
Notice is hereby given that Letters Testamentary have been granted by the Register of Wills of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, to the undersigned upon the Estate of Thelma Linder, Deceased.  
All persons having claims or demands against the Estate of the Decedent should make same known and all persons indebted to the Decedent should make payment without delay to: Michael Yanoff, Executor  
Goldstein Law Partners, LLC

610 Old York Rd  
Suite 340  
Jenkintown, PA 19046

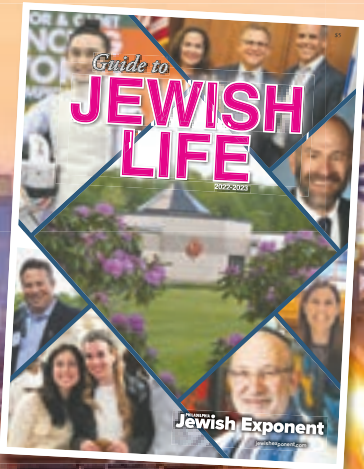
ESTATE OF THEODORE PEOPLES, JR. a/k/a THEODORE PEOPLES, DECEASED.  
Late of Philadelphia County, PA  
LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to CYNTHIA G. PEOPLES, EXECUTRIX, c/o Jay E. Kivitz, Esq., 7901 Ogontz Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19150,  
Or to her Attorney:  
JAY E. KIVITZ  
KIVITZ & KIVITZ, P.C.  
7901 Ogontz Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19150

ESTATE OF THERESA VAN HORN, DECEASED  
Late of Philadelphia, PA.  
LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION on the above estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same, and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay, to Sara Volpe, Administratrix, c/o Gary A. Zlotnick, Esq., Zarwin Baum DeVito Kaplan Schaar & Toddy, PC, One Commerce Sq., 2005 Market St., 16th Fl., Philadelphia, PA 19103 or to their attorneys,  
Gary A. Zlotnick, Esq.  
Zarwin Baum DeVito Kaplan Schaar & Toddy, PC  
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2005 Market St., 16th Fl.  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

# Attention All Community Organizations

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please contact  
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Andy Gotlieb at  
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# Wish Your Friends & Family **A HAPPY PASSOVER** in the Jewish Exponent

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**DEADLINE IS WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup>**



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Best Wishes

to all for a

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If you have any questions, contact the Jewish Exponent at 215-832-0702 or [classified@jewishexponent.com](mailto:classified@jewishexponent.com).