Holocaust Commemoration Honors Dr. Saul Friedman page 12

2018 YAJF Annual Meeting page 9

Delicious Passover Recipes page 22-23
Musings with Mary Lou

Octogenarians
By Mary Lou Finesilver

I will turn 84 this month. Some people don’t like birthdays or telling their ages. I shout it from the tallest peak, so to speak. Each year that I can add is an absolute plus.

My Mother, Esther Bonow, had 7 siblings and all but maybe one or two lived beyond 80 and some into their 90’s. I feel fortunate that I have been able to follow in their footsteps. Lots of things keep me this way: luck, genetics, my kids, my job, my doctors and my desire to keep going as long as possible in ‘good health.’

Now I am not bragging, understand. If you are Jewish, you don’t say good things about yourself because you could just reverse all of that stuff; so I’m just glad to be me now. Now understand also that I am not any different than any others my age. I have had a few surgeries in my time, a bout with skin cancer and also lymphoma. My parents are gone and so is my sister, so some people would say that I am an orphan. I don’t like the sound of that.

I also am now the matriarch of part of the family. My sister-in-law, Joy Malkoff, is the matriarch of the Finesilver division of the family. The phrase alone makes me feel old, but truthfully I don’t feel old. I am not ready to sit by the fire covered with a blanket with my dog in my lap. Not me. I am trying to keep up with some of those who are in their 90’s and that’s not easy. I am also trying to keep up with some of the youngsters in their 50’s and 60’s. Keeps me running, that’s for sure.

I think the biggest thing one has to remember is to not feel sorry for oneself for what has gone in the past, but to deal with what the present has to give you. Sure, I have trouble remembering words many times.

There is the old idea that I’ll remember at 3 o’clock in the morning. As a young woman living in New York City many moons ago, I dated a young man whose thoughts ran a little sad at times, who got upset with me and my attitude and told me to stop looking at life through rose colored glasses. Believe me, there are plenty of times when I don’t do that, but us oldsters have to just go on! Family helps, children help and so do friends, but in the end, you are it and no one but you is going to meet each day head on and make the most of it.

No matter what age you are, life is short; and I’m not sure I believe that I will be reincarnated as someone else, so therefore there is another life ahead. This is it, kid, and let’s make the most of it. Each day must have sunshine even when it is not shining. I try when possible to make friends, not enemies, and I love to smile at people I don’t know. I think that the ones that smile back are made a little happier and feel a little lighter—at least I hope so. Smiles and laughter are so important in our lives. They are the glue that keeps us alive amid our trials and tribulations.

My advice (and who do I think I am to give advice): keep smiling, keep plugging away. It’s good to celebrate birthdays and keep kicking up our heels. Let’s make the most of our time now!!

For You Were Strangers in Egypt

By Gon Erez

As part of my work, I want to do my best sharing with our community all of the wonderful things that both happened and are happening nowadays in Israel. I also think that I have an obligation to share with our community challenging and controversial things that are happening these days, since I believe that as Jews we all have a shared responsibility for the sake of Israel and its people.

Many of you might have heard in the past few months about the controversy regarding the asylum seekers situation in Israel and the upcoming deportation.

To simplify things, let me start from the beginning. In 1951, a few years after World War II and the Holocaust, there was a serious refugee problem around the world. Those days, the UN issued the International Convention on the Status of Refugees that defines who is a refugee: A refugee is a person who’s owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted in his own country for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

By this convention, a refugee who flees to another country has the right of residency and work; the right to access to health, social services and education; and the right of mobility.

The young state of Israel was one of the first countries to sign this convention due to the difficult situation of Jews after the Holocaust.

Around 2005, a wave of asylum seekers from Eritrea and Sudan infiltrated Israel thru the southern border with Egypt. They escaped their countries due to the political situation. In Eritrea, there is a responsibility to recruit for ongoing national service that includes performing national service that includes performing military helps, children help and so do friends, but in the end, you are it and no one but you is going to meet each day head on and make the most of it.

The Israeli government decided to use a “voluntary departure” policy and encouraged the asylum seekers to leave to a third country like Rwanda or Uganda. The government offered a grant to the asylum seekers and promised that the countries will take them in. In reality, the asylum seekers got to those countries and all of their money and passports were taken from them and they remained with nothing in a third world country.

In January of this year, a forced deportation policy started and the asylum seekers have been given 4 months to leave the country. As I write these letters, the open detention facility Holot is being closed and the asylum seekers are moved to Saharonim or given a temporary permit that allows them to live and work only outside the 7 big cities in Israel.

The situation sounds bad but we see a phenomenal awakening in the Israeli society that is standing alongside the asylum seekers and demanding that the government stop the deportation. Huge Israeli demonstrations are happening nowadays against the deportation. Holocaust survivors, Rabbis and pilots fighting the deportation and asking the government to remember our Jewish history and commandment: You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. [Exodus 22:20]

The proposed solution:
Examination of requests for asylum seekers and granting rights to refugees in accordance with international law.

Stop the revolving door policy of foreign workers.

Dispersal of asylum seekers throughout the country.

This year we are celebrating 70 years of the state of Israel. Israel is a strong democratic country and I personally believe that we have the ability and the obligation to fulfill our Jewish values and save asylum seekers’ lives.
What’s in this month’s Jewish Journal?

Commentary ............................................ 2
Synagogues and Sisterhoods .......... 4–6
Federation ............................................. 9–11
JCRC .................................................. 12–13
JCC Activities ................................. 14–17
Recipes ............................................. 22–23
In Memorium ................................. 36–37
Mazel Tov ............................................ 47

Candle Lighting Times

**Shabbat**
- Mar. 30  7:28 p.m.
- Apr. 6  7:35 p.m.
- Apr. 13  7:42 p.m.
- Apr. 20  7:50 p.m.
- Apr. 27  7:57 p.m.

**Passover**
- Mar. 31  8:28 p.m.
- Apr. 5  7:34 p.m.
- Apr. 6  7:35 p.m.

About the Jewish Journal Monthly Magazine

Publisher: Andrew L. Lipkin
Advertising Director: Phyllis Friedman
Office: Kathy Schell

The Jewish Journal Monthly Magazine is a publication of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation and has received major grants from the Schermer Trust, The Maurice and Florence Lipscher Charitable Trust and ZOA.

The Jewish Journal Monthly Magazine is sent monthly to members of the Jewish communities in Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull counties in Ohio, and Mercer County in Pennsylvania.

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JJMM Mission Statement

The Youngstown Jewish Journal Monthly Magazine, a publication of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, strives to —

• Provide a major tool of community communication for the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation and its affiliated agencies;
• Present current local, national and world news of Jewish interest;
• Offer timely commentary, interpretation, analysis and authentic background on events of the day for the purpose of encouraging the concern and response vital to our responsibilities as Americans and Jews;
• Enrich the cultural interest of individuals and the community through articles, features, reviews and other material of both local and national Jewish content and interest;
• Provide a communication tool to enable all members of the Jewish community to express their viewpoints on issues of Jewish importance and interest;
• Demonstrate commitment to the progress and continuity of Jewish life in the U.S., especially our local area, Israel and around the world.
•

The JJMM does not assume the responsibility for the Kashruth of any product or service advertised on its pages.

April 15 is the deadline for articles and ads for the May issue.
Passover as Post Traumatic Growth

The Jewish people can be defined as survivors of the most extreme Crucible of life experiences incredibly maintaining human purpose, triumphant spirits and a sense of sacred mission. Most generations suffered as victims of prejudice and inhumanity yet Jewish character was shaped by G-d’s Higher Values as conveyed by Torah and Mitzvot. As a result, positive Jewish contributions for the improvement of life through knowledge and human achievement has excelled beyond expectations.

We can say that the miracles of Jewish existence, human achievement and perpetuating positive, purposeful character qualify the Jewish People as Masters of Post Traumatic Growth.

Albert Einstein believed that: “Learning is experience. Everything else is just information.” He also understood that there is more to shaping productive life. What distinguished Einstein’s success along with Jews throughout history has been the way the Jewish Perspective processes those experiences.

Consider how eating crisp bread crackers and gefilte fish for a week is something that enhances Jewish life and is associated with things we actually anticipate with joy. On a recent Cleveland Passover shopping trip the non-Jewish clerk remarked incredulously at the quantity of food and the great expense Jews go to this time of year. So, I responded by asking him if his family like many Americans do that for Thanksgiving as an annual happening. I do believe that includes Anshe Emeth and Temple Emanuel Sisterhoods since El Emeth has only been in existence for 36 years. Ellen Weiss and Phyllis Perlman are asking for 6 to 8 volunteers of all size and all ages to walk the runway. Donor as you know is our largest fund raiser and you must pledge at least $25 to be a donor and then there is the Jewel page, Memorial page and Golden Girls page for additional donations.

Reservations are due no later than April 18, 2018. You should have received your official invitation by now. Congratulations to Nancy Wagner and her helpers for a very successful bake sale at the JCC during the Purim Carnival. Over $600 was raised. Nice job, thanks Nancy, Paula Ferguson, Sherry Clayman, Howard Sniderman, Debbi Grinstein and all who baked.

I hope that all of you who shop at Giant Eagle will take advantage of purchasing the Gift Cards from us to use when shopping. We do make so much a card when you use them and it actually costs you nothing extra. We have them in increments of $25 and $50 to purchase which can be done at the Temple. Don’t forget the Judaica Shop when looking for gifts, including wedding, Bar & Bat Mitzvahs, birthdays etc. Some beautiful new items have arrived so shop our store first.

Save the date of May 8, 2918 for Sisterhood’s closing meeting. We will be installing the new officers for 2018-2019 during the meeting and we will also be greeting Fran Hildbrand Central Great Lakes Region Torah Fund Vice President.
Rabbi’s Message
Rabbi Frank Muller
Congregation Rodef Sholom

The Exodus: Fact or Fiction?
Every year at our Passover Seders we retell the story of the Exodus. Jewish scholars consider the Exodus to be the most important story of the entire Bible. Without the exodus from Egypt, there is no Jewish people, no Mount Sinai, no 10 Commandments, in fact no Judaism at all. The seminal place of the Exodus in the Jewish psyche is evident from the first commandment--“I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;” (Ex. 20:1).

The Exodus is the first Bible story taught to children in Sunday school. It is part of the Jewish DNA, and yet, have you ever questioned whether the Exodus really happened as it’s described in the Torah? I just finished reading Richard Elliott Friedman’s new book, The Exodus: How It Happened and Why It Matters. Friedman is the author of many important books on biblical scholarship, including the classic, Who Wrote the Bible?

In his latest work, he questions the typical approach of many rabbis that what’s most important about a biblical story is not whether it is actually true or not, but rather what eternal truths, or moral lessons, it imparts. But to discount the value of historical veracity, Friedman argues, is not the correct approach. While moral lessons are important, he contends, they become even more important when we know for certain that an event really took place.

Concerning the Exodus, Friedman asserts that given the evidence from archaeological findings and modern biblical textual analysis, we can say with almost 100% certainty that the Exodus did happen, although probably not on the same level as the Torah describes. To be specific, the Torah tells us that 603,000 men experienced the revelation about Mt. Sinai. These are the men that supposedly left Egypt. When you add up the women and children who accompanied them you get approximately 2 million people who presumably trekked across the desert after crossing the parted waters of the Red Sea.

Since archaeologists have been unable to discover any evidence of such a large group, many historians assume that the Exodus never occurred. This is utter nonsense, says Friedman. No archaeologist has ever combed the entire Sinai Peninsula. As a matter of fact, only the shell of one jeep, a remnant of the Six Day War of 1967, a mere 50 years ago, was unearthed at a level of 16 meters down.

Can we even imagine how deep we’d have to go to find evidence of an exodus from Egypt nearly 3 1/2 millennia ago? It would be impossible! Friedman’s main thesis is that a much smaller number of Israelites than previously thought left Egypt, and that they were all from the tribe of Levi. They went on to become the Levitical priests who offered sacrifices in the desert tabernacle called the Mishkan, at sites in ancient Israel, and in Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem several hundred years later.

The book goes into a much more detailed explanation, of course, and Friedman offers up a plethora of supporting arguments for his thesis, including the theory that the ancient desert tabernacle was modeled after the battle tents of Ramses II, the Egyptian pharaoh during the time of the Exodus, as well as the fact that many Levites have Egyptian last names. Very interesting!

The authors of the Torah (if you believe like I do that the Torah was written by human beings, albeit divinely inspired by God) couldn’t have made up such a fantastic story. Friedman claims that the combined evidence of text and archaeology is that not only was the Exodus historical, it was essential to the development of monotheism. We don’t know what ancient Israel’s religion would have become without it, but we do know what it became with it.

Ethical monotheism (i.e. the belief in one God who empowers us to perform moral acts of kindness and compassion, such as loving our neighbor, helping the poor, and welcoming the stranger) is the major foundational value of the Jewish religion. The Exodus isn’t just a nice, meaningful story, but untrue. If it were just a great story, Dayenu, that would’ve been enough. But being true historically, with so many valuable ethical lessons, it is definitely a treasure, a spiritual gift to be passed down from generation to generation.

Darlene joins me in wishing all of you a very happy and meaningful Passover.

Rodef Sholom Events

Congregation Rodef Sholom Brother • April 2018
April 2018 Services

Congregation Rodef Sholom Annual Sisterhood Donor Luncheon

Rodef Sholom Tzedek Committee at Liberty Food Bank
Friday, April 6 at 9:30am-12:00pm
PowerPoint Presentation by Marcia Levy on Holocaust Survivors of Rodef Sholom
Saturday, April 7 at 10:00am
Presentation will follow morning Shabbat Service.

MSJS/AKIVA Community-Wide Shabbat Dinner and Service at Temple El Emeth
Friday, April 13 at 6:00pm
Heartsaver Course by the American Heart Association
Thursday, April 19 at 9:00am – 12:00pm
$50 per person

Congregation Rodef Sholom Sisterhood • April 2018

To My Sisterhood Members,
Passover (Hebrew: Pesach)
Passover is one of our most sacred and widely observed Jewish Holiday. We share the Passover story and we learn about the significance of freedom from slavery. Our Passover story also includes unleavened bread (Matzoh), plagues and the splitting of the sea.

Passover 2018
Passover 2018 will begin in the evening of Friday, March 30 and ends in the evening of Saturday, April 7. We will gather respectively around our Seder tables to celebrate Passover “the Great Escape” by retelling the story about one of the biggest Miracles!

Traditions of Passover
From traditional to gourmet to low fat and sugar-free we all have our own family favorite recipes and holiday customs. There are Specific foods that are important and meaningful part of our Passover Holiday. Enjoy all your Menus and Memories.

Passover Holiday Wishes
Chag Pesach Sameach Happy Passover! For my Sisterhood Members, my Temple Family Members and to all of your Families, Loved ones and Friends may we all celebrate the Miracle of Passover. Wishing all of us Peace and Joy and may this always live on in our hearts. Chag Pesach Sameach Happy Passover! With love and Sisterhood,
Your Sisterhood President, Sally M. Blau
Heartsaver courses are designed for anyone with little or no medical training who want to be prepared for an emergency in any setting. The course will include CPR, Heimlich and AED machine training. Students will receive a course completion card that is valid for 2 years. Heartsaver classroom courses are video based, instructor led, and feature group interaction and hands-on coaching and feedback from an American Heart Association Instructor. Skills are taught with the AHA's research-proven practice-while-watching technique that allows students to practice skills as the video guides them.

To sign up, call the Temple office at 330-744-5001. Please mail all payments to Congregation Rodef Sholom – 1119 Elm Street, Youngstown, OH.

Save the Date
Date: Tuesday, May 22, 2018
Time: 11:30am
Location: The Avalon Inn and Resort – 9519 East Market Street, Warren, OH
There will be Special Entertainment and Prizes! More information will be mailed separately to all Sisterhood members, Temple members and guests.

Congregation Rodef Sholom April 2018 Services

Friday, April 6 at 10:00am
7th Day Passover Yizkor Memorial Service

Friday, April 7 at 10:00am
Tot Shabbat Service led by Sofya Farhan followed by a PowerPoint Presentation: “Holocaust Survivors of Rodef Sholom,” then lunch. RSVP required for luncheon by Tuesday, April 3 by calling the Temple office at 330.744.5001

Friday, April 13 at 6:00pm
MSJS/Akiva Community-Wide Shabbat Dinner & Service at Temple El Emeth
RSVP required by Monday, April 9
Friday, April 20 at 6:00pm
Shabbat Service
Saturday, April 28 at 10:00am
Bar Mitzvah of Henry Miller
RSVP required for luncheon by Friday, April 20 by calling the Temple office at 330.744.5001

Oneg Sponsored by the Miller Family

April 2018 The Jewish Journal Monthly Magazine 5
Rabbi’s Message
Rabbi Dario Hunter
Ohev Tzedek-Shaarei Torah

The Price of Freedom

One of the more evocative moments in the story of B’nai Yisrael’s freedom from bondage and its aftermath is the building of the Mishkan (Tabernacle). On the surface of it, the account of the composition of this earthly dwelling for G-d (in Parshah Terumah) reads like a construction manual. However, the context of it is inspirationally instructive. Up to this point, B’nai Yisrael has kvetched and complained about the price of the effort towards freedom. There were, for instance, complaints that Moshe Rabbeinu’s entreaties to Pharoah worsened the condition of Jews in bondage. And worse still, after witnessing the miracle of the parting of the Red Sea, the creation of the Golden Calf defied the very G-d who delivered the Jewish people and represented a regression to idolatry. And yet, in the building of the Mishkan, Moshe’s request of Pharoah that the people be let go to serve their G-d is notably not forgotten. Gifts come from every corner towards this effort; it is a truly communal exercise. And amidst this building, there is a notable absence of kvetching and an engagement with the community driven task at hand. Avodat Hashem (service to G-d) is not a one-way street; it is a transformative event that strengthens the worshipper’s soul and clarifies the bond between brothers and sisters as well as between G-d and man. In asking that B’nai Yisrael be set free to serve their G-d, Moshe Rabbeinu was not asking for his people to simply be let go from one form of mindless bondage and given to another. He was asking that they be set free to fully realize themselves, mature through the giving of themselves and their unique gifts.

Pesach (Passover), which commemorates directly Hashem’s mercy in passing over the first-born of the Israelites in the final plague, is very much centered on spiritual maturity. The ritual of ridding one’s home of chametz (leaven) symbolizes the ridding of one’s self of the puffed up sense of pride that endures when a person puts service to self over service to others. The price of freedom as such, if you can call it that, is the responsibility to seek spiritual maturity through acts of gemilut chasidim (loving kindness), to identify with the pain and suffering of others and to see in others the diverse gifts that they have to offer. It also compels us to recognize ourselves as a part of a larger whole working towards the common effort and goal of spiritual elevation.

As the ridding of chametz relates to the bread of affliction, the unleavened matzot that B’nai Yisrael made in haste as they rushed towards their destined freedom, so too should we rush towards good deeds and give no space or time for pridefulness to swell up within ourselves. This Pesach, may you experience the blessing that comes from together-ness and the spiritual gifts that are derived from maintaining a spirit of giving.

(continued from page 4)

El Emeth Events

Jewish Christian Dialogue will have its monthly session on Wednesday, April 4 at the Synagogue. Rev. Nick Mager will speak on “Did Calvin Teach Predestination?” Refreshments are served at 12:30 pm and the study session begins at 1:00 pm.

All are welcome to attend. Temple El Emeth will have a Passover Kiddush luncheon on Saturday, April 7 following Shabbat morning services.

April birthdays and special occasions will be celebrated. Please call the office to RSVP for lunch.

Yizkor will take place that morning at approximately 11 am.

“Bagels with the Rabbi” will take place on Sunday morning, April 8. Minyan begins at 10 am followed by the program at 10:30 am.

Rabbi will be starting a series called “Looking Back: Pioneering Jewish American Life 17th-19th Centuries.”

Temple El Emeth will host a Shabbat dinner and service conducted by our Akiva and MSJS students on Friday evening, April 13. Dinner begins at 6:00 pm followed by the service. The cost of the dinner is $12 for adults and reservation forms with checks can be mailed to Akiva Kooperman. Refreshments are served and all are welcome to attend.

Raquel Allison will celebrate her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday morning, April 21 at 9:30 am. Raquel is the daughter of Lindsey Knofsky and the granddaughter of Kim Knofsky and the late Brian Knofsky.

Temple El Emeth presents “From Broadway to Logan Way... Stephen Sondheim’s Company” on Sunday, April 29th. Tickets are $20 per person and must be purchased in advance. A “Bruncheon” will begin at 1:00 followed by the show at 2:00. See article on page nine for more information and an order form.

Happy Passover!

Lynda McClary
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Nine Things You Didn’t Know About Passover

By MJL Staff

(My Jewish Learning via JTA) — Here are nine things that many likely wouldn’t know about the Festival of Freedom:

1. In Gibraltar, there’s dust in the charoset.

The traditional charoset is a sweet Passover paste whose texture is meant as a reminder of the mortar the enslaved Jews used to build in ancient Egypt. The name itself is related to the Hebrew word for clay. In Ashkenazi tradition, it is traditionally made from crushed nuts, apples and sweet red wine, while Sephardic Jews use figs or dates. But the tiny Jewish community of this small British territory at the tip of the Iberian Peninsula takes the brick symbolism to another level, using the dust of actual bricks in their recipe.

2. Abraham Lincoln died during Passover.

The 16th American president was shot at Ford’s Theatre on a Friday, April 14, 1865, which coincided with the fourth night of Passover. The next morning, Jews who wouldn’t normally have attended services on the holiday were so moved by Lincoln’s passing they made their way to synagogues, where the normally celebratory Passover services were instead marked by acts of mourning and the singing of Yom Kippur hymns. American Jews were so affected by the president’s death that Congregation Shearith Israel in New York recited the prayer for the dead — usually said only for Jews — on Lincoln’s behalf.

3. Arizona is a hub for matzah wheat.

Hasidic Jews from Brooklyn have been increasingly sourcing wheat for their Passover matzah from farmers in Arizona. Excessive moisture in wheat kernels can result in fermentation, rendering the harvest unsuitable for Passover use. But rain is scarce in Arizona, which allows for a stricter standard of matzah production. Rabbis from New York travel to Arizona in the days leading up to the harvest, where they inspect the grains meticulously to ensure they are cut at the precise moisture levels.

4. At the seder, Persian Jews whip each other with scallions.

Many of the Passover seder rituals are intended to re-create the sensory experience of Egyptian slavery, from the eating of bitter herbs and matzah to the dipping of greenery in saltwater, which symbolizes the tears shed by the oppressed Israelites. Some Jews from Iran and Afghanistan have the tradition of whipping each other with green onions before the singing of “Dayenu.”

5. Karaite Jews skip the wine.

Karaite Jews reject rabbinic Judaism, observing only laws detailed in the Torah. That’s why they don’t drink the traditional four cups of wine at the seder. Wine is fermented, and fermented foods are prohibited on Passover, so instead they drink fruit juice. (Mainstream Jews hold that only fermented grains are prohibited.) The Karaites also eschew other staples of the traditional seder, including the seder plate and charoset. Their maror (bitter herbs) is a mixture of lemon peel, bitter lettuce and an assortment of other herbs.

6. Israeli Jews have only one seder.

Israeli Jews observe only one Passover seder, unlike everywhere else where traditionally two seders are held, one on each of the first two nights of the holiday. Known as “yom tov sheni shel galuyot” — literally “the second festival day of the Diaspora” — the practice was begun 2,000 years ago when Jews were informed of the start of a new lunar month only after it had been confirmed by witnesses in Jerusalem. Because Jewish communities outside of Israel were often delayed in learning the news, they consequently couldn’t be sure precisely which day festivals were meant to be observed. As a result, the practice of observing two seder days was instituted just to be sure.

7. You’re wrong about the orange on the seder plate.

Some progressive Jews have adopted the practice of including an orange on the seder plate as a symbol of inclusion of gays, lesbians and other groups marginalized in the Jewish community. The story goes that the practice was instituted by the feminist scholar Susannah Heschel after she was told that a woman belongs on the synagogue bimah, or prayer podium, like an orange belongs on a seder plate. But according to Heschel, that story is false. In that apocryphal version, she said, “a woman’s words are attributed to a man, and the affirmation of lesbians and gay men is erased. Isn’t that precisely what’s happened over the centuries to women’s ideas?”

8. “Afikomen” isn’t Hebrew.

For many seder participants, the highlight of the meal is the afikomen — a broken piece of matzah that the seder leader hides and the children search for; the person who finds the afikomen usually gets a small reward. Most scholars believe the word “afikomen” derives from the Greek word for dessert. Others say it refers to a kind of postmeal revelry common among the Greeks. Either theory would explain why the afikomen is traditionally the last thing eaten at the seder.


Most people are eager for a break from holiday meals when the eight-day Passover holiday concludes. But for the Jews of North Africa, the holiday’s end is the perfect time for another feast, Mimouna, marking the beginning of spring. Celebrated after nightfall on the last day of Passover, Mimouna is marked by a large spread of foods and the opening of homes to guests. The celebration is often laden with symbolism, including fish for fertility and golden rings for wealth.
Spending Bill Includes Big Boost for Jewish Groups Seeking Security Money

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- An omnibus spending bill approved by Congress more than doubles spending for security grants that have been overwhelmingly tapped by Jewish institutions.

The $1.3 trillion bill approved recently includes $60 million for the security grants, up from $25 million last year.

More than 90 percent of the grants have been used to harden security at Jewish institutions since the nonprofit security grant program was launched in 2005.

Nathan Diament, the Washington director of the Orthodox Union, one of the lead advocates for the grants, said a spike in threats on Jewish institutions over the last year drove the increase. According to the Anti-Defamation League, anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. in 2017 increased by 43 percent over 2016, not including a spate of bomb threats carried out against Jewish institutions by a Jewish man in Israel.

"We didn’t have to educate members of Congress that the past year has seen an increased set of threats and activity," Diament said in an interview.

Of the $60 million, $10 million for the first time will go to areas outside major metropolitan areas. Diament said that will allow Jewish institutions outside such designated areas to apply for the funds. He named Monsey, in upstate New York, as an example of an area with a high Jewish concentration that until now has not been able to access the existing program.

Also advocating for the security grants over the years were the Jewish Federations of North America and Agudath Israel of North America.

The bill also includes $175 million over the next 10 years to improve security at schools, a provision that was accelerated after the deadly school shooting in Parkland, Florida, in February. The bill will fund training in violence prevention, police-school coordination and crisis intervention, and will be extended to private and parochial schools as well as public schools.

JFNA praised the inclusion in the omnibus bill of $5 million for the Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program, double the amount of previous years. The program partners with Jewish institutions to deliver assistance to elderly Holocaust survivors.

"There are approximately 100,000 Holocaust survivors living in the United States today, with an estimated 30,000 living in poverty," said William Daroff, the Washington director of JFNA, in a statement. "By doubling funding levels to $5 million, the program now will be able to provide immediate support to ensure that Holocaust survivors are able to live in dignity and comfort for the remainder of their lives."

Also wrapped into the omnibus is the Taylor Force Act, which slashes funding to the Palestinians until the Palestinian Authority stops payments to Palestinians killed or arrested during attacks on Israelis.

Taylor Force was an American who was murdered by a Palestinian terrorist in a stabbing attack in Tel Aviv in 2016.

Palestinian officials say that only a small portion of the targeted money goes to violent attackers, and that much of the money serves as a welfare program for Palestinians who are imprisoned by Israel, many without charges.

U.S. funding for the Palestinians currently stands at about $260 million a year. None of the money targeted goes directly to the Palestinian Authority, instead funding programs run by NGOs that assist Palestinians.
The 2018 Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, May 17, 2018 at the Jewish Community Center of Youngstown. The meeting will open with a community dinner at 6:00pm. The 2018 Annual Meeting will feature keynote speaker, Josh Block, CEO/President of The Israel Project (TIP).

Josh Block is a communications, foreign policy and political strategist involved in national politics and policy for nearly 20 years. A former Clinton Administration official & spokesman at the State Department’s USAID, Block got his start on Capitol Hill in the office of Senator Edward M. Kennedy and Democratic politics. A spokesman for the Clinton/Gore and Gore/Lieberman presidential campaigns, Block also worked on House and Senate races, including Sen. Chuck Schumer’s (D-NY) first campaign for U.S. Senate, the ’96 Presidential Inaugural Committee, and as spokesman at the Ohio Democratic Party.

After nearly a decade on the senior staff of AIPAC, one of Washington’s most respected and effective advocacy organizations, where he was Spokesman and Director of Strategic Communications, Block was appointed Senior Fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute in Washington D.C., and established a strategic consulting practice focused on the intersection of policy, politics and public affairs for international and US-based clients in the public and private sector.

Block was named by Foreign Policy Magazine to its Twitterati 100 list of the most influential foreign policy experts on Twitter (@JoshBlockDC) and The Washington Post named him one of the 50 Most Influential Jews. When he was appointed CEO and President of The Israel Project, AIPAC President Michael Kassen said, “TIP, as well as the pro-Israel community, will benefit greatly from [Block’s] unique ability to shape the debate and educate both policymakers and the public about Israel and the Middle East.”

Invitations will be mailed and there is no minimum contribution to attend the Event. Dinner will be served for $10/person. Please RSVP by May 10 to (330) 746-3250 x 108 or to NSentelik@JewishYoungstown.org.

For more information, call Sarah Wilschek (330) 746-3250 x123.
Lisa Long Appointed as the Financial Resource Development Director

Andrew Lipkin, Executive Vice-President of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, has appointed Lisa Long as the Financial Resource Development Director. Lisa will assume her responsibilities on April 9th.

In her role she will work closely with Federation leadership in fundraising and campaign initiatives as well as administering existing endowments, including the Thomases Family Endowment.

Originally from Highland Park, just outside of Chicago, Lisa was named, Bat Mitzvahed and married at Congregation Am Shalom in neighboring Glencoe. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Mass Communications from Miami of Ohio.

After graduation Lisa worked as a TV news anchor, reporter and producer in Michigan, South Dakota and Vermont before beginning her development career 15 years ago.

Lisa’s husband, Grady, grew up in Columbiana County and the couple decided to move back to Ohio in 2012. Lisa and Grady have two children, Madeline, age 9, and Henry, age 6. The family lives in the Crestview School District where Grady teaches high school social studies.

I am honored to serve my faith and community in this new role. The Federation has played an incredibly important part in connecting my children to their faith and making my entire family feel at home in the Mahoning Valley,” shares Lisa.

Lisa comes to the Jewish Federation from OH WOW! where she served as Associate Director. During her time in Ohio she has also led fundraising efforts at Salem Regional Medical Center and YSU (WYSU-FM and The Rich Center).

Lisa is very involved in the community, currently serving on the Youngstown Jewish Federation Leadership Fellows, WYSU Advisory Board, Crestview Parent Advisory Council and is President Elect of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Students Lend Loving Hands

Students in the Service Class of Ursuline High School have been visiting the daycare center of Heritage Manor every Monday. Shira Solomon and Sophie Alper are assisting volunteer Henry and client Helen.

JFS Discretionary Fund Renamed in Honor of Alvin Weisberg

Jewish Family Services of Youngstown, in honor of recently retired Director Alvin Weisburg, has renamed our JFS Discretionary Fund. It is now the Alvin Weisberg / JFS Fund. These funds are used for assisting individuals and families in times of need.

If you are interested in making a donation to the Alvin Weisberg / JFS Fund please feel free to stop at our offices during normal business hours or mail a check to: Jewish Family Services 517 Gypsy Lane Youngstown, OH 44504. Check can be written to “Jewish Family Services.” For further questions please call our office at 330-746-7929. Thank you to everyone who donated to this important fund, to help those in need, up to this point.

Youngstown Area Jewish Federation Names Director of Communications

The Youngstown Area Jewish Federation has named Elise Skolnick to the position of Director of Communications.

In this newly created position, Skolnick will set and guide the strategy for all communications, website and social media platforms, and public relations messages to consistently articulate the mission of the Federation and its affiliate organizations, said Andy Lipkin, executive vice president. Skolnick has extensive experience in the newspaper industry and communications field. Her most recent position was as Communications Coordinator for YWCA Youngstown. “I’m excited to join such a strong, community-minded organization,” Skolnick said. “I look forward to using my experience to help further its mission.” The Youngstown Area Jewish Federation works to promote the welfare of the Jewish people, locally, nationally and overseas.
Continuing to Break Boundaries

By Dominic Boston
Featured Writer, The Holcad

Last semester, I wrote on the Breaking Boundaries program that two Westminster students are a part of. History major Peter McMaster and Psychology major Anna Brock are participating as facilitators over activities between students in Sharpsville Area Middle School and two schools in Israel. The two middle schools in Israel, one Jewish and one Arab, communicate via Linoit, a program that allows students to post statements and discuss the activities. Peter and Anna, along with their counterparts in Israel, watch over the chatroom and make sure that the students are conversing appropriately. Some activities include discussions regarding cultural differences.

These chatrooms foster discussions between American students and Israeli students who both come from different cultural backgrounds. As a facilitator, Peter watches over the chats and was surprised by the interest both groups of students shared for one another.

The students are interested in learning about each other’s cultures and chat with one another in a respectful manner. When asked about how the students were communicating with one another, Anna expressed delight at the way students were interacting. The students can understand the complexity of religions and culture.

Recently, Westminster College was visited by two speakers who are part of the Breaking Boundaries program in Israel. Dr. Randa Abbas, Academic Dean of the Arab Academic College in Haifa, and Ms. Haya Khaldy, teacher and English coordinator at Khaled Suliman High School, visited Westminster to discuss the Israeli side of Breaking Boundaries, as well as to speak about the Bedouin community. Ms. Khaldy’s father is a Bedouin, which in the desert, visitors are rare. Because of this, if you were to visit a Bedouin community, they would welcome you with water, coffee, food and shelter. Ms. Khaldy stated that Bedouins would allow the guest three days of rest before asking them about their visit. She mentioned Breaking Boundaries has had in Israel. She remarked on the excitement that Israeli students get when getting involved with this international program. The talk generated a full classroom in Patterson Hall and further one-on-one interviews with Dr. Abbas and Ms. Khaldy after the presentations. Since this past Saturday, Dr. Abbas and Ms. Khaldy have toured Pittsburgh, met with Psychology students, participated in a Civil Dialogue talking about Israel, the Middle East, and Arab and Muslim communities, as well as met with Dr. Sherri Pataki involving research regarding women and stereotypes. Both visitors expressed their excitement with visiting New Wilmington and exploring the Pittsburgh area.

The Breaking Boundaries program has been able to provide students with the opportunity to learn about cultures other than their own. For Peter and Anna, both expressed their gratitude with the program and hope to continue working with it. Peter, who did not know what to expect upon initially getting involved, has remarked on how pleased he was that he did take part. “I am so grateful for the experience that Breaking Boundaries has given me,” he said. “To be able to learn alongside these students and watch as they communicate and expand their knowledge about culture has been great.”

Pastry Chef Showcases Talents for Youngstown Jewish Community

The Youngstown Area Jewish Federation has arranged for two renowned pastry chefs, Natali Marciano (pictured) and Judith Baranes (as representatives of Partnership2GETHER), to showcase their talents, present demonstrations and share recipes in a hands on way with the greater Youngstown community. Seven years ago, Marciano decided to fulfill her dream of becoming a pastry chef. She studied in the famous Stella pastry academy in Tel Aviv. When she ended her studies there she baked and catered many events from home, and in 2016 she and her husband opened Lola Patiserie coffee shop in Akko. In the shop she conducts workshops and prepares desserts for many events in the region. Judith Baranes assists Natali in her pastry shop and caters events as well. Both Marciano and Baranes say they look forward to meeting the Jewish community of Youngstown and sharing their unique and tasty recipes.

The event will take place on April 18 at 11:30am. For more information, contact Sarah Wilschek, SWilschek@jewishYoungstown.org, (330) 746-3250 x 123.
JCC Announces 2018 Holocaust Commemoration Events Will Pay Tribute to Dr. Saul Friedman

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) is announcing its annual Holocaust commemoration programs for this spring’s series of Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance) holiday observances. The 25th Annual Community Holocaust Commemoration event is set for Thursday, April 12, 2018, at Noon in the Rotunda of the Mahoning County Courthouse, Youngstown. The annual Shoah Memorial Ceremony will be held on Sunday, April 15, 2018 at 4:00 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center.

Yom Hashoah is an internationally recognized day set aside for remembering all victims of the Holocaust and reminding society of what can happen to civilized people when bigotry, hatred, and indifference reign. This year’s local theme, “Anti-Semitism in All its Forms” explores the increased instances of anti-Semitism world-wide and how Holocaust denial contributes to this increase.

The annual memorial ceremony on the 15th will pay special tribute to Dr. Saul Friedman, featuring a keynote presentation by Saul’s son, Dr. Jonathan Friedman. A beloved scholar and member of the Jewish community who passed away five years ago, Dr. Saul Friedman served as a professor of history at YSU from 1969 until his retirement in 2006. Saul was an internationally recognized Holocaust expert, who published numerous award-winning books and documentary films. A recipient of many honors and awards, Saul’s career highlight came in 2000 when he received an endowment from the Clayman family to establish a Judaic Studies program at YSU.

Dr. Jonathan Friedman followed in his father’s footsteps and currently is a Professor of History and the Director of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at West Chester University in Pennsylvania. He has also served as a historian at both the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. and the USC Shoah Foundation in California.

In addition, the program will include the unveiling of the Saul Friedman Collection, an extensive compilation of Saul’s papers, notes, research materials, and Survivor testimonies that Saul’s family donated to the Federation, the official opening of the new JCC Holocaust Resource Center and Library, special musical presentations, a candlelighting ceremony, and participation by children and grandchildren of Survivors. Because there are few Survivors left in the community who are able to share their stories first hand, it is crucial that the second and third generations preserve their memories. As direct descendants of Survivors, these individuals share an obligation and profound commitment to honor their relatives, preserve their unique heritage and culture, and educate the community on Holocaust issues.

The Annual Community Holocaust Commemoration at the Courthouse will feature a presentation by Jesse McClain, the Jewish Federation’s Holocaust educational specialist, on the transformation of the JCC library into the new Holocaust resource center. Following extensive renovations, the upgraded Resource Center will serve as an exhibit space as well as a multi-media resource for Holocaust and other Judaic holdings. The community program will also feature the recognition of the winners of the JCRC’s student Holocaust writing and multimedia contest, the presentation of a proclamation by Youngstown Mayor Jamaal Tito Brown, as well as a memorial candlelighting ceremony to honor the six million who perished.

This year’s theme about anti-Semitism grapples with the role anti-Semitism played in the Holocaust. Though the general definition of anti-Semitism is hostility or prejudice against, Jews, it has become an umbrella term for negative stereotypes about Jews. While there is no universally accepted definition, there is generally a clear understanding of what the term encompasses, namely hatred toward Jews, individually and as a group, that can be attributed to the Jewish religion and/or ethnicity.

Both programs are free and open to the public. The Holocaust Commemoration and Education Task Force, a committee of the JCRC, is chaired by Rabbi Joseph Schoenberger and Rochelle Miller, children of Holocaust Survivors, and is comprised of numerous Survivors, children of Survivors, and other interested volunteers from the community. For additional information, contact the JCRC at 330-746-3251.

The event is free and open to all. Lunch will be served.

Friday, April 13, 2018
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Multi-Purpose Room

RSVP by April 9, 2018 online at jccyoungstown.org or call the Bursar’s Office 330.746.3250 ext. 195
On March 3rd 2018, we took a group of five Jewish teenagers from town, and made our (long) journey to Washington D.C. where we were to participate in the biggest pro-Israel gathering in the country- AIPAC policy conference.

Before I go in to sharing some of our amazing experiences - I’d like to start by explaining a little about what AIPAC is and why it’s so important. AIPAC as we know it today was founded in 1963 by Isaiah L. “Si” Kenen, an American journalist, lawyer and philanthropist.

AIPAC stands for The American Israel Public Affairs Committee. It is a lobbying group that advocates pro-Israel policies to the Congress and Executive Branch of the United States. Many people see AIPAC as the most important organization in promoting the U.S.-Israel alliance. Also, it is considered one of the most powerful lobbying groups in the United States.

Every year AIPAC holds its policy conference in D.C, where thousands of pro-Israel activists all ages and backgrounds and from all 50 states, get together for three days of Israeli-related breakout sessions led by experts and general sessions with top-notch speakers such as the Israeli Prime-Minister, US V. President, US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley etc.

So off the road we went, with a seven seat rented Dodge, Emily Blau (JCC Program Director), Lexi Burdman, Abigail and Caroline Scharf, Teddy and Karina Kunkel and me.

After about six hours’ drive (not including stops) we got to the hotel late that evening. Tired but happy, each one curled up to his or her own bed.

On Sunday the 4th (March), we made our way to the convention center and passed through security. The first morning session was enough for me to understand what everyone has been talking about. Electrifying atmosphere created by the thousands of people that all came with one mutual objective- to show their support for the one and only Jewish state.

Speakers came one after the other with all kinds of stories that didn’t leave one eye dry. There were stories about technological innovations that have changed the world and saved people’s lives and Israeli individuals with all sorts of fascinating stories that evoked great emotions.

Apparently, that was only the beginning. As time went by we attended different breakout sessions and learned some very important things about Israel and its short history as a state.

Days were long, starting at 8:00 am (after going through security) and ending sometimes after 7:00 pm (not including the less formal evening activities).

On Monday we took the students to hear about college life and what it mean to be an active pro-Israeli student on Campus. While (in my opinion) Tuesday will be most remembered for our meetings on Capitol Hill with Congressman Bill Johnson himself and with Congressman Tim Ryan’s staff.

There’s no real way to express my (and our) feeling about this overwhelmingly great experience.

I can only pay my gratitude to the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, the ZOA and B’nai Brith (our local Youngstown Chapter) for sponsoring this initiative. Being able to provide this experience to our high-school students was such a great privilege that I was so grateful to have.

Caroline Scharf, a sophomore in Ursuline High-School who was on the trip wrote: “I loved going to AIPAC because it gave me the opportunity to learn a lot about American relations with Israel and hear people speak that I would’ve never been able to hear otherwise.”

Karina Kunkle said, “My experience at AIPAC was very educational. I learned so much about Israel and the people who are supporting it.”

We thank you Caroline (and the rest) for coming, hopefully this is the beginning of a tradition.
**BYYO Open Recruitment**

Attention all 8th graders! Now is your time to get active in Youngstown’s AZA and BBG chapters.

To find out more, contact any member you know or City Director Emily Blau at 330.746.3250 ext. 152 or eblau@jewishyoungstown.org.

Local Chapters:
- Dodi Li BBG #69 Girls, grades 8-12
- Sigmund Nisenson AZA (Siggy) #169 Boys, grades 8-12

**Camp Registration Now Open**

Camp JCC provides quality care and experiences to the greater Youngstown community, and 2018 is set to be another stellar summer. Housed at the JCC of Youngstown, our campers have a safe, fun environment to build lifelong friendships through unforgettable adventures. Camp JCC is designed for campers entering grades 1-8 and is open to all.

Visit jccyoungstown.org/camp to learn about all the fun things camp JCC will be offering this year!

**Baking with Hunter**

Come learn the basics of baking with Camp Program Coordinator and After School Lead Teacher, Hunter Thomas. After each program, participants will get to bring home their creations.

**Date:** Wednesdays, Apr. 11, 18 & 25
**Time:** 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
**Location:** JCC Adult Lounge
**Cost:** $15/Member | $20/Non Member

Register at jccyoungstown.org

**Glow in the Dark Family Dance Party**

Bring the whole family and dance with your kids (or watch them boogie with their friends) as we groove and sing karaoke to music from DJ Kimmy! We will provide snacks and glow sticks.

**Date:** Thursday, Apr. 19
**Time:** 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
**Location:** JCC Multi-Purpose Room
**Cost:** $8/Member Per Family | $11/Non Member Per Family

Register at jccyoungstown.org

**Liz Rubino Studios**

For more information on the studio offerings, contact Liz Rubino at 330.509.0891 or coaching@lizrubino.com.

Liz Rubino offers private sessions in voice, acting, drama therapy, junior voice, and junior acting. All sessions are 55 minutes long with the exception of junior lessons, which are 30 minutes long.

**JCC School of Dance**

Eriann Raib-Ptichkin is a well-trained and experienced local dance teacher collaborating with the JCC as the Artistic Director of the new School of Dance. This program teaches children the technique, artistry and discipline of dance in a cheerful and positive learning environment. Children develop a variety of transferable listening and learning skills in a classroom setting while being physically healthy and having fun! Visit jccyoungstown.org to learn more.

**JCC School of Music**

This exciting program features piano, violin, guitar, percussion, and voice lessons housed at the JCC! Visit jccyoungstown.org to learn more.

To register for JCC School of Music lessons, contact the JCC Bursar’s Office: 330.746.3250 ext. 195

For more information on fitness programs, contact Shelia Cornell at 330.746.3250 ext. 182 or scornell@jewishyoungstown.org.

**Get fit fast with Personal Training at the JCC!**

Personal Training Benefits:
- personalized safe and effective fitness programs
- achievement of goals in a short time period
- improved muscle coordination, strength, endurance, and flexibility

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Pickleball Play Schedule (January-April)

A paddle sport created for all ages and skill levels. The rules are simple and the game is easy for beginners to learn, but can develop into a quick, fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players.

Tuesday & Thursday: 4:30–7:30 p.m.
Sunday: 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Open Gym Youth Basketball

Children ages five and up can join us for kid-friendly basketball time in our gym. Bring your own ball, or borrow one of ours.

Date: Fridays
Time: 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Wallyball

A fantastic way to get in shape and have fun! Play in our racquetball court. Equipment is provided.

Tuesdays: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Fridays: 5:00–7:00 p.m.

Racquetball

A great way to make friends and stay in shape. Call or visit the JCC Welcome Desk to reserve your court. Equipment not provided.

Ping-Pong

Want to play ping-pong with your friends?

The JCC Welcome Desk can make it happen! Just let us know and we’ll set up the table and provide the paddles and balls.

Wellness Program: Brain Health Awareness

Please join Chiropractor Dr. Angela Natoli as she discusses how to achieve optimal brain health! Learn the key factors of keeping your brain nourished, activated, and healthy at any age. She will also discuss common disorders such as Alzheimer’s, migraines, and anxiety as well as tips on how to help brain imbalances.

Date: Friday, April 20
Time: 12:00–1:00 p.m.
Location: JCC Multi-Purpose Room
Free Event

Register at jccyoungstown.org or with the JCC Bursar’s Office at 330.746.3250 ext. 195

For more information on Aquatics, contact Shawn Chrystal at 330.746.3250 ext. 112 or aquatics@jewishyoungstown.org

The JCC Aquatics department offers swim lessons throughout the year in private and small group settings. Classes are taught by trained Learn-to-Swim Instructors. All swim lesson monthly fees are automatically deducted from your account on file. In order to cancel your lessons, you must contact the JCC Bursar’s Office two weeks before you would like your lessons to end.

To enroll in any of our group or private swim lessons, contact the JCC Bursar at 330.746.3250 ext. 195.

Group Lessons

You & Me Baby

This is a monthly class where parents assist their children in the water. Children will learn how to float and improve their water skills. Recommended ages: 6-36 months. Swim pants or swim diapers are required.

Date: Saturdays | 9:30–10:00 a.m.
Cost: $30/Member | $40/Non Member

Learn-To-Swim Ages 3 & Up

Children will be placed into the appropriate level by the swim instructors.

Level 1:
Children will be taught basic swimming skills such as floating, blowing bubbles and the correct body positions for freestyle and backstroke.

Level 2:
Children will be taught the arm motions for freestyle and backstroke as well as the correct breathing patterns for both strokes.

Level 3:
Children will be taught the basics of breaststroke, butterfly, and diving as well as refining Freestyle and backstroke techniques.

Level 4:
Children will continue to refine the four swim strokes and diving.

Cost: $30/Member | $40/Non Member

Swim Team

Practices

Date: Monday–Thursday
Time: 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.
Cost: $75/Member per Month | $150/Non Member per Month

Youth Swim Team

Join us at our Main Campus indoor pool for a youth swimming program focusing on technique and endurance. Daily attendance is not mandatory but encouraged. We are offering six week programs:

• Apr. 2 – May 10

Private Swim Lessons

Private swim lessons provide the greatest flexibility among lesson options. The one-on-one attention provided through these lessons creates a personalized setting for learning. Private lessons are great for swimmers of any age from the rookie swimmer trying to learn the basics to the seasoned swimmer looking to improve their skills. Private lessons are also great for adults who want to learn to swim or even triathletes looking to improve their skills.

Private ELC and Akiva swim lessons available

1:1 student/teacher ratio | 4 lessons @ 30 minutes
Cost: $82/Member | $110/Non Member
$109/ELC or Akiva pick up

P.A.L.S. Private Swimming Lessons

(Persons with Autism Who Love to Swim)

The JCC offers free swim lessons that are especially geared towards persons on the autism spectrum. Our instructors have gone through special training and will be using advanced techniques to connect with and aid autistic children during lessons.

Those wishing to enroll in the JCC P.A.L.S. program visit jccyoungstown.org/pals. This program is funded by The Thomases Family Endowment of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation.

Swim Safe 500

This program provides free swimming lessons for children in kindergarten through eighth grade who

(continued on next page)
JCC Scholar Series

The Holocaust in Czech Cinema

Speaker: Jacob Ari Labendz

Between 1959 and 1969, Czechoslovak filmmakers released about ten Holocaust-themed films, many of extremely high quality. Dr. Labendz will discuss the films in their historical contexts with specific attention to the complex political and cultural uses of Holocaust memory by state actors, citizens and proto-dissidents. Through this cinematic journey, we will learn more about the place of Jews in communist Central Europe, why Jews could function as potent political symbols, and what this all meant for actual Jews.

About the Speaker: Jacob Ari Labendz is the Clayman Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Youngstown State University, where he directs the Center for Judaic and Holocaust Studies. He specializes in the history and culture of Jews in modern Europe, with a focus on postwar Czechoslovakia.

JCC Journeys

Join us on a fun-filled bus trip to Cleveland or Pittsburgh to see a show and have dinner. It’s a wonderful way to meet new friends. Members and Non Members are welcome! Register online at jccyoungstown.org or with the JCC Bursar at 330.746.3250 ext. 195.

Beautiful – The Carole King Musical

This musical tells the inspiring true story of King’s remarkable rise to stardom, from being part of a hit songwriting team with her husband Gerry Goffin, to her relationship with fellow writers and best friends Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann, to becoming one of the most successful solo acts in popular music history. Price includes orchestra seat, transportation and tip for the bus driver. Dinner will be on your own. Space is limited and seating location is on a first come, first serve basis.

Israel’s 70th Anniversary Speaker Series

Hand in Hand: Coexistence in Israel

Hand in Hand is the center for Jewish-Arab education in Israel. Its mission is to create a strong, inclusive, shared society in Israel through a network of Jewish-Arab integrated bilingual schools and organized communities. It currently operates integrated schools and communities in six locations with 1,578 Jewish and Arab students and more than 8,000 community members. Hand in Hand changemaker Noa Yammer will explore her personal journey to this work, as well as the dilemmas and successes that come with building a shared and equal future for Arabs and Jews in Israel. A light dinner will be served.

An Evening of Music: Flute Solos and Duets

A delightful evening with flute solos and duets played by two of Youngstown State’s finest graduate flute students, Anna Reitsma and Morgan Frederick. They will be accompanied by part-time YSU faculty member Diane Yazvac. Music will include works from Bach, Nielsen, Doppler and more!

Dive-In Movie: Treasure Hunt

Date: Friday, Apr. 20
Time: 4:00–6:00 p.m.
Cost: Free/Member | $5/Non Member
Register online at jccyoungstown.org

A.M. Energizer

Grab an Aqua Jogger belt and get ready for a great workout. This class incorporates a series of exercises and routines in the deep end of the pool that have zero impact on the hips, knees, ankles, or back.

Date: Tuesday & Thursday
Time: 7:45–8:30 a.m.

Aqua Cardio Blast

This 60 minute cardio class will help strengthen all of your major muscles. Come workout in an inspiring, motivating group environment with fantastic music. This fun-filled class will make you forget you are exercising! No swimming ability required.

Date: Monday & Wednesday
Time: 5:00–5:45 p.m.

CULTURAL ARTS

For more information on Cultural Arts, contact Emily Blau at 330.746.3250 ext. 152 or eblau@jewishyoungstown.org

JCC Music Series

An Evening of Music: Flute Solos and Duets

A delightful evening with flute solos and duets played by two of Youngstown State’s finest graduate flute students, Anna Reitsma and Morgan Frederick. They will be accompanied by part-time YSU faculty member Diane Yazvac. Music will include works from Bach, Nielsen, Doppler and more!

Date: Monday, Apr. 23
Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Location: JCC Multi-Purpose Room
Cost: $5/Member | $7/Non Member

Beautiful – The Carole King Musical

This musical tells the inspiring true story of King’s remarkable rise to stardom, from being part of a hit songwriting team with her husband Gerry Goffin, to her relationship with fellow writers and best friends Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann, to becoming one of the most successful solo acts in popular music history. Price includes orchestra seat, transportation and tip for the bus driver. Dinner will be on your own. Space is limited and seating location is on a first come, first serve basis.

Date: Sunday, June 17
Location: Cleveland, OH
Leave JCC: 11:00 a.m.
Showtime: 1:00 p.m.
Return to the JCC: 7:30 p.m.
Cost: $65/Member | $85/Non Member

Brigadoon

When New Yorkers Tommy Albright and Jeff Douglas lose their way during a vacation to the Scottish Highlands, they stumble into the mythical village of Brigadoon on the one day every hundred years it appears. Tommy, who is engaged back in New York, falls head over heels for villager Fiona. A twist of fate then reveals the complicated truth that if any resident leaves Brigadoon, the town and the people in it will be lost forever. Tommy is forced to choose between returning to the world that he knows or taking a chance on life and love in a mysterious new place. Price includes orchestra seat, transportation and tip for the bus driver. Dinner will be on your own. Space is limited and seating location is on a first come, first serve basis.

Date: Sunday, July 22
Location: Pittsburgh, PA
Leave JCC: 12:00 p.m.
Showtime: 2:00 p.m.
Return to the JCC: 8:30 p.m.
Cost: $65/Member | $85/Non Member

JCC Scholar Series

The Holocaust in Czech Cinema

Speaker: Jacob Ari Labendz

Between 1959 and 1969, Czechoslovak filmmakers released about ten Holocaust-themed films, many of extremely high quality. Dr. Labendz will discuss the films in their historical contexts with specific attention to the complex political and cultural uses of Holocaust memory by state actors, citizens and proto-dissidents. Through this cinematic journey, we will learn more about the place of Jews in communist Central Europe, why Jews could function as potent political symbols, and what this all meant for actual Jews.

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Date: Monday, Apr. 9
Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Location: JCC Multi-Purpose Room
Registration required at jccyoungstown.org or at the JCC Bursar’s Office at 330.746.3250 ext. 195 by April 6
Volunteer Opportunities
Social Action Committee of the Jewish Community Relations Council
330.746.3250 ext. 123
Swilschek@jewishyoungstown.org

Churchill United Methodist Food Pantry
The CHUM Food Pantry aims to feed families in Liberty Township that are in need of extra assistance. Since first starting in 2016, the pantry now feeds over 70+ families. Volunteers will help distribute food and make guests feel welcome during their visit.

Dates: Apr. 6, May 4
Time: 9:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Location: 189 Churchill Rd, Youngstown, OH 44505

Diaper Packing with Making Kids Count
The Making Kids Count Diaper Bank Volunteers repack diapers in quantities of 25 diapers per size with saran wrap and labels. This ensures that more people are able to receive a pack of diapers and that the diapers are being distributed as more of an “emergency” supply. Volunteers wrap 10,000 diapers into 400 packs a month!

Dates: Apr. 13 | May 11
Times: 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Location: 7178 West Blvd, Ste E, Youngstown, Ohio 44512

Aladdin
Based on the 1992 animated film, Disney’s Aladdin tells the story of a street-smart commoner whose whole life changes when he meets a magical genie who can grant him three wishes. Aladdin wants the hand of Princess Jasmine, but that means becoming something he’s not and going toe to toe with Jafar who wants the genie for his own evil plans. Price includes orchestra seat, transportation and tip for the bus driver. Dinner will be on your own. Space is limited and seating location is on a first come, first serve basis.

Date: Sunday, Aug. 26
Location: Pittsburgh, PA
Leave JCC: 11:00 a.m.
Showtime: 1:00 p.m.

For more information on Rentals. contact Kelli McCormick at 330.746.3250 ext. 284 or kmccormick@jewishyoungstown.org

Let us host your next party, meeting or event at the JCC!

Our spacious Multi-Purpose Room is equipped with an overhead motorized projection theater screen, state-of-the-art audio visual system, movable module stage, and commercial kitchen. Catering packages are available for up to 250 guests.

Our highly versatile Adult Lounge will accommodate 50 guests and provides a relaxing atmosphere. An in-house kosher caterer is available upon request for events in this room.

The JCC offers meeting room packages for small or large business meetings and events. Our small conference room, which will seat up to 10 guests, is located in a quiet setting. Our boardroom seats 35 and is equipped with a built-in projector and screen. Refreshments and snacks are available upon request for an additional charge. We are offering discounts on business meetings hosted during the week.

Now Offering: Under the Sea Splish Splash Mermaid Bash
Experience swimming, interacting and storytelling with the JCC Mermaid in our full-size indoor heated pool and enjoy time in our party room.

Cost: $225/Member | $281/Non Member

Pricing includes:
One hour swimming with the Mermaid
One hour in the party room
The JCC Mermaid will also pose for photos for 15 minutes after the swim session

Extras:
$50/hr. for additional time in the pool
$50/hr. for additional time in the gymnasium
$65 for each additional Mermaid
Lifeguards will staff the pool at all times
15 people per lifeguard
$25 for each additional lifeguard needed

Current Exhibit: ISO-photography by Al-len Morris
Mar. 15–May 10
Please join us for an Opening Reception:
Thursday, Mar. 15 | 5:30–7:00 p.m.
Schusterman Summer Fellowship Program Accepts Dr. Adam Fuller

A hearty congratulations to Dr. Adam Fuller, who was accepted to the Schusterman Summer Fellowship Program at Brandeis University.

At the Summer Institute for Israel Studies, university faculty from North America and around the world participate in seminars at Brandeis and in Israel that help them design courses in Israel Studies for their home universities.

290 faculty fellows have completed SIIS, teaching thousands of students with syllabi developed at SIIS.

During the first two weeks, SIIS fellows are in residence at Brandeis and participate in seminars taught by distinguished Israel Studies scholars. These seminars focus on Israel’s society, history, politics, culture, foreign affairs, and diplomacy. Fellows are then required to present syllabi for the courses they plan to teach on their home campuses. Accommodations are in shared suites at the university’s newest residence halls.

After completing the program, Summer Institute for Israel Studies alumni continue to enjoy access to a trove of resources — syllabi, articles, archives, podcasts, conferences, workshops and webinars — and an ever-growing network of peers that spans the globe.

My Primitive Passover Scavenger Hunt

Linda Pressman

When I see the giant gefilte fish and matzah display at Costco in late February, it sends me into a panic. I think, is it time for gefilte fish already? I think that finding the holiday foods, including that gigantic jar of gefilte fish, is not easy and maybe I should stockpile now. I start thinking about how many people I’m having for Passover — a lot or a little? One manageable table or an impossible four?

Most of the year I’m a pretty normal American woman. I look normal. I dress in a fairly normal manner. I walk in grocery stores and have a vaguely normal shopping list. Yes, there are certain Jewish holidays here and there where I’m maybe shopping for 20 pound bags of potatoes in the winter, apples and honey, round challahs and smoked fish in the fall, or poppy filling in March. All a little odd.

But then there’s Passover.

Costco, of course, can only satisfy a few needs for this holiday. Though I’m willing to bounce back and forth between its kosher smoked fish case and the Passover display, both forming a miniature Pale of Settlement in the store for Jewish shoppers to cling to, eventually I must venture out to the Jewish section of the regular grocery stores, to their Pesach tables, and to the kosher stores to get everything else I need.

Shopping for Passover is like being on the worst scavenger hunt ever. My grocery list looks like it was written in medieval Poland. I need a really big brisket. Like maybe an entire cow. And chicken livers. Like the whole chicken.

And maybe 10,000 eggs.

I need horseradish — red and white. I need fish and potatoes, matzah and parsley. Coconut and carrots. Apples and walnuts and honey and wine. Oh, and they wouldn’t happen to have four Shank bones hanging around, would they? One time when my mother was alive, she had a craving for real kishke. I went to the store with her instructions: I needed rendered fat and casings. The butcher seemed mystified.

How did I become my mother? Or, rather, my grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother? All the way down the line? How did I get so fascinated with the butchers at all the grocery stores in town, interrogating the staff about their briskets, their chicken livers, the weights and when they’re expected?

When I’ve bought everything on my list, I start cooking very meticulously. I cling to the idea that if I’m organized about this, I can be ready. I can’t really be ready.

Sometimes while I’m out shopping, I can’t run into the rest of the world. There they are, happy normal people, out shopping for regular groceries, like bread, or in the Easter aisle buying chocolate eggs, squishy Peeps and giant chocolate Easter bunnies. I’m somewhat surprised that the world is just ticking along as normal, and there’s not an emergency in their kitchens like there is in mine. Because no matter how far ahead I start, no matter how much I’m sure I’ve finished the night before, it never fails that two hours before the seder I have to call my sister for emergency backup, for parsley sprig placement or peeling boiled eggs.

Back at the store, I find the last thing on my list, horseradish root for the seder plate — a gnarled, primitive-looking thing that I grasp in my matching gnarled hand — and I head home.

Best wishes for a Happy and Healthy Passover!
Hillel at Kent State Celebrates Purim with LGBTQ Community

Kent, OH – Hillel at Kent State University celebrated Purim this year with a week of community building and expanded programming. The culminating event was a student-created drag show aptly named ‘Queen Esther’s Ball.’ Partnering with the Kent State LGBTQ Student Center, Pride! Kent, and Students Supporting Israel, the program was attended by over 125 students from the Jewish community and partnering organizations.

Hillel Student Board leaders, Arin Weinstein and Rachel Marchese, worked closely with leaders from Pride! Kent and the KSU LGBTQ Student Center to create a celebration that reaffirmed Hillel’s commitment to inclusion and pluralism and exposed non-Jewish students to the holiday of Purim. In addition to Queen Esther’s Ball, Hillel hosted a hamantaschen baking event for students where they baked 300 hamantaschen, many for the first time. Students also made 75 mishloach manot that were given to friends, family, and university friends and partners to bring the joy of the holiday to others.

Hillel at Kent State University is the home away from home for 1,500 Jewish students at Kent State and University of Akron.

Temple El Emeth Purim Celebration

Adults and children paraded around the sanctuary at Temple El Emeth, which hosted a recent community-wide Purim celebration.

Top: Jamie and Pami Dutro dress to celebrate the Purim Festival.
Middle Left: Nancy Burnett, Lori Szoke, Alice Franklin, and Phyllis Perlman.
Middle Right: Children enjoy selecting special items from the table of prizes.
Bottom Left: Rachel Kay and her daughter Molly, enjoy the festivities.
Bottom Right: Rabbi Joseph Schonberger plays saxophone with the Purim Band during the Purim Celebration.
**Children’s Books for Passover**

By Penny Schwartz

("ITA") -- A talking parrot saves the family seder and a musician is eager to host his perfect first Passover meal in a pair of delightful new children’s books for the holiday. A third book celebrates the rich diversity of the Jewish people through photographs.

Looking beyond Passover, a new crop of Jewish children’s books beckons for the spring that includes a picture book on Moe Berg, the Jewish baseball player who became a spy for the U.S. government; an adventure chapter book that travels back to the days of King Solomon; and a rollicking graphic novel on the life story of Dr. Ruth Westheimer.

**Paulie’s Passover Predicament**
Written by Jane Sutton; illustrated by Barbara Vagnozzi
Kar-Ben; ages 3-8

Paulie is a guitar-playing mosiac-ian who is hosting his very first seder and wants it to be just perfect. At the grocery store, he piles his cart with boxes of matzah, candles and lots of grape juice. But Paulie’s guests — a porcupine, bear, bunny and others — giggle and poke fun at his seder plate with its really big ostrich egg, saltwater with pepper, and pine cones rather than walnuts for the ceremonial charoset. Kids will get in on the action when Paulie sets out to search for the hidden afikomen — until the basement door closes shut behind him. Paulie ingeniously solves the problem and later leads his friends in a rousing rendition of “Dayenu”; he is especially grateful for his freedom. Jane Sutton’s playful story, enhanced by Barbara Vagnozzi’s brightly colored illustrations, captures the excitement of celebrating Passover with a tender touch that reinforces the importance of being kind to friends.

**The Passover Parrot**
Evelyn Zusman; illustrated by Kyrsten Brooker
Kar-Ben; ages 3-8

Lily lives in a brownstone in Brooklyn with her parents and six brothers and sisters. She loves swinging on a tire swing that hangs from a large tree in their New York City backyard. As the family prepares to celebrate Passover, a neighbor who is moving drops off her pet parrot as a gift that delights Lily — her mom, however, doesn’t share the excitement. The parrot’s name is Hametz, the word for bread and other leavened food that is not eaten during Passover. Lily is determined to recite the Four Questions in Hebrew at the seder, but everyone is too busy to help her practice. Except Hametz, that is, who repeats the questions back to Lily. With a houseful of guests for the seder, Lily’s father is not amused when Hametz chimes in with Lily and he banishes the parrot to the girl’s room. Will the seder be ruined when Lily discovers Hametz and the afikomen missing from her room? Lily solves the mystery and the seder comes to an uplifting end. This is a newly illustrated 35th anniversary edition of this story by Evelyn Zusman, who was a Hebrew school teacher in New York and Los Angeles, according to Kar-Ben. A lively Lily and playful Hametz are center stage throughout the book’s large, colorful illustrations by Canadian artist Kyrsten Brooker. She draws readers in on the scenes that evoke a nostalgic feel of urban Jewish life in the early to mid-20th century.

**We Are Jewish Faces**
Debra B. Davick
Apples & Honey Press; ages 5-8

This joyful collection of colorful photographs conveys the rich diversity of Jews today, with the faces of Jewish children and teens with their grandparents, friends, brothers and sisters. While the recommended age range is 5-8, the lively but simple photographs will appeal to even younger ones, who will be fascinated by the smiling, cheerful faces of other kids. The settings traverse the globe and the Jewish life cycle and calendar, from blowing the shofar, eating matzah and lighting a Hanukkah menorah to graduations, bar mitzvah celebrations and other milestones. Kids are dressed in contemporary clothes and traditional elaborately decorated Yemenite clothing. In an author’s note, Debra Davick writes that she was first inspired to create the book by visiting her children Jewish day school many years ago—a community that included Jewish children from an array of Jewish families. Here are some new Jewish challenges and traditions that they had never seen before.

**The Spy Who Played Baseball**
Carrie Jones; illustrated by Gary Cherrington
Kar-Ben; ages 5-9

Nothing says spring like baseball. This new book introduces kids to the unusual story of Moe Berg, a Princeton-educated, multi-lingual major leaguer from the 1930s who was inducted into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. During World War II, Berg became an intelligence officer for the U.S. war efforts, including in Nazi-controlled Europe.

**Search for the Shamir**
Eric A. Kimmel; illustrations by Ivica Stevanovic
Kar-Ben; ages 6-9

This is the second in the “Scarlett and Sam” series, a Jewish chapter book for older readers. Eric Kimmel, a popular and award-winning author, delivers a fun adventure story with returning fictional twins Scarlett and Sam, who travel back in time to ancient Jerusalem, where they face the challenge of finding a mythical insect called the shamir that the ruler needs to build the First Temple.

**Roller Coaster Grandma: The Amazing Story of Dr. Ruth**
Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer and Pierre Lehu; illustrated by Mark Simmons
Apples & Honey Press; ages 8-12

In this graphic novel, kids follow the remarkable life journey of Ruth Westheimer, the popular sex-therapist media star known as Dr. Ruth who fled the Nazis on a Kindertransport, trained as a sniper with the Haganah in Israel and immigrated to the U.S.

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**When:** MONDAY, May 14, 2018
**Time:** 5:30p.m.

**Where:** St. Charles Church Social Hall 7345 Westview Dr. Boardman, OH

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**ENTERTAINMENT 6:30p.m.**

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The First Torah Reading in Orbit and Five Other Fun Facts About Jews in Space

Josefin Dolsten

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Torah tells how God created the earth and the heavens, although the stories that follow tell us more about the former than the latter. A new exhibit doesn't quite answer theological questions about space, but it does show the ways in which Jews have looked at, written about and traveled into the final frontier.

"Jews in Space: Members of the Tribe in Orbit," named after a Mel Brooks gag, is an exhibit organized and on view at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and the Center for Jewish History here. It features both Yiddish and Hebrew books on astronomy and astrology, science fiction works created by Jews and sections on the history of Jewish astronauts.

JTA was given a tour by Eddy Portnoy, YIVO’s senior researcher and director of exhibitions, who curated the collection with Melanie Meyers, and learned about some of the unusual and unexpected relationship between Jews and the cosmos.

This book of horoscopes was written in Yiddish.

Published in 1907 in Odessa, Ukraine, "The Revealer of That Which Is Hidden: A New Practical Book of Fate" gave Yiddish readers a way to learn about their futures by way of astrology. Much like a modern-day horoscope, the book offered predictions based on the reader’s zodiac sign. Similar books existed both in Yiddish and Hebrew during the time period, but rabbinic authorities were not thrilled, since astrology is banned by Jewish law (although zodiac symbols have shown up as synagogue decorations for at least 1,500 years). Despite that, Jews at the time continued to read horoscopes as well as seek other ways of predicting the future, such as by going to psychics and reading tea leaves.

The first Jewish American to go into space was a woman.

Judith Resnik became the first Jewish American and second Jew (Soviet astronaut Boris Volynov was the first) to go into space when she flew on the maiden voyage of the Space Shuttle Discovery in 1984. Born in 1949 to Jewish immigrants from Ukraine who settled in Ohio, Resnik worked as an engineer at the Xerox Corp. before being recruited to NASA in a program to diversify its workforce. Resnik was only the fourth female to ever do so. She died in 1986 along with the rest of the crew of the Space Shuttle Challenger when the spacecraft broke apart shortly after takeoff.

In 1985, a Jewish-American astronaut read from the Torah in space.

Jeffrey Hoffman, the first Jewish-American man to go into space, consulted a rabbi on how to observe Judaism on his first trip, in 1985. Hoffman, a Brooklyn native who was born in 1944, brought with him a scaled-down Torah and did the first Torah reading outside of Earth. He also had a set of Jewish ritual items specially made for his trip, including a mezuzah with a Velcro strip that he would attach to his bunk and a prayer shawl with weights to keep it from floating away in zero-gravity. He also brought a menorah to celebrate Hanukkah, although he was never able to actually light it aboard the spacecraft.

The Vulcan salute on "Star Trek" has Jewish origins.

Actor Leonard Nimoy used an unlikely source of inspiration for his character Spock’s iconic Vulcan salute, which consists of a raised hand with the middle and ring fingers parted into a V. The gesture looks just like the one kohanim do in synagogue during the Priestly Blessing. In his autobiography, Nimoy explained that he had copied the Jewish gesture, which he had seen in a synagogue as a child (it looks just like the one kohanim do in synagogue during the Priestly Blessing). In his autobiography, Nimoy explained that he had copied the Jewish gesture, which he had seen in a synagogue as a child (it also appears on tombstones of kohanim).

The Vulcan salute, which is accompanied by the phrase “Live long and prosper” (the kohanim’s blessing begins “May God bless you and guard you”), became so iconic that the White House mentioned it in a statement issued on Nimoy’s death in 2015.

An alien in "Futurama" was named after the YIVO Institute.

Some might think it a coincidence that the institute shares a name with a bizarre extraterrestrial in the animated science fiction comedy series. In a 2008 direct-to-video film based on the TV series, Yivo (voiced by actor David Cross, who was raised Jewish) is a tentacled being who uses his many limbs to have sex with every living being in the universe.

Turns out the screenwriter, Eric Kaplan, is friends with Cecile Kuznitz, a professor at Bard College who has done extensive research on the institute. He decided to, um, honor her by naming the character after the topic of her work, the archive and research center on Eastern European Jewish life founded in Vilna in 1925.

A Jewish immigrant to the U.S. helped popularize science fiction.

Hugo Gernsback, a Jewish immigrant from Luxembourg, is sometimes called "The Father of Science Fiction" for publishing a magazine that helped popularize the genre. Launched in 1926, "Amazing Stories" featured tales of aliens, robots and other beings, including ones written by Gernsback himself. His magazine brought science fiction — a term he coined — to the mainstream and inspired many writers, such as Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the Jewish-American duo that created Superman. Gernsback left "Amazing Stories" in 1929, although it held on in one form or another until 2005. Among the Jewish writers who had their first stories published in the magazine were Isaac Asimov and Howard Fast.
Delicious Passover Meals that are Low in Carbs and Calories

By Megan Wolf

(JTA) -- I’m a big fan of healthy whole grains, but they can easily become heavy -- even the healthy ones. Instead of packing my Passover meals with heavy dishes, I’m offering a lighter, lower calorie and lower carbohydrate option this year.

If you have seen my recipes before, you may know that I love cauliflower as a stand-in for potatoes and rice. There is truly no better substitute! Not only is it delicious, it’s now incredibly easy to find already riced. And who can’t use a time saver in the kitchen?

I prefer frozen riced cauliflower to fresh. The more I make these dishes, the more I realize this is by far the best method of purchase. I think it works so well in part because there is already some water in the cauliflower and it helps the vegetable to cook more evenly.

These recipes are delicious and well suited for any time of year, but they are especially welcome at Passover, when we’re all looking to lighten our load a bit! I also love how these dishes come together in color, taste and texture. The sweet and crunchy aspects of the broccoli play off the creamy cauliflower and punchy salmon.

**SIMPLE LEMON SALMON**

**Ingredients:**
- 4 6-ounce salmon portions
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 1 lemon, sliced

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 400 F., place sheet pan in the oven to heat.
2. Whisk olive oil and lemon.
3. Season salmon with salt and pepper.
4. Brush salmon with half of the lemon mixture.
5. Place salmon skin side down on the hot sheet pan, roast until cooked to your liking, or about 8-10 minutes.
6. Serve salmon by topping the fish with the remaining oil mixture and sliced lemon.

**SEARED MUSHROOM CAULIFLOWER RISOTTO**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 10 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 4 cups frozen riced cauliflower
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 2 cups water or more
- 1/3 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 pint crimini mushrooms, quartered
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt to taste

**Directions:**
1. Sauté onions and garlic over low heat until cooked through and translucent.
2. Add frozen cauliflower and mix to combine. Add white wine and continue stirring.
3. Add water 1/2 cup at a time, stirring frequently and adding more water as each batch is absorbed.
4. While the cauliflower is cooking, sauté mushrooms in olive oil in a separate pan, set aside.
5. Once the cauliflower is soft and resembles risotto, add Parmesan cheese and stir to combine.
6. Serve risotto with mushrooms atop or stirred into cauliflower, topped with lemon juice.

**BURNT BROCCOLI**

**Ingredients:**
- 2 heads broccoli, cut into florets
- 2 tablespoons olive oil plus more for drizzling
- 1 tablespoon honey
- Salt to taste

**Directions:**
1. Steam broccoli until just tender and bright green, about 2 minutes.
2. Toss broccoli with 2 tablespoon olive oil and place on a large baking sheet, roast until crispy and starting to char; about 15-20 minutes.
3. Microwave honey until it’s liquid then immediately pour evenly over broccoli and drizzle with olive oil, season with salt.

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Passover Chicken Schnitzel Recipe

By Shannon Sarna

(The Nosher via JTA) -- Schnitzel is one of my family’s favorite dishes throughout the entire year, but it is especially loved during Passover. With very small changes (as in, use matzah meal and almond flour instead of bread crumbs), this dish is 100 percent Passover-friendly. And it’s so satisfying as the week of Passover eating lags on and you crave some serious eats-- not just matzah slathered in whipped cream cheese for like, the 20th time.

Schnitzel tips!
-When dredging anything (like chicken or eggplant), set up a work station before you start cooking. Two (or three, depending on the recipe) large shallow bowls or Pyrex dishes are ideal for the egg and bread crumb steps. Dredge all your pieces, place them on a baking sheet lined with parchment, and then start frying.
-Don’t overcrowd the pan or the chicken will not brown properly. Fry 2-3 cutlets at a time, depending on their size and the size of your pan.
-After you are done frying, sprinkle with an additional pinch of salt while it’s still hot.
-To reheat, place on a wire rack on top of a baking sheet in an oven heated to 250 degrees for 10-15 minutes.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs chicken cutlets (thinly sliced chicken breasts)
- Salt and pepper
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 tsp kosher-for-Passover mustard or hot sauce
- 1 tsp water
- 1 ½ cups matzah meal
- ½ cup almond meal
- 2 Tbsp sesame seeds (optional)
- 2 Tbsp dried parsley
- ½ Tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- Vegetable or canola oil for frying

Directions

1. Combine eggs, mustard or hot sauce, and water in a large bowl. Combine matzah meal, almond meal, sesame seeds (if using), parsley, paprika, salt, and pepper in another large bowl.
2. Dredge each chicken cutlet into egg mixture, then into matzah meal mixture, pressing down to ensure the entire piece is covered. Lay flat on a plate or baking sheet.
3. Pour oil into large sauté pan to about 1-1 ½ inches high over medium-high heat.
4. Fry chicken cutlets in batches, 2-3 at a time, until golden on each side. Depending on thickness of chicken, around 3 minutes each side. Take care not to overcrowd the pan or chicken will not cook properly.
5. Remove from pan and allow to cool on a wire rack.
6. While chicken is still hot from pan, sprinkle each cutlet with additional pinch of salt.

(Shannon Sarna is the editor of The Nosher.)

The Nosher food blog offers a dazzling array of new and classic Jewish recipes and food news, from Europe to Yemen, from challah to shakshuka and beyond. Check it out at www.TheNosher.com.
Why I Led My Orthodox Jewish Classmates on the National Gun Control Walkout

By Jacob Miller

CHICAGO (JTA) -- I’m a sophomore at Ida Crown Jewish Academy, the largest Modern Orthodox high school in the Chicagoland area. When I heard about the #ENOUGH national school walkout, I immediately wondered how my school could participate. Our school motto is “Inspiring Bnei and Bnot Torah to thrive in the modern world;” here was a chance to put that dictum—emphasizing that we students are meant to bring Jewish values into the wider world—to the test.

My friends and I followed the news reports about the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in horror, read the biographies of victims with distress and discussed the event at length. We felt a burning rage about lax gun laws in the country. I approached my classmate Bayli Alter and together we decided to speak with our school dean, Rabbi Leonard Matanky, about how our school could get involved in the walkout.

Word about the walkout spread quickly, and many students approached me and volunteered to help plan the event.

The nationwide walkout on March 14 was organized by high school students and the Women’s March Youth Empower in response to the shooting at Stoneman Douglas in Parkland, Florida, in February. The 17-minute (to commemorate the 17 victims) walkout was designed to demonstrate against gun violence and show support for stricter gun legislation.

As an Orthodox Jewish school, our needs were a little different. We needed to ensure the program was Jewish in character, and we didn’t want to align ourselves with the wider Women’s March movement, which has been criticized for, among other things, its feeble response to one of its co-chair’s embrace of the Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, an avowed anti-Semite. Our student body also runs the gamut of political opinion, from right to left, and we needed to ensure our walkout did not offend or alienate anyone.

We tried hard to design programming that emphasized bipartisan political activism and memorialized the victims of the shooting. At 9:50 a.m., the entire school assembled in the gym, where Bayli and I spoke for a few minutes about the Parkland tragedy and gun control proposals. We hoped to provide context for the walkout by educating students about the national conversation about gun legislation without forcing any political beliefs. We also stressed the memorial component of the demonstration. We then invited students to join us in our walkout.

Outside, we handed out sheets with Tehillim, or Psalms, on one side and the names and contact information for our local and national representatives on the other. We read out names of the Parkland victims, recited Tehillim and read short biographies of four of the people killed. Afterward, we encouraged students to phone Congress and urge their political representatives to support reasonable gun legislation.

“It was emotionally uplifting that students could gather for a common cause in the hope of achieving something positive out of this horrific tragedy,” said English teacher Sheri Goldstein. “The handouts with prayers on one side and phone numbers on the other side represented what Ida Crown is about.”

Rabbi Matanky told me, “I think one of the most important things we can teach our students is how to respond to injustice and how to channel their energies to make the world a better place. We are very proud of our students who took the initiative and used the opportunity to remember those who were murdered via traditional Jewish responses and prayer.”

It’s important for us as Jewish high school students to stand with our peers and to advocate against hate and violence to ensure atrocities like Parkland never happen again.
Tips for Non-Jews Attending Their First Seder

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

Every year at Passover, many Jews enjoy inviting non-Jewish guests to the seder, the big family meal during which they recount the tale of the Exodus. Such invitations are extended in a tradition of interfaith cooperation and the conviction that at least one person at the table should actually enjoy himself.

For non-Jews who might be intimidated by attending their first seder, we offer the following tips on seder customs and ways to avoid what Yiddish-speakers call a “tsimmes.”

Tip #1: Avoid the tsimmes. The word is Yiddish slang for a fracas, but is also the name of a casserole made of sweet potato, carrots, dried fruit, honey and brown sugar. It has been known to induce diabetes between the soup course and the drive home.

Tip #2: Do not refer to the holiday as “The Passover.” No Jew since Jesus has ever called it “The Passover.”

Tip #3: Do NOT compare matzah to a communion wafer, unless you actually enjoy long awkward silences.

Tip #4: After dessert, the children will either hide or find a piece of matzah known as the “afikomen” and then engage in an aggressive bargaining session with their parents over its return. One pink-faced uncle may joke, “No wonder we’re so good at business!” DO NOT LAUGH AT THIS JOKE.

Tip #5: About that matzah: To commemorate the haste in which they left Egypt, Passover requires that Jews only eat this cracker made from wheat that in its journey from field to supermarket has not been allowed to rise or acquire any discernible flavor. When “tasting” your first piece, remember to nod and smile and keep a full glass of water or other liquid nearby.

Tip #6: After plowing through the Haggadah and eating various combinations of symbolic foods, it is now time for the festive meal. Congratulations! You made it! You’re almost home! (Unless, of course, your hosts are observant Jews, when the reading of the Haggadah will pick up again right after dessert. No, I’m not kidding.)

Tip #7: The festive meal will often begin with a serving of something called “gefilte fish.” This is sometimes referred to as “carp pâté,” but only by people who have never seen or tasted pâté. When “tasting” your first piece, remember to nod and smile and keep a full glass of water or other liquid nearby.

Tip #8: The Elijah ceremony also includes the recitation of a rather angry prayer that begins, “Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that do not recognize You.” It sounds pretty bad, but first you must consider what the late Jewish historian Salo Baron once said about the impact of persecution on the collective Jewish self-consciousness and -- wait. I can’t do this. It’s pretty bad.

Tip #9: As the seder moves toward its conclusion, someone will open the front door and invite the prophet Elijah to join the seder. Considering Elijah has been dead for 3,000 years and there are millions of Jewish households making the same request, you might find yourself thinking this is implausible. And I might find myself thinking, “Really? More implausible than Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny, wise guy? Do you think you’re better than us?” Of course, I will have had at least three cups of wine at this point.

Tip #10: At this late point, many Jewish families like to joyously sing a song called “Chad Gadya,” which is about a dead goat, a beaten dog, an injured cat, a slaughtered ox and a visit by the Angel of Death. It is a children’s song. One pink-faced uncle may joke, “No wonder we’re so screwed up!” DO NOT LAUGH AT THIS JOKE.

The seder now concludes with everyone saying “Next year in Jerusalem!” to which your hostess may respond, “Next year at somebody else’s house!” You may now get up from the table and -- hey, come back! You forgot your coat!
How Matzah Became a Household Item for Non-Jews in the Netherlands

By Cnaan Liphshiz

ENSCHEDE, Netherlands (JTA) -- For most matzah bakeries, Passover is their lifeline and only claim to financial viability. After the weeklong holiday, during which Jews are commanded to consume matzah to commemorate their ancestors’ hurried flight out of Egypt, demand for the famously tasteless cracker drops sharply.

Except, that is, in the Netherlands. A centuries-old and proud Jewish community here has made matzah a household product that is sold in supermarkets and consumed year-round by millions of non-Jews who swear by it as their breakfast bread of choice.

That’s one reason why Pieter Heijs, a co-owner of Hollandia Matzes in this eastern city, is probably the only matzah maker in the world who braces for losses, not earnings, during Passover.

Almost all the profits of his matzah bakery -- the only one in Holland -- comes from sales to non-Jews of a product that lacks the “kosher for Passover” certification. However, for four weeks ahead of Passover, Hollandia also produces kosher-for-Passover matzah, which “costs more to make than what we get for it,” Heijs said.

The factory, which produces about 40 million matzah crackers annually, also makes small amounts of shmurah matzah -- a specialty variant that is even costlier because of its stringent adherence to the kosher rules. To prevent even the hint of leavening, the wheat and flour never come into contact with moisture from the time of the harvesting until the dough is kneaded and the sheets are baked.

Still, Heijs remains committed to making matzah that is kosher for Passover:

“It’s a matter of tradition, and it means a great deal to me,” said Heijs, who is not Jewish. “Even if it comes at the expense of our profit margins, we will continue to produce Passover kosher matzah for as long as we can.”

The losses, however, are dwarfed by the boom in Hollandia’s sales during Easter, which often coincides with Passover. On the Christian holiday, millions of Dutch buy and eat matzah as part of a nationwide tradition that testifies to centuries of Jewish influence on the general population.

A liberal nation that was home to one of Europe’s most illustrious Jewish communities before its near annihilation by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Holocaust, the Netherlands has other examples of interfaith borrowings (take the oliebol, a deep-fried winter snack in Holland that many trace back to the Hanukkah doughnut called sufganiyah).

Such carryovers were perhaps possible in the Netherlands partly because many Protestant Christians here emphasize the Hebrew Bible over the New Testament. But Heijs said “it’s because Dutch Jews were so integrated into the fabric of society.”

The matzah became a year-round household food in recent decades as supermarkets replaced smaller grocery stores, according to Jonah Freud. He published a book in 2012 about the Dutch Jewish cuisine based on her research for the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam.

“I think it may be connected to how matzah is perceived as healthy,” Freud said.

Heijs concurs.

“Many of our clients want matzah because it’s such a pure product,” he said. “No additives, no conservatives, highly nutritious. What more can you ask of a health food?”

In an overture to the health-food crowd, one of the first moves by Heijs and his business partner, Udo Karsemeijer, who also is not Jewish, after they bought Hollandia in 2004 was to add an organic matzah product to the lineup. It includes matzahs in two sizes, a whole wheat variety and one with spice herbs.

Hollandia now exports products to Scandinavia, Germany and even France, where several matzah bakeries compete for a market with 500,000 Jews.

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Heijs and Karsemeijer bought the Hollandia factory from a Jewish family named Woudstra. The founding family built the factory in Enschede because it had a large Jewish community, and because of the arrival to the eastern Netherlands of thousands of Jews who fled the Nazis in nearby Germany.

When the Nazis invaded in 1940, the Woudstras went into hiding and the Nazis closed down Hollandia.

Before the invasion, the Netherlands had several matzah bakeries, according to the Dutch Bakers’ Museum. Among the best known and oldest was the De Haan bakery in the picturesque fishing village of Marken, north of Amsterdam. It operated only ahead of Passover, and after the baking of the last matzah each year, De Haan employees would march to music through the village dressed in white sheets and ceremoniously extinguish the ovens.

One of the production line machines inside Hollandia, a state-of-the-art factory with 18 employees who work year-round inside a three-story building, dates back to 1924. Inside the room where it now operates, the local Jewish community briefly ran a Jewish school for the children who were expelled from the general education system under the Nazis.

The factory reopened after World War II, during which the Germans killed 75 percent of the prewar Dutch Jewish population of 100,000. The community never replenished its numbers.

By then, however, matzahs had developed a non-Jewish following.

The eye-catching and instantly recognizable packaging of Hollandia matzah boxes — an orange-colored octagonal cardboard box with a nifty camera-aperture opening — was a marketing coup cooked up by the Woudstras, Heijs said.

The matzah became even better known to the Dutch immediately after the war because the Hollandia factory received generous subsidies under the Marshall Plan for financial aid to rebuild war-torn Europe, according to Heijs.

He said the funding was meant also as a gesture acknowledging Jewish suffering during the Holocaust.

“Frankly I couldn’t tell you why so many Dutchmen like matzah — I don’t think it’s tasty at all,” said Roger van Oordt, the director of the Netherlands-based Christians for Israel group, which organizes matzah-baking activities in solidarity with Israel and the Jews. “If I have to think about eating nothing but matzah for two weeks, it makes being Christian look easy.”

Although he is not Jewish, Heijs regards matzah as much more than a commodity.
NEW YORK (JTA) — I have roamed the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Egyptian wing many times, marveling at sarcophagi, statues of Horus and Ra, and portraits of young men on ancient panels who gaze back at visitors, looking shockingly familiar and contemporary. But on a Sunday just before Passover, I viewed the artifacts as I’d never before seen them: through the lens of the Exodus story, which we retell each year through reading the Haggadah.

Nachliel Selavan, a Jewish educator and self-taught museum guide whose specialty is looking at Jewish texts and history through ancient artifacts, guided a group of about 20 through the Egypt section, pausing at statues, carvings and the Book of the Dead scroll. Before setting off he distributed source sheets with canonical Jewish texts in Hebrew and English. For more than two hours Selavan connected items and ideas mentioned in the texts with the artifacts on view.

Selavan had us look at a passage from Deuteronomy in which Moses details what will befall the Israelites if they don’t live up to their end of the covenant with God.

We looked through cases at the Met displaying little replicas of Egyptian life discovered in the tombs of embalmed rulers, intended to accompany the deceased on their journeys to the afterlife. In the Bible, the Israelites are told they will be flattened by insufferable ailments and curses, and that the Lord will “will bring you back in boats to Egypt,” so undesirable they can’t even sell themselves back into slavery. Selavan pointed inside one of the ancient dioramas to show what those boats would have looked like.

“The Jewish people and Tanach do not exist in a vacuum,” Selavan, using a term meaning the Hebrew Bible, said after the tour. “Understanding the context for the text is key to our identity. Artifacts help us realize that ‘oh wow, these were real people.’

“What was daily life like for regular Philistines or regular Israelites? What were they seeing as they traded and mingled with another culture? When you see material culture like this, it makes it real.”

Selavan brought us to several examples of reliefs carved with the names of the Egyptian ruler, or paro/pharaoh, noting how important names were to them. In Hebrew, he noted, the Book of Exodus is known as Shemot, or names, which begins with the names of the sons of the patriarch Jacob, who went with their own families down to Egypt with their father.

“It was very interesting to see actual artifacts, representations of words we see in the Torah,” said Lori Leifer, 37, a Yiddish singer and computer database programmer who describes herself as Conservadox. She heard about the tour through Chulent, a WhatsApp group for Jews who have left Orthodox communities. Everyone else on the tour appeared to be Orthodox, including several haredim.

The Exodus tour is one of five Jewish tours Selavan offers at the Met through his company, Torah Intermedia. Another focuses on artifacts from the time of the Maccabee revolt and oriented toward Hanukkah. More Passover-themed tours are planned for the festival’s intermediate days.

“When you’re able to not just learn a text but see the stuff it’s talking about, the learning goes to a whole other level,” said Rabbi Ethan Tucker in an interview.

Tucker is the president and rosh yeshiva of Hadar, the egalitarian Torah learning center based in Manhattan. Last year Hadar brought its 45 summer fellows to the Met for a tour with Selavan. They were studying Avodah Zara, a Talmud tractate on idol worship, and saw examples of what the Talmud discusses.

“It was great to go around with someone with knowledge of Jewish sources and material sources on display at the Met,” Tucker said. “I found it to be very enriching. One of the struggles of being in a culture so focused on text is you can forget texts are talking about things in the real world. For institutions centered on the beit midrash [study hall], to get out into a museum raises the quality and intensity of the experience.

Selavan is one of a handful of individuals and companies that offer private Jewish tours at major art museums.

(continued on page 29)
David Thomas, associate coordinator of groups and visitor services at the Met, said the museum does not share the number of tours led by outside guides like Selavan.

"I'm not aware of any other tour guides who offer Jewish-themed tours, but there may be some," Thomas said. "Many synagogues, universities and other Jewish organizations also bring groups."

Selavan grew up the son of a rabbi/tour guide/archaeologist in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, and was educated at yeshivas. He discusses references from Mishna comfortably with a Satmar Hasid on his tour but dresses more like a Brooklyn hipster. Asked how he identifies religiously, Selavan replied, "I'm on the Orthodox spectrum but not sure where I fit."

Like the Met's galleries, Selavan's journey took a winding route. After yeshiva Selavan, now 34, began teaching the Brazilian martial art capoeira around Israel. At 25 he earned an undergraduate degree at a Jerusalem teachers' college and in 2013 came to the United States to teach. In his second year teaching Bible at the Netivot Montessori Yeshiva in East Brunswick, New Jersey, he took fourth-graders to see the Met's exhibit "From Assyria to Iberia." Another visitor, overhearing him, asked if he read Aramaic and led him to the Tel Dan stele, a 2,800-year-old inscribed stone on loan from the Israel Museum. Reading what turned out to be paleo-Hebrew, Selavan was struck by the power of seeing the earliest known reference to "Beit David," the seat of the Davidic dynasty, which is his hometown.

"Then people started asking me questions," Selavan said.

At the start of the 2016-17 school year, he started networking with other Orthodox yeshivas to lead tours and quickly expanded into leading adults. Last summer he took about 20 groups through the Met, he said, and now leads synagogue and Hillel groups as well. He gave a Jewish tour of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts to members of an Orthodox synagogue in suburban Newton, and is now planning to do the same with area day school groups.

Selavan lives in Crown Heights, the Brooklyn headquarters of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, and is finishing up a long-distance master's degree program in Jewish education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and enrolling in a Jewish history master's program at Yeshiva University.

On the Passover tour, as the group approached the Temple of Dendur, the massive sandstone shrine set in a grand sunlit interior plaza, Selavan pointed out a replica crocodile in the surrounding moat, found in Ezekiel and Exodus, is generally translated as "serpent," but more likely meant crocodile, as they infested the Nile.

“My dream is to do things like this with museums around the world,” he later told JTA. “In Spain, London, France and so on. And to live in Jerusalem.
‘Nobody is Talking About Anti-Semitism.’ You’re Kidding, Right?

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

NEW YORK (JTA) -- Slate podcaster Mike Pesca has a theory that whenever President Donald Trump says “everybody” it means “almost nobody,” and when he says “nobody” or “anybody” it means “almost everybody.”

Try it: When Trump said, "Nobody knew health care could be so complicated" -- well, nearly everybody disagreed. And when he says, "Everybody knows there was no collusion," he means, "I insist there was no collusion, but am worried that nobody else, including Robert Mueller, agrees with me."

That kind of verbal irony has become a way of arguing on social media. A Facebook friend complained recently that two weeks after Louis Farrakhan gave yet another anti-Semitic speech, "no one really cares." In fact, the Farrakhan speech was widely reported in the mainstream media, from The Washington Post to CNN to Fox News to Rolling Stone, especially after a leader of the Women’s March attended the Nation of Islam leader’s speech and refused to acknowledge his hate or apologize. By waiting too long to release a tepid statement on the incident, march leaders kept the story going another week. So did the right, which used Farrakhan’s re-emergence into the public spotlight as an opportunity to bash the left.

You could say people now care about Farrakhan more than they have in 20 years.

Bill Moyers does an annual survey of “Overlooked, Under-Reported and Ignored Stories.” Last year’s list included the growing movement for Medicare for All, U.S. airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq and the impact of Trump’s policies -- not his tweets, not his scandals -- on American society. Last week, on the radio show “On The Media,” social media monitor Thalia Beaty spoke about how hard it is to get attention for the Syrian government’s vicious siege of the Damascus suburb of eastern Ghouta.

"It just doesn’t seem that media outlets know how to tell this story of human suffering without a geopolitical angle," she said.

But usually when people say that “nobody is talking about something,” they mean "not enough people are talking about a story the way I want them to talk about it." That could mean that The New York Times or CNN hasn’t put the story on the front page or at the top of the hour. Or that legislators have sent the issue to the back burner. Or that activists are focused on X when they should be focused on Y.

Jewish activists and media professionals seemed to do a “Freaky Friday” switch over the weekend when The New York Times published an essay by one of its editors charging that American Jewish leaders have done too little to call out the troubling anti-Semitism of the past two years. Jonathan Weisman, who was a target of “alt-right” anti-Semites during the 2016 campaign, has written a book called “((Semitism)): Being Jewish in America in the Age of Trump.” In Sunday’s essay, he claimed the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Federations of North America and other leading Jewish organizations “have been remarkably quiet” on the rise of anti-Semitism.

I don’t mean to pick on my friend; the “everybody” and “nobody” trope is everywhere these days. In part it is a symptom of news overload -- important things that demand attention disappear at the speed of a tweet about some other thing that demands immediate attention. Everybody knows that Trump is adept at changing the subject, and almost nobody knows how to resist the bait. And while the web has democratized news and made it theoretically easier to get a story out to the public, it also means that many more stories and ideas are jockeying for attention.

(continued on page 31)
theories. When Ohio’s Republican state treasurer, Josh Mandel, lashed out at the ADL in defense of the two conspiracy theorists, Weisman wrote, “I did not see any organized effort to rally around the institution, one of the few major Jewish groups in the United States that is still not predominantly engaged in debate over Israel.”

It’s an odd charge. First, the ADL talks plenty about Israel. Second, if the Jewish community were a government, the ADL would be its Department of Defense, AJC would be its Department of State and JFNA would be the IRS. That’s not to say that their missions don’t frequently overlap, but the ADL is usually deferred to when it comes to anti-Semitism. The AJC does a lot of work on anti-Semitism, but mainly in Europe. The JFNA is a fund-raising trade group that generally avoids made-for-Twitter issues like the ADL-Mandel ruckus.

But coming after a period that included Charlottesville, the JCC bombings and a general feeling of disquiet following the 2016 campaign and the rise of the alt-right, it’s just weird to conclude that Jewish organizations are ignoring or downplaying anti-Semitism. The ADL certainly has been loud and consistent in calling it out in the past 16 months, joined frequently by the American Jewish Committee, Simon Wiesenthal Center, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and, ahem, the Jewish media.

Weisman only gets it partly right when he talks about how “partisanship” has distorted the internal Jewish debate on anti-Semitism. Partisanship hasn’t silenced or cowed the ADL or left it isolated, as he suggests. But it has made it harder for Jews to agree on what constitutes the greatest anti-Semitic threat of the moment. Right-wing critics say the ADL goes after the alt-right in order to tarnish Trump. They accuse the ADL of ignoring left-wing anti-Semitism as represented by the Boycott Israel movement, which the ADL also consistently and assertively condemns. The Jewish left, meanwhile, says the Jewish establishment spends too much time vilifying domestic critics of Israel and should really be focused on the rise of white nationalism.

That’s certainly how the Farrakhan debate is playing out. The right has raised Farrakhan’s anti-Semitism as a symbol of all that plagues the left. And the left insists that the right’s focus on Farrakhan is meant to deflect from its own coddling of white nationalists and other hatemongers.

So nobody is talking about anti-Semitism? Everybody is talking about anti-Semitism. They’re just not listening to each other.

(continued from page 30)
A Palestinian-Born Legislator Dreams of Rebuilding a Synagogue in Berlin

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — Raed Saleh, a Palestinian born in the West Bank, wants to rebuild a synagogue in the German capital. Now the dream of this Berlin politician is a bit closer to reality.

Standing in front of the Fraenkelufer Synagogue on a chilly March morning, the senator and leader of the Social Democratic Party here announced plans for the reconstruction of a building that was largely destroyed in the Kristallnacht pogrom of 1938.

Saleh’s goal, endorsed by Berlin Jewish Community President Gideon Joffe, is to make a statement against growing anti-Semitism in the capital city — and against discrimination targeting Muslims, too.

“If you say you want to support Jewish life in Germany and Berlin and Europe, and you don’t just want to pay lip service, then you have to carry it out concretely,” said Saleh, 40, who immigrated to Germany with his family when he was 5.

He first proposed the project in November in a column in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. His thinking: “He who builds castles can also rebuild synagogues.”

So Saleh campaigned for and won support from the Berlin Senate. The project is still a vision, but no longer a pipe dream.

It’s an idea that would have stunned Joffe 12 years ago, when he was first elected president of the Jewish community.

“I would never have thought that a Berliner of Palestinian background would help the Jewish community,” Joffe said, standing beside Saleh, who was born in a village near Nablus. “I find it to be a fantastic story that allows us to look with hope into the future.”

Also announced Thursday was a plan to renovate a former Jewish orphanage on Auguststrasse, converting it into what would be Germany’s first Jewish trade school. There already is a Jewish high school in Berlin, but the new school would cater to students who are not necessarily moving on to college.

Noting that many Jewish kids have transferred to Jewish schools because of anti-Semitism, Joffe said he hoped the new facility would open in the next two years.

While it will take longer to realize the Fraenkelufer project, Joffe said he would be “very happy to see it become a place for exchange between people, a place where they can get to know Judaism.”

Fraenkelufer, which sits on the banks of one of Berlin’s many canals, is located in a multi-ethnic neighborhood with many Arab residents, a colorful market and shops with Arabic signs.

For Saleh, that makes it the perfect location for such a project, “especially in a time of increased anti-Semitism, also coming from migrants; especially given that there increasingly are schools where teachers complain that they are overwhelmed with a situation that they can’t control,” he said.

His idea, still in the early stages, is to build a structure resembling the classical 1916 synagogue by architect Alexander Beer. But rather than erase the recent past, the reconstruction would emphasize the violent rupture of the Holocaust and represent hope for the future.

Saleh said the project is likely to take several years to realize and would cost nearly $30 million. The senator pledged to secure state and federal funding, as well as raise funds from German industry and private donors — including his own young sons. He said they each pledged 20

(continued on page 33)
(continued from page 32)

euro, about $25, from their own savings.

Rebuilding destroyed synagogues is not a new phenomenon in Germany. Since the 1990s, particularly with the influx of some 200,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union, big cities and small towns have taken on projects to build new Jewish houses of worship or rededicate old ones that had been used as storehouses or even barns over the years.

The projects were often intended as proud symbols of a new Germany. But aside from some in larger cities, like Munich and Dresden, few became hubs for growing, active Jewish communities. More often they were used as museums and interfaith meeting centers.

Before World War II, Berlin had some 175,000 Jews and numerous synagogues. The original Fraenkelufer Synagogue could house up to 2,000 worshippers. A few years after it was destroyed in the 1938 pogrom, the architect Beer was deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp, where he was murdered in 1944.

Today, the traditional congregation is small but growing thanks to an energetic group of younger Jews, including native Germans along with those born in Israel, the United States and elsewhere. One of more than a dozen active congregations in Berlin, its members meet in Beer’s small former youth synagogue, which has a balcony for holiday overflow. Men and women sit separately, though without a mechitza, or divider. There are regular Friday night meals and visiting Jewish educators.

The new building would not be used for prayer services but rather for classrooms and other gatherings, including interfaith events.

It is among several projects in Berlin meant to bring together Jews, Muslims and Christians against the backdrop of increased xenophobia and populism. Conservative Rabbi Gesa Ederberg is joining with colleagues to start a multi-faith kindergarten. And the “House of One” – a concept stuck in the planning stage – would be a place of shared worship.

Best estimates there are some 30,000 Jews in Berlin, a city with a population of about 3.5 million. Fewer than 10,000 Jews belong to the official community.

Recent statistics show an increase in anti-Semitic crimes in Berlin, with 288 reported incidents last year compared to 197 in 2016.

He recalled a group of visiting Arab teenagers who – surprised by the similarities between the two faiths – asked, “Why are we always fighting with each other?”

“I said, ‘Probably because we normally look only at our differences, and not at what we have in common.’”

When fellow Muslims question his commitment to his own community, he tells them that he “would not be a good Muslim if I did not take a stand; a Christian would not be a good Christian if he would stand by while refugee homes burn; and a Jew would not be a good Jew if he stands by when someone tears the headscarf off a woman.”

“I am convinced,” Saleh added, “that one can only combat hate and prejudice with an open door, and this will be a place of open doors.”
Stephen Hawking Was Admired by Israeli Physicists for His Insights and His Humanity

By Barak Kol

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- Dr. Stephen Hawking was a rare and inspirational man whose deep insights into the mysteries of the physical universe were matched only by his courage in the face of a cruel, debilitating illness, which he met with good spirit and a unique sense of humor.

In the wake of his passing, those who have commented on his legacy have focused not only on his work as a scientist and a communicator of science, but also on his display of human spirit.

At the Hebrew University of Jerusalem’s Racah Institute of Physics, our interactions with Dr. Hawking were marked by our shared love of the discovery of the physical universe and our aspiration for creating a better world.

Dr. Hawking’s most famous theoretical argument, that matter can escape black holes, was intimately related to the ideas of the late Professor Jacob Bekenstein from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

A black hole is the most compact form of matter, as implied by Einstein’s theory of gravity. Surrounded by a seemingly one-way horizon, it is one of the most mysterious objects in nature. In 1972, Bekenstein (1947-2015), then a doctoral student at Princeton University, suggested that black holes might have properties of heat (more precisely entropy, known today as Bekenstein-Hawking black hole entropy).

Dr. Hawking was among the scientists who were skeptical. He believed that black holes absorb everything, yet nothing can escape them and therefore their temperatures would have to be absolute zero. But in 1974, he was led to the theoretical argument that once the effect of quantum physics are taken into account, black holes are not truly black. Dr. Hawking theorized that some radiation does escape from a black hole, and that this radiation represents (non-zero) temperature, just like a heated metal bar would glow in the dark.

At first he resisted this conclusion because it conformed to Bekenstein’s idea. However, he ultimately realized that both are correct and that a new and consistent understanding of black holes had

(continued on page 35)
emerged. This radiation is called Hawking radiation, and it remains Dr. Hawking’s single most important contribution to the field of theoretical physics. So it was Hawking, building off and confirming Bekenstein’s work, who established the theoretical foundation for black hole thermodynamics, a deep connection between gravity and quantum physics that is a cornerstone of our contemporary understanding of these phenomena.

Since his passing, some have commented on Dr. Hawking’s relationship with the State of Israel. Over his long career he visited Israel multiple times, accepting the prestigious Wolf Prize in physics in 1988 and, most recently, as an honored guest of the Israel Academy of Sciences in 2006.

Unfortunately, in 2013 he was represented to have made a decision with which we obviously disagree -- to contribute to an academic boycott campaign against Israel. After initially agreeing to attend a conference led by then-President Shimon Peres, Dr. Hawking later canceled his participation. While misguided, I believe this decision was made not out of animosity, but rather with the intention of trying to foster a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

I was part of a group of Israel theoretical physicists who sent a message to Dr. Hawking to formally protest his decision.

We wrote, in part, “We believe in the goal of a peaceful and prosperous coexistence of Israelis, Palestinians and other peoples. We moreover believe that the freedom of thought, expression and a free sharing of information are some of the core values of science as well as of democracy. A boycott, on the other hand by its very nature, suppresses dialogue and the free exchange of ideas for all parties involved, and we do not consider it helpful for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.”

Putting aside this disagreement, it was both an honor and a pleasure to have met Dr. Hawking on several occasions, and I will always remember his wit and how he faced his challenges with a smile, his typical defying grin. His science will be studied by generations to come and his spirit will continue to inspire millions around the world.

(continued from page 34)

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Herman Gorsky, 1931-2018

Graveside services were held on Thursday, March 8, in Ohev Tzedek-Shaarei Torah Cemetery for Herman Gorsky, 86, who died on March 5 in Heritage Manor.

Mr. Gorsky was born April 23, 1931, in Youngstown a son of Benjamin and Hannah Sisman Gorsky. He was a 1949 graduate of East High School and served in during the Korean Conflict with U.S. Air Force as a radio operator attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant. Following his discharge he returned to Youngstown, where he was a buyer for Fledman Brothers. Herman had also worked as a manager for B.J. Alan Co. now known as Phantom Fireworks.

He was a founding member of Ohev Tzedek Temple in Boardman.

Herman is survived by two nephews, David (Laura) Gorsky of Euclid and Mark Gorsky of Youngstown; and by his sister-in-law, Edith Gorsky of Boardman.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Irv Gorsky.

Contributions may be made to Heritage Manor.

Arrangements are being handled by the Shriver-Allison-Courtley-Weller-King Funeral Home.

Happy Passover!
In Memorium

Judge Louis Koppel "Luke" Levy 1936-2018

Judge Louis Koppel "Luke" Levy, 81, died March 15, in Key West, Fla. was formerly of Youngstown. 
Mr. Levy was born on Aug. 28, 1936, in Youngstown, the son of Atty. Jacob and Gertrude Polonsky Levy. He was a 1954 graduate of Boardman High School and was class president each of his four years of high school. He also was manager of the basketball team. He continued his education, graduating in 1958 from Dartmouth College, attended the University of Michigan, and received his juris doctorate from Cleveland Marshall Law School. 
Luke was paralegal at Dudnik Firm in Cleveland and later practiced law with his father. In 1969, he was an assistant police prosecutor and in 1973, a traffic court referee in Juvenile Court. In 1985, he became Youngstown Municipal Court Judge, holding the position until his retirement in 1997. 
Judge Levy was a Mahoning County Bar Association member from 1965 to 1998. He received the Supreme Court Superior Award for Excellence in 1986. Luke was a member of the Temple El Emeth. 

Goldie R. Zlotkin 1924-2018

Goldie was born July 12, 1924, in Youngstown, the daughter of Myer and Bessie Manevitch Zlotkin. 
She was a graduate of The Rayen School. 
She enjoyed the outdoors, including Mill Creek Park and sports of all kinds. Also she liked playing the piano and sewing. 
Goldie is survived by a brother, Albert (Fay) Victor of Northridge, Calif.; two nieces, Sandra Percic (Roger) Michael and Linda (Jeff) Eisikowitz; and a nephew, David (MaryJo) Victor. 
Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by a brother; Louis Zlotkin; and sister-in-law Leah Zlotkin. 
Contributions may be made to Jewish Family Services or Temple El Emeth. 
Arrangements are being handled by the Shriver-Allison-Courtley-Weller-King Funeral Home.

Barbara (Lefsky) Goldberg

Barbara (Lefsky) Goldberg, passed away on March 22, 2018. She was the devoted wife of the late Joseph Goldberg, loving mother of Eugene Goldberg (fiancée Renee Rardon) and Gail Ann Naylor, dear sister of Dr. Lawrence (Cathy) Lefsky, cherished aunt of Dr. H. Scott Lefsky, and adored grandmother of Andrew H. and Robyn Stacy Goldberg. 
The family has requested that contributions may be made to: Mildred Mindell Cancer Foundation, 7500 Travertine Drive Unit 104, Baltimore, MD 21209 and/or St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 3801 
Local arrangements by the McCaulley Funeral Home, serving the valley for more than 116 years!

Best Wishes for a Happy Passover!
Israel is the Star at a National Security Conference in Mississippi

By Ben Sales

BILOXI, Miss. (JTA) – A homeland security conference took place in a southern Mississippi town with an Air Force base and a shipbuilding yard.

Among those in attendance were the commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard; a general from India, the world’s second-largest country; and representatives from Taiwan and South Korea, a U.S. ally in a key trouble spot.

But Israel was the star.

The International Homeland Defense and Security Summit, organized by the state government, was held recently in this Gulf Coast city far from any Jewish population center, in a state the local Israeli consul visits only twice a year. But representatives of 16 Israeli companies attended, along with a delegation from its Defense Ministry and arms industry.

Bryant credited a national security conference he spoke at in Israel in 2016 as the inspiration for this one. One of the first pictures he showed during his speech was of him grinning with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

“If there’s anyone that knows about homeland security, it’s the Israelis,” he said at the start of his address opening the conference, whose organizers paid for JTA’s flight to Biloxi along with hotel costs. “They have a tough neighborhood they live in.”

The admiration went beyond the governor.

Paul Zukunft, the Coast Guard commandant, said of Israel that “[t]here’s no

(Continued on page 39)
rity sensor system that’s used on Israel’s northern and southern frontiers. A third, Beeper, is a surveillance system — already deployed by the Israeli military and police departments in Baltimore and Houston — that can pinpoint where a gun is fired and instantly take video of who fired the weapon.

While there are no hostile borders in Mississippi, Magal has already done work there and elsewhere in the United States securing the perimeters of prisons, power plants and Secret Service sites. It’s played a role in securing 80 percent of Israel’s borders, as well as some borders in Europe, the manufacturer claims.

“I don’t think they suffer from any illegal movement on the border,” said Saar Koursh, CEO of Magal. “But for us, securing Mississippi’s critical sites is definitely an opportunity, and besides that, collaborating with the industries doing projects out of Mississippi as well.” Israel Aerospace Industries has two facilities in Mississippi.

The threats discussed in Mississippi were a far cry from those in Israel, where militant groups aim missiles across a border, terrorists try to infiltrate from the barely self-governing territory next door and at least one regional rival threatens annihilation.

Instead, discussion focused on the Gulf Coast’s maritime economy. Panelists talked about boats ferrying drugs, migrants and weapons across the water. They discussed natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina — its effects are still visible here — and how climate change could exacerbate future storms. They talked about the area’s military presence and how manufacturing equipment like drones can boost the state.

But the governor said there’s still plenty of opportunity for Israelis to do business in the state. Bryant pointed to the border tech they have developed, from sensors to surveillance, as a way to secure the coast without a physical barrier. He has made supporting Israel a priority of his administration, visiting three times since he took office in 2012.

“What we can learn from the real world experience, unfortunately of having someone on your border in a threatening manner, can be very beneficial here in the United States of America,” the governor said at a news conference. “Israel has shown the world that you can secure a border with the use of technology as well as the new advanced structures that we see being used here.”

Israel and Mississippi also share cultural similarities, said Lior Haiat, Israel’s consul general for the region, who is based in Florida. Its population of fewer than 3 million makes it intimate like Israel. And the high percentage of soldiers and veterans makes military service a familiar and appreciated part of life, as it is in Israel, where there’s a mandatory draft.

“It’s very similar because Mississippi is a very small place where work is very centralized,” Haiat said. “The governor knows all of the key players personally, and he personally opens the door for Israeli companies.”

In his closing speech at the conference, Bryant said: “Should there come a day when there will be a threat, and it will, we will have friends around the world. We are preparing ourselves in the event that that terror attack does occur.”
Here’s Why Ronald Lauder’s Support for a Two-State Solution Could Actually Matter

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- Twice in 20 years Ronald Lauder made noise by breaking with what is supposed to be a sacrosanct rule of the establishment American Jewish leadership: Don’t hector Israel’s elected government on life and death issues.

In 2001, Lauder, then the chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, appeared at an anti-government rally in Jerusalem. Organizers opposed concessions to the Palestinians proposed by then-prime minister Ehud Barak in a bid for a final status deal with the Palestinians that would culminate in a two-state solution.

“All the world should know that you are not alone,” Lauder told the protesters. This week, Lauder, the president of the World Jewish Congress, took to the Op-Ed pages of the New York Times to warn Benjamin Netanyahu’s government that it risked losing the support of Diaspora Jews — in part because its settlements policies are endangering the two-state solution.

The World Jewish Congress is not the Conference of Presidents.

Lauder, now 74, may have raised eyebrows in 2001, at the tender age of 56, when he discarded the establishment consensus not to criticize issue on security matters. His participation at the rally spurred the Conference of Presidents’ Conference, the foreign policy umbrella body for U.S. Jewry, to create a rule forbidding chairpeople from speaking out of turn on matters of consensus.

Nowadays, as the leader of the World Jewish Congress, Lauder’s critique is less remarkable. The WJC historically stakes out a more nuanced position than the Presidents Conference when it comes to Israel. WJC leaders have over the years spoken out against Israeli policies if they felt the policies could harm Diaspora Jewish communities.

Nahum Goldmann, the co-founder of the WJC who was its president from 1949-1977, worked tirelessly in diplomatic circles to advance the founding of the state of Israel. He then proceeded for decades to annoy its leadership for failing to more forcefully engage the Arabs in peacemaking.

In 2003, Edgar Bronfman, whose presidency ran from 1982-2007, co-signed a letter to President George W. Bush urging him to press Israel not to build its separation barrier.

Things have gone south with Bibi.

Netanyahu was out of politics in 2001 when Lauder spoke out against the Barak government’s peace proposals. But Netanyahu was very much active behind the scenes, and still in touch with the American benefactors who backed him during his first term as prime minister, from 1996-1999. Among these was Lauder, who did not fund Netanyahu directly, but who steered funds to Israeli institutions that advanced Netanyahu’s hawkish agenda.

Netanyahu and Lauder also had a falling out in 2011: Lauder had a part ownership stake in an Israeli television channel, and refused to block a report it broadcast that was unflattering to Netanyahu and his wife, Sara.

Notably, Lauder appears also to be hedging his bets. His staffers are distributing a Hebrew version of the Op-Ed that speaks of Israel in more personal terms than the New York Times version. Whereas in the Times, Lauder expresses pride that “the Israeli Army is stronger than any other army in the Middle East,” in the Hebrew version he recounts the particular fears he felt on the eves of the 1967 Six-Day and 1973 Yom Kippur wars.

“I gave my all in the good days and the bad,” he writes in the Hebrew version, addressing his readers as “brothers and sisters.”

It’s been 17 years, and things have changed, maybe not for the better.

When Lauder spoke out against the Barak proposals — particularly, against sharing Jerusalem with the Palestinians — the consensus was that there may be a deal to be done with the Palestinians, but it needed the right leader to do it. There was a Nixon-to-China logic in thinking a hard-liner was likelier to forge a lasting peace with the Palestinians.

That’s what helped propel Ariel Sharon (who had replaced Netanyahu as Likud Party leader) to the prime ministership within weeks of the Jerusalem protest. It’s also why the Presidents Conference, four years later, backed Sharon’s withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank, despite opposition from its hawkish members.
Israel Trip: Thanks to Youngstown Area Jewish Federation

By Karina Kunkel

Last summer I was able to have an amazing experience on a three week trip to Israel, thanks to the generosity of the Youngstown Jewish Federation. From June 13 thru July 3 I traveled all around Israel and visited many places. I gained so much more knowledge about Jewish culture and history and I felt a connection that I hadn’t felt before. It was an experience that I will never forget.

I met up with the group that I was traveling with at JFK airport in New York. We introduced ourselves and began making friends right away. I knew I was going to have a great trip. After a very long flight we landed in Israel and checked into a very nice hotel in Jerusalem. Early the next morning we toured Jerusalem. We explored the Old City and the Jewish Quarter and then went to the Western Wall to pray. Later in our trip we returned to Jerusalem and toured the Knesset, the Theodore Herzl Museum, the Israel Museum, and explored the tunnels under the Western Wall. We went to Yad Vashem to remember the victims of the Holocaust; that was a very moving experience for all of us.

We traveled up the Mediterranean Coast and to the Galilee. We went on an archeological dig which was a lot of fun. I found several artifacts that were many centuries old. We went swimming in the Mediterranean and held a Shabbat service on the beach. We spent seven days in the Galilee and Golan Heights and every night we sang songs, talked, and played sports together as a group. We went on a boat cruise on the Mediterranean Sea and listened to music and danced for hours. We did a lot of hiking to see the natural stone arch of Keshet and the ocean caves at Rosh Hanikrah. We hiked to the waterfalls of the Banias and rafted down the Jordan River. That was very refreshing after a really hot day.

We spent two days visiting Tel Aviv. We had fun at the Nahalat Binyamin street festival and Carmel Market. We bought tons of gifts and jewelry. I loved trying the different foods at the markets and seeing how different things were from what I am used to. Tel Aviv is an amazing, modern city and we had a lot of fun there. After Tel Aviv we headed south to the Negev Desert. We learned about David Ben Gurion and his vision for the desert, we rappelled down the Ramon Crater (scary), snorkled in and boated on the Red Sea at Eilat, and rode camels around the desert. The camels were very friendly and we had a great time. That night we spent the night in a Bedouin tent. The tents were fun to stay in but the night was short because we had to wake up at 3:00AM to hike to the top of Masada. We watched the sunrise and held a short morning service before touring Masada and hiking back down. We cooled off under the waterfalls at Ein Gedi and then went to float in the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea was one of my favorite places because it was so relaxing.

On our last day we volunteered at Save A Child’s Heart. The kids there are treated for medical problems due to congenital heart disease. We sang and played games with them. After we said goodbye to the children we headed to Ben Gurion Airport to go home. It was a very long flight and very emotional because we all had to say goodbye to each other. We all still keep in touch.

The trip to Israel was an amazing, fun experience and I will definitely be going back someday. I enjoyed every day that I was there and I loved the people, the food, and their way of life. I learned so much about the country and its history and what it means to be Jewish and part of something that is bigger than I ever imagined. The experience helped me to feel proud to be a part of the Jewish people and I will always remember this trip and the Federation for making it possible.

Happy Passover!

The Schwebel Family

Best wishes for a Happy and Healthy Passover
30 Years Later, the Author of ‘The Devil's Arithmetic’ has a New Young Adult Holocaust Novel

By Penny Schwartz

BOSTON (JTA) -- More than 30 years ago, Jane Yolen had already made her mark in the world of children's literature. Among the nearly 100 books she had written were fantasies and folk tales, picture books and the popular “Captain Toad” chapter book series. Her gift for spinning original fairy tales earned her the reputation as the American Hans Christian Anderson.

But when her editor, Deborah Brodie, suggested she write a Jewish children's book, Yolen dismissed the idea.

Sure, she was Jewish, she recalled telling Brodie, who was Jewish, too. But, growing up, Yolen's family wasn't particularly observant. And although she had minored in religious studies at Smith College, Yolen told Brodie she would have to do as much research as someone who wasn't Jewish.

Brodie persisted.

"She was a classic nudzh," Yolen recalled fondly all these years later of the late editor, a giant in the world of children's publishing.

But Yolen, best known as a fantasy writer, had a spark of an idea for a Holocaust story that would lead with a girl bored and indifferent at her grandparents' Passover seder. When Hannah opens the door to symbolically welcome the prophet Elijah, she finds herself transported back in time to a Polish shtetl where the Jewish villagers are on the verge of being shipped to a German Nazi concentration camp. Only Hannah knows the horrifying tragedy that the future will bring.

Yolen relented and wrote a first chapter. She assumed it would end at that. Instead, Brodie sent back a contract.

"I thought, 'OK, I'm going to try this,'" she said in a phone conversation with JTA from her home in western Massachusetts.

The result was “The Devil's Arithmetic,” a Holocaust novel that when it appeared in 1988 was nothing like anything that had come before. The book garnered critical acclaim, earned multiple book awards and was made into an Emmy-winning Showtime film starring Kirsten Dunst.

The popular fantasy novel has sold more than 1.8 million copies, is used widely in middle schools across the country and has been in continuous print since publication.

Now, three decades later, Yolen, 79, has written “Mapping the Bones” (Philomel), a Holocaust novel for a new generation of teens. The year is 1942, in the Lodz ghetto in Poland, where 14-year-old twins Chaim and Gittel Abromowitz make a daring escape with their family. Separated from their parents in the forest, the twins hide with Polish partisans, and are later captured by German soldiers and forced into a slave labor camp.

Through brutal treatment, suffering and loss, the sister and brother bond with other camp prisoners, sustain each other, and find light through the young boy's moving poetry that serves as a testament to loss and memory.

"Mapping the Bones" is Yolen's third Holocaust novel; the second was "Briar Rose" (1992).

"I look at all three and I realize it's not just the Holocaust that binds them together. It's remembering," she said.

"Whenever we think of the Holocaust, we think of remembering. We think of never forgetting. Soon all we will have are the stories. Soon we will have no one left who was there."

"The Devil's Arithmetic" was a trailblazer, according to Norman H. Finkelstein, an author of nonfiction for older kids and two-time winner of the National Jewish Book award. Three decades ago, at a time closer to the war, the idea of writing about the Holocaust was still difficult, said Finkelstein, a retired public school librarian in the Boston suburb of Brookline.

"It was a different Holocaust book. It was not strictly factual, it was not a memoir," Finkelstein told JTA in a recent conversation.

"Jane did a superb job in taking the story of the Holocaust down to a level that ordinary American kids could understand and digest, and present it in a sympathetic manner. The characters were realistic, not paper cutouts."

Educators immediately seized on the book to teach about the tragedies of the Holocaust, he recalled.

There's an inherent tension in presenting the Holocaust in young adult fiction, according to Daniel Magilow, a Holocaust scholar and professor of German studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

On one hand, writers need to create young characters with whom readers can identify, said Magilow, a former fellow

(Continued on page 43)
at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum who writes on the subject of Holocaust representation. Books for younger readers tend to be redemptive, and if not upbeat they at least suggest that adversity can be endured and overcome.

The problem? This does not square with the historical reality with how children were treated during the Holocaust. “We are reminded that the very young and the very old were immediately slated for the gas chambers,” Magilow said.

Magilow cautioned that Holocaust fiction should not be presented uncritically, but should be taught “in the context of the uncomfortable truths.” It’s important to educate kids about tragedies that occur in the world, but it’s a complex balancing act.

“It’s devastating material,” he said, “and there’s no way around it.”

Yolen acknowledged the balancing act in an author’s note for “Briar Rose,” which is set at the Chelmno extermination camp in Poland.

“[T]his is a book of fiction. All the characters are made up,” she wrote. “Happy-ever-after is a fairy tale notion, not history. I know of no woman who escaped from Chelmno alive.”

“The Devil’s Arithmetic” struck a chord for Deborah Berlin, who read the book more than 15 years ago, when she was about 10 years old, she recalled in a recent phone conversation. As a child growing up outside of Boston, she knew that half her family had perished in the Holocaust. Reading Yolen’s historical fantasy stirred an emotional connection to the incomprehensible loss, she recalled.

“It was my gateway” to read more books in a quest for a deeper understanding of the Holocaust, said Berlin, now a middle-school math and science teacher at the Rashi School, a Reform Jewish K-8 day school in suburban Boston. Yolen’s fantasy and other works of fiction are especially important to today’s teens, who may feel disconnected from the Holocaust, she has observed.

“Mapping the Bones” is Yolen’s 366th book. As Yolen sets out on a whirlwind series of book talks and conferences, the author said she had not lanned to write a third Holocaust novel.

The idea for the Hansel and Gretel-like narrative emerged in a conversation with an editor, who like Brodie three decades earlier, urged Yolen to take on the project.

In four years of being immersed in Holocaust research and writing, there were also lighter and happier books, Yolen said. Among them was “Jewish Fairy Tale Feasts: A Literary Cookbook,” written with her daughter, Heidi E.Y. Stemple.

“But the things that feed the soul are [books] like ‘Mapping the Bones,’” Yolen reflected. “As hard as it was, I know I was meant to write this book.”
NEW YORK (JTA) — A new study will provide free testing for three mutations that substantially increase the risk for developing breast, ovarian and prostate cancer among people with Eastern European Jewish ancestry.

The BRCA Founder Outreach Study (BFOR), which was launched last week, will test 4,000 men and women in four U.S. cities — New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Boston — for mutations in the BRCA gene that are more common among those with Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry. Those who test positive for one of the mutations will receive genetic counseling to figure out next steps.

“We think it’s important because it will save lives,” Dr. Kenneth Offit, who is serving on the study’s executive committee, told JTA earlier this month.

The BRCA gene is found in all humans, but mutations can cause it to function improperly and increase the risk of developing certain cancers: breast and ovarian in women, breast and prostate in men. Those with Ashkenazi Jewish roots are 10 times more likely to have a BRCA mutation than the general population, with one in 40 carrying a mutation in the gene.

In 1996, Offit discovered the most common BRCA gene mutation for Ashkenazi Jews, but he said the vast majority of people have not been tested for the mutations or the two others that are prevalent in the group.

In the [Ashkenazi] Jewish community, where these mutations are quite common, we think that probably 90 percent of people who could be tested have not been tested,” he said.

Offit said some people are scared of finding out the results and view testing as too much of a hassle. In addition, insurance companies only cover testing for those with a family history of breast, ovarian and prostate cancer, but up to 40 percent of those with the mutation do not have a family history of those types of cancer, according to Offit. An Israeli study published in 2014 recommended that all Ashkenazi women age 30 and over should be screened for BRCA mutations.

“We think it’s a model for the future of genetic testing in health care,” he said.

What’s new about the way testing is conducted in the BFOR study, Offit said, is the fact that patients sign up online and can choose to receive their results from their primary care provider. The testing will be free for participants, and the study is open to anyone over 25 years old who has health insurance and at least one grandparent with Ashkenazi heritage.

“This study is different because we’re making an effort to ensure that the testing is not done at a distance from your doctor. We’re really reaching out to have doctors involved,” Offit said.

(Continued on page 45)
breast cancer and as high as 40 percent of developing ovarian cancer. Men with a mutation have an increased risk of developing breast and prostate cancer.

The BFOR study, which received funding from the Sharon Levine Corzine Foundation, the Breast Cancer Research Foundation and other donors, allows people to register on their smartphone or computer, receiving testing at a local laboratory. They can choose whether to receive the results from a primary care provider or a cancer specialist. Primary care providers will receive training about how to provide follow-up counseling if a patient tests positive.

For those who test positive for a BRCA mutation, there are steps that can be taken to lower cancer risk, Offit said. Since ovarian cancer is almost always discovered at an advanced stage, it is recommended that women with a BRCA mutation have their ovaries surgically removed after they finish childbearing. In terms of reducing the risk of developing breast cancer, some women choose to undergo a mastectomy, while others elect to get frequent breast screenings.

Men should be screened regularly for prostate cancer, including by taking a test to measure the level of PSA, a protein that could indicate prostate cancer. Offit said doctors should use a lower cutoff for the level of PSA for men who have a BRCA mutation in order to perform a biopsy to check for cancer.

Offit hopes to learn more about how people opt to receive the test results — whether through their primary care providers or a specialist — and how many primary care providers will feel comfortable giving the information to their patients.

“Yes, we will be testing many individuals of Ashkenazi background and we will save lives for sure because we know that,” he said, “but the research question is to improve the way we offer this information to the whole population.”

Offit said similar testing could be offered for the general population for a wide variety of diseases.

The executive committee consists of doctors from institutions in the four cities. Offit said he is hoping to launch a larger study later this year.

For those who are not eligible to participate in the study, he recommends speaking to a doctor about risk factors. For those who do not have a family history of breast, ovarian or prostate cancer, insurance does not cover testing for BRCA mutations. In those cases, Offit recommends regular screenings for breast and prostate cancer.

(Continued from page 44)
Meet the Jewish Teenager Who is Running for Governor of Kansas

By Ben Sales

(JTA) -- Ilan Cohen loves Kansas. He knows a couple of people in Kansas. He’s currently, officially, running to be governor of Kansas.

And one day he hopes to visit Kansas. And turn 18. And be able to vote. And graduate from high school.

Right now, Cohen is a 17-year-old junior at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in suburban Washington, D.C. But that hasn’t stopped him from officially launching a gubernatorial campaign in a Midwestern state he’s never been to. Visit CohenForKansas.com, and you will see an honest-to-goodness campaign site complete with a biography, links to media coverage (including, um, Wikipedia) and an inspiring photo of corn.

Why is Ilan Cohen running for governor of Kansas?

“Because I can,” he said.

“One of the key reasons behind this candidacy is teen participation in political life,” Cohen told JTA in a 20-minute break from his campaign schedule—and 11th grade. “There are many ways of getting involved in the political scene before you’re 18, and oftentimes in ways you don’t necessarily expect. For instance, running for governor of Kansas.”

An apparent oversight in Kansas’ electoral laws has allowed anyone, anywhere, of any age, to become a candidate for governor. A handful of teenagers have jumped at the opportunity. They include Democrats, Republicans and others. One candidate misspells the word “independent” on his campaign site.

The state did successfully bar a dog from running, and it is now trying to figure out how to keep this from happening in the future. A bill raising the minimum age to 18 and requiring residency in the state is advancing.

“I went on the website, entered my name, my address, phone number and email address, and then I did the same thing for my treasurer, and then maybe one more time, and then I pressed submit,” Cohen said. “I didn’t have to show ID or prove that I’m a citizen of the United States or anything. It’s a very easy process.”

The first teen to register to run for Kansas governor was Jack Bergeson, also 17, who began his campaign last year. Bergeson is actually from Kansas and, like Cohen, is a liberal running in a state that’s been red since the 1968 election. Bergeson’s platform is a bit more detailed than Cohen’s. He supports Medicare for all, a $12 minimum wage and laying high-speed rail between major Midwestern cities. JTA was unable to reach him directly.

“I am not getting into the so-called game of politics for my own personal gain,” Bergeson said at a teen candidates’ forum recorded by the Wichita Eagle. “Ultimately I decided to take the plunge into the deep end to do something career politicians tend not to do. That’s taking the power away from the wealthy few and handing it to the people who work 40 hours [a week] or more just to put food on the table and keep the lights on.”

Cohen said his top issue is narrowing the educational achievement gap, though his campaign is more lighthearted. But he’s a serious admirer of the current student activism for gun control launched by survivors of the school shooting in Parkland, Florida. Cohen was an organizer of a planned student walkout last week protesting gun vio-

(Continued on page 47)
Bar Mitzvah of Henry Miller
Saturday, April 28 at 10:00am

Henry is a seventh grade honor roll student at Howland Middle School. He has kept his honor roll status since Kindergarten, achieving his recent goal of straight "A"s. He was a member of Destination Imagination, an organization that teaches skills and STEM principles to kindergarten through university level students through creative and collaborative problem solving challenges. Henry made it to the Destination Imagination state finals. Henry has also represented Team Ohio in the 2017 Maccabi games held in Albany, New York and has played basketball for Howland.

Additionally, he is an active member of the local BBYO, a teen movement aspiring to involve more Jewish teens in more meaningful Jewish experiences.

Henry enjoys playing the tuba in the school band. He is looking forward to competing in his first solo band competition in March. One of Henry’s hobbies includes collecting sports memorabilia.

During the summer, Henry enjoys spending time at Camp Wise, a Jewish overnight camp in Chardon, OH where he has made lifelong friends. Expanding his ever-growing network of friends through social media, such as Snapchat and Instagram, is important to Henry. Henry’s parents are Wendy and Ken Miller. He is the grandson of Bonnie and Scott Lehman and Marilyn and David Miller.

With great joy we invite you to join us in worship as Henry Miller is called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah, Saturday, April 28, 2018 at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary and a Kiddush luncheon in Strouss Hall.

Please RSVP to the Temple at 330-744-5001 by Friday, April 20, 2018 for the luncheon.
The Youngstown Area Jewish Federation presents

Israel at 70

Gala Event

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