

JEWISH EXPONENT

— WHAT IT MEANS TO BE JEWISH IN PHILADELPHIA —

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OF NOTE

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Volume 134
Number 5

Published Weekly Since 1887



Local Rugby Player to Play For Israel Against UAE

SOPHIE PANZER | JE STAFF

A LAFAYETTE HILL NATIVE is taking the field in the first friendly women's rugby match between Israel and the United Arab Emirates on May 21.

The match was arranged after the two countries normalized relations by signing the Abraham Accords last year and Israel's vaccination rollout drastically reduced its COVID-19 cases.

Natalie Klotz plays prop on the Israel Women's Rugby National Team, where she is one of four American players, and center for the Tel Aviv Rugby Club. She played rugby as an undergraduate at Brown University and loved the community it created, so she knew she wanted to continue once she moved to Israel in 2017.

Initially, she played on the Tel Aviv team because the national team's rules required that she wait three years after her initial move to be eligible to join.

"It's been a bit of a long way," she said.

The pandemic postponed her ability to



▲ The sanctuary at Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel

Courtesy of David Haas

What Will It Take to Get Back in the Synagogue?

SOPHIE PANZER | JE STAFF

AS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE become vaccinated against COVID-19, communities are grappling with what the next phase of reopenings will look like.

While some synagogues have been open for indoor worship throughout the pandemic, often with masks and

distancing, synagogues that have relied on virtual or outdoor programming now face an important question: Is it time to get back in the sanctuary?

Rabbi Jill Maderer of Congregation Rodeph Shalom said that while news of the vaccine rollout was encouraging, Rodeph Shalom would not be returning to large indoor maskless gatherings without

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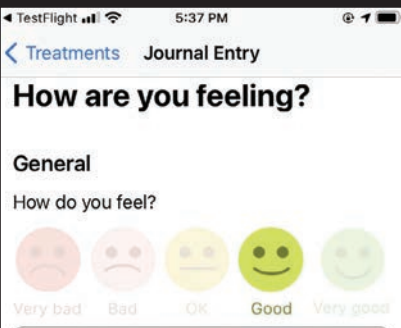
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Miriam's Advice Well

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN A GUEST-FREE SHABBAT?

A reader admits that she enjoys the pandemic Shabbat dinners strictly limited to her family and wonders how she can say no to Shabbat invites as society reopens. Miriam's counsel: "At the risk of being flippant, just say no!" For further explanation and thoughts on recalibrating our lives "during this strange time of re-entry," read Miriam's Advice Well. From dating to parenting, Miriam welcomes all questions. Email yours to news@jewishexponent.com and put "Advice Well Question" in the subject line. jewishexponent.com/2021/05/10/dear-miriam-how-do-you-maintain-a-guest-free-shabbat/



Philacatessen

EPIC ROASTED POTATOES

Food columnist Keri White loves potatoes in just about every form and recently discovered what she calls a perfect version of a roasted potato. The secret is using parchment paper, which helps make the spuds crispy without being fried. Read Philacatessen, her online blog, for the recipe. And check Philacatessen regularly for food content not normally found in the printed edition, such as other recipes, restaurant reviews and food news from around the Delaware Valley. jewishexponent.com/2021/05/10/epic-roasted-potatoes/



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Annniversary of Nazi Book Burning Marked

LOCAL
ELEANOR LINAFELT | JE FEATURE

THE NAZIS HELD their first book burning on May 10, 1933, destroying texts they deemed “un-German,” including those by Jewish, liberal and leftist authors. Eighty-eight years later, Philadelphia politicians, community leaders and students marked the anniversary of the

event by reading and distributing texts that were on the Nazi banned list, as well as those by contemporary authors fighting racism and antisemitism today. The Philadelphia Holocaust Remembrance Foundation, Friends Select School and The Philadelphia Citizen co-hosted the “History is an Open Book” event at the Horwitz-Wasserman Holocaust Memorial Plaza in Center



▲ Eszter Kutas speaks at “History is an Open Book.”

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“Students are going to play a critical role in making sure that our society is heading in the right direction. The example of the Nazi youth is a historical warning.”

ESZTER KUTAS

City. The celebration of literature and education promoted freedom of expression and uplifted historically marginalized people. PHRF Executive Director Eszter Kutas opened the event by providing a brief history of the Nazi book burnings, which she argued were one of the lesser-known starting points of the Holocaust. Kutas then told the story of Magnus Hirschfeld, a German Jewish physician and sexologist whose work that supported LGBTQ people was destroyed in the book burnings. “He was a Jewish man but, most importantly, he was an advocate for others. This story shows us how loss was not singular to the Jewish community and the Holocaust was not singular to the Jewish

community either,” Kutas said. “His legacy demonstrates how marginalized communities can help one another.” The PHRF organized “History is an Open Book” with that principle in mind. “Our foundation has broadened our mission to concentrate not only on the Holocaust, but to make those lessons relevant to our society today,” Kutas said. “We are giving a nod to our historic past but also concentrating on those people who are fighting the right fight today.” Middle and high school students from Friends Select, a Quaker pre-K-12 school in Center City, read throughout the event. The PHRF wanted to include students to educate them on this piece of history, and acknowledge the fact that



▲ Books offered in the giveaway at the book burning anniversary event
Photos by Eleanor Linafelt

university students participated in the book burnings.

“Students are going to play a critical role in making sure that our society is heading in the right direction,” Kutas said. “The example of the Nazi youth is a historical warning.”

This was the first year that the event was held, and multiple speakers acknowledged its relevance to today’s political climate.

Shira Goodman, the regional director of the Anti-Defamation League Philadelphia, who also read at the event, noted that over the past several years there have been spikes in antisemitism and increases in white supremacist activity in the region.

“It’s important to come together in ways that counter those forces,” she said. “We can do that by reading these words and giving out these books.”

Others who read and spoke at the event were Larry Platt, editor and co-founder of The Philadelphia Citizen; City Controller Rebecca Rhynhart; Councilpersons Derek Green, Allan Domb and Jamie Gauthier; and Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Kathryn Ott Lovell.

Rhynhart prefaced her reading from Isabel Wilkerson’s 2020 book “Caste”

with a reflection on how its description of the unspoken racial caste system in the United States resonated with her as a Jewish woman. She explained how Nazi Germany looked to the racist systems of the U.S. for inspiration.

“How disgusting is that?” Rhynhart said. “We need to understand the darkness and racism in the history of our country in order to fully break it down.”

The event concluded with a giveaway of books, including “Caste,” as well other texts that combat racism, antisemitism and bigotry, such as “Night” by Elie Wiesel, “How to Be an Antiracist” by Ibram X. Kendi and “Malala’s Magic Pencil” by Malala Yousafzai.

Kutas hoped that the readings and giveaway informed attendees about the book burnings and encouraged them to continue to resist intolerance and oppression.

“Our goal is to deepen people’s historical understanding, but also to have them walk away with a sense of how important it is to stand up for what is right so that we can live in a more tolerant society,” she said. ●

Eleanor Linafelt is a freelance writer.



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Fritzi Zbik, Holocaust Survivor, Dies at 99

OBITUARY

SOPHIE PANZER | JE STAFF

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR and educator Fritzi Zbik died on April 20 at the age of 99.

Her friends and family members remember her as a devoted homemaker and matriarch who loved to cook and garden.

“She was just such a loving, loving woman. She didn’t care about the excesses in life,” daughter Hanna Zbik said. “Her family always came No. 1.”

The Northeast Philadelphia resident was born in Rona de Sus, Romania in 1921. She was the 10th of Malka and

In Kaufering, she met Benjamin Zbik, a widower whose wife and daughter had been killed in Auschwitz. He worked in the kitchens, got her a job serving food and helped the sisters survive.

In their statement, her family said the three prisoners became friends with 13 other Jewish prisoners with whom they eventually plotted an escape. She became especially close with one of the other young women, Susan Pereszlenyi.

In 1945, the group began to notice the Nazi guards dressing in civilian clothes due to fear of United States soldiers. Benjamin Zbik found out they had started executing

Philadelphia. The family lived on Bainbridge Street and owned a stable that rented horses and wagons to merchants. When automobiles became widely used, Benjamin Zbik worked at a butcher shop. Edith Jeger married Benjamin Zbik’s brother, Ruben, and the family members lived close to each other.

As a child, Hanna Zbik listened to her parents tell stories about what they experienced during the war.

“I asked myself, ‘Could I have done that if I had lived through that?’ The answer is no, and it just magnifies my thoughts as to how strong my mother really was,” she said.

Zbik’s family said several of



▲ Fritzi Zbik with her great-grandchildren, Jonah and Madison.

“I asked myself, ‘Could I have done that if I had lived through that?’ The answer is no, and it just magnifies my thoughts as to how strong my mother really was.”

HANNA ZBIK

Avraham Yisrael Jeger’s 12 children. According to a statement from her family, she had a religious upbringing. Her parents owned a kosher stove that their neighbors would use to bake matzah during Passover.

When war broke out in Europe, she and her sister Edith Jeger worked in a restaurant for one of their cousins in Hungary. They were confined to the Budapest Ghetto and later forced to march north across the Danube River. They were then put on cattle cars and shipped to Kaufering, a subcamp of Dachau. Many did not survive the journey, and Zbik’s sister became extremely ill.

prisoners to try to cover their tracks, and the group decided to flee in late April. A few days later, on May 1, they found U.S. soldiers and knew they were liberated.

Fritzi and Benjamin Zbik were married shortly after the war and had their only child in a displaced persons camp. They set about trying to find lost family members, and Fritzi Zbik learned that her parents and two of her brothers had been killed, but several other siblings were alive and had moved to Israel, Canada or the United States.

The Zbiks immigrated to the U.S. through Detroit in 1949 and then moved to

the other 16 Jewish prisoners who escaped from Kaufering together ended up settling in the Philadelphia area and raising families. A few years after the Zbiks moved to Philadelphia, Pereszlenyi also immigrated here. When she found her friend’s address and paid her a surprise visit, Zbik fainted.

The two women and their families were inseparable, and they spent years going shopping, cooking and celebrating Jewish holidays together. Zbik’s daughter and grandchildren called her friend “tante,” the Yiddish word for aunt.

“We used to get together,



▲ Fritzi and Benjamin Zbik in 1949

Courtesy of Hanna Zbik

most of the time on Saturday evenings when Shabbos went out. She was very, very friendly to everybody,” Pereszlenyi said.

Zbik lived to have grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was a member of the New Americans Association and the Holocaust Survivors Association and spoke about her experiences during the Holocaust at many synagogues, schools and community centers. According to her family, she was passionate about giving tzedakah and

supported charities including Israel Bonds, Jewish National Fund and the Firefighters Association.

“She was pure of heart, she was naturally good and we loved her so much,” her family said in their statement. “She didn’t have any hate in her heart. This is a woman who lost her parents and her brothers. She just moved forward, and she lived.” •

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Health-Tracking App Promotes Patient Empowerment

LOCAL

JESSE BERNSTEIN | JE STAFF

JOURNAL MY HEALTH, a new app created by local entrepreneur Tracey Welton-Rossman, is billed as a tool for patients and their physicians to manage illness.

The app, which allows users to track symptoms in a private, detailed and simple manner, is intended to help patients give their providers as accurate of a picture of their health as possible during their visits. If patients can refer to an easy-to-navigate record of their symptoms, activities and medications, the thinking goes, their physicians can more accurately plot the next steps in treatment.

"I often wish I could place a

Vulcan mind meld on patients to instantaneously understand how they are feeling and what they have observed. A patient may not think to mention their big toe occasionally turns blue, but that may be an important diagnostic clue, or not," said Dr. Marta T. Becker, chief medical officer of Journal My Health. "Physicians' brains are honed to cut through information and recognize meaningful patterns. Journal My Health reduces the time required to gather and analyze comprehensive health information and formulate a personalized treatment plan."

For Welton-Rossman, founder and CEO of Journal My Health, the app is more than a business venture. It's a response to her personal experience with a chronic

condition, and a way to give patients the feeling that they are empowered to take charge of their own health.

Twenty years ago, Welton-Rossman was injured in a car accident that continues to cause her chronic pain. Managing the day-to-day pain was one thing; managing all of the different sources of information, whether from her body, her doctors; or her environment, was another difficult job on top of that. Her analog version of Journal My Health was juggling everything in her head and a folder. Dealing with multiple doctors, she often found herself struggling to recall who had what information, and when they'd gotten it.

Welton-Rossman's idea



See App, Page 10

▲ Tracey Welton-Rossman

Photo by Nell Hoving

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NEWSBRIEFS

British Labour Party Suspends 14 Members for Alleged Antisemitism

THE LABOUR PARTY in Britain suspended 14 members for alleged antisemitic rhetoric, JTA reported.

In addition, a Conservative Party spokesperson said the party will suspend a Cambridge politician for similar remarks.

Seven of the Labor lawmakers are on the government councils of the City of Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire, municipalities north of London, the Jewish News reported.

The report didn't specify what the councilors said, wrote or did to prompt the allegations, nor how they reacted to it.

Labour and Conservative spokespeople said the suspensions are part of zero tolerance policies toward antisemitic rhetoric in their ranks.

Under former leader Jeremy Corbyn, antisemitic rhetoric became more common with Labour. His successor, Keir Starmer, suspended Corbyn from the party.

Paris to Name Street for Sarah Halimi

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo said the city will inaugurate in its historic Jewish quarter a street named for Sarah Halimi, whose killing has drawn protests over the way authorities handled it, JTA reported.

Halimi's alleged killer, a 31-year-old Muslim man

with a history of antisemitic behavior, won't stand trial because the high court ruled that the marijuana he smoked before the murder made him temporarily psychotic. Previous rulings found that Kobili Traore was motivated partly by his hatred of Jews

"We need to honor Sarah Halimi's memory. And that's what we'll do," Hidalgo said in a statement. "There will be a Sarah Halimi Street. It will be a way of achieving justice for her."

The street will be in the 4th District, which before the Holocaust was the heart of Jewish life in Paris. It also is known as the Marais.

Prominent Jews Sign 'Jewish Harper's Letter'

About 50 prominent Jewish Americans signed an open letter warning of the rise of "social justice ideology," JTA reported.

The social justice ideology is described as a "pernicious" force that is "antithetical to Judaism" and threatens to stifle free debate and democratic values in the United States.

Organizers of a new initiative called the Jewish Institute for Liberal Values said they were inspired by last year's Harper's letter, which made a similar argument about public censorship of unpopular opinions.

Signatories include prominent conservative writers Bret Stephens, Bari Weiss and Seth Mandel;

academics and authors such as Stephen Pinker and Daniel Gordis; and leading rabbis like David Wolpe of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, who is the son of the late longtime Har Zion Temple Rabbi Gerald Wolpe.

"Jewish tradition cherishes debate, respects disagreement, and values questions as well as answers," the letter says. "We members of the Jewish community add our voices to the growing chorus supporting our liberal principles, opposing the imposition of ideology, encouraging open discussions of challenging topics, and committing to achieving a more just America."

Hate Crimes Up 73% in NYC Thus Far in 2021, Asians and Jews Targeted Most Frequently

The number of hate crimes reported in New York City between Jan. 1 and May 2 climbed 73% compared to a year ago, JTA reported.

Jews were targets of 54 hate crimes, down from 58 incidents in the same period in 2020, according to New York Police Department statistics.

But Asians, who were targeted 16 times in that period in 2020, were targets 80 times this year.

In all, there were 180 hate crimes through May 2 in New York City, compared to 104 such crimes in the same period in 2020. •

— Compiled by Andy Gottlieb

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HEADLINES

ISRAEL BRIEFS

El Al and Others to Add Flights From Tel Aviv to US

EL AL ISRAEL AIRLINES will increase the number of daily and weekly flights from Tel Aviv to the United States, Globes reported.

That includes going from three daily flights a day to New York (including Newark Liberty International Airport) to four and increasing the weekly flights to both Miami and Los Angeles from three to five.

El Al will be facing competition from rival airlines Delta, United Airlines and American Airlines. In all, there will be 10 flights per day between Tel Aviv and New York.

Delta will go from seven weekly flights between Tel Aviv and New York to 10. United will increase from 13 weekly flights to 24, including the renewal of a Tel Aviv-Chicago route. And American will launch daily flights between Tel Aviv and New York, three weekly flights between Tel Aviv and Miami and, in November, three weekly flights between Tel Aviv and Dallas.

Israel to Open Borders to Some Countries

Vaccinated or recovered tourists from 14 countries will be allowed to visit Israel starting May 23, according to The Times of Israel.

The countries are the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Iceland, Denmark, Ireland, Portugal, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Tourists will be required to take what's known as a polymerase chain reaction coronavirus test before boarding a plane to Israel. Once they arrive in Israel, they will have to take both a PCR test and a serological test; the latter proves the existence of coronavirus antibodies.

The pandemic caused Israel to record an 81% drop in tourism in 2020 compared to 2019, the Tourism Ministry said.

Israeli Man Visiting Baltimore Shot and Killed

An Israeli man visiting Baltimore for a wedding was shot and killed early May 3 in a robbery outside the house he was staying in the city's heavily Jewish Fords Lane area, JTA reported.

Video surveillance shows three youths approaching Efraim Gordon, 31, as he exited a car and moved toward his aunt and uncle's house. Gordon is then shot by one of the youths. Gordon died later that day at a hospital.

Chabad Online said he was a Jerusalem tech entrepreneur affiliated with Chabad-Lubavitch.

Gordon was buried in Israel and an online effort to raise money for his return and funeral quickly produced far more than the \$15,000 sought.

Youngest Survivor Who Testified Against Eichmann Dies

Yosef Kleinman, who was the youngest Holocaust survivor to testify at Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann's trial, died May 4 in Jerusalem, JTA reported. He was 91.

Kleinman, then 31, was one of 110 witnesses at the 1961 trial of the most-senior German official in charge of Jewish extermination.

His testimony — delivered right after another witness fainted — was about the fate of Jewish youths at Auschwitz. It included a description of notorious Auschwitz physician Josef Mengele's tactics.

Kleinman was deported to Auschwitz in 1944 from Budapest, Hungary, when he was 14 and saw his mother and younger sister sent to their deaths.

After liberation, Kleinman and a brother traveled around Europe. They joined a ship in Cyprus, where they were interned until allowed to immigrate to pre-state Israel in 1947. He served in the Israeli army, later opening a carpentry business with his brother. •

— Compiled by Andy Gotlieb

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App

Continued from Page 10

for an app that could help her keep track of such things was germinating back then, but it wasn't until the last year that she began to develop the first versions of what became Journal My Health. A telehealth appointment early in the pandemic and the first rumors of what has come to be called "long COVID" were the push she needed to try and make something new.

"It was almost like somebody

was saying, 'You should do this,' Welson-Rossman said.

The persistence of long COVID — the still-being-studied long-term effects of COVID-19, wherein people who have had the virus suffer symptoms of the virus well after their initial recovery — made the development of the app feel especially timely to Welson-Rossman and her team. Welson-Rossman, a Jewish graduate of Drexel University, works for Chariot Solutions, an information technology consulting firm

that counts mobile application development as one specialty. Becker, an ear, nose and throat specialist, contributed to the app's design. It was important to her that the patterns and trends in a patient's condition be easily legible to medical professionals, and she believes that the app does just that.

"It is time-consuming to extract and identify critical pieces of patient information," said Becker, who is Jewish. "If a physician can visualize patterns and trends in a patient's

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How are you feeling?

General

How do you feel?

Very bad

Bad

OK

Good

Very good

Notes for the day

Stress

None

Mild

Moderate

Severe

Sleep: 7 hours, 0 minutes

0

12+

Symptoms

Difficulty focusing

None

Mild

Moderate

Severe

▲ A sample of a "Wellbeing Journal" entry Courtesy of Journal My Health

condition, we can be efficient diagnosticians and come to effective treatment strategies."

One hundred patients are beta testing the app, logging their symptoms, medications, treatments, sleep patterns, stress levels, mood, lifestyle occurrences, doctors appointments and other relevant data. There are still kinks to be worked out; to Welson-Rossman's amusement, the first support question came from a United Kingdom user, who noted that there was an issue with the app's clock feature.

The app is available from the Apple Store for iOS devices and will be ready for Android and other devices in the future, according to a press release.

The idea is that, eventually,

the finished version becomes popular enough on a national scale that Welson-Rossman and her team could market Journal My Health to insurance companies and large employers. It goes beyond long COVID; 45% of Americans, Welson-Rossman said, are affected by chronic conditions.

"Our ultimate goal is giving people with long COVID and chronic conditions a way to create better outcomes for themselves," she said. "This is possible through the use of their own data, improved communications with their healthcare team, and a demonstrable way to track progress." •

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New Jewish Federation CEO, JAFI Chair Discuss Goals

LOCAL

SASHA ROGELBERG | JE FEATURE

BOTH ISAAC HERZOG and Michael Balaban have busy to-do lists that feature the importance of building community in the year ahead.

Balaban, the incoming CEO of Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, and Herzog, the chairman of the executive for the Jewish Agency for Israel, were featured during Jewish Federation's community leadership call on May 7.

Balaban, who is the president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Broward County, Florida, and begins locally on June 1, said that building connections and community would be the key to increased funding of the local Jewish Federation. One of his goals is to ensure that Judaism is accessible to more Jews in Philadelphia and that the Jewish Federation is prepared to meet the diverse needs of Jews.

"We must come to understand that Jews and Judaism are not a monolith, that one size simply doesn't fit all," he said. "My vision is to create

a Jewish community that connects people, ensures a Jewish future, and cares for people here at home, in Israel and around the world."

Balaban created a list of "musts" for the Federation for it to achieve his aim of community building: instilling a sense of pride in the Philadelphia Jewish community and working toward common goals, creating connection points and accessible ways for community members to begin participating in Jewish programming and building synergy between the different Jewish organizations in the area.

Above all, Balaban said, Jewish experiences needs to be vibrant and affordable.

In addition, Balaban hopes to engage with more LGBTQ Jews and Jews of color, believing that the Jewish Federation should be proactive in reaching out and hosting events.

"Our job ... is to guarantee that when a person wishes to access the richness and diversity of the Jewish experience, the mechanisms and responses are in place to both enchant and to captivate," he said.

Herzog, who has served as chairman of JAFI — the



▲ Michael Balaban
Courtesy of Michael Balaban

world's largest Jewish nonprofit — since June 2018, listed JAFI's priorities in the coming year: increasing the numbers of Jews making aliyah and continuing to connect young Jewish people to Israel through programs such as Birthright, Masa and Onward Israel.

Though the pandemic stifled travel globally, aliyot have not ceased entirely: Since March 2020, 22,000 people moved to Israel from 45 different countries, Herzog said.

And JAFI recently saw triple the number of files open to those looking to make aliyah.

Israel has become the first nation in the world to approach herd immunity, Herzog said, and as it begin to ease



▲ Isaac Herzog speaking in Philadelphia in 2018
Courtesy of Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia

restrictions, travel to Israel will be able to increase. For now, first-degree family members of those living in Israel may visit if vaccinated and tested before and after arriving to Israel. Through Birthright, those fully vaccinated may travel to Israel this summer, and Masa is now allowing travel by having olim quarantine upon arrival.

JAFI is also preparing 1,400 Israeli emissaries to work at Jewish summer camps in the United States this year, including summer camps funded by Jewish Federation.

If the measures put in place to increase travel to Israel prove successful, JAFI expects about 250,000 olim over the next three to five years.

Aside from growing connections between North American and Israeli Jewry, JAFI has sought to increase Jewish solidarity internationally by providing monetary aid to more than 75 Jewish communities around the world, including COVID-related aid to the Roman Jewish community.

JAFI wants to continue to influence Israeli society through the support of social projects, such as JAFI's creation of a fund to assist struggling Israeli non-governmental organizations, Herzog said.

Herzog touted JAFI's commitment to prioritizing pluralism in Israel — reaching out to charedi communities, as well as supporting the small, but growing, Conservative and Reform Jewish communities.

Both Balaban and Herzog identified growing antisemitism and the distancing of Israel from American Jewry as challenges their respective organizations need to overcome.

"We work with the Jewish world in a parallel track, meaning, on the one hand, we help and encourage aliyah," Herzog said. "On the other hand, we help and encourage Jewish communities and Jews wherever they are to ... have a strong Jewish identity and to live a Jewish life without threat or harassment." ●

Sasha Rogelberg is a freelance writer.

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Letter from 1834 on US Diplomatic Visit to Holy Land Surfaces at Jerusalem Auction

ISRAEL

ASAF SHALEV | JTA.ORG

A DETAILED ACCOUNT of one of the earliest American diplomatic voyages to Palestine has surfaced as part of an upcoming auction in Jerusalem.

The account appears in a handwritten letter from one of the passengers of the USS Delaware, a U.S. Navy ship that visited the Mediterranean Sea in 1834 and made a stop at the port town of Jaffa, then under the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

Sent from the Spanish island of Menorca and addressed to Circleville, Ohio, the four-page letter describes several historically significant moments in the sailing ship's journey, including a stop in Palestine and a visit with the first American diplomat stationed in the region.

According to Kedem Auction House, the letter's existence was entirely unknown to scholars who study the history of the Holy Land and U.S. diplomacy in Palestine. The anonymous

collector who spotted the letter and realized its importance usually focuses on the history of the Israeli postal service. That person bought the item from another collector who had been holding it as an artifact of relevance for U.S. maritime and postal history.

"This letter is of great importance to both the history of American Jewry as well as to the history of the State of Israel," Kedem CEO Meron Eren said in a statement. "It's amazing to read, if only to learn about relations between the United States and Palestine at the time."

The passenger who authored the letter, Lewis Woofley, describes traversing much of the Mediterranean on an eastbound route along the coasts of France, Italy and Greece with stops at various islands. Eventually, the sailing ship reached the port of Alexandria in Egypt. Well-versed in the geography of antiquity, Woofley is thrilled at the sight of various ruins,

noting locations mentioned in ancient folklore.

An extended stop in Egypt allowed Woofley and other passengers of the USS Delaware to venture inland where they had an encounter with the local ruler, Mohammad Ali. Known today as the founder of Egypt, Ali was busy fashioning a modern nation out of the ancient kingdom when this audience of Western visitors arrived.

"We rowed once [sic] the bay to his palace, where we were received by him seated on his divan in one corner of the room," Woofley wrote. "He did not rise to meet us, but kept his crossed-legged position reclining his head and motioning us to be seated. Coffee was handed us in fine china goblets resting on golden stands."

During the conversation, the "good-natured" Pasha, as Woofley refers to him, displayed a charisma that apparently won over his visitors.

"The Pasha is one of the most interesting men, in many respects, of the age," Woofley

writes. "The changes that he has introduced among his subjects, the improvements that he has made and is still carrying on in Egypt are immense."

From Egypt, the ship sailed northeast along the coast until reaching the shores of the Holy Land. This is how excited Woofley was on the morning of arrival, according to the letter: "The Holy Land! Palestine! The feelings, the reflections, the ecstasies, you may more readily imagine than I describe."

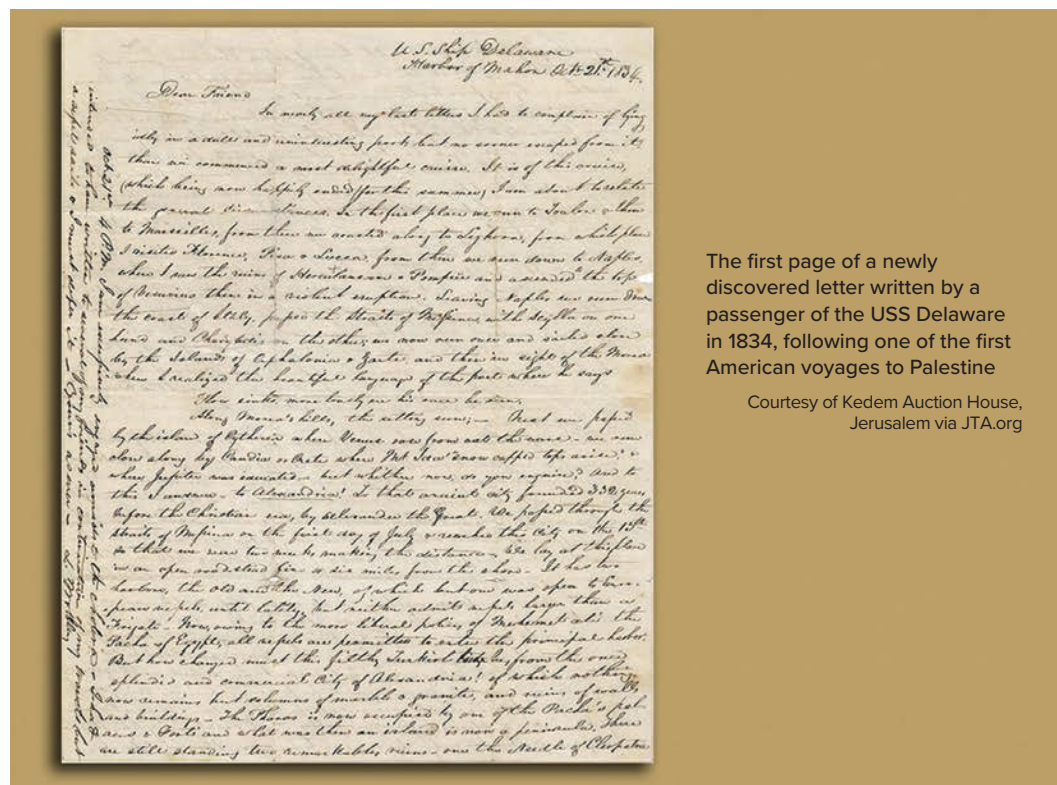
An American diplomat stationed in Palestine, David Darmon, boarded the ship and briefed the visitors on what conditions to expect when they disembark. Darmon was a French Jew who served as a consular agent, the first

American representative in the area. Little is known about him, which makes the discovery of the letter significant.

Woofley was excited to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but Darmon delivered some news that seemed to quash that possibility. Palestine was in an "unsettled state." Darmon shared news of bad roads, bandits and a dangerous plague gripping the area.

"What a pity!" Woofley writes. "After having come so far and being so near to it — Like Moses, we are only to be permitted to see the Promised Land but not to enter it."

Kedem expects the letter to fetch a price of between \$2,000 and \$4,000, with the proceeds going to an anonymous seller. •



The first page of a newly discovered letter written by a passenger of the USS Delaware in 1834, following one of the first American voyages to Palestine

Courtesy of Kedem Auction House, Jerusalem via JTA.org

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Brazilian Becomes Lone Soldier in Israel, Then Loses Both Parents to COVID-19

ISRAEL

MARCUS M. GILBAN | JTA.ORG

RAANANA, ISRAEL — When Thiago Benzecry left his home in Brazil's Amazon region to join the Israeli navy, he knew he was putting significant distance between himself and his family, in more ways than one.

He didn't know it would be the last time he would see his parents in person.

Benzecry landed at Israel's Ben Gurion Airport in July 2019 with plans to study Hebrew and then volunteer in the Israel Defense Forces. It was a path he could hardly have imagined as a child in Manaus, where his father was a renowned Pentecostal church pastor and his mother was a party planner who supported her husband's work.

"I have never been afraid of my children's future. Instead of giving a car when they turned 18, I always gave backpacks," his father, Stanley Braga, wrote on social media to mark his son's very first day in the Israeli military.

Just months later, Braga was

dead, and so was Benzecry's mother, Vladya Rachel Benzecry, both victims of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which Manaus became known to the world as a grim early hot spot in the Amazon rainforest. Braga was 49 when he died, his wife just 48. They had been married for 30 years.

In Israel, Thiago Benzecry mourned without any family nearby to support him. Shortly after his parents' deaths, he would be vaccinated against COVID-19 as part of Israel's pace-setting inoculation drive.

"I, the only one in my family not to contract the virus, am the first to receive the vaccine. What if they had had the same opportunity and the same conditions in Manaus? I felt a mix of relief and pain," Benzecry told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Benzecry's story has captured the hearts of supporters in both Israel and Brazil. In April, he was featured on the cover page of a major Israeli newspaper. A video testimonial posted the next day on the Israeli Defense Force's Facebook page garnered



▲ "My main goal is to honor my parents," Thiago Benzecry said. Courtesy of Thiago Benzecry



▲ Thiago Benzecry, left, with his late parents and two brothers. Courtesy of Thiago Benzecry

nearly 100,000 views, "likes" and supporting messages.

"My main goal is to honor my parents," Benzecry said in an immigrant absorption center in Raanana, the upscale Tel Aviv suburb known as Israel's "Brazilian capital."

Much sought-after by English- and French-speaking new immigrants, Raanana is home to some 300 Brazilian families and was recently declared a sister city with Rio de Janeiro.

The 23-year-old Benzecry is not so different from his new neighbors, whose families found refuge in Brazil for only a few generations before

making it to the Holy Land.

Benzecry's great-great-grandfather Jacob arrived in Brazil from Tetouan, Morocco, in the 1800s, as part of a wave of North African Jewish immigration. There he became the patriarch of a Sephardic dynasty in the Amazon.

"The Benzecrys are among the most traditional Jewish families in the whole Amazon region, playing a pivotal role in the local economy, including trade, industry, engineering, medicine, and education," said David Vidal Israel, president of the Amazon Israelite Committee, or CIAM, the equivalent of a local Jewish federation.

"After a century, some 1,000 families had settled in the Amazon, lured by the rubber boom and by the quest for a land free of persecutions," added CIAM director Anne Benchimol, who is also a descendant of Jacob Benzecry. "They soon created their own small communities as a way of securing their culture and tradition."

Thiago Benzecry's maternal grandfather married someone who was not Jewish. So did his mother, who maintained ties to the Jewish community even as she devoted herself to supporting her husband's Christian ministry.

"They were both very dear to everyone here. I first met Vladya when I was a teacher at

our elementary Jewish school and *madrich* [instructor] at the Jewish youth movement. She would also practice Israeli folk dance. Later, she started to organize many Jewish events," Vidal Israel recalled.

As a child, Benzecry said he considered himself Christian.

"I experienced a dual religious identity and that's where my education comes from," he said.

He found himself drawn to his Jewish heritage — and especially to Israel — as a teen. First, he attended a school owned by his mother's aunt that was popular among Jewish families in Manaus. Then, at 16, he went on a 10-day tour of Israel operated by Birthright, the nonprofit that runs free trips to Israel for Jewish young adults. And when he turned 18, he volunteered as a security guard at the Beit Yaacov Rabi Meyr, Manaus' only synagogue.

Three years ago, at 20, Benzecry decided to spend six months in Israel on Masa, a program that lets participants choose from various study, volunteer and professional opportunities in the country. He worked as a student intern at an incubator for high-tech start-ups in Tel Aviv.

"I was then able to know what Israel really was, the social and cultural nuances, the way that Israelis communicate,

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HEADLINES

and have a clear idea of what I wanted," Benzecry said. "When I finally came on aliyah, it was not a first-time adventure anymore, which took the weight off my shoulders."

In order to make aliyah, or immigrate to Israel, Thiago Benzecry submitted a certificate showing that his maternal grandfather, Rubens, was Jewish. Born to a non-Jewish mother, Vladya's own conversion was apparently not accepted by the Jewish Agency, which oversees immigration applications. But Benzecry was able to benefit from the Law of Return's clause that gives every grandchild of a Jew the right to Israeli citizenship.

"As I grew up and got more and more mature, I assumed my Jewish heritage and identity. Today, I'm Jewish," Benzecry said. He added, referring to his Israeli ID card, "I am ready for conversion as part of the army because today my teudat zeut says I have no religion."

When Benzecry first arrived in Israel as an immigrant, he moved to Maagan Michael kibbutz, where he studied Hebrew at an ulpan, the government-subsidized Hebrew language school for new immigrants. Because he was already 22, he was not required to enlist in the military, but he chose to anyway. He joined Garin Tzabar, the program that supports soldiers-to-be who do not have a family in Israel.

"The biggest difficulty of a lone soldier is undoubtedly being away from family and friends from the country of origin. Coming home for the weekend and not having anyone to talk to or hug is very difficult," said Navy Maj. Rafael Rotman, who immigrated from Brazil in 1997 when he was 17 years old.

That dynamic only deepened over the last year, as the pandemic set in and made international travel unsafe and difficult. Israel has not allowed people who are not citizens to visit except in narrow instances since very early on in the crisis, in March 2020.

As Manaus turned into a hotspot, Benzecry watched from afar as his father worked to support the city's many impoverished families. Braga announced an effort to deliver 10,000 food baskets to families in crisis as part of his ministry. He also used his radio show to express support for Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's decision to keep the economy open despite the deepening pandemic.

When he tested positive for COVID-19 last September, Braga wrote to his son from his hospital bed urging him not to worry. Benzecry was totally unprepared for the phone call a short while later telling him his father had died.

Just as the father's funeral was ending, Benzecry's mother and 31-year-old brother collapsed and were soon diagnosed with the coronavirus. While his brother recovered, his mother died in late October, after six weeks in intensive care.

Benzecry finished his tugboat mechanics training course before traveling to Brazil in December to visit his two brothers and 16-year-old sister. The next month, a brutal second COVID-19 wave overloaded Manaus' health care system, again turning pictures of mass graves in the city into front-page news worldwide.

Now, as Benzecry begins to consider what he will do after his military service is complete, he sees his future in Israel, not South America.

"I'm proud to be Brazilian and that's what I tell everyone, everywhere. Brazil is part of my story, a place of communion. It's my family, my culture, a place I can always visit, but it's not my target anymore. It's just a remembrance. The world is too big," he said.

"My parents were the greatest supporters of my choices. The educational and cultural heritage I received from them is the reason why I'm here today. I feel like I'm also living their dream." •

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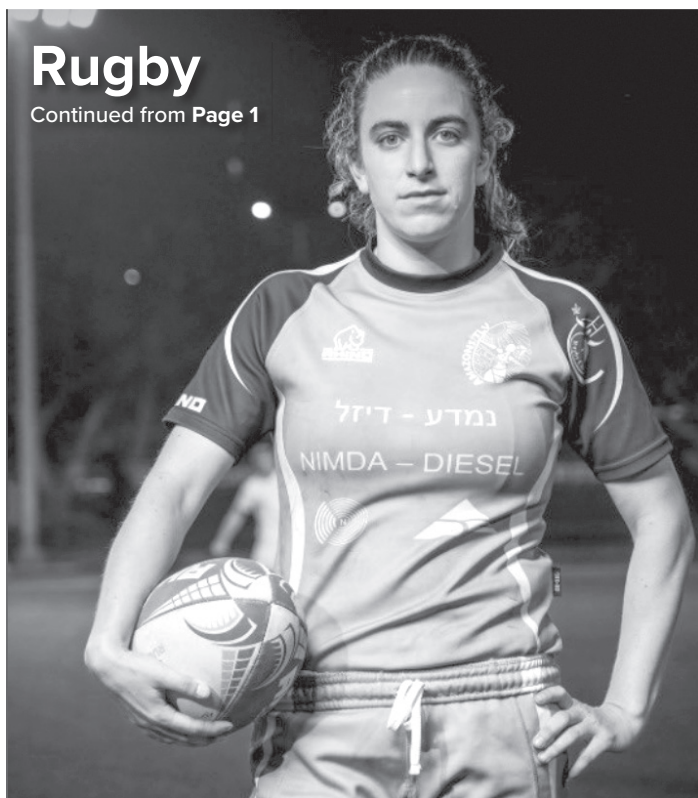
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Rugby

Continued from Page 1



▲ Natalie Klotz

Photo by Bartzi Photography



▲ Israel women's rugby national team

Courtesy of Natalie Klotz

play in national competitions even further. Last year's rugby season was canceled, and this season looked uncertain before Israel's vaccination rollout started to send the country on the path toward normality. The team was able to practice together, but weren't sure what they were preparing for.

Their training paid off when they learned they would

play against the UAE. On March 19, the men's teams met at Dubai's Rugby Park in the city's Sports City for the first-ever friendly match between Israeli and Emirati national teams in any sport, The Jerusalem Post reported. Spectators were not allowed in the arena due to COVID-19.

In the first game, Israel defeated UAE 33-0. The teams

mixed players for a second game. After the competition, the Israeli team stayed in Dubai to celebrate and held an outdoor Shabbat ceremony with the Emirati team.

For the women's match, the Emirati team will travel to Israel.

"It definitely feels historic. It was really cool to watch the boys go. We've kind of been waiting for that moment for ourselves," Klotz said. "Having the Emirati team come now that these borders are open and especially in COVID and this being our first international match in almost two years, it feels like it's kind of monumental in many ways for us."

Reut Ben David, a national team manager, thinks sports can play a key role in expediting relationships between the countries.

"Sport is a good platform and a very clean platform to normalize relationships between any two groups," she said. "It doesn't have any politics in it, it's just people coming who want to play and want to have fun."

Even before the pandemic

hit, national team coach Omer Chalfi said rugby players faced challenges due to Israelis' disinterest in or even ignorance of the sport. When he tells people he coaches rugby, he is often met with confusion. When he tells people he coaches women's rugby, they are even more surprised.

"We don't have a professional league, everything's an amateur level, which means it is much more difficult for the girls. They're not getting paid, they're all working full-time jobs on their own time, they're training, they go to the gym, they're there on their own time," he said. "It's much harder to be an amateur athlete than a professional one in that way because we expect them to train almost as a professional athlete, and they have their own personal life and their work."

For Klotz, the sports culture in Israel feels different from the sports culture in the U.S. She said it's difficult to recruit young adults who go straight from high school to the army, and there are few universities that offer sports scholarships.

But the beauty of rugby, she

said, is that it is possible to become a good player quickly. You just have to put in the time.

"It's one of the few [sports] that you can go to the first practice without having heard of it, and you can be a very competitive player in one year, as long as you are willing to give it a go and not be scared, and it has a lot of room for new players," she said.

Now that it looks like Israel and other European countries will be safe enough to allow travel, the team plans to travel to Serbia in June to play against European teams in the European Rugby Champions Cup.

Ben David said the women's team has received sponsorship from the city of Netanya, which will work to publicize the upcoming UAE match, and Athena, the national program advancing women's sports in Israel.

"It's a very good opportunity for us to make ourselves public and to raise awareness to rugby and women's rugby specifically," she said. ●

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Synagogue

Continued from Page 1

widespread vaccine availability for children and enough herd immunity in the city, state and even country to make the virus a very low risk.

“One of the strengths of the congregation is the diversity, including age,” she said. “We have this entire youth community who is behind in vaccinations, so we’re eager for that to be offered.”

Until these conditions are met, the synagogue is experimenting with incremental and slow returns from virtual worship to gathering outdoors and in small groups.

Rabbi Eric Yanoff of Adath Israel said his community has been using outdoor events, including a Passover barbecue and upcoming Shavuot celebration, to get people used to the idea of gathering in person again.

“People are going to come around to it at different times, going back to the habit of coming to shul,” he said.

He said the last few months made a massive difference in people’s confidence levels in terms of socializing, but getting back to a pre-pandemic normal of indoor worship will be a long process.

Rabbi Abe Friedman of Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel said small in-person b’nei mitzvah ceremonies and in-person preschool programming held over the past year have given synagogue leadership an opportunity to learn more about what kind of indoor programming is possible.

He said the synagogue plans to begin to bring people together more over the summer to test procedures and plan for the fall. Services held in the sanctuary will be kept small. People will be required to RSVP, and no kiddush will be served.

Friedman said the synagogue highly encourages vaccines, but would not require people to provide proof of vaccination



▲ BZBI holds an outdoor service at Fittler Square.



▲ A preschool class meets in the sanctuary at BZBI. Courtesy of David Haas

“People are going to come around to it at different times, going back to the habit of coming to shul.”

RABBI ERIC YANOFF

since indoor gatherings will involve masking and distancing, measures that have proven efficacy against the virus. He also said that requiring the vaccine would be unfair for people who could not yet access it due to medical conditions, income issues or inability to take time off from work.

Rabbanit Dasi Fruchter of the South Philadelphia Shtiebel said her shul plans to continue to congregate outside with masks, which has been the practice since the pandemic began. As more and more people are vaccinated, they will adjust their guidelines for services and celebrations.

She pointed out that moving gatherings indoors would

come with many more restrictions than outdoor gatherings and could feel jarring to congregants. Now that fully vaccinated people can forgo a mask outdoors if they are able to keep social distance, outdoor gatherings feel much more relaxed.

“A big question we’re holding now is, well, is it worth it to move inside if we have the opportunity outside for less restriction?” she said.

But the truly big question on synagogue leadership’s minds is the procedure for the High Holidays.

“I frankly expect that a quarter-to-a-third of our congregation is probably going to prefer to stay online, either

because of concerns about corona, or because the experience for them online is actually better,” Friedman said. “We have a very old building. Accessibility is a problem. There are people who have all kinds of hearing impairments, and being able to control the level of sound with themselves, is a major improvement of experience.”

Maderer said Rodeph Shalom is evaluating scenarios for how to conduct services in the sanctuary for the High Holidays. The congregation hopes to hold services indoors, but Maderer acknowledged they may operate at limited capacity.

Yanoff also does not anticipate Adath Israel will be back to pre-pandemic normal in terms of capacity or relaxing safety restrictions by fall.

“We don’t think it’s likely, based on a survey that we did in our community. People are not likely to feel comfortable being in a room with 1,500 other people for full-length services,” he said. “We are planning on doing multiple breakout services with smaller capacities that allow for distancing.”

Adath Israel, Rodeph Shalom and BZBI plan to continue offering virtual services for the foreseeable future for those who do not feel comfortable returning to in-person services, as well as for members with disabilities, child care issues and other accessibility concerns.

“We’ve actually used this time while we have not been in the building this year to rewire and to increase and improve our infrastructure so that we can continue to reach people who are not in the building,” Maderer said.

The South Philadelphia Shtiebel does not stream services but will continue to offer online classes.

Although Fruchter described her shul’s approach to safety as slightly more cautious than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, she believes Jewish

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leaders and shuls have a responsibility to help people overcome their anxieties and get used to the idea of moving back toward normal social interactions. That could mean giving people the opportunity to join services from longer distances away or simply providing a sympathetic ear.

“There’s another role that we play in helping people feel safe, together, and providing that reassurance,” she said. “It looks like compassionate listening. The fear is so real.” •

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What Will It Take for Me to Go Back to Synagogue?



BY GARY ROSENBLATT

WHEN I WAS very young, what motivated me to go to shul on Shabbat morning was the fire station two houses away from the synagogue.

My dad was the rabbi of the only congregation in Annapolis, Maryland, and shul attendance was a family affair. If I behaved during services, my big brother would take me to the fire station afterward, and sometimes the firemen let me sit at the wheel of the hook and ladder truck. That made my week.

In recent days I've been thinking a lot about my various experiences with shul attendance over the years. The sad truth is that though I am fortunate enough to have received my second COVID vaccine more than a month ago, I haven't been back to shul, and I'm not sure why. But the weather is getting warmer and I'm running out of excuses.

It's ironic because these last few years I've really enjoyed shul — the services, the rabbis,

the people, the singing. In my early years, not so much.

As kids, learning to read Hebrew and becoming familiar with the prayers, the goal at services was to be the fastest.

When I was about 10, I attended a family wedding in New York and stood in awe as I took in the sight of what seemed like hundreds of men in black hats and dark suits swaying fervently as they recited the afternoon Mincha prayer. I zipped through the silent Amidah and was waiting for the service to continue. A few minutes went by and then a few more minutes until it seemed everyone had finished.

I asked my brother what the holdup was, and he pointed to a very short older man, eyes closed, still in fervent prayer.

"That's Rav Aharon Kotler, the head of one of the biggest yeshivas in the world," he told me.

"What's taking him so long?" I asked. "Can't he read Hebrew?"

As I got older, I learned about the importance of kavanah, or intention, putting one's heart and mind into the words we were saying as we prayed. But during my teenage years, prayer for me was associated more with obligation than choice.

Starting when I was 11, I attended a yeshiva in Baltimore through high school and lived during the week at the home of my maternal grandparents. My grandfather, a European-born,

Yiddish-speaking Talmudic scholar, had his own shul on the first floor of the large cottage house. I lived in the attic, and once I became a bar mitzvah, I was needed most mornings to help ensure a minyan of 10 men.

I'd know my presence was required because one of the shul-goers would ring a loud buzzer and hold it down for what seemed like minutes while I got up, less than enthusiastically, and dressed in a hurry. I attended out of a sense of duty, and I admit that if an 11th person showed up, I was tempted to go upstairs and back to bed.

The association of annoying alarms and shul attendance continued when I got to Yeshiva University. I soon learned that loud "minyan bells" were rung every weekday morning in the dorm to wake us up for services; attendance was mandatory. The first couple of weeks we would wake up with a jolt from those bells. But somehow, after that we didn't seem to hear them anymore.

One teenage bit of mischief came about in Annapolis on Rosh Hashanah when I was about 15. The shul was packed, and my friend Michael (whose father was the cantor) and I chose an arbitrary spot in the service and stood up from our front-row seats. There was a rustling and stirring behind us as, gradually, the entire congregation of several hundred rose, following our lead. As soon as

everyone was up, we sat down, and they did the same. We did this a few times before my dad, seated facing us in his white robe on the bimah, subtly signaled his displeasure.

Over the years as an adult, with shul attendance no longer coercive, I have been blessed to have belonged to three synagogues (in the three states where we lived) that were true houses of prayer. Each in its own way was special, but they all had active and devoted members committed to Torah and led by learned, exemplary rabbis. And in each of the shuls, what I have enjoyed most in the service is when our joined voices blend in song, stirring a kind of transcendent feeling of collective prayer and community.

Those peak moments make the shul-going experience something to cherish.

Then came COVID. Houses of worship were closed, the virus was all around us, and we had no choice but to stay home. I missed the rhythm of walking to and from shul on Friday evening and Shabbat morning, feeling part of the spirit of the kehillah (congregation), and often lingering after services to catch up with friends.

But I became accustomed to staying home, and that had its own pleasant pattern: sleeping later, praying at home, spending more time with my wife and, when the weather allowed,

meeting up with friends — six feet apart — on a bench outside.

I know I'm not alone in my ambivalence about going back to shul now. I've talked to friends about it and they, too, seem a bit mystified about what keeps some of us home. We know that going back would be good for the congregation, and probably for us, even though the prospect of COVID-limited attendance, singing and socializing is less than appealing.

Are we just lazy or fearful of becoming sick? Or have we become dependent on the safety and security of keeping close to home?

What would get me back to shul? No, it's not the prospect of visiting a nearby fire station after services. It's the chance to ignite a spark of faith and commitment, and time to take the next step back on the long path toward normalcy.

So there I was, on Saturday, back in synagogue. Sitting alone, at least six feet away from others, and wearing a mask, felt isolating at first, like praying alone in a room despite the others around me. But gradually the mood lifted and the familiar comfort of the prayers — and the warm (if muted) greetings from fellow congregants — made me feel at home again. I could get used to this. ●

Gary Rosenblatt is the former editor of The New York Jewish Week.

Peace a Dream Until Palestinians Accept Israel's Legitimacy



BY CURTIS PONTZ

WAS ISRAEL JUSTIFIABLY and justly created as the place to which the Jewish people were able to return in 1948 to reestablish and perpetuate a Jewish state? This is the critical issue if one believes, as I do, that the very fact of

Israel's existence has served as the impetus for the rejection by the Palestinians of the seemingly countless efforts toward conflict resolution.

Yet those involved in the peace-making process have failed to take into account the underlying obstacle to reaching a meaningful accommodation

between the two sides: the well-documented historic refusal of the Palestinians to accept the legitimacy and existence of the sovereign Jewish state.

Without acceptance by the Palestinians of the legitimacy and existence of Israel, there can be no practical path to a

negotiated peace. For them to do so the Palestinians must first be convinced that the establishment of the modern state of Israel was both justifiable and just.

Why do so many of those interested in formulating a

See Pontz, Page 38

Take it From a Fat Rabbi: Nobody Needs Your Dieting Advice



BY RABBI MINNA BROMBERG

DO YOU WANT to know one small but powerful way we could make Jewish life more inclusive?

Stop telling fat people about your diet and asking if they'd like to join you.

Last year I launched Fat Torah, with the aim of confronting weight stigma

from fatphobia and the many oppressive forces that so often intertwine with it, including misogyny, ableism, healthism, homophobia, transphobia and white supremacy.

But one problem has only recently occurred to me, 10 years in the rabbinate and 30 years as a fat activist notwithstanding: Working with individuals has its limits when what we are seeking is systemic change. The people who most need a fat rabbi's advice — about how to “know better so you can do better” (to paraphrase Maya Angelou) or how to confront weight stigma within themselves before they continue afflicting others with it — are the ones least likely to seek my counsel.

We want our communities — synagogues, schools,

But you cannot properly assess anyone's health just by their size. Ask yourself: What does Jewish tradition teach us about how to care for the sick? One thing is to pay attention to a person's actual needs and desires, and not the needs that we are projecting onto them. When the Talmud (Berakhot 5b) has us follow Rabbi Yochanan, a famed healer, as he visits the sick, we learn that his very first question is “are your sufferings welcome to you?” We can all follow this model of first assessing whether our “help” is wanted.

You do not need to give up your own diet. But please be mindful of how your relationship with your body — and how you talk about it publicly — impacts those

I yearn for a world in which our Jewish communities can be places of belonging for bodies of every size. There is no shortage of work to be done to get there.

in Jewish communal life and deploying Jewish tradition in ways that are liberatory for all bodies. It has been my pleasure to connect with people in Jewish communities who are tired of diet culture interfering with our full enjoyment of traditional foods and appalled by the enshrinement of weight loss as a Jewish value. They are deeply concerned about how the pervasiveness of disparaging attitudes toward fatness and fat people harms not only the largest among us, but also those who are struggling to recover from eating disorders (among the most deadly of mental illnesses).

My inbox is blessedly full of their righteous anger, genuine sadness and deep love of the Jewish community, despite its failure to protect its own

summer camps, programs for elders, Hillels and more — to be places that welcome us as whole human beings, created in the Divine image. Anyone who has been even a little bit fat for more than five minutes in our fatphobic culture is already deeply familiar with the sense that they don't fit in.

When you suggest a diet to us, you reinforce the message that this space is one in which we cannot or ought not belong. If you are taken aback when we do not respond with gratitude, please know that we have already received too many of these offers and your “new” diet (or “program” or “healthy lifestyle”) only reminds us that we have heard it all before.

Often this urge to share your diet comes from a place of being “concerned about health.”

around you, especially when that relationship aligns with oppressive stereotypes rather than disrupting them.

I yearn for a world in which our Jewish communities can be places of belonging for bodies of every size. There is no shortage of work to be done to get there — from making sure we have seating that can accommodate the largest among us, to breaking ourselves of the habit of using fatness and fat people as the targets of “humor.” But please know, my dear dieter, that simply holding yourself back from trying to recruit others to your diet plan would truly be a wonderful starting point for making a world of difference. •

Rabbi Minna Bromberg is founder and president of Fat Torah.

KVETCH 'N' KVELL

Proposed Bill Potentially Fatal for Israel

I'M WRITING IN RESPONSE to “House Bill on Israel is Flawed, But Our Jewish Civil War is Worse,” on April 29.

The bill to limit aid to Israel, proposed by Rep. Betty McCollum (D-Minn.) and other progressives will harm Israel. It is endorsed by known anti-Israel/anti-Jewish legislators. Pro-Israel Jewish organizations should absolutely take a public stand against it. Aid to Israel should not be based on the falsely reported treatment of the Palestinians. The bill is not flawed — it is potentially fatal.

No Jewish organization should find merit in a bill to hobble Israel. Israel's legitimacy is denied in most of the Islamic world, its physical and economic safety are consistently under attack, the double standards applied to Israel are legion. And yet ...

Yehuda Kurtzer identifies himself as a progressive Zionist, part of the broad spectrum of pro-Israel groups. He warns that progressive values must be included or eventually Jewish groups will fade. He stressed the need for Israel to address Palestinian self-determination and their human rights, as if Israel's 70 years of inviting compromise had never occurred. And when does Arab recognition of Jewish rights and self-determination begin?

Progressive Zionists support for Israel, based on documented facts, is very welcome. Those of us who have done it for so long can use more help.

Roberta E. Dzubow | Plymouth Meeting

Piece on Rise of Antisemitism Lacked Context

I wanted to respond to Shira Goodman's and Jeremy Bannett's op-ed (“Antisemitism Mutated Like a Deadly Virus in 2020,” May 6) in the Exponent.

What they left out is context, which is that crime also mutated wildly at the same time as antisemitic incidents spread. Robberies, rapes, shootings and murders rose rapidly, often over 100% in several categories. In New York where I live, the cause is largely due to the recent “No Bail” law, which effectively releases criminals within hours of being arrested.

A recent example of this is the arrest of a serial synagogue defiler who had been arrested 41 times for his actions and was arrested yet once more for repeating his antisemitic attacks. The no bail law left the judge no choice but to release him back onto the streets, no doubt to repeat his criminal activity. Forty-two attacks, which should have ended at one.

Added to this are new laws which remove limited immunity from police, criminalize several techniques used to subdue a perpetrator and an atmosphere that demonizes them and coddles the criminal. Derek Chauvin's actions were criminal and he was punished, but you can't use him as the poster boy for all police without decreasing police morale and emboldening the criminal class.

As anarchy takes over the streets of our cities, Jews, Asians and other vulnerable minorities will see increases in attacks. It's time to reject the knee-jerk reaction to demonize all because of the crimes of the few. •

Steve Heitner | Middle Island, New York

STATEMENT FROM THE PUBLISHER

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Got Milk — Shavuot Is Coming

FOOD

LINDA MOREL | JE FOOD COLUMNIST

FALLING SEVEN WEEKS after Passover, the most observed of all Jewish holidays, Shavuot is the most overlooked holiday on the Jewish calendar.

That is remarkable since Shavuot honors the anniversary of God giving the Torah to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. Where would the Jewish people be without the Torah?

After fleeing from Egypt, it took Moses and the Israelites seven weeks to trek through the desert to reach Mount Sinai. When they received the Torah and read the laws of Kashrut, they realized their cookware and meat were not kosher.

Because butchering and

preparing fresh meat would take a long time, the hungry and tired Israelites ate what was around. Just like modern Jews grabbing a yogurt, they relied on milk products until they koshered their supplies.

From the onset, Shavuot has been associated with dairy foods. Because it is pure and white, milk has come to symbolize the Torah.

In the weeks following Passover, cows, goats and sheep in Israel graze extensively on new grass. By late spring, the females are producing abundant milk. With fresh milk in season, it's no wonder dairy products are whipped into creamy foods of all kinds at Shavuot.

This year, Shavuot begins



Salmon with curry cream sauce
tasha_lyubina / iStock / Getty Images Plus

on Sunday evening May 16, a perfect time to invite family and friends, even if you've never done so before. The Torah has guided the Jewish people from Mount Sinai to the present. A document that precious deserves to be celebrated with an elegant dairy dinner.

BROILED SALMON WITH CURRY CREAM SAUCE | DAIRY

Serves 4

Broiled Salmon:

- Nonstick vegetable spray
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- Kosher salt to taste
- 1 pound salmon filet, cut into 4 oblong slices

Preheat the broiler. Set up a broiler pan and coat it with the vegetable spray. Sprinkle garlic powder and salt on all sides of the salmon filets. Place the filets on the broiler pan, skin side up.

Broil them for 3 minutes. Turn them over and broil them for 4 minutes. Turn them again so the skin side is up. Broil the salmon for 3 minutes, or until the filets are cooked through and the skin is brown

and crunchy.

Serve immediately with the curry cream dressing below.

Curry Cream Dressing:

- ½ cup light mayonnaise
- ¼ cup reduced fat sour cream
- ¼ cup 2% fat Greek yogurt
- ⅛ cup 1% milk
- 1½ teaspoons curry powder

Place the ingredients in a small bowl. Whisk them together until they are well combined. Serve the dressing on the side in a small bowl.

SAVORY PANCAKES WITH MUSHROOM CREAM SAUCE | DAIRY

Yield: approximately 12 pancakes, serves 4 as a side dish

Mushroom Cream Sauce:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil, or more if needed
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (10-ounce) package of mushrooms, sliced
- ½ teaspoon rosemary needles, crumbled
- A dash of nutmeg
- Kosher salt to taste

- 1 cup whole milk
- ⅓ cup cream

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil and butter over a medium flame until the butter melts. Scatter the garlic and stir it briefly. Add the mushrooms, rosemary, nutmeg and kosher salt. Sauté until the mushrooms are browning. Lower the flame if the garlic browns. Add more olive oil if the pan becomes dry.

Remove the skillet from the flame and let it cool for a minute or two. Add the milk and cream and stir it to combine. Return the skillet to a medium flame and stir until warmed through and the sauce thickens slightly. Remove it from the flame and reserve while making the pancakes.

Savory Pancakes:

- ¾ cup flour
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- A dash of white pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon onion powder
- 1 egg
- ½ cup whole milk, or more milk if needed
- 4 tablespoons sweet butter, or more if needed

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▲ Pancakes with mushroom cream sauce grafvision / iStock / Getty Images Plus

In a medium sized-bowl, whisk together the dry ingredients (flour through onion powder).

In a second medium-sized bowl, whisk together the egg and milk. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ones. Whisk until the flour disappears. If the batter is stiff, add milk a teaspoon at a time, whisking briefly until combined. Don't overwhisk. Plenty of lumps will remain.

You'll need to make pancakes in two batches. In a large skillet, melt the butter on a medium flame. Using a tablespoon, drop the batter into the butter, creating silver dollar-sized pancakes. Add more butter at any time, if needed.

When tiny craters form in the batter and it turns golden around the edges, flip the pancakes and cook them on the other side until golden. Move them to a platter.

Repeat the directions for the first batch with the second. When the second batch of pancakes is nearly ready, heat up the mushroom cream sauce on a medium flame until rewarmed. When all the pancakes are on the platter, pour the sauce over them. Serve immediately.

CRAZY CAPRESE SALAD | DAIRY

Serves 4

- 1/2 cup pine nuts or blanched slivered almonds
- 2 beefsteak or extra-large tomatoes
- 1 large ball of mozzarella cheese
- 2 clementines
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil leaves
- Kosher salt to taste
- Red wine vinegar for drizzling
- Olive oil for drizzling

Place the pine nuts or almonds on an aluminum lined baking sheet in the toaster oven or a standard oven. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 1-2 minutes, or until fragrant and golden. Nuts burn easily, so watch them almost continuously. Reserve.

Slice the tomatoes and the ball of mozzarella cheese on the thin side. Peel the clementines, discarding the peel and pith.

Arrange the tomatoes, mozzarella and clementine sections attractively on a platter, letting them overlap a little. Tuck the basil leaves in between. Sprinkle the salad with salt. Drizzle on the vinegar and olive oil. Scatter the nuts on top. Serve immediately. •

Books: Falling Short After a Great Start, Going Beyond

BOOKS

JESSE BERNSTEIN | JE STAFF

Great Premise Falls Short

"Secrets of Happiness"
Joan Silber
Counterpoint

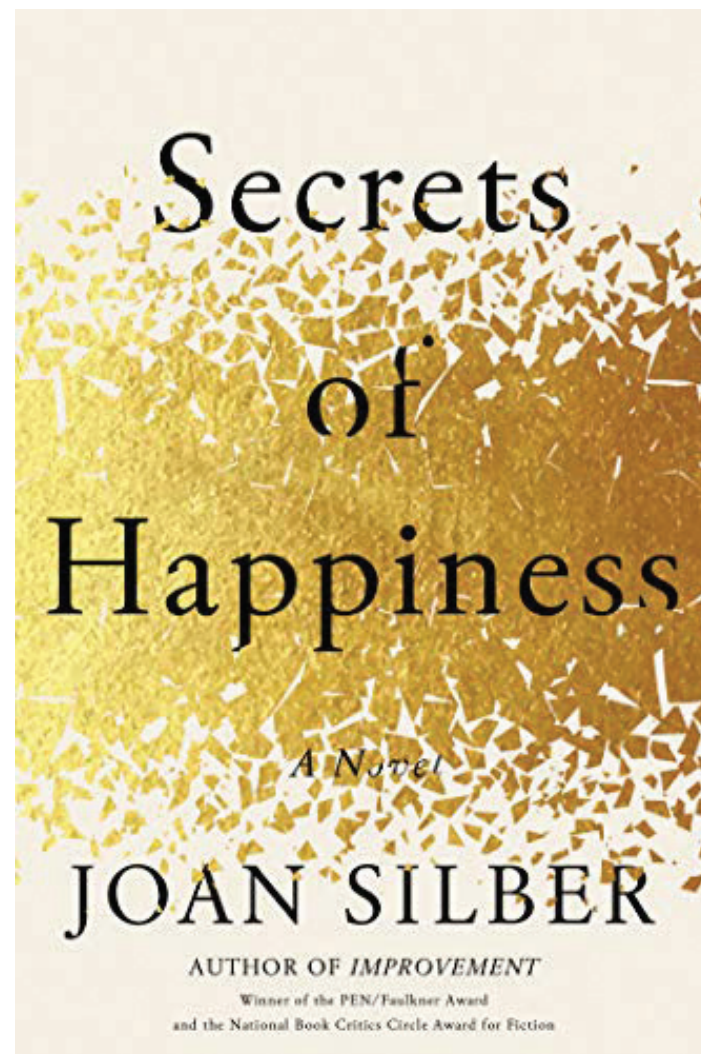
THE DECEPTION THAT sets up the story of "Secrets of Happiness" is revealed on page 10. The premise — after 32 years of conventional marriage and a comfortable Upper West Side existence, a father reveals that he has a second family in Queens — is so juicy, so ripe for exploration, that one appreciates Joan Silber's to-the-point-ness here.

Don't mess around; state the problem so we can get to the richly dramatic consequences.

But the focus falls away shortly afterward. Silber, a decorated novelist who won the 2018 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, has a particular style that she returns to in "Secrets of Happiness," shuffling through first-person-narrated perspectives to complicate the reader's understanding of some part of the larger story.

In "Improvement," Silber weaved her narrative with the perspectives of a man on Rikers Island, his girlfriend and German smugglers who spent a single night at the home of the girlfriend's aunt decades before. In "The Size of the World," Silber gave center stage to an engineer, a man who sold that engineer some screws and then that guy's sister.

Writing her novels in this way, spinning off into the minds and stories of characters that don't appear at first glance to elucidate anything about the story at hand, Silber is able to generate irony, to rhyme strange narrative rhymes and



Courtesy of Counterpoint

present new perspectives on her own characters. Tossed-off comments in one story become life-altering utterances in another; one person's family heirloom is another's junk. In exploring the fullness of conversations, linked objects and shared experiences, Silber is able to examine a story from every angle.

The risk in writing the way Silber does is that in those spins away from the main narrative, Silber needs to reassert the "why" for each new section. Why should the reader care about this peripheral character, especially if their section doesn't appear to serve the main narrative?

Reading "Secrets of Happiness," I found myself

asking myself that far too often. The initial chapter, narrated by the family-franchising father's legitimate son, Ethan, is rich with intrigue. Not one person in the first family knew about the second family! The second family in Queens is quite a bit poorer than the first family, and the mother in the second family is a Thai immigrant with shaky English. When the father dies and leaves behind some serious money, everyone in the first family aside from Ethan is hesitant to give any to the second family.

There's enough there to sustain an entire novel. And the next section, which switches over to a son of the

See Books, Page 22

Books

Continued from Page 21

second family, Joe, introduces new drama in its recapitulation of what the reader thought they already knew. But in learning the stories of, say, Joe's ex-girlfriend's dead husband's secret English lover, I found myself missing the original story too much to justify the distance from the principals. The incredible premise, so rich with possibility, felt forgotten, and the low status afforded the second family by their class and race seems to have been unintentionally reinforced. We just don't hear all that much about them.

Silber is a gifted writer, and to write in the risky, house-of-cards way that she does is artistically courageous. But there's something missing in "Secrets of Happiness," which

is a shame, because in those first 10 pages, it's right there for the taking.

Going Beyond a Reimagination

"Wolf Lamb Bomb"

Aviya Kushner
Orison Books

To embark on a reinterpretation of the Book of Isaiah, as Aviya Kushner does in her debut poetry collection "Wolf Lamb Bomb," is a serious undertaking. Isaiah's complex narrative structure, its centuries-old literary and liturgical value, the generations of writers that have picked it apart for meaning — it's a lot to contend with it.

The PR material for Kushner's book says that "Wolf Lamb

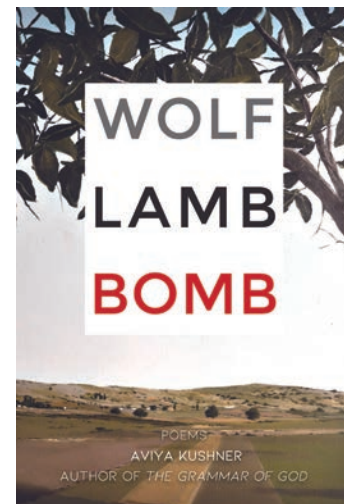
Bomb" "revives and reimagines" the Book of Isaiah, a phrase that calls to mind a "spiritual sequel" or a production of "Hamlet" set in, like, a student government or something. I look askance at that phrasing not because it's not a worthy goal, but because I don't really think that's what Kushner set out to accomplish, or what she ultimately did here. Kushner, a columnist for The Forward, was a National Jewish Book Award finalist for "The Grammar of God: A Journey into the Words and Worlds of the Bible."

Her five-part collection feels like a chevruta session with an especially humane and close reader. To read anything alongside her, one feels, would be a rare gift. Her insights into the tragedies and opportunities of war, God and love are rendered in her unfussy diction, and her

yearning for greater understanding of the interplay between sins and disasters of the past and dreams for the future are deeply affecting.

Kushner's poems are linked by their engagement with the Book of Isaiah's contradictory sense of inescapable failure and the possibilities of the future. "In the imagined life / the next step is always / a problem," she writes in "Stubble"; and in "Two Love Songs To Denial," she asks, "How can anyone expect the infinite ? from the finite?" And she asks with the experience of someone who's been burned in the past by that misplaced expectation.

Kushner's fluency with her source text is something to behold. She doesn't stop with "swords into plowshares" and call it a day. Her engagement with the full text of the Book



Courtesy of Orison Books

of Isaiah is certainly as a poet, but the scrutiny that Kushner brought, on a line-to-line level, is what distinguishes "Wolf Lamb Bomb" from work that simply "revives and reimagines." It's practically a commentary. •

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Bold Rabbi's Tale Reads Like a Movie

BOOKS

BAT AMI-ZUCKER | JE FEATURE

"The Rabbi of Buchenwald"

Rafael Medoff
Yeshiva University Press

THERE IS A REMARKABLE scene early in "The Rabbi of Buchenwald" that sounds like something out of a movie — and perhaps should be.

It takes place in May 1945, soon after the United States army liberated that notorious Nazi concentration camp. The Swiss government offered to admit 350 Buchenwald children under the age of 16. The problem is that not enough children survived that Nazi hell to take full advantage of the offer.

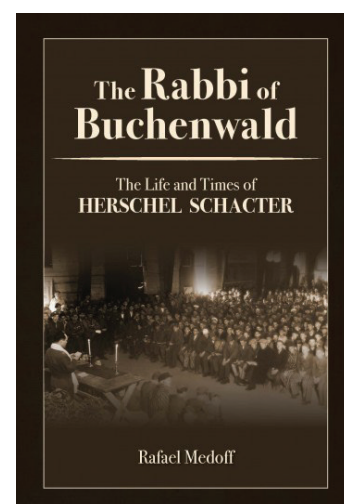
An intrepid U.S. Army chaplain, Rabbi Herschel Schacter, tries to pass off a number of young adults as young teens so they can board the train taking them to a new life. A suspicious Swiss Red

Cross inspector, one Sister Kasser, disqualifies many of the would-be passengers for exceeding the age limit.

Schacter finds a printer in nearby Weimar to create a rubber stamp bearing the Red Cross emblem. The rabbi and two confederates break into Kasser's office, help themselves to blank cards of the type she gave to qualified passengers, and spend the night forging the signatures needed to confirm that the holder is of the required age.

The next morning, as Kasser stalks through the train in search of stowaways, older children in cars ahead of her elude discovery by jumping from the train and running back to the cars through which she has already passed. In this madcap fashion, many more than 350 Buchenwald children make it to Switzerland.

Rafael Medoff's new study, "The Rabbi of Buchenwald," is at once a biography of Schacter and a history of postwar U.S.



Courtesy of KTAV.com

Jewry, viewed through the lens of the many leadership positions Schacter held and the ways he impacted the community.

During the course of nearly half a century in Jewish public life, Schacter was the rabbi of a successful synagogue in the Bronx and a pioneer in early U.S. Orthodox outreach efforts, as well as chairman of national Jewish organizations such as the

See Rabbi, Page 32



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Orchestra Promotes Jewish-Arab Dialogue

MUSIC

SOPHIE PANZER | JE STAFF

A NEW PARTNERSHIP between an orchestra in Israel and a nonprofit in Philadelphia began with Rabbi David Straus playing matchmaker.

The Main Line Reform Temple rabbi heard about Polyphony of Nazareth, a classical music orchestra made up of Jewish and Arab musicians, through a friend and fellow rabbi who said the group was looking to expand virtual programming options and raise money to support the performers during the pandemic.

The orchestra’s mission of fostering connections among Jews and Arabs in the Middle East reminded Straus of ARTolerance, a local nonprofit

in Philadelphia that shared a similar mission of using the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding. Main Line Reform had a longstanding relationship with the organization’s founder and artistic director, Udi Bar-David, and putting him in touch with Polyphony’s executive director, Nabeel Abboud Ashkar, seemed like a perfect fit.

Bar-David, an Israeli, and Ashkar, an Arab Palestinian Israeli citizen, quickly hit it off after Straus made the initial introduction, and the three leaders began brainstorming ways to bring their communities together.

The result is a virtual concert that will be held May 23 at noon on Zoom. Polyphony will play Vivaldi’s “The Four Seasons” from Nazareth to an audience

of community members in the Greater Philadelphia area. Local ARTolerance artists also will perform. In addition to Main Line Reform, local sponsors include Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel, Congregation Shir Ami, the Jewish Community Relations Council and several churches.

Ashkar said he has seen how passion for classical music can unite students from different cultural backgrounds during his time leading Polyphony and Barenboim-Said Conservatory in Nazareth. Many of the conservatory’s students have won national and international recognition in the classical music world, and the organization’s programming has been integrated into music curriculum in Israeli schools.

“If you’re an Arab or Jewish

kid, you’re in an early stage exposed to two different cultures,” he said.

Bar-David, who is a cellist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, said one of ARTolerance’s primary focuses is bringing Arabs and Jews together to foster understanding among communities and promote equality among Jews and Arabs in the Middle East.

“I believe that there is a growing number of voices in the Jewish community, myself included, who really want to see a change,” he said.

Changing the cultural conversations about Jews and Arabs in Israel is an urgent calling for Bar-David and Ashkar. Bar-David believes the country’s status quo is unsustainable without full civil rights for Palestinians, and

Ashkar believes the only way to achieve peace is to make Israeli society more inclusive and pluralistic.

Ashkar, Bar-David and Straus also believe the program will help American Jews understand and appreciate the complexities of Jewish-Arab relationships in Israel, since reading or watching news about conflict in the Middle East is no substitute for engaging in conversations with Jewish and Arab communities and getting their perspectives first hand.

“This is one opportunity for a really fantastic musical group that includes so many Arabs to be introduced to the Jewish community. I don’t think that there are enough interactions between the two in this country,” Bar-David said.

The program will not end



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General Manager

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Family Service Manager



▲ Polyphony of Nazareth

Photo by Kai Bienert

after the May 23 event. The leaders of Polyphony, Main Line Reform and ARTolerance intend for the concert to be the first in a series of events and conversations to promote greater cross-cultural understanding among Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Americans. After the initial event, the groups will hold community discussions and classes.

When travel becomes safer, ARTolerance and Main Line Reform hope to bring local audiences to visit the orchestra in Nazareth. Polyphony is also scheduled to perform at Carnegie Hall during the 2022 season. In the meantime, the organizations are enjoying the wide reach and accessibility that virtual platforms offer.

“We often focus on the conflict, and the conflict is real, and there are many narratives about what has happened,” Straus said. “But what a program like this is about is saying, ‘There’s also hope,’ and that there are ways that there can truly be examples of a shared society.”

Those interested in attending the virtual concert can access the Zoom link at bit.ly/3eyzoT2. ●

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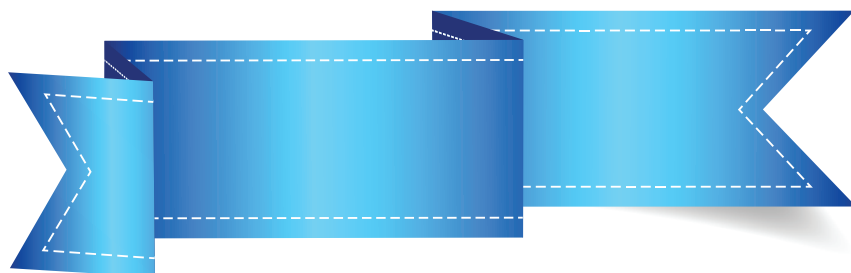
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2021 confirmations



Temple Sinai's

76th Confirmation Class

May 14, 2021

4 Sivan 5781

From Top Left: Justin Barrer, son of Jen & Marc Barrer, Noah Gartenberg, son of Wendy & Ira Gartenberg, Sarah Kideckel, daughter of Alison Klugherz & Ken Kideckel, Jaime Letofsky, daughter of Ira Letofsky and Doreen Letofsky, Alexa Sussan, daughter of Stephanie & Ilan Sussan, Lia Sussan, daughter of Stephanie & Ilan Sussan, Jacob Thomas, son of Jen & Mike Thomas, Ari Weiner, son of Sheri Hoffman & Rubin Weiner, Shira Weissbach, Director of Education, Rabbi Adam Wohlberg, Rabbi Sam Hollander

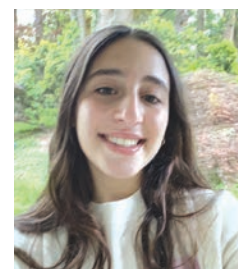


Sevita Paula Beer
Daughter of Bennett Beer & Meena Manilal



*"Open my heart to your Torah,
that I may pursue Your Mitzvot."*
- Mishkan T'Filah

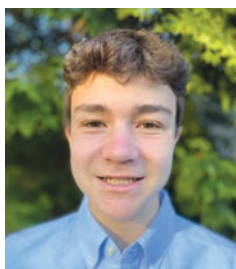
**Mazal Tov to the Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel
Confirmation Class of 5781**
Sunday, May 16, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.
Live Streamed: [KenesethIsrael.org/Stream](https://kenesethisrael.org/stream)



Samara Lauren Brookman
Daughter of Andrew & Jody Brookman



Emily Rebecca Eisenman
Daughter of Noah & Lauren Eisenman



Matthew Neil Freiman
Son of Michael & Jill Freiman



Henri James Heath
Son of Douglas Heath & Irina Bakis



Jordyn Mira Kelman
Daughter of Kenneth & Bonnie Kelman



Isabella Maja Rose Plaut
Daughter of Jeffrey & Ellen Plaut, and Terri Plaut



Jane Rebecca Rosenthal
Daughter of James & Diane Rosenthal



Mina Elise Rothberg
Daughter of Brad & Penny Rothberg



Henry Becker Rubin
Son of Aaron Rubin & Susan Becker



Sophie Faye Taylor
Daughter of Andrew Taylor & Elizabeth Kaufman Taylor



Jordan Eve Wagner
Daughter of George Wagner & Deborah Jacobs-Wagner



Dayna Francine Whitman-Orlin
Daughter of Jeffrey Orlin & Wendy Whitman-Orlin



Mia Isabella Zucker
Daughter of Andrew & Nicole Zucker



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SHAVUOT WORSHIP SERVICES VIA ZOOM Shavuot.tbazoom.info - to join our worship service

Join us for Shavuot – 6 Sivan 5781

Shavuot Evening Service - Sunday, May 16, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Followed by Tikkun Leyl Shavuot - Stay and study with us!

Shavuot Morning Service w/Yizkor - Monday, May 17, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

Our Confirmands will "Zoom" in for a "Group Aliyah"
during our SHAVUOT EVENING Service

Our Confirmands will lead the Congregation in worship on
Simchat Torah, this coming Fall - Please join us then as well.

Melanie Cohen
Daughter of Michael
and Erica Cohen

Clara Kantorczyk
Daughter of Jean Kintisch
and Todd Kantorczyk

Arielle Oslon
Daughter of Brett
and Tivia Oslon

Miya Slaim
Daughter of Daniel Slaim
and Nottasorn Plipat

Dylan Stein
Son of Gregory
and Brooke Stein

Eric J. Lazar Rabbi • Sharon Forman-Toll Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning

Har Zion Temple Congratulates Our Confirmands June 1, 2021



Top, left to right: Rabbi Shawn Simon-Hazani - Director of Lifelong Learning, Noah Berger, Zachary Bookbinder
Bottom, left to right: Samuel Goldberg, Sofia Strayer, Steven Goldberg - Confirmation Teacher

1500 Hagys Ford Road, Penn Valley, PA 19072 • www.harziontemple.org

Mazal Tov ~ מזל טוב Adath Israel Confirmation Classes Rabbi Eric Yanoff and Rabbi Andrew Markowitz

Class of 5780

Students

Lillian Abella
Morey Averill
Katharine Goldstein
Carina Hurok
Simon Roling
William Shapiro

לאה
מורי קובי
רבקה
מוריאלה כרינה
שמעון
זאב אברהם

Parents

Ben Abella & Ursina Teitelbaum
Les & Karen Averill
Jonathan & Julia Goldstein
Jeff & Alissa Hurok
Daniel & Andria Roling
Lester & Lynn Shapiro

Class of 5781

Students

Alexandar Edels
Dylan Elgart
Mackenzie Hart
Evan Naiberg
Andrew (AJ) Rosenau
Caroline Schure
Emma Wusinich

אלקסנדר אפרים
רפאלה שרה
מיכאלה
איתן
אפרון נדב
עדינה רבקה
רחל

Parents

Ira Edels & Dawn Polarine
Robert & Wendy Elgart
William & Laurie Hart
Steffanie Naiberg & Erik Bronstein
Stuart Naiberg
Ira & Jennifer Rosenau
Andrew Schure & Meredith Krain
Mark Wusinich & Meg Farbman



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MAZAL TOV TO GERMANTOWN JEWISH CENTRE'S CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 5781 | 2021!

HONORING



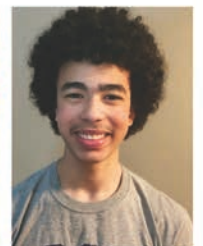
Zivia Avelin
daughter of
Alexandra Volin Avelin
and Sheila Allen Avelin



Jacob Becker
son of
Chip and Marta Becker



Nami Lieberman
daughter of
Beth Janus and
Seth Lieberman



Gabriel McLeary
son of
Latifa diPaolo McLeary



Becca Miller
daughter of
Minna Ziskind and
Gabriel Miller



Jared Nachimson
son of
Karen and Eric Nachimson



Lia Taylor
daughter of
Jessica Baskin Taylor
and Thomas Taylor



Lilyan Wolnek
daughter of
Rebecca and Ivan Wolnek

STAFF

Rabbi Adam Zeff
Abigail Weinberg
Education Director
Noah Rubin-Blose
Confirmation Educator



Germantown Jewish Centre extends thanks and gratitude to Steve & Chris Levin and Chuck & Martha Schleifer
for their support of the Confirmation and Teen Tuesday programs.

2021 confirmations

**Mazel Tov to our
5781 Confirmand**

CONGREGATIONS OF
SHAARE SHAMAYIM
9768 Verree Road, Philadelphia, PA 19115
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Joseph Covone
Son of Helene & Michael Covone

*You are Cordially Invited to Attend
Beth Tikvah B'nai Jeshurun Confirmation Services*

Sunday, June 13, 2021 • 3 Tammuz 5781
Virtual Services 10:00 a.m.



Chloe Barbash
Daughter of Ellen
and Jonathan Barbash



Dalya Dunoff
Daughter of Alana
and Glenn Dunoff



Neomi Kaganovsky
Daughter of
Leanne and
David Kaganovsky



Jaiden Kelman
Daughter of Robin Rosman
and Eric Kelman



Lacey Kurtz
Daughter of Wendy
and David Kurtz



Sara Meltzer
Daughter of Dana
and Josh Meltzer

Rabbi Saul I. Grife, Rabbi
Benjamin Greenfield,
Cantorial Soloist

Rabbi Roni Handler,
Director of Congregational Learning
and Associate Rabbi

Valarie Hurwitz,
Executive Director
Michael Drossner, President



TIFERET BET ISRAEL

proudly acknowledges and congratulates our Confirmands

CLASS OF 5780

confirming their commitment to Torah on Shabbat Yitro, February 6, 2021

Hannah Chasan	daughter of	Estelle & Noam Chasan
Michael Eisman	son of	Barbara & David Eisman
Jason Kerbel	son of	Margie & Brett Kerbel
Jordan Klein	daughter of	Lisa & David Klein
Logan Kowit	son of	Sheila & Uzi Kowit
Raia Silverman	daughter of	Jessica & David Silverman
Rebekah Smith	daughter of	Janet & Todd Smith

CLASS OF 5781

confirming their commitment to Torah on Erev Shavuot, May 16, 2021

Jacob Elgart	son of	Heidi & Daniel Elgart
Malka Goldberg	daughter of	Debra & Lee Goldberg
Shaina Possoff	daughter of	Andrea & Adam Possoff
Lea Rubenstein	daughter of	Irene & Marc Rubenstein
Raviv Stein	son of	Heather & Paul Stein
Sarah Strausberg	daughter of	Renee & Mark Strausberg
Evan Toomey	son of	Jennifer Toomey
Edward Vaks	son of	Melissa & Edward Vaks
Brooke Weinberg	daughter of	Beverly & Gary Weinberg

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Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

Eliseo D. Rozenwasser
Interim Rabbi

Rebecca Cornacoff
President

Matan Silberstein
Executive Director

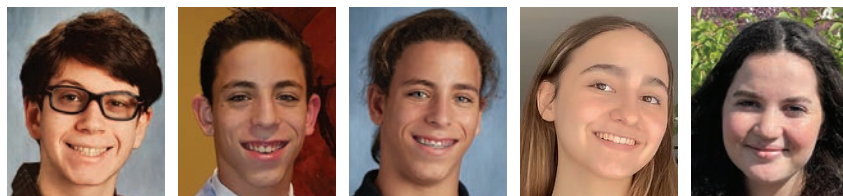
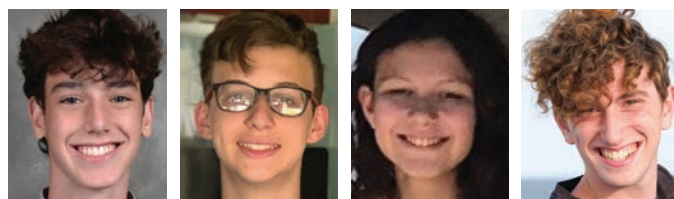
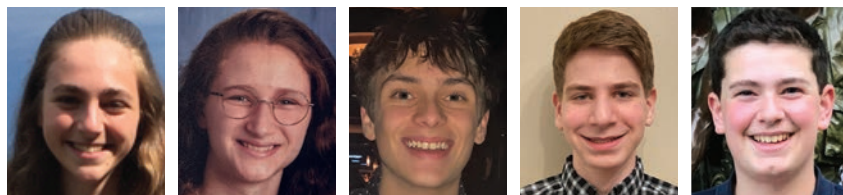
Danielle Parmenter
Rabbi of Congregational Learning

Hazzan Arlyne Unger
Cantorial Prayer Leader

Sue Parris
Director of Finance

Renee Strausberg
Director of Engagement

**Congregation Adath Jeshurun and Beth Sholom Congregation
extend a hearty Mazal Tov to our Confirmands and their parents!**



From top to bottom, left to right:

Tess Armon
Daughter of Wendy and
Bruce Armon

Rina Cherry
Daughter of Rebecca and
Shai Cherry

Phillip Duarte
Son of Stephanie Greenberg
and Lou Duarte

Zachary Feinberg
Son of Sherri and Frank Feinberg

Max Goldman
Son of Rachel Saifer Goldman
and Jonathan Goldman

Aidan Kasner
Son of Glori and Jordan Kasner

Jordan Lieberman
Son of Valerie and Adam Lieberman

Claire Mansheim
Daughter of Helene
and Aaron Mansheim

Sam Nejberger
Son of Jason Nejberger
and Kimberly Center

Alex Olson
Son of Heather Olson
and Joseph Olson (z"l)

Asher Sasson
Son of Allison and Evan Sasson

Jacob Sasson
Son of Allison and Evan Sasson

Sarah Schwartz
Daughter of Marie and
Andrew Schwartz

Morgen Zighelboim
Daughter of Carla and
Joel Zighelboim



Congregation Adath Jeshurun
7763 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027
215.635.6611 • www.adathjeshurun.info



Beth Sholom Congregation
8231 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027
215.887.1342 • www.bethsholomcongregation.org

Shai Cherry, Rabbi; Howard K. Glantz, Hazzan

David Glanzberg-Krainin, Raymond and Ruth Perelman
Senior Rabbinic Chair; **Andrea Merow, Rabbi; Jacob Agar, Cantor**

Ossi Nussbaum, AJ/Beth Sholom Jewish Teen Collaborative Director



101 Richboro Road • Newtown, PA 18940
May 15 • 4:30pm

CONFIRMATION CLASS 5781/2021

Alexis Paige Fingerman
Laura Glickman and Jarad Fingerman

Blake Isaac Rubin
Stephane and Richard Rubin

Abigail Dara Green
Nancy and Michael Green

Jordana Drew Seigal
Lori and Scott Seigal

Matthew Isaac Green
Nancy and Michael Green

Sydney Faith Siegel
Michele and David Siegel

Abigail Hannah Levine
Rori and Michael Levine

Emma Rachel Steinberger
Jaime and Eric Steinberger

Harry Samuel Rosenthal
Debbie and David Rosenthal

Ava Madison Toren
Anna and Mitch Toren

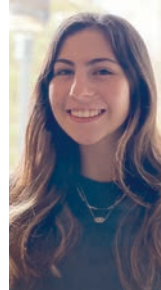
Charles K. Briskin, Rabbi • **Rachel Kohlbrenner**, Cantor
Eric S. Goldberg, Director of Education • **David Sandman**, Confirmation Instructor
Phil Nordlinger, Director of Operations • **Jon Stevens**, President



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YASHER KOACH TO OUR 5781 CONFIRMATION CLASS

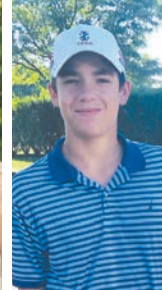
Our Confirmation service will be held on Friday June 4, 2021.



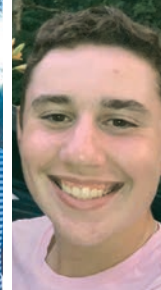
Emma Freedman
daughter of Jay and
Melissa Freedman



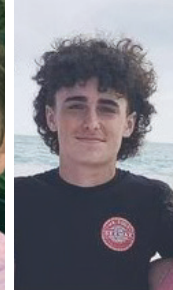
Lilah Israeli
daughter of Michael
and Hilary Israeli



Evan Rosenstein
son of Mark and
Jennifer Rosenstein



Jeremy Segal
son of Larry and
Marla Segal



Jacob Yontef
son of David and
Amy Yontef

Service to celebrate them in the future.

Glenn Ettman
Rabbi

Seymour Prystowsky
Rabbi Emeritus

Jordan Franzel
Cantor

Sara Erlbaum
Co-President

Laina Silversmith
Co-President



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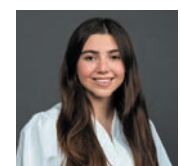
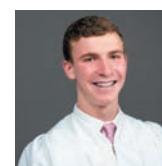
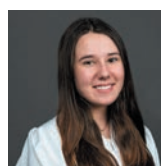
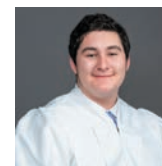
CONFIRMATION SERVICE

Sunday, May 16, 2021/6 Sivan 5781 at 5:00 PM

BETH OR CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2021 - 5781

We congratulate our congregants on their achievement in reaching their spiritual goal and recognize their passion and dedication to living a vibrant and committed Jewish life.

Justin Blake Cartagenova Joshua & Stacey Cartagenova
Brynn Copman Scott & Randi Copman
Shane Tyler Faberman Austin Faberman & Heather Rossman
Nathan Ari Fechter Gary & Debbie Fechter
Dillon Cole Frankel Fred and Stacy Frankel
Anna Jordan Gamburg Donald & Amy Gamburg
Jacqueline Germer John & Melissa Germer
Madison Gindea Scott & Tracy Gindea
Adam Mitchell Grossman Harvey S. Grossman & Deborah B. Miller
Gabrielle Taylor Jones Ron Jones & Gail Dizengoff-Jones
Dara Kisver Joshua & Stacie Kisver
Micah Margolis Jonathan & Francine Margolis
Lauryn Nadell Jordan & Amy Nadell
Jenna Rovner Paul & Lisa Rovner
Samantha Salin Michael & Donna Salin
Ellee Samantha Segal Robert & Cindy Segal
Hali Seligman Danny & Judy Seligman
Taylor Nicole Weiss Lawrence Weiss & Stephanie Sweet
Ethan Samuel Werner Dean & Dana Werner
Charlotte Gital Zager Warren & Katherine Zager



Gregory S. Marx Senior Rabbi
Jason Bonder Associate Rabbi
David Green Cantor
Josh Gottlieb President
Amy S. Abrams Executive Director
Aaron Nienshultz Director of Religious School



2021 confirmations

Main Line Reform Temple
Beth Elohim 410 Montgomery Ave, Wynnwood, PA 19196

Rabbi David Straus Rabbi Geri Newburge Cantor Faryn Rudnick
Rabbi Kevin Kleinman, Director of Education Ross M. Levy, Youth Director
Amy Krulik, Executive Director Jamie Mushlin, President Cantor Emeritus Marshall Portnoy

2021 Confirmands

 Ruben Hector Barrett Son of Jessy Sandoval-Barrett & Steven Barrett	 Josh Ellenbogen Son of Tracey Ellenbogen	 Adam Page Fox Son of Andrea & Brian Fox	 Lily Demby Greenberg Daughter of Jacqueline & Andrew Greenberg
 Julian Reed Grossman Son of Lisa & Richard Grossman	 Levi Hancock Son of Rachel & Matthew Hancock Z"L	 Graham Henry Israeli Son of Lori & David Israeli	 Ellie Peyton LaVoe Daughter of Marcy & Ira LaVoe


MAZAL TOV- מזל טוב
CLASS OF 5781

 **BETH AM ISRAEL**
Building Meaningful Jewish Lives Together


Rabbi David Ackerman Hazzan Harold Messinger Leo Fuhrman, Education Director

Rosie Ackerman Solvej Berman Ethan Brookshier Lior Cohen Dylan Elgart Jadyn Gelfand Sophia Khan Sophia Kasner Sarah Krantz Elan Kuznits Rose Weathers	Nomi Shapiro and Rabbi David Ackerman Ingrid Johansen and Mitchell Berman Ilana and Michael Brookshier Dafna and Ilan Cohen Wendy and Robert Elgart Chiara and Joel Gelfand Nataliya Zelikovsky and Jamil Khan Margie and Scott Kasner Nancy Spinner and Ian Krant Pnina and Sagi Kuznits Stacy Olitsky
---	---

May you continue to build meaningful Jewish lives together!

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**Old York Road Temple-Beth Am Proudly Announces
Our 70th Annual Confirmation Class of the
Mensch Lab: The Rabbi Harold B.
and Elise Waintrup Religious School**
May 16, 2021 – 6 Sivan 5781, 7:00 p.m.



ROB GOLDBERGER Son of Norman & Jaclyn Goldberger (Rob Goldberger is not pictured in the photo)	JACOB NATHANIEL SPECTOR Son of Jennifer & Marc Spector	SARA FRANKEL Daughter of Rachel & Sean Frankel
Robert S. Leib Senior Rabbi Shoshanah Tornberg Rabbi - Educator	Mark D. Braverman President	Elena Zarkh D.Mus., Cantor Sherrie Turetsky Interim Executive Director

Confirmation Class 2021
Congregation Beth El - Ner Tamid



 **BETH EL - NER TAMID**
715 Paxon Hollow Road, Broomall, PA 19008

Rebecca Bernstein, Jacob Krautheim, Rachel Levin, Spencer Rosin
Morah Ruth Henninger, Education Director Larisa Averbakh
Rabbi Janine Jankovitz, Rabbi Emeritus Barry Blum, Cantor Steven Friedrich
Proud Parents: Marc & Karen Bernstein, Ray & Lisa Krautheim, Franklin & Marcie Levin, Matt & Nancy Rosin

OHEV SHALOM
of Bucks County

944 2nd Street Pike • Richboro, Pennsylvania 18954 • (215) 322-9595 • www.ohev.org
Proudly Announces our Confirmands of 2021-5781 on Leyl Shavuot

<u>Confirmands</u> Ari Berkowitz Ethan Cheifetz Brett Frajerma Samuel Reiter	<u>Parents</u> Lisa and Adam Berkowitz Jennifer and Stuart Cheifetz Ivy and Eric Frajerma Susan Reiter and Sean Reiter
--	--

Elliott N. Perlstein, Rabbi	Annelise Ocanto-Romo, Cantor	Diane Pevar, President
Paul Frimark, Cantor Emeritus	Barbara Glickman, Education Director	Hilary Leboff, Synagogue Administrator

Ohev Shalom celebrates the uniqueness of each individual and welcomes diversity within our sacred community.



Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia

COMMUNITY NEWS

The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia mobilizes financial and volunteer resources to address the communities' most critical priorities locally, in Israel and around the world.

Celebrate Shavuot with Your Neighborhood Kehillot

CAN YOU SMELL BLINTZES, cheesecakes and all of those dairy goodies in the air? It's Shavuot time!

Shavuot celebrates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. There are many Shavuot customs, such as partaking in the aforementioned dairy products and participating in marathon study sessions (that sometimes last all night). This year, Shavuot begins Sunday, May 16 at sundown and lasts through Tuesday, May 18.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia's Neighborhood Kehillot are ready to get you in the Shavuot spirit with a lineup of programs leading up to and on the holiday that the whole family can safely enjoy.

Torah Through the Ancient Art of Papercutting: A Hands-On Workshop Thursday, May 13 | 7-8:30 p.m.

Papercutting is a traditional Jewish folk art form, made by cutting figures and words in paper or parchment. Join Rabbi Kelilah Miller (Congregation Ohev Shalom, Wallingford), Delaware County Kehillah and Chester County Kehillah for this pre-Shavuot workshop, where you will learn how to create your own special paper art pieces. We will also explore the concept of hiddur mitzvah (beautification of the commandments and rituals). Out of all the Jewish ritual and folk art forms, papercuts offer the greatest opportunity for elevating a simple material (a sheet of paper) from something ordinary to an object that enhances our Jewish life.

No previous papercutting knowledge is necessary to participate in this workshop. Required supplies: cutting mat and an X-Acto knife (recommended for 15-years-old and up or well supervised).

Old York Road Jewish Learning Fest Sunday, May 16 | 7 p.m.-noon

Let's virtually celebrate Shavuot with a night of learning. You will have the ability to choose from a lineup of engaging and thought-provoking sessions, led by members of the community.

Center City Kehillah Shavuot Learning Sunday, May 16 | 3-6 p.m. on Zoom

Monday, May 17 | Various outdoor locations around Center City

Shavuot has long been one of the most celebrated opportunities for our Center City Jewish community to come together, and we're glad to be able to reimagine our celebration for both virtual and outdoor classes. The first 100 registrants will get a special Shavuot treat emailed to them from the Center City Kehillah right before the holiday.



▲ The Jewish Federation's Neighborhood Kehillot have a lineup of programs to celebrate Shavuot this year. Courtesy of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia

Bucks County Kehillah's Journeys in Judaism Sunday, May 16 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Each of us takes hold of Torah in our own way, and each of us has a story to tell. Inspired by storytelling programs on public radio, Bucks County Kehillah's community Shavuot virtual gathering will feature several individuals' journeys in Judaism. Hear stories of people who chose Judaism, others who returned to Judaism later in life and those who have been inspired by Judaism for their entire lives. On Shavuot, learn from and be moved by members of our community.

The program will also include music and poetry related to Shavuot.

Torah in Living Color Monday, May 17 | 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Join the Kehillah of Bux-Mont and Torah in Living Color for a Shavuot celebration to honor the Torah and artistry of Jews of color. Enjoy a creative ma'ariv (evening) service, entertaining and engaging artistic presentations, and learn about Jews in all hues and how you can make a difference.

The kehillot are part of the Jewish Federation's neighborhood initiative to foster a vibrant Jewish community throughout the Greater Philadelphia region. For more information about the Kehillot's Shavuot programs and to register, visit: jewishphilly.org/kehillotshavuot.

Do you know any aspiring Jewish leaders, ages 20-24, looking for the summer of a lifetime?

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Applications open until May 19th at jewishchangemakers.org

Can We Count on You?

BY RABBI BARRY DOV LERNER

PARSHAT BEMIDBAR

HAVE YOU EVER been at a small weekday service, whether to remember a Kaddish or attend a shiva, and you hear someone ask, “Do we have a minyan?” Meaning, are there at least the minimum of 10 present for communal worship?

But the next moment is occasionally a bit strange: Someone — or more than one — looks around the group, points toward each of those present, and says “not one, not two, not three ... and then ultimately announces, “We have a minyan!” or that “We don’t have a minyan.” What is this not-counting ceremony?

The what is an incredibly old custom, really a circumlocution, a way to avoid counting people. Old meaning thousands of years.

Why? Why would anyone think we are not permitted to count people for a mitzvah? Frankly, we Jews do a lot of counting.

Does this mean that counting per se in Jewish tradition is a sin? No! Think about Chanukah — we count eight nights. A brit milah is on the eighth day after birth. A b-mitzvah is counted for an age, 12 or 13, respectively. We are now concluding a count of 49 days of the Omer from Passover to Shavuot.

Counting days, weeks, months, even years is not punished. We Jews have been counting everything throughout our history.

Welcome to this week’s Torah portion, Bemidbar, which begins with a census — divinely ordered no less — of all the children of Israel on their way out of Egypt, the second, in fact, since the exodus. We read this Shabbat: Moses is told “Take a census of the whole Israelite community by the clans of its ancestral houses, listing the names, every male, head by head.” [Numbers 1:2-4]

So, what is the reason for “not one, not two, etc.?” Should our tradition really have any uneasiness or even anxiety, even when God orders both? “Yes,” said our rabbinic midrashim based on a biblical precedent.

We read from the Torah only several months ago, that Moses was directed: “When you take a census of the Israelite people ...” he is then instructed how to conduct the census in detail. “... Each shall pay the Lord a ransom for himself on being counted in order that no harm occur to them ...” [Ki Tisa, Exodus 30:12].

What is the difference between the two census procedures? In the first mandate, they are told to collect a half-shekel per person. Then they are to count the total half-shekels gathered. In this indirect method, the number of

Israelites is learned. But specifically, in this way we also are ransoming our souls; we prevent any harm to any individual or the entire group.

One would think that to count otherwise is to perhaps tempt fate and somehow sin by directly counting people. So, we count “not one, not two, not three ...” to avoid a plague.

Did it ever happen? Yes! In fact, the Bible records that census which resulted in a plague, interpreted by our sages as a punishment. After Israel is established as a nation with a king who conducted a census at God’s direction that tally did go terribly wrong.

King David is ordered to census of Israel [II Samuel 24], and this same directive is repeated again later in the Bible [I Chronicles 21]. Both narratives are described by our sages as a sin that deservedly resulted in a plague in which 70,000 died.

Perhaps what made it a sin was how King David took his census suggested our sages; David failed to follow the protocol of not-counting, of collecting coins to count and the subsequent deaths were a divine punishment.

Nonetheless, this returns us to our Torah portion this Shabbat and raises new questions: Why doesn’t our portion this Shabbat repeat the protocol for taking a census? Why not also require a

ransom for each soul? Why is there no parallel warning of a danger of *negef*, or plague? What is the difference between these instructions for conducting a census? And a population survey is needed for, after all, every administration of a country needs to know for how many citizens is the leadership to provide.

What do the scholars interpret those deaths resulting from King David’s census that since then to the present have occasioned “anxiety” or is it just what many consider a superstition?

Rashi writes that counting Israelites individually triggers the “evil eye” and brings a plague, consistent with the Talmudic sage Rabbi Eleazar: “Whosoever counts Israel violates a negative precept” [Yoma 22b]. Therefore, they must conduct every census using objects such as half-shekels and then count the objects.

His grandson, the Rashbam, counters with a practical rationale: This was a military determination to ascertain the number of fighting men and their organization for forthcoming battles.

Nachmanides (the Ramban) agrees with this last suggestion that we cannot just depend upon divine miraculous victories a wise balance between trust in God and human commitment. And he also cites contemporaries that human beings are

not objects or possessions to be inventoried. Every soldier is a person who has an importance and value deserving of God’s love and our respect.

War is terrible, and inevitably they will be confronting future battles. The death or injuries to any one soldier is a tragedy and while his military role might be restored numerically, as a human being he cannot be replaced. Every soldier is or could be a husband, son, father and grandfather, uncle and cousin — part of a larger family — and each is vital to *klal Yisrael*, the people of Israel.

When we ask aloud “is there a minyan?” and we count those present, let’s keep these values in mind as we count people. Let’s also be people on whom the community can count! *Keyn yehi ratzon.* •

Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner is the editor and president of JewishFreeware.org and president and rav hamakhshir of Traditional Kosher Supervision LLC. 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 reflect the view of the Board of Rabbis.



Rabbi

Continued from Page 22

Religious Zionists of America, the American Conference on Soviet Jewry and, most important, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Schacter was the first Orthodox Jew to chair the Presidents Conference, which, Medoff shows, represented a kind of coming-of-age for Orthodox Judaism in the U.S.

The old stereotype of Orthodox Jews as insular and unsophisticated gave way, in the 1960s, to a generation of young rabbis such as Schacter — impeccably tailored, speaking unaccented English and entirely capable of leading the entire Jewish community, not merely its religiously observant minority.

Deeply researched through archival documents and numerous interviews, Medoff’s well-written narrative explores Schacter’s involvement in a

slew of Jewish public controversies. Some of those conflicts will seem familiar to contemporary readers, from disputes over Israel’s Jewish identity to clashes with U.S. government officials who were pressuring Israel to make one-sided territorial concessions.

We read of a rain-drenched Schacter picketing the Polish Embassy in Washington (to protest that government’s scapegoating of Jews), a magnanimous Schacter inviting Jewish militant

hecklers to join him on the podium and a rather *chutzpahdik* Schacter entangled in a comic incident involving the president of the United States and a pair of cuff links — to mention just a few of the many episodes in this scholarly but very readable work.

“The Rabbi of Buchenwald” is not hagiography. Medoff presents a full picture of Herschel Schacter, the leader and the man, and he was not flawless. Serious scholarship

shows us history in its full scope, not just the most flattering or pleasant parts.

Most of all, what Medoff shows is that while Schacter left Buchenwald after two and a half months, Buchenwald never left Schacter. “What I saw in Buchenwald was seared into my heart and mind,” Schacter often said. •

Bat-Ami Zucker is a professor of American history at Bar-Ilan University.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy to Go Virtual

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION of Jewish Genealogical Societies' 41st annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, which was slated for August in Philadelphia, is going virtual because of ongoing pandemic concerns.

The conference will feature livestream presentations and more than 100 prerecorded, on-demand video presentations to cover virtually every aspect of Jewish genealogy.

The keynote speaker will be Michael Hoberman, professor of American literature at Fitchburg State University.

Registration and conference program details are posted on the conference website at iajgs2021.org.

American Friends of Kaplan Medical Center Changes Name, Broadens Mission

American Friends of Kaplan Medical Center announced that it's changing its name to the American Foundation for Creating Leadership for Israel and broadening its objectives.

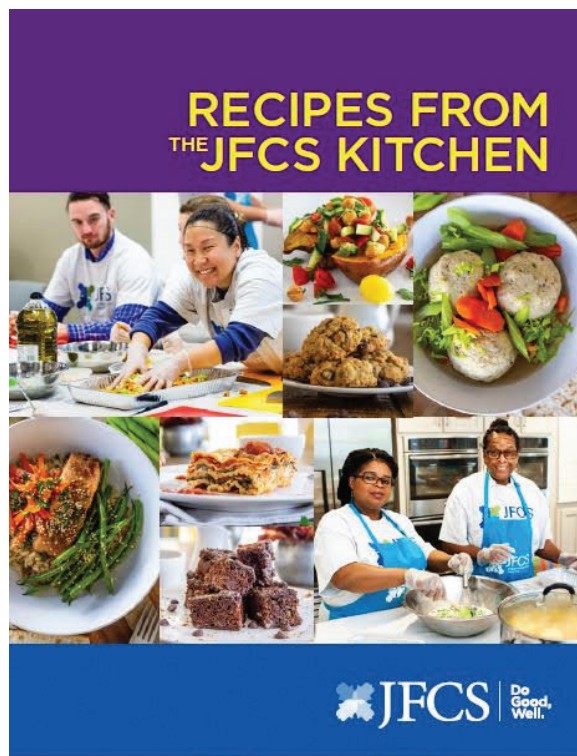
The renamed organization will strive to connect the United States and Israel through creative and collaborative programming and focus on young leadership development. It will raise support for Israeli medical innovation programs and young leadership projects.

AFCLI's launch event will be on July 4 at Congregation Mikveh Israel to honor the heroism of Yoni Netanyahu at Entebbe. Scheduled speakers include Israel Prize awardee Maj. Gen. Doron Almog and Entebbe lead pilot Joshua Shani.

JFCS Compiles Cookbook

Jewish Family and Children's Service announced that it has compiled "Recipes from the JFCS Kitchen" to highlight its pandemic work in a retrospective story and cookbook.

During the pandemic, JFCS worked to ensure the community connections were not lost. Instead of in-person cooking programs, the organization



Courtesy of Jewish Family and Children's Service

transitioned classes and programs to a Zoom format, posted cooking videos on social media and making access free to more of its programs.

JFCS held a virtual cooking series entitled "Nourishing Community," that included guest appearances by notable chefs such as Frankie Olivieri of Pat's King of Steaks and Michael Solomonov of CooknSolo Restaurants. Their recipes are included in the cookbook.

"Recipes from the JFCS Kitchen" is \$36, with all proceeds benefiting JFCS' food insecurity and kitchen programs. It is available at bit.ly/2QFGmO3.

Disputed Rabbi in Jerusalem Has Connection with Orthodox Beit Din of Philadelphia

Ultra-Orthodox Rabbi Michael Elkohen of Jerusalem, who anti-missionary groups contend is actually a

Christian missionary sent to Israel to convert Jews, has a Philadelphia connection, The Jerusalem Post reported.

Elkohen, 42, who was born Michael Elk in Salem County, New Jersey, has denied the claims. He said he was born Jewish and had been a Christian missionary, but abandoned the religion in 2014. He referred questions about his Jewishness to the yeshiva dean. In turn, Rabbi Gideon Holland referenced a bill of divorce for Elkohen and his first wife from the Orthodox Beit Din of Philadelphia.

That Jewish court of law has since weighed in.

"It is impossible to rely on the Jewishness of the givers and receivers of bills of divorce that they are Jews for all purposes and that there is no doubt about them at all," wrote Rabbi Yitzchok Meyer Leizerowski, one of the court's rabbinical judges. "Matters are clarified as much as possible, a bill of divorce is written and given, however it is already impossible to clarify their past in a thorough document."

"We are announcing publicly that it is impossible to rely just on a bill of divorce document given by a rabbinical court in order to determine Jewish status."

Leizerowski told the Post that the court didn't look into Elkohen's Jewish status when it was approached about the divorce.

Rutgers Honors Students for Excellence in Jewish Studies

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey honored several students virtually on May 4 for their academic achievements in Jewish studies.

The ceremony, which was sponsored by the Department of Jewish Studies and the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers, featured student presentations about their work and experiences in Jewish studies.

Students from the Philadelphia area honored included junior Grace Herdelin of Haddonfield, New Jersey; senior Brianna Newman of Burlington, New Jersey; and graduate student Steven Weinberg of Elkins Park. •

— Compiled by Andy Gotlieb



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ABRAMSON

Louis I. Abramson, April 19, 2021. Beloved husband for 70 years of Gloria (nee Sitnick), died peacefully surrounded by love. Loving father of the late Brenda Fineberg (Louis), Debra Ryan (the late Rick) and Sandi Foster (Joseph). Beloved and proud grandfather of Rachael, Matthew (Lauren), Brooke (Tim), Faith (Adam), Eric, Carly (Ray), Alisa (Chris), Paul (Giannis) and David. Cherished brother of Allan (Sheila) and beloved by nieces, nephews, relatives and friends. Lou grew up in South Phila. and joined the Pennsylvania National Guard after graduating from high school. He served during the Korean War and was honorably discharged after 13 years and joined the Jewish War Veterans. He was a National Commander of the J.W.V., serving all veterans with devotion and support. He was Commander of Post #697 and an active member of the Holocaust program. He was Commander of Post #98, Commander of Phila. County Council, Dept. of PA, President of Delaware Valley Veterans Home Advisory Board, Finance Office for Veteran Guard 3rd Regiment Infantry National Guard, PA., and United Veteran Council Phila. He was President of Tiferes B'nai Israel Synagogue and received the Man of the Year Award. He will be sadly missed by his family and all who knew him.

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CAPLAN

Lynne Ann Caplan, died on May 1, 2021. Lynne beat ovarian cancer for more than 16 years, a remarkable accomplishment, physically and mentally. Lynne was a graduate of Brandies University, and operated her own business organizing homes. Lynne cherished the time she spent raising her nephew David Walkenstein. Lynne is survived by many devoted friends, with whom Lynne generously shared her love, strength and wisdom. Lynne will be missed dearly by all who knew her. Donations in Lynne's memory may be made to Philadundance, Lilabundance, Mazon or Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance.

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CHANSKY

Norman Morton Chansky of Swarthmore, PA died on April 30th, 2021. He was the devoted husband of the late Elissa Chansky (nee Ellsas). Norman graduated from Boston University and Columbia University. A long time professor of educational psychology and statistics at Temple University, he retired as Professor Emeritus. Norman was also an avid gardener, lover of nature, a prolific writer and musician. Norman is survived by his five children Linda Janidlo (Thom), James (Katherine), Keren Suberri (Moshe), Tamar Chansky Stern (Phillip) and Matthew (Lisa), his grandchildren Elizabeth Hunt (Ryan), Sara Preheim (Scott), Bethany Janildo, Allison Burch (Bobby), Isaac Gilad Suberri (Alan Mitchell) Mer, Raia and Emma June; great grandchildren Abby, Corinna, Tyler, Daniella, Eitan, Nadav, Arran, Rona, Eleanor, and Solomon, as well as many nieces and nephews, cousins, along with friends. And by Sophie Mulugeta Gordon who was treasured by both Elissa and Norman. Donations in Memory of Norman can be made to: HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) www.hias.org; Chester Children's Chorus www.swarthmore.edu/chester-childrens-chorus/gift

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FINK

Mr. Byron Fink, 90 passed away on Sunday, May 2, 2021 at home surrounded by his loving family. He was born in the Bronx, NY and lived most of his life in his beloved Philadelphia and Hillsborough for the past 3 years. Byron worked his entire career at the Jewish Exponent in Philadelphia, starting as an errand boy and working himself up to the role of Production Director for 50 years retiring in 1996. Byron loved the theatre, opera and music of all kinds. He was a well-known collector of art, ceramics, Tiffany lamps and especially British Biscuit Tins. He was featured for his collections in the Philadelphia Inquirer, Collector's Magazine and Inside Magazine. Byron is best remembered for his quick wit which kept all that knew him amused. He is predeceased by his parents, Robert and Shirley Fink, his sister, Zelma Fink, his brothers Howard and Theodore Fink. Byron is survived by his brother (Elias) David and his wife (Jennifer). All Services were private. Memorial contributions can be made in Byron's name to a charity of your choice.

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FRANK

Dr. George A. Frank, Esq., on May 5, 2021. Born in Hungary, arrived in U.S. 1957. Son to Alex and Eva, beloved husband of Carole Shames (nee. Farber). Loving father of Cheryl Lynne Shames and Charles Lawrence (Ashley) Shames. Doting grandfather of Eden Rose, Zachary Jay and Sydney Juliet. BS in Chemistry, Colo. State U. and PhD in Organic Chemistry, MIT. JD cum laude, Temple Univ. While in law school, joined Du Pont Corp. and ascended to intellectual property law group leader. Upon retiring from Du Pont, Dr. Frank joined Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP as of counsel, chair licensing and tech transfer practice group. In his spare time, Dr. Frank enjoyed tennis and squash winning a number of amateur tournaments, travel, tai chi, books and opera. Contributions in his memory may be made to Chabad of the Main Line or Main Line Reform Temple.

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GORDON

Philip Alan Gordon passed away May 4, 2021. Beloved husband of Sharon Gordon (nee Simon). Loving step-father of Samantha Goldenberg (Matt Vasaturo). Contributions in his memory may be made to The Lung Cancer Research Foundation. www.lungcancerresearchfoundation.org

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HEIMAN

Barbara Lawson Heiman died on May 2, 2021. She was born in Michigan, in 1930, and her midwestern upbringing colored her view of life with no-nonsense practicality, a hunger for continuous learning, and a sense of humor that the people in her life depended on to bring a laugh or smile to their lives. She went back to college at the age of 46, which she called "recycling herself," and earned an ASN, BSN, and MSN in nursing. She taught nursing at Gwynedd Mercy College for 20 years before retiring in 1999. Her love of classical music, opera, theater, and family filled her life with joy and satisfaction. She is survived by three children: Lisa (Clarke) Fowler, Deborah (Brad) Dick, and Robert (Sharon) Heiman; and seven grandchildren: Matthew, Julia, and Zachary Dick; Nathaniel Fowler; and Alex, David, and Andrew Heiman. Beloved sister of Judith Thatcher, and Lois Cherin (deceased). She is especially grateful for the love and friendship of Cissy Passanza, and of her companion, Jules Mindlin (deceased).



KOLSBY

Herbert F. Kolsby, July 10, 1926 - May 1, 2021. Preeminent trial lawyer, law professor, tireless advocate and fundraiser for the State of Israel, died peacefully in his sleep on Saturday at the age of 94. He was a loving husband for 72 years of the late Hermine Wilson Kolsby, his childhood sweetheart; he was also a devoted father, grandfather and great-grandfather. A founding partner of Philadelphia law firm, Kolsby Gordon, he was for five decades a fierce advocate for the common man and woman, by holding entities like drug companies and auto manufacturers accountable for their egregious errors. He is among the first attorneys responsible for bringing to light the dangers of Diethylstilbestrol (DES) and the Dalkon Shield. A graduate of Temple Law School in 1951, forty years later he helped create their nationally-ranked Masters Program in Trial Advocacy, and he is honored by a Distinguished Lectureship there in his name. In 1993, he was the recipient of the prestigious Michael A. Musmanno Award—given annually to "the person best exemplifying the same high integrity, courage, and concern for human rights as exhibited by the late Justice." He was a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, and he is listed in all recent editions of the Best Lawyers in America. He was General Chairman of the Federation Allied Jewish Appeal and president of Temple Adath Israel in Merion. Anyone who heard him speak publicly felt his powerful presence. Philadelphia Magazine called him "the best orator in the city." He was also an incredibly charming and funny man with a repertoire of several thousand jokes. He was always a delightful conversationalist. He never lost his power to articulate, and was as sharp just before his death as he had been in his prime. He is survived by his brother, Charles Kolsby (Beryl); his children, Dana Edenbaum (Saul), Robert Kolsby (Kathy) and Paul Kolsby (Sam); his grandchildren, Hal (Martina), Ted, Alice, Charlie and Wilson; and his great-grandsons, Jesse and Leo. Contributions may be made to the charity of your choice.

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LEVINSON

Lee S. Levinson (02/05/1925-04/28/2021) Lee lived with honesty, integrity, and a very dry wit. He passed away with his family at his side. Lee was born in Chicago, IL, to Mollie Slott and Charles Levinson. At the age of eight, his family moved to New York City for his mother's position with the Chicago Tribune New York Syndicate Newspapers. As a result, Lee and his older brother, Bill, led an extraordinary life surrounded by cartoonists, media executives, and notable national columnists. Lee graduated Townsend Harris High School in Manhattan at the age of fifteen. He attended Ohio State University, where he joined Phi Sigma Delta fraternity prior to enrolling in Naval Officer Training School at the outbreak of World War II. Lee served with distinction as a Lieutenant Junior Grade in the South Pacific, participating in numerous campaigns and support missions. After the war, Lee returned to Ohio State, where he met the love of his life and wife of 72 years, Johann. Lee and Johann settled in Philadelphia to raise their family. Lee ran a successful meat packing company and was a founding member of Temple Beth Hillel, Wynnewood, PA. Lee remained an avid sports fan of his beloved Ohio State Buckeyes, Chicago Cubs and Philly sports teams. Upon retirement to South Florida, Lee was a constant fixture on the tennis courts well into his eighties despite his declining health. Lee was a generous husband, dad, grandfather and great-grandfather. He will be missed dearly. Lee is survived by his wife, Johann; daughter Linda Hertz (Lee); son Richard (Cherie); grandchildren Meryl Junik (Kyle), Rachel Licht (Gregg), Sundri Simon (Keith) and James; and great-grandchildren Evan, Aaron, Margot, Shay, Emilia, and Zoe. His family is eternally grateful to his caregivers, John Ebanks and Mittylyn Holness. Internment was private. Donations to your favorite charity or Israel Tennis & Education Centers are warmly appreciated (www.itecenters.org).

MARDER

Nancy A. Marder (nee Segall) May 4, 2021, wife of the late Isadore, of Merion, PA, mother of William Z. Marder (Mona), Ellen Pries (Michael) and the late Stephen Marder (Maribeth); grandmother of Daniel (Jessica) Pries, Jennie (Adam) Friend, Peter, Noah, David and Matthew Marder; great grandmother of Jacob, Liza, Jamie and Jack. Graduate of Phila. High School for Girls and Univ. of PA. Graveside Services were private. Contributions in her memory may be made to Har Zion Temple.
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NOVICK

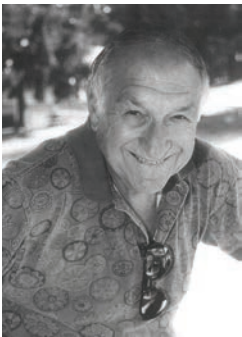
Morris Novick on April 30, 2021. Husband of Eleanor (nee Bessel) of Penn Valley, PA. Father of Gary (Joy) Novick, Jerold (Judy) Novick and William (Ellen) Novick. Grandfather of Beth, Sophie, Max, Jacob, Daniel, Charlie and Theo. Contributions in his memory may be made to Golden Slipper Camp and Jewish Relief Agency.
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SKOLNICK

Israel Skolnick (Iz), on May 1, 2021, age 95, died peacefully in Abington, PA. Beloved father of Stuart (Anita) and Cheryl, devoted grandfather of Deena (Michael), Eliot (Simone), Jonathan (Sarah), Joshua (Ilana) and Ari. He was an endlessly enthusiastic great-grandfather to Brandon, Melora, Gabriel, Bea, and Matan, and a dear brother to Yetta Erlich. He was predeceased by Bea, his beloved wife of 50 years, and his sisters Miriam Seres and Libby Roth. A proud graduate of Simon Gratz High School, World War II veteran and active member of JWV Drizin-Weiss Post #215. He was universally adored for his unshakeable positivity and selflessness – a true mensch in every sense of the word.
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SUKONICK

Irene Sukonick (nee Vernick), 96, of Warminster, PA, passed away Monday, April 26, 2021 and was the loving wife of 64 years to her predeceased husband, Merrill (2007). Irene was the 3rd of 4 children of Eva (nee Polish) and Morris Vernick, who died in 1966 and 1964, respectively. Irene was also predeceased by her eldest child (2016), Karen Nathan (late Kaj) as well as her siblings: (2009) Kay Bloch (late Albert), (2010) Nathan Vernick (late Ann Ruth) and Eleanor Vernitsky (1925). Irene is survived by 2 proud daughters: Marilyn Sukonick-Zeff and Wendylyne Sukonick in addition to her forever son-in-law, Gary Zeff. Her 4 grandchildren will miss their Bubbie dearly--Erik Nathan (Lauren Drell), Nicole McCoy (Jason), Brynne-Eva Zeff and Samuel Zeff. Numerous nieces and nephews will also miss their aunt. Irene graduated from Dobbins Vocational School. She was devoted to her family. As an outstanding cook, baker and hostess, Irene shined when her entire family gathered together for holidays and milestones. Her hobbies included bridge, reading, sculpting, painting and golf. Irene adored her hometown sports teams, especially the Eagles and Phillies. Irene also passed along her love of animals to her family. Those who knew Irene best appreciated her sound advice and dry sense of humor. Funeral services and burial were private.
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SUPNICK

Judith S. Supnick (nee Schaffer), a retired teacher from Elkins Park, on May 3, 2021. Judy is survived by her daughter, Amy Supnick (Dan Roth) and her brother, Robert Schaffer. Funeral services are private. Contributions in her memory may be made to the Montgomery County SPCA, 19 E Ridge Pike, Conshohocken PA 19428 or to the American Foundation for the Blind, 112 W 34th St., New York NY 10120.
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Philadelphia - A new report has just been released which reveals 7 costly mistakes that most homeowners make when selling their home, and a 9 Step System that can help you sell your home fast and for the most amount of money.

This industry report shows clearly how the traditional ways of selling homes have become increasingly less and less effective in today's market. The fact of the matter is that fully three quarters of homesellers don't get what they want for their homes and become disillusioned and - worse - financially disadvantaged when they put their homes on the market.

As this report uncovers, most homesellers make 7

deadly mistakes that cost them literally thousands of dollars. The good news is that each and every one of these mistakes is entirely preventable. In answer to this issue, industry insiders have prepared a free special report entitled "The 9 Step System to Get Your Home Sold Fast and For Top Dollar".

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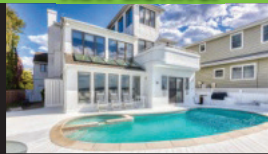
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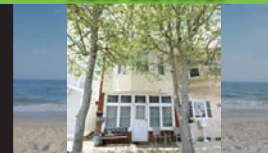
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ESTATE NOTICES

ESTATE OF MARION DOROTHY WATERS a/k/a MARION WATERS, MARION D. WATERS, MARIAN DOROTHY WATERS, MARIAN D. WATERS, DECEASED
Late of Philadelphia
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 PAUL WATERS, ADMINISTRATOR, c/o Nicholas W. Stathes, Esq., 899 Cassatt Rd., Ste. 320, Berwyn, PA 19312, Or to his Attorney: NICHOLAS W. STATHES TOSCANI, STATHES & ZOELLER, LLC 899 Cassatt Rd., Ste. 320 Berwyn, PA 19312

ESTATE of MARVIS FRANKLIN; FRANKLIN, MARVIS, Deceased
Late of Philadelphia, 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: Frank A. Franklin, II, c/o Edgar R. Einhorn, Esq., 7 N. Columbus Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19106, Executor. Edgar R. Einhorn, Esq. 7 N. Columbus Blvd. Unit #243 Philadelphia, PA 19106

ESTATE of Peter Edward Pertschi aka Peter Pertschi; Pertschi, Peter Edward aka Pertschi, Peter, 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: Kristopher T. Pertschi, c/o Hope Bosniak, Esq., Dessen, Moses & Rossitto, 600 Easton Rd., Willow Grove, PA 19090, Administrator, CTA. Dessen, Moses & Rossitto 600 Easton Rd. Willow Grove, PA 19090

ESTATE of REMEE ZOE KLOS, Deceased
Late of Pennsylvania
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 Caleb Deitch, Executor, c/o their attorney Debra G. Speyer, Two Bala Plaza, Suite 300, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004.

ESTATE OF RONALD RUBIN a/k/a RONNIE RUBIN, 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 GEORGE F. RUBIN, EXECUTOR, c/o Lawrence S. Chane, Esq., 130 N. 18th St., Philadelphia, PA 19103-6998, Or to his Attorney: LAWRENCE S. CHANE BLANK ROME LLP 130 N. 18th St. Philadelphia, PA 19103-6998

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ESTATE NOTICES

ESTATE OF MARY AGNES JEFFERY, DECEASED
Late of Philadelphia
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 MEGAN JEFFERY, EXECUTRIX, c/o Danielle M. Yacono, Esq., 2202 Delancey Place, Philadelphia, PA 19103, Or to her Attorney: DANIELLE M. YACONO THE LAW OFFICES OF PETER L. KLENK & ASSOCIATES 2202 Delancey Place Philadelphia, PA 19103

ESTATE OF MICHAEL DAN GOTTLIEB, 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 Kathleen Reilly, Executrix, c/o Mark J. Davis, Esq., 644 Germantown Pike, Ste. 2-C, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444; Mark J. Davis, Atty. Connor Elder Law 644 Germantown Pike Ste. 2-C Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

ESTATE OF TREVOR R. HADLEY, 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 CHERYL BORCK-HADLEY, EXECUTRIX, c/o Melvyn H. Rothbard, Esq., 23 S. 23rd St., Unit 3C, Philadelphia, PA 19103, Or to her Attorney: MELVYN H. ROTHBARD 23 S. 23rd St., Unit 3C Philadelphia, PA 19103

FICTITIOUS NAME

Fictitious Name Registration
Notice is hereby given that an Application for Registration of Fictitious Name was filed in the Department of State of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on March 04, 2021 for **April & October** at 4102 Manayunk Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19128. The name and address of each individual interested in the business is Susan Kanoff at 4102 Manayunk Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19128. This was filed in accordance with 54 PaC.S. 311.417

Fictitious Name Registration
Notice is hereby given that an Application for Registration of Fictitious Name was filed in the Department of State of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on March 01, 2021 for **Entirely Organized** at 141 Gulph Lane Conshohocken, PA 19428. The name and address of each individual interested in the business is Christine Foster at 141 Gulph Lane Conshohocken, PA 19428. This was filed in accordance with 54 PaC.S. 311.417

Fictitious Name Registration
Notice is hereby given that an Application for Registration of Fictitious Name was filed in the Department of State of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on March 01, 2021 for **High Beauty** at 2412 W Allegheny Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19132. The name and address of each individual interested in the business is Zahira M. Davis at 2412 W Allegheny Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19132. This was filed in accordance with 54 PaC.S. 311.417

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Fictitious Name Registration
Notice is hereby given that an Application for Registration of Fictitious Name was filed in the Department of State of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on March 04, 2021 for **Love&War** at 6124 Christian St. Philadelphia, PA 19143. The name and address of each individual interested in the business is Eric L. Manigault Jr. at 6124 Christian St. Philadelphia, PA 19143. This was filed in accordance with 54 PaC.S. 311.417

Fictitious Name Registration
Notice is hereby given that an Application for Registration of Fictitious Name was filed in the Department of State of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on February 19, 2021 for **Ray M Consulting** at 405 N. Broad St. Lansdale, PA 19446. The name and address of each individual interested in the business is Raymond E. Medlin at 405 N. Broad St. Lansdale, PA 19446. This was filed in accordance with 54 PaC.S. 311.417

Fictitious Name Registration
Notice is hereby given that an Application for Registration of Fictitious Name was filed in the Department of State of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on March 04, 2021 for **realAction** at 1286 Wright Drive Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006. The name and address of each individual interested in the business is Subodh Patel at 1286 Wright Drive Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006. This was filed in accordance with 54 PaC.S. 311.417

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OPINION

Pontz

Continued from Page 18

road to peace fail to cite the unwillingness of the Palestinians to accept Israel's legitimacy as the major element in perpetuating the impasse? In order to break the stranglehold this stance has had upon the peace process, proponents of peace must acknowledge and confront what is at the core of the conflict. Only by eliminating the Palestinians' resistance to the acceptance of the continuing presence of Israel in its present location can a reasonable pathway to a negotiated peace be realized.

What is the evidence that Israel's establishment was justifiable and just, which would, in effect, undermine the Palestinians' refusal to accept the presence of Jews on land the Palestinians insist belongs solely to the Islamic and Arab worlds?

The fact of the continuous Jewish presence in the land of Palestine for more than 3,000 years inevitably leads to the determination that the Jews are indigenous to the land of Palestine. This point is key because it is a principle of international law that indigenous people have the right to possess any territory in which they naturally originated, with all the implications that principle carries for the right of the Jews to possess at least a portion of the land in dispute.

That is why the Palestinians have expended so much effort over the years to formulate a narrative denying the historical Jewish connection to the Holy Land.

Furthermore, although Zionism can be a thorny subject for some, Zionism was not an evil undertaking aimed at coercing the Palestinian Arabs into submission. The validity of Zionism was accepted and supported by international institutions that recognized the right of the Jews to national self-determination based on

historical ties to their homeland.

What more supportive evidence could one want in order to prove the justifiability and justness of Israel's creation than the sequence of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, the 1920 San Remo Resolution, the mandate for Palestine approved by the League of Nations in 1923, Article 80 of the UN Charter, and the 1947 vote of the UN General Assembly favoring partition of the territory of Palestine?

Israel's founding was based on a foundation no less strong than what has legitimized the creation of most other countries. And that strong foundation also reflects as much legal weight, as represented by instruments of international law, as does the right to exist of most other nations.

Call me naïve for believing that convincing the Palestinians that the creation of modern Israel was justifiable and just will offer the promise of ending the long-standing Palestinian rejection of Israel's existence. Perhaps the effort will prove futile, but it must be resolutely pursued. I am confident that once the Palestinians accept the Jewish people's right to their own nation, which means agreeing to share the land of Palestine with the Jews, the great majority of Israeli Jews will fall in line with Palestinian aspirations for nationhood, and solutions to the contentious issues that will need to be ironed out to produce an enduring peace agreement will be settled upon.

The alternative is that peace will remain a vain hope. ●

Curtis Pontz of Philadelphia is the author of "The Stranglehold: How to Break the Palestinians' Unyielding Grip on the Middle East Peace Process."

Join the conversation!

Tell us what you're thinking and interact with the community at jewishexponent.com

Connect with us on



COMMUNITYCALENDAR

▼ FRIDAY, MAY 14

Parsha for Life

Join Rabbi Alexander Coleman, 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 to receive a Zoom link and password.

▼ SUNDAY, MAY 16

Virtual Shavuot

Join **Bucks County Kehillah** at 6:30 p.m. for a Shavuot celebration inspired by storytelling programs on public radio. The program will feature several individuals' journeys in Judaism, whether they chose Judaism, returned to Judaism later in life or have been inspired by Judaism for their entire lives. Email buckscounty@kehillah.jewishphilly.org for more information.

▼ WEDNESDAY, MAY 19

Support Group

This **Jewish Family and Children's Service** support group is for anyone who is a relative of an LGBTQ individual and is looking for a space to process. This group is a safe place to ask questions, express emotions and learn from other folks in similar places. Zoom starts at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact Galia

Godel at ggodel@jfcsp Philly.org.

Financial Strategies

Join **Jewish Family & Children's Service** at 7 p.m. to discuss options that may be available while planning a financial strategy for caring for a person with a disability or other special needs. Contact Rivka Goldman at rgoldman@jfcsp Philly.org or 267-256-2250 to RSVP.

▼ THURSDAY, MAY 20

Party and Auction

Join **Bethesda Project** at 6 p.m. for the 24th annual Party & Auction, an interactive fundraising event streaming virtually. The event will feature live and prerecorded entertainment and online activities. Help raise \$200,000 to fund emergency shelter, permanent housing and supportive services for homeless individuals. Call 215-985-1600 for further information.

Virtual Author Talk

Join **The Jewish Museum** at 6:30 p.m. for a conversation between writers Edmund de Waal and Adam Gopnik to celebrate the launch of de Waal's "Letters to Camondo," the follow-up to his 2010 bestseller, "The Hare with Amber Eyes." This new work is a personal reflection on assimilation, family, art, history and memory. Call 212-423-3200 for more information. ●

NEWSMAKERS

On May 5, AJC Philadelphia/SNJ hosted a briefing that featured AJC's Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights Director Felice Gaer on "China's 'Unconscionable' Campaign Against the Uyghurs: Stopping Genocide Occurring on Our Watch." The program was designed to demonstrate the urgency of the crisis involving the Uyghur Muslim minority in China.

► Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights Director Felice Gaer
Courtesy of Felice Gaer



Reed Stoltz, an 11th grade student at Council Rock North High School, built a gaga court at Ohev Shalom of Bucks County for his Eagle Scout project. Reed, who attended Ohev Shalom of Bucks County Hebrew School through his bar mitzvah, raised money for the project and led his troop in constructing the court over a few Sundays.

► Jennifer, Reed and Craig Stoltz
Courtesy of Craig Stoltz



Kesher Israel Congregation in West Chester celebrated Lag B'Omer.



Photo by Melissa Scrimo

WHAT'S GOING ON
in Jewish Philadelphia?

Submit an event or browse our online calendar to find out what's happening at local synagogues, community organizations and venues!

Submit: listings@jewishexponent.com
Online: jewishexponent.com/events/

JEWISH EXPONENT

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