

# JEWISH YOUNGSTOWN AREA JOURNAL

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**PASSOVER EDITION 2026**  
NISSAN-İYAR 5786

## ON THE COVER

Passover begins at  
sundown April 1.  
*See pages 27-30 for  
recipes and more.*

## INSIDE

Heritage Manor recently  
updated its entryway.  
*See page 5.*

JCC planning annual  
golf outing.  
*See page 13.*

Jewish teens are sharing  
their experiences with  
other students.  
*See page 20.*



**WE STAND**



**WITH ISRAEL**

## CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

March 20 .....	7:17 p.m.	April 17 .....	7:47 p.m.
March 27 .....	7:24 p.m.	April 24 .....	7:54 p.m.
April 3 .....	7:32 p.m.*	May 1 .....	8:02 p.m.
April 10 .....	7:39 p.m.	May 8 .....	8:09 p.m.

*\*from pre-existing flame*

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## LISA'S LONG VIEW

### Resilience, responsibility and the work of freedom

A Message From Lisa Long  
Federation Chief Executive Officer

Passover is the holiday of questions like “Why is this night different?” For me this is also a time for questions like... “What am I carrying forward and what am I ready to leave behind?”

Recently, I attended the FedPro conference hosted by the Jewish Federations of North America. One hundred and five of the 141 Federations were represented. Think about that. In a time when many institutions are stretched thin, 105 communities showed up, to learn, to grow, to wrestle with big questions about the future of Jewish life.

One moment at the conference made me smile, and think... JFNA had asked their staff to help “create *minyans*” during the conference. No explanation. Just that phrase. One

staff member, unfamiliar with the term, packed a large amount of yellow fabric because she believed she was being asked to help “create minions.” It was funny. But it was also instructive.

We cannot assume everyone who walks through our doors speaks the language of Jewish life. Not everyone grew up with the same level of Jewish literacy, practice or connection. Some come with deep knowledge. Some come curious. Some come cautiously. Some come wounded. If we want a resilient Judaism, especially in small communities like ours, we have to explain more and without judgement. We have to be welcoming at every level. We have to create on-ramps, not gatekeeping.

Resilient Judaism in small communities isn't about numbers, it's about commitment. It means we invest in our children and in our adults. We make room for questions. We build relationships before we build programs. We create spaces where someone can say, “I don't know what that means,” without embarrassment. And, it means we show up for each other, even when it's inconvenient.

Another question raised at the conference has stayed with me: What inspires me to give to Federation? Not just my money, but my time, energy, and heart.

For me, part of the answer goes back to an experience I will never forget.

When I was serving as our Federation's financial resource development director, I had the opportunity to tour the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh before the building was torn down. They were applying for a Thomases Family Endowment of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation grant, and we walked through the building in the footsteps of the murderer who entered that sacred space.

We saw the tally marks on the tops of the doors, marks first responders made to indicate whether a room was clear or how many victims were inside.

We saw the bullet holes in the *bimah*, in

the kitchen where congregants had been preparing the Oneg meal, in the pews. We realized that something as simple as choosing to sit on the left or the right determined life or death that day. To this day, when I choose a side to sit on in temple, I think about that.

We walked upstairs through the classroom where the children of the congregation normally gathered. Children who, mercifully, were offsite that morning.

But the image that has never left me was the filing cabinet the coward hid behind while exchanging fire with police, its doors riddled with bullets. And inside that cabinet were children's books about Tikkun Olam. On the walls around him were children's drawings about kindness and love. How can someone stand face-to-face with that and still choose hate?

That question has no easy answer. But it clarifies something for me... This is why Federation matters.

Because Federation is about building communities where children draw pictures about kindness. Where we gather for meals. Where we rejoice freely. Where we respond when tragedy strikes, not only for ourselves,

*Long View continued on page 38*



## NANCY'S NOTES

### Puzzles

By Nancy Burnett

The Book of Genesis begins with G-d creating order out of chaos. Humans continually dismantle that order into ever-expanding chaos affecting individuals, cities, states, countries, and the world until we reach a point where we feel helpless to reassemble the fractured pieces we have scattered.

On a cold, wintry day in Ohio, I watch as my family gathers around a 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzle trying to assemble a picture

of antique cars from assorted bits and pieces of unrelated colors and wonder why they are subjecting themselves to such a frustrating task. Their capacity for frustration knows no limits!

In a world where we seemingly have no control over anything surrounding us, many of us turn with renewed interest to puzzles — often jigsaw puzzles — mankind's search for order and sanity.

Although I do Wordle daily, I am not

a devoted puzzle aficionado. Rearranging five letters into the correct order to form an everyday English word is hardly world changing, but it gives me a satisfying start to my day. It is one little piece of chaos that I can control. For me, my mid-morning ritual and coffee sets me off in an organized beginning; it helps me gather my thoughts before I am inundated by the news feeds on my phone.

Puzzles of various kinds have been documented as far back as the 1300s. It is only recently that they have enjoyed a renewed popularity due in part to the COVID pandemic. John Spilsbury is believed to be the first to create jigsaw puzzles as we know them in 1760. He took a map and cut it into randomly shaped pieces to be reassembled into the order from which he began.

In these turbulent and unsettled times, we have a feeling of our lives being out of control — the same feeling we experience as we begin a jigsaw puzzle of 1,000 random pieces. We search out the corners and edges

trying to create order out of chaos. There is a feeling of satisfaction as we place the final piece in our jigsaw puzzle, but it is fleeting as we acknowledge the real, life-changing puzzles yet to be assembled. Chaos still surrounds us, but piece by piece we arrange what we can control and begin the task of repairing our world one piece at a time.

As we learn from our Torah, G-d has gifted us with free will and choice. It is up to each of us to assemble the pieces of our collective lives into the meaningful creation with which the world began — where we honor and respect all living things and provide a world of peace and harmony for all.

With faith and strength and hope we face each new day knowing that even small steps — like those individual puzzle pieces — with trial and error can form the world we are entrusted to care for.

Make each day meaningful for all G-d's creation, and do our part in reassembling the world as it was first envisioned.

## ABOUT THE JOURNAL

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The Jewish Journal 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.

April 20 is the deadline for articles and ads for the Spring Issue. Submissions may be edited for length and/or clarity. The Jewish Journal does not assume the responsibility for the Kashruth of any product or service advertised on its pages.

The Jewish Journal is now accepting opinion columns. Send submissions to journal@jewishyoungstown.org as a Word document. Include name and contact information. Acceptance is at the discretion of the editor and may be edited for clarity.

## Note from the Publisher and Editor

Dear Reader,

This year, the egg might be the most important item on the Seder plate. The *beitzah*, a symbol of renewal and new beginnings, feels especially meaningful right now. In recent years, we have witnessed and continue to witness profound tragedies. During these difficult times, we must remember what Pirkei Avot 2:4 tells us: “*Al tifrosh min ha'tzibbur*” - do not separate yourself from the community. Right now, staying connected as a Jewish community is so important, and through the Jewish Journal, no matter where our community members are, we remain connected as a Youngstown Jewish community.

Every time the Jewish Journal shows up in your mailbox or inbox, we are all reminded that we are a part of a bigger community. Each issue shares stories

and reminds us of the power of coming together to carry our traditions forward. These stories span a wide range of voices, perspectives, and experiences, all with a shared purpose: to educate, inspire, and connect YOU to our Jewish community.

But we cannot continue our long Jewish tradition of storytelling without you. Your support of the Jewish Journal helps ensure our stories continue to be told and reminds us of what we can accomplish together as a community.

This Pesach, we ask you to help us continue sharing stories that connect us all. If you would like to support the Journal, donations can be sent to 505 Gypsy Lane, Youngstown, Ohio, 44504, with “JJ” in the memo.

Chag Pesach Sameach to you and your family.



Elise Skolnick, Editor



Lisa Long, Publisher

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## ADS clients share during 'show and tell'

Adult Day Services at Heritage Manor clients recently began sharing photos and mementos two times a month during "show and tell."

Recently, Jackie Brewington shared photos of her mother and father. Originally from Philadelphia, Brewington moved to Youngstown when she married a soldier at age 17. Together, they had eight

children. She spent her life serving others, cooking, and waitressing. She comes from a family of great chefs and bakers, and she passed that passion on to her children.

"Jackie is a very warm soul who welcomes anyone that enters her orbit," said Kristen Oakley, activity director. "She has a strong faith and love for her family. She is a friend to all."



Jackie Brewington shared photos and mementos during "show and tell" at ADS. She's pictured (left) with DeJanae Oliver, activity aid.

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## Upgrades at Heritage Manor



Recent upgrades to Heritage Manor Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation included upgrades to the unit one dining room. Pictured is Mary Hanick.

Upgrades to a portion of Heritage Manor Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation are complete. The renovations embarked on in the fall included an upgrade of the hallway off the front lobby through nurses station unit one and the unit one dining room. Beginning with replacing the tile outside of the chapel to match the front lobby, all of the linoleum flooring was replaced with luxury vinyl tile throughout the dining room and nurses station. The dated wallpaper was removed, and the walls were refinished and painted to match the previously updated areas. Modern handrails and bumper guards were installed not only to match what had been installed during

the 2021 Heritage Manor expansion project, but to improve the safety of residents and guests. The dining room tables and chairs were replaced for a more modern look, and to improve access for residents.

“I would like to thank Terri Anderson, Andi Baroff, and Nancy Wagner for their help selecting and hanging new artwork in this space,” said Shane Baldwin, director of operations. “Our goal with this renovation was to provide a warm and inviting homelike atmosphere that reflects the quality of care offered within Heritage Manor. We plan to continue modernizing Heritage Manor in 2026 with similar renovations starting in the unit two dining room.”

## ADS celebrates Tu B'Shevat



Clients of Adult Day Services at Heritage Manor celebrated Tu B'Shevat with Barb Wilson, JCC director of cultural arts &

Jewish engagement. They learned about the holiday through taste testing ice cream representing trees throughout the seasons.

## Levy tenants make hamantaschen



Levy Gardens Assisted Living tenants made dough for hamantaschen following day, they baked the cookies. Pictured from left are Sophia Kapon with Barb Wilson, JCC director of cultural arts & Jewish engagement. The

following day, they baked the cookies. Pictured from left are Sophia Kapon, Wilson, John Gimbel, Lenore Ackerman, and Shana Mostov.

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## JFCS staff participate in career fair



Nicole Balog-Bickerstaff, senior outreach coordinator, and Laura Haas, LISW, clinical social worker, of Jewish Family & Community Services participated in Hubbard High School's January career fair for all grade levels. Each student had a chance to speak with representatives of many organizations about various career paths. Colleges, trades and trade schools, military and police, dance academy, healthcare, and other organizations participated. Pictured from left are Balog-Bickerstaff and Haas.

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## Passover by the numbers



**Rabbi Seth Sternstein**  
Temple El Emeth

The *seder* itself consists of 15 steps from beginning to end. We drink four cups of wine (or grape juice) throughout the *seder*. There are three whole *matzot* placed on the table and eaten. We recount the 10 plagues, and spill a corresponding drop of wine from our individual cups. Various songs, including “Echad Mi Yodea” refer to the numbers one through 13. In retelling the Exodus from Egypt, we recall the four (or perhaps five) words used in the text that characterize God’s actions in liberating our ancestors from their bondage. The Talmudic rabbis calculated in numeric terms the minimum amount of *matzah*

that we should eat and the minimum amount of wine we should drink in order to allow us to fulfill the *mitzvot* of eating and drinking these *seder* staples.

When Passover begins, we count the seven weeks that lead to the culmination of the Passover holiday, namely, Shavuot.

It seems, just from these few examples, that, at least in connection with Passover, Jews are obsessed with numbers. And, that’s not an inaccurate observation.

A number is a mathematical concept used to count, measure, and label. Numbers are indispensable in helping to understand and categorize the Universe. Since Judaism teaches that God created the universe, we are actually participating in the Divine Mind when we employ mathematics and numbers to help us order and make sense of the universe.

We make sense of the universe every day through use of a calendar. Every week is divided into seven days; every day is divided into 24 hours, and every hour is divided into 60 minutes. By tracking this

information, we become conscious of the idea that, since our lives are limited, we had better make good use of the time we are allotted. Moreover, it’s a good idea to be organized, in order to maximize our efforts. Otherwise, time has a way of escaping, and we will not accomplish what we hope for. Seconds, minutes, hours, and days become important for those who wish to be productive.

We also make sense of Jewish life through numbers. The Passover *seder*, noted above, is one example. To understand this, let us take the song, “Echad Mi Yodea.” It assigns concepts for the numbers one through thirteen.

The number one reminds us of God, Who is unique. There is nothing else comparable to God. Moreover, God is a Unity; there are not multiple gods, nor zero gods. God willed the Universe into existence, and, therefore, we exist.

Two reminds us of the two tablets of law which God gave to Moses, and which changed the world forever. The Jewish

contribution to reducing moral chaos and increasing moral order in the world is traced directly to this event.

Three and Four remind us of the founders of the Jewish people. Their lives and their values inform every thoughtful Jew and non-Jew today. Their biographies teach us a great deal about our own possibilities of achieving greatness, as well as the pitfalls to avoid in our personal journeys.

Five is the number used for the Torah; these five books are the foundation of everything good in the Jewish world. By definition, if an activity runs counter to the values in the Bible, as refracted through the minds of the Jewish sages, it is suspect, if not absolutely forbidden.

And, how, exactly, do the minds of the sages work in understanding the five books of the Torah? To answer this question, one examines the six books of the Mishnah, which provide a window into their thinking.

The song continues through the number

*Numbers continued on page 38*

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## Four Chaplains program at El Emeth

The “Four Chaplains” were four U.S. Army chaplains who sacrificed their lives on the troop transport ship SS Dorchester in 1943, giving their life jackets to others when the ship was torpedoed. They were Methodist Minister the Reverend George L. Fox, Reform Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, Catholic Priest Father John P. Washington, and Dutch Reformed Minister the Reverend Clark V. Poling. The chaplains were remembered for their selfless act of giving their life vests to other soldiers and were seen praying together as the ship sank.

Recently Chaplain John Chittock and members of American Legion Post 737 attended a Shabbat morning service at Temple El Emeth and gave a powerful and moving presentation marking the anniversary of this event. Temple El Emeth was honored to have them attend and know that they are committed to preserving these stories for generations to come.



Chaplain John Chittock and members of American Legion Post 737 attended a Shabbat morning service at Temple El Emeth to discuss the four chaplains who sacrificed their lives in 1943 to save others. Pictured from left are Rabbi Seth Sternstein and Chittock.

## TEMPLE EL EMETH EVENTS

**Temple El Emeth's 18th annual Second Seder** will take place Thursday evening, April 2 at the Synagogue. A lively Seder led by Rabbi Sternstein will be followed by a traditional catered dinner from Jeffrey Chrystal Catering. Reservation forms have been sent to members' homes and are available in the Synagogue office.

**Hybrid Torah Tuesday with Rabbi Sternstein** will be held April 7 and April 21 at 11 a.m. Rabbi explores the weekly Torah portion with the group. Those wishing to attend are asked to please contact the office in advance.

**A Shabbat morning service and Kiddush Luncheon** is scheduled for April 11. Services begin at 10 a.m. with lunch following. Reservations are appreciated by April 9.

**Temple El Emeth will take their Friday evening service on the road** to Levy Gardens on April 17. El Emeth members will join their friends at Levy Gardens for the service beginning at 4 p.m.

**A Friday evening Shabbat service and dinner** is planned for April 24. Special guests will be two Israeli emissaries who will speak following dinner. More information to follow.

## HAPPY PASSOVER

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## Chag Pesach sameach!

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May Passover bring joy, togetherness, and meaning to every home in our community.

Rabbi Seth Sternstein, DD

Elyse Silverman Program Director

Jeffrey Marlin President



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## Children of Israel announcements



### Youngstown Yahrzeit Initiative (Y.Y.I.)

Children of Israel is proud to have launched the Youngstown Yahrzeit Initiative, a community effort to help provide in-person weekday *yahrzeit minyanim* in Youngstown. At present, to the best of our knowledge, Children of Israel's Sunday morning *minyan* is the only in-person weekday *minyan* available. We recognize the significant community need—particularly for those wishing to recite Kaddish in the traditional manner they were

accustomed to prior to COVID—and are working to develop a sustainable solution.

This initiative is being organized for the benefit of the entire Youngstown Jewish community. All are welcome to participate, with no additional commitments and regardless of synagogue affiliation.

Those interested in participating and/or helping others say Kaddish are invited to email [coiyoungstown@gmail.com](mailto:coiyoungstown@gmail.com) for more information.

### Stay Connected

For updates on schedules, classes, and programs, please visit [coiyoungstown.org](http://coiyoungstown.org).

### Our Mission

Children of Israel is dedicated to sustaining traditional Jewish life and meaningful connection within the Youngstown Jewish community. If you would like to support this mission, please consider making a donation by scanning our QR code.



## What do retirement and Passover have in common?

By Yankel Golden  
President & Rabbi

Children of Israel  
Congregation

Retirement is something many people look forward to — no more clocking in and out, no more rigid schedules, no more boss to answer to. I remember hearing adults say when I was a child, “When I retire, that’s when I’ll finally be able to start living.” And then the day comes.

Many retirees enjoy golf, beaches in Florida, and catching every game of their favorite team. And while those pleasures are well-earned, there are only so many rounds of golf and Sundays watching the game on the couch before a quiet question begins to surface: Is this what living really means?

Often that question leads to something deeper. One may begin volunteering, taking on part-time work, becoming more involved in the community, or more active in their *shul*. Because while we all crave freedom from our day-to-day responsibilities, we also crave purpose. Without a greater purpose to what we are doing, it’s hard to truly feel satisfaction in how we are living.

And that brings us to Pesach. In “The Ten Commandments,” Charlton Heston as Moses famously declares to Pharaoh, “Let my people go!” But that is only half of the Torah’s message. The full line from the Torah reads: “Let My

people go so that they may serve Me in the wilderness.” Freedom was never meant to be the final destination — it was only the beginning. G-d did not free the soon to be Jewish people simply for endless leisure and no responsibility in the desert. They were not redeemed only to be free from something, but to be free for something — for connection, for growth, for a life of meaning. This ultimately culminated in becoming the Jewish people by accepting the Torah at Mount Sinai.

This is one of the enduring messages of Pesach. Each year, each of us has our own “Exodus from Egypt,” the pressures and routines that can keep us stuck. The Seder reminds us that freedom is not just the removal of chains — it is the opportunity to choose what our lives will stand for.

This year, as we sit at our Seders and retell our story as we have every year since we were brought out of Egypt, perhaps we should all ask ourselves the question: What am I free for?

In our own individual way, may we use the gift of freedom to deepen our connection — to the Jewish people, to our traditions, and to Hashem — and may we all find the ultimate fulfillment in our lives.

On behalf of myself and everyone at Congregation Children of Israel, we wish you and your family a *kosher* *unfreilichen* Pesach.

Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy Passover

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## How we treat a stranger



**Rabbi  
Courtney Berman**  
*Ohev Beth Sholom*

As we move closer to Passover, our tradition gently turns us back toward one of the Torah's most repeated commands: how we treat the stranger.

The rhythm of our yearly Torah reading cycle itself

helps prepare us for the holiday. During the coldest weeks of winter, we immerse ourselves in the book of Exodus, and just before Passover we begin turning toward Leviticus. By the time we sit down at our Seder tables, the story of our people's journey from slavery to freedom has already been echoing in our ears for weeks.

In Exodus, we relive the drama: the plagues, the hurried departure, the crossing of the sea, and the awe-filled moment at Sinai — thunder and lightning, smoke and sound, the overwhelming revelation of the Ten Commandments. It is one of the most dramatic scenes in the Torah.

And then, almost immediately, the narrative gives way to law. Verse after

verse of commandments begin to outline what this newly freed people's society is meant to look like. On the surface, some of these laws can feel dry or distant from our modern lives. Yet, beneath the details, there is a profound reminder: The purpose of revelation was never simply to stand in awe at a smoking mountain. The goal was — and the goal still is — to build a society that is just, compassionate, and protective of human dignity.

It is here, while Sinai's thunder still echoes in the background, that we encounter for the first time the oft-repeated command: "You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:20).

There is a concreteness to these words. This is not an abstract call to "be nice." The Torah does not tell us merely to feel warmly toward vulnerable people. It commands specific behaviors: Do not oppress. Do not take advantage. Do not charge interest to the poor. Return a garment before nightfall so someone has something to sleep in. And further, if they cry out, God says, I will hear.

The 19th-century Mussar work "Pele Yoetz" sharpens this even further. Reflecting on the command to love the stranger, it explains that this mitzvah includes helping "a person who is wandering from his place and lives in a foreign

land." The Torah's reasoning — "for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt" — makes it clear that we are speaking about anyone who lives in a foreign land and might be away from their family, might be without support, and might have a lowered spirit and an anxious heart. Such a person, the "Pele Yoetz" writes, deserves that we draw them close, become their friend and companion, and assist them in whatever ways we can. This is not just about feeling a specific way toward this person. This is a responsibility.

As we prepare for Passover, this message becomes even more urgent. At the Seder table, we will say, "In every generation, a person must see themselves as if they personally went out from Egypt." We taste the bitterness, and we tell the story so vividly that memory becomes experience. We know that the Torah's intent is not only that we remember our own suffering. For the tradition to have power today, our memory must shape our behavior. Our collective memory, the way we tell our Jewish story, provides us with moral grounding.

We know what it feels like to be vulnerable. We know what it feels like to be dependent on the mercy of others. We know what it feels like to have no advocate and no voice. That memory is meant to

soften us, and also to obligate us.

Aside from our regular Passover observances, we will also take part in HIAS's 8th Annual Refugee Shabbat in April. Communities across the country are taking part as an opportunity to recognize the profound impact of the global Jewish movement working on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced people. At Ohev Beth Sholom, we will observe Refugee Shabbat on Friday, April 17, with the help of Milana Dimenstein, who brings her own lived experience of coming to America. Her story, as well as the stories of so many others, remind us that "stranger" is not just a technical or legal category. It is a human being with a name, a history, and a heart.

Passover teaches that liberation is not complete until it expands beyond ourselves. The rules sketched out in our Torah teach that revelation is not complete until it reshapes our society. Together, they remind us that Jewish memory is meant to produce Jewish responsibility.

As we clean our homes and prepare our Seders, may we also prepare our hearts. May the story of our own journey from narrowness to possibility move us to protect those who still feel narrow and constrained. And may our remembrance of Egypt lead us to more acts of compassion toward all those who dwell among us. Amen.

## Learning Sessions

with Rabbi Educator

*Jessie Locketz*

Tuesday, April 14 & April 28 | 12pm

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## SAVE THE DATE



# Refugee Shabbat

A Safe Place to Call Home:  
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## Quiet mitzvot: the work that matters Bessie Anderson, z”l



By Sarah Wilschek

Jewish values are woven into every aspect of daily life. We are taught to care for our homes (*shalom bayit*), to repair the world (*tikkun olam*), to tend to the sick (*bikkur cholim*), and—perhaps most fundamentally—to show up for one another through acts of loving-kindness (*gemilut chasadim*).

Bessie Anderson, may her memory be for a blessing, lived *gemilut chasadim* in a personal and tangible way. For years, Bessie devoted her time and creativity to making the spaces around her more beautiful and welcoming. She designed and maintained gardens throughout the Mahoning Valley, including at the JCC and in Liberty Township. With the same care, she spent countless hours knitting and crocheting afghans, clothing, and accessories for those she loved.

As Bessie’s world became physically smaller and she spent more time at Heritage Manor, her commitment to caring for others did not diminish. Instead, it transformed. From her room, she made hats for newborns at the hospital, items for foster children in partnership with Project MKC, and eventually, afghans for the police officers who help keep our Ohev Beth Sholom community safe. She was incredibly proud and humbled to make a difference.



In October 2024, Bessie and I spent time crocheting together and talking about the love and intention that go into every handmade piece. During that conversation, she asked how she might continue to help the congregation through her fiber arts. Together, we created a plan for Bessie to make lap-size afghans for our on-site police officers. She often shared, with a smile, how meaningful it felt to bring comfort to those who work to protect our community. For nearly a year, Bessie worked daily on these blankets, completing eight beautiful pieces before her passing in August 2025.

During the 2025 holiday season, in honor of Bessie’s memory and her desire to bring comfort and gratitude to our security team, Ohev Beth Sholom distributed these afghans to officers of the Youngstown Police Department. Each officer received a note sharing Bessie’s story and the intention behind her work.

Our tradition teaches that *gemilut chasadim* encompasses emotional, physical, spiritual, and communal care. Bessie’s joy in creating and her commitment to using what she had to help others embodied that teaching. She shared the stories of her projects with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren—so much so that she inspired several of them to learn to crochet themselves.

From Bessie’s quiet *mitzvot*, we learn that there is always a way to show care, offer comfort, and express gratitude. No matter our health, our home, or our circumstances, we each have the ability to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

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Israel’s Emergency Services System

## OBS Religious School Celebrates Tu Bishvat



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## JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF YOUNGSTOWN UPCOMING EVENTS

### MEMBERSHIP

#### THE COUNTDOWN TO SUMMER IS ON!

Join the JCC between April 1 and May 31, and we will waive the enrollment fee when you mention seeing this ad!

### SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

#### CRAFT & KVELL

March 20 - Mosaic Suncatcher  
April 17 - Dried Flower Luminaries

### LOGAN CAMPUS

#### SUMMER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

Opening May 23!

### WELLNESS

**100 MILE SWIM CHALLENGE** All year long  
Escape to Paradise Swim Challenge through March 31  
Triple Crown Swim Challenge starting May 3

#### VOLLEYBALL CLINIC (YOUTH)

March 21

#### GRANDPARENT & ME SPRING PICKLEBALL

April 7

#### COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS (AGES 18+)

National Garlic Month - April 14

#### LEARN TO SWIM (AGES 3+)

New session starts in April

#### WATER WOMEN (AGES 17+)

April 11–May 26

#### SPRING STROKE CLINIC (AGES 5+)

April 13

#### LIFEGUARD TRAINING

(Ages 15+) Multiple Sessions Available

#### LIFEGUARD RECERTIFICATION

(Ages 17+) Multiple Sessions Available

#### NEW SEMI-PRIVATE

#### PERSONAL TRAINING FOR TWO

Dual training for couples, friends or family

### ARTS & CULTURE

#### THE MATZAH BAKERY (ALL AGES)

March 17

#### VETERANS BREAKFAST CLUB

Vietnam, Then and Now - March 25  
The History and Meaning of Memorial Day - May 27

#### SUSAN KANTERMAN BOOK CLUB

**MARCH:** “The End is the Beginning: A Personal History of My Mother” by Jill Bialosky

**APRIL:** “Woman on Fire: A Mystery Novel” by Lisa Barr

#### LUNCH & LEARN

Jewish Heritage Month: All About the Knish! - May 12

### AGING WELL

#### CAREGIVER CAFE

March 23, April 6 & 20, May 4 & 18 | 10:30–11:30 a.m.

#### TECH TUESDAY

March 24, April 7 & 21, May 5 | 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

#### GRIEF GROUP

March 18 & April 15 | 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

#### LUNCH BUNCH

March 26, April 16 | 11:45 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

#### KINSHIP PROGRAM

March 25, April 22, May 13 | 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

#### THRIVE WITH FIRST LIGHT (AGES 60+)

March 24 | 1:00–2:30 p.m.

### YOUTH

#### AFTER SCHOOL FAMILY FUN IN THE POOL

April 10 - Dive-in Movie

#### J ALL DAY (GRADES K–5)

Spring Break: April 1–10  
Check calendar for more upcoming dates.

#### LITTLE GROOVERS (AGES 2–5)

April - Jungle Jive

May - Pool Party

#### PARENTS NIGHT OUT (GRADES K–6)

March 21

#### CAMP JCC (GRADES K–8)

June 1–August 7

## Youngstown BBYO holds elections



Osim Gallim, the Youngstown BBYO chapter, recently held elections for their winter/spring board. Maddie Long was elected N’siah (president), Tres Hively S’ganit (vice president of programming), Blythe Hively Mit Mom (vice president of membership/recruitment), and Tamar Sigler Sh’lichah (vice president of Jewish enrichment). Pictured from left are Tres Hively, Blythe Hively, and Long. Sigler is pictured on the phone.

## JCC to hold Suzi Solomon golf classic

The Jewish Community Center of Youngstown will hold its annual Suzi Solomon Golf Classic June 8 at Squaw Creek-Avalon Golf and Country Club, 761 Youngstown Kingsville Road SE, Vienna Center.

Registration and lunch are at 10:30 a.m.; tee time is 11:45 p.m. A cocktail hour will be at 5:00 p.m. Included will be an auction and raffle.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. To register or become a sponsor, visit [jccyoungstown.org/golf](http://jccyoungstown.org/golf).

Sponsors and participants help teach hundreds of local children how to swim, feed 700 homebound seniors every week, provide high-quality childhood education to more than 100 students every year, and more.

The JCC Suzi Solomon Golf Classic celebrates the life of avid golf enthusiast and local Jewish community member, Suzi Solomon. This event directly benefits the Jewish Community Center of Youngstown and is made possible through the generosity of the Suzi Solomon Philanthropic Fund of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation and other generous sponsors and donors.

Honorary chairs of the event are Martin Solomon and Jeff Solomon. Chairperson is Andrew Solomon.

**INTERESTED IN SWIM LESSONS? WANT TO JOIN A FITNESS CLASS?  
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CHECK OUT OUR FULL SLATE OF OFFERINGS AT [JCCYOUNGSTOWN.ORG](http://JCCYOUNGSTOWN.ORG)!

## Local teens attend BBYO convention



Two local teens recently attended the BBYO International Convention. Pictured from left are Madeline Long and Tamar Sigler.

Local teens Madeline Long and Tamar Sigler recently attended the BBYO International Convention in Philadelphia. The event united nearly 3,400 Jewish teens from around the world. They heard from inspiring speakers, leaders, and changemakers.

They shared a little about their experience with The Jewish Journal.

Madeline Long: My IC experience was absolutely amazing! Since this was my first experience with IC, I wasn't really sure what to expect, but when I walked into the convention center, I was welcomed with so much warmth and love. While I was there, I was able to see all my friends from my region and the friends I made over my summer camp at CLTC and my experience at Maccabi. I met so many new friends through the different

activities, including the different speakers and different Shabbat services we were able to attend. The best part, in my opinion, was that it was all organized by teenagers, through services and through programs. It was all eye-opening, and I was truly amazed by the abundance of self-pride and Jewish tradition from all over the world.

Tamar Sigler: I had the best time at IC. The more I go to these types of Jewish events, the more I feel myself opening up and being more willing to make so many new friends. Being surrounded by so many Jews and hearing Hebrew makes me feel so secure and understood, and I'm so grateful for IC for that experience. IC helps me feel connected to my roots and religion, and will forever hold a special place in my heart.

## JMeals teams up with United Way



JMeals is teaming up with the United Way to provide meals to individuals impacted by the recent explosion at Phoenix House senior living apartments. The JMeals food service team is preparing and packaging 180 meals per week at the Jewish Community Center, and

United Way is delivering them to the displaced residents currently staying at the Baymont Hotel in Boardman. JMeals is a collaboration between JCC and Jewish Family & Community Services. Pictured from left is Terrance Houston, a JMeals driver, and Billy Keel, of the United Way.

# Happy Passover!



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## Federation staff attend national conference

Five Youngstown Area Jewish Federation staff attended this year's FedPro, Jewish Federation of North America's annual conference that brings together senior and mid-level professionals from across the Federation system. The conference included keynote addresses, interactive workshops in self-awareness and direct communication, as well as design thinking sessions that allowed participants to work with colleagues on case studies and work applications.

They shared their thoughts on the experience with *The Jewish Journal*.

**Courtney Campesi, Financial Resource Development Director:** I had the privilege of attending the FedPro Conference for the first time this past February in Phoenix. Being surrounded by more than 1,000 Federation professionals was truly inspiring. The energy in the room was undeniable, fueled by a shared passion for the meaningful and impactful work we carry out every single day. Over the course of two and a half days, we connected with peers, learned from leaders in the field, and exchanged innovative ideas that we are excited to bring back and implement in our own community.

One moment that deeply resonated with me came during a session where the speaker repeated a simple yet powerful phrase: "My Jewish community means everything to me." Hearing those words affirmed what I have long felt in my own heart, our Youngstown Jewish community means everything to me. It has supported me, challenged me to grow, and helped me discover purpose. That is why it is so important that we continue to show up for one another and invest in the vital work that strengthens and sustains our community.

While we were in Arizona, Lisa [Long] and I were grateful to spend time with several donors who were in the area. We loved the chance to sit down together, catch up, and share about everything happening in our Youngstown Jewish Community.

**Lisa Long, CEO:** See her regular column on page 2, where she discusses her FedPro experience.

**Jason McQuown, Controller:** Attending my first FedPro conference was a highly valuable experience in my role as Controller at the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation. The sessions focused on key topics such as CRM softwares, the world of AI in the workplace,

cyber security, data mapping, and financial budgeting/reporting. I appreciated the interactive environment to exchange ideas, gain new perspectives, and reinforce the importance of continuous learning with other Federation professionals. Overall, FedPro left me feeling motivated, better informed and excited to bring new ideas back to our work and community.

**Dave Stauffer, CFO:** Attending the FedPro conference in Phoenix was an incredibly valuable and energizing experience. Joining more than 1,000 professionals from Jewish organizations across the country created a powerful sense of shared purpose and community. As CFO of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, I focused much of my time on the financial sessions, which were packed with practical insights and real-world strategies. I came away with a deeper understanding of how other communities are approaching financial stewardship, compliance, and long-term sustainability, as well as new ideas I'm excited to bring back to our community.

Just as meaningful was the opportunity to connect with fellow financial professionals

who face many of the same challenges I do. The networking alone made the conference worthwhile, fostering relationships that I know will continue well beyond the event. I was also especially impressed by the sessions highlighting how AI is being thoughtfully integrated into daily workflows to improve efficiency and decision-making. Each day's all-participant plenary featured powerful talks and speakers that were both inspiring and thought-provoking, making the conference not only informative but truly motivating.

**Pam Stoklosa, Human Resources Director:** Attending FedPro was a valuable experience. It was great to connect with other professionals in the Federation as well as my field, share ideas, and talk through the real-life challenges and successes we're all navigating. Having the opportunity to build those relationships and share what's working in our communities gave me helpful resources and contacts I can connect with moving forward. I'm grateful for the opportunity to participate and to bring those connections and ideas back to our organization here in Youngstown.



Youngstown Area Jewish Federation staff attended Jewish Federation of North America's annual conference. Pictured from left are Pam Stoklosa, Courtney Campesi, Dave Stauffer, Lisa Long, and Jason McQuown.



## Yom Hashoah

COMMUNITY EVENTS

YAD VASHEM EXHIBIT:

### “WHEN TIME STOOD STILL – THE FATE OF JEWISH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES DURING THE HOLOCAUST”

*This exhibition tells the fate of 15 families and the fate of the communities they belonged to.*

APRIL 13-20 | THOMASES FAMILY ENDOWMENT OF THE YOUNGSTOWN AREA JEWISH FEDERATION ART GALLERY

### 33RD ANNUAL COMMUNITY HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION

*Winners of the JCRC's student Holocaust writing, art, and multimedia contest will be recognized.*

APRIL 14 | 12:00 P.M. | MAHONING COUNTY COURTHOUSE

### THE YOUNGSTOWN AREA JEWISH FILM SERIES PRESENTS: “AMONG NEIGHBORS”

*Blending magical realism with documentary storytelling, the film examines a rural Polish town where longtime neighbors of different faiths turned on one another, murdering Holocaust Survivors months after World War II ended.*

APRIL 15 | 5:30 P.M. | JCC OF YOUNGSTOWN

### SHOAH MEMORIAL CEREMONY

*Will include the unveiling of a traveling exhibit that tells the life story of Abraham and Frances Honigman, local Holocaust Survivors.*

APRIL 19 | 4:00 P.M. | JCC OF YOUNGSTOWN



YOUNGSTOWN AREA  
JEWISH FEDERATION



JCRC

Presented by the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation and  
the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation

## Esther Marks Memorial Volunteer Award nominations due in May

The Youngstown Area Jewish Federation is seeking nominations for the Esther Marks Memorial Volunteer Award.

Esther Marks was a prodigious volunteer within the Federation and its agencies, at her synagogue, and in the general community. The Esther Marks Memorial Volunteer Award is meant to encourage volunteerism at all levels and to honor her memory.

Nominations must be submitted in writing, and be one page and double spaced. The nomination should detail why the nominee is deserving of the award. Individuals may be nominated by any individual or organization of the Jewish community. Nominees should be involved in Federation and/or any of its agencies or affiliated organizations and in the general Jewish community including

involvement in Jewish organizations or synagogues.

Nominees should also be involved in organizations in the general community. Nominees need not be a volunteer in a purely leadership role. Rather this award will give priority to those who volunteer for direct services to people or agencies. Consideration will be given to, but not limited to, direct volunteer activities, membership on boards or committees, leadership positions, length of time of service, and quality of volunteerism.

Nominations are due by May 21. The award will be presented at the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation annual meeting. Send nominations to Lisa Long, CEO, Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, 505 Gypsy Lane, Youngstown, Ohio, 44504.

## Federation looking for updated community member contact information

The Youngstown Area Jewish Federation continually works to keep contact information current and accurate. They recently launched a new database system and want to ensure they have the most up-to-date contact details for community members so they can share important Federation updates and meaningful news from the Jewish community. Community members will also receive a letter in the mail.

Scan the QR code and complete the brief form to update your contact information. Details may also be updated by contacting Nancy Sentelik at [nsentelik@jewishyoungstown.org](mailto:nsentelik@jewishyoungstown.org) or 330.746.3251, ext. 108.



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## Federation goes red with the nation for heart health

Staff of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation and its agencies, along with JCC members, wore red Feb. 6 for National Wear Red Day. National Wear Red Day is an annual day set aside to raise awareness and stand united against cardiovascular disease — the number one killer of women.



## Youngstown Area Jewish Federation's Burdman to assume interim OJC co-leadership responsibilities



Ohio Jewish Communities announced a series of leadership transitions that reflect both organizational growth and an ongoing commitment to advancing the interests and wellbeing of Ohio's Jewish community.

Following his recent move to Israel, Chief Executive Officer Howie Beigelman will be transitioning into a consulting role with Ohio Jewish Communities. In this capacity, Beigelman will continue to support the organization's strategic priorities, public policy efforts, and long-term vision, while allowing for continuity during this period of transition.

To ensure seamless day-to-day operations, Bonnie Deutsch Burdman, executive director, community relations/government affairs for the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, and Marc Ashed, assistant vice president, external affairs and director, government relations for the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, will assume interim leadership responsibilities, jointly overseeing organizational management and external engagement. Both bring deep institutional

knowledge, strong relationships across the state, and a proven commitment to OJC's mission.

"For over a decade, it's been my privilege to lead our statewide efforts in Columbus and work with our partners in Washington to enact consequential legislation with meaningful impact felt here in Ohio, across the United States, and around the world," said Beigelman. "I'm proud of our work, of our community's reputation and credibility with policymakers on both sides of the aisle, and of the business, civic, and religious leaders who know to call on us. I will always be ready to speak out for the Jewish community and to speak up for Ohio."

"Ohio Jewish Communities is entering a new and dynamic chapter," said OJC's Board Chair Greg Miller. "We are grateful for Howie's continued partnership and leadership, even as he begins this next phase of his life in Israel. At the same time, we are confident that Marc and Bonnie's steady leadership will ensure continuity, momentum, and impact." Miller added that "the work to secure a new CEO is nearly concluded and we eagerly look forward to an announcement in the near future."

Ohio Jewish Communities remains fully engaged in its work advocating for public policy priorities, strengthening relationships with elected officials, and supporting Jewish communities throughout Ohio. The organization looks forward to building on its successes while embracing new opportunities ahead.

Ohio Jewish Communities is the bipartisan statewide advocacy organization representing Jewish Federations, Jewish Community Relations Councils, and Jewish agencies across Ohio. OJC works to advance public policy priorities, strengthen community security, and foster strong relationships with government leaders at all levels.

1948-2026

## Save the date for Yom Ha'atzmaut

Israel's 78th Independence Day celebration

On **April 26**, the celebration at the JCC will feature food, games, face painting, music, and community activities.

Thomas Family Endowment of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation

## ART GALLERY

### Lessons from The Tree of Life: LIGHTING THE PATH FORWARD

Now on view in our community, this traveling exhibition features memorial items left after the October 27, 2018 attack on the Tree of Life synagogue. Preserved by the Rauh Jewish Archives at the Heinz History Center, these objects honor victims and survivors and reflect a global outpouring of compassion.

Exhibit runs through April 9

In cooperation with

## Lunch & Learn brings Israel to life



More than 35 community members gathered for an engaging Lunch & Learn that brought Israel to life through story, culture, and cuisine. Led by Liron

Daniel (pictured), the interactive program explored Israel's cities, people, and shared experiences through a brief talk and hands-on activity.

## Jewish teens share Jewish experiences



Area Jewish teens are sharing their Jewish experiences with peers through the Student to Student program. Pictured from left are Blythe Hively, Tres Hively, Maddie Long, and Sid Brawlasce.

Local Jewish teenagers are visiting area schools to talk with other students about Judaism as part of the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation's Student to Student program.

This nationwide initiative is a proven, classroom-based experiential program that brings Jewish and non-Jewish high school students together to learn about Judaism through personal storytelling.

Tres and Blythe Hively (Bio-Med), Maddie Long (Crestview High School), and Sid Brawlasce (Beaver Local)

recently spoke to students at Campbell Memorial High School about their Jewish identities, basic facts about Judaism, and their experiences with antisemitism.

Jensen McKelvey (Ursuline High School) and Eli and Jake Hagler (Poland High School) discussed their experiences with more than 20 students from Newton Falls High School.

As part of the Student to Student program, the Jewish high school student presenters visit local high schools with few, if any, Jewish students. Local teens will next visit Salem schools.



## THE PENNER FAMILY ENDOWMENT

During their lifetimes, David and Benita Penner were generous to both the Jewish and secular communities. The purpose of this endowment is to pursue Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) by breaking the cycle of poverty through enhancing Early Childhood Education. This age range was defined, by the donors, as birth to starting kindergarten.

Applications are due by May 24 annually. For more information visit [yajfoundation.org](http://yajfoundation.org) or contact Financial Resource Development Director Courtney Campesi at [ccampesi@jewishyoungstown.org](mailto:ccampesi@jewishyoungstown.org).

## Events honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation and the JCC held programs highlighting the shared history and ongoing work of Black-Jewish relations.

On Jan. 15—King’s birthday—the JCRC welcomed more than 55 community members for “From Exodus to Freedom Rides: Jewish and Black Americans Marching Together for Civil Rights.” In this lunch and learn, Dr. Cryshanna Jackson Leftwich and Dr. Adam Fuller, YSU professors, explored the historic partnership between Black and Jewish communities during the Civil Rights Movement and reflected on where that relationship stands today. Their message emphasized mutual support, solidarity, and the responsibility to continue showing up for one another.

The week of commemoration concluded

on Jan. 21 with a Film Series event, co-sponsored by the JCC and the JCRC, featuring the powerful documentary “Ain’t No Back to a Merry-Go-Round.” Fifty people attended the showing of this film, which tells the remarkable and little-known story of the 1960 desegregation protests at Glen Echo Amusement Park, sparked when five Howard University students sat on a whites-only carousel. When white neighbors, largely Jewish, joined Black students on the picket lines, an unprecedented alliance was formed—one that drew national attention.

“Together, these programs honored Dr. King’s legacy by reminding the community that meaningful social change is built through partnership, shared action, and a continued commitment to justice across communities,” said Melissa Bateman, Federation director of community engagement.



Dr. Adam Fuller (left) and Dr. Cryshanna Jackson Leftwich explored the historic partnership between Black and Jewish communities during the Civil Rights Movement.



Fifty people attended the JCC of Youngstown and the Jewish Community Relations Council showing of “Ain’t No Back to a Merry-Go-Round.”

## BUS TRIP

# The SOUND of MUSIC

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Thursday, April 23 | 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

\$145/Member | \$190/Non Member

Includes Boxed Lunch | Orchestra C Seating

All Ages | Participants under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.



For more information or to register contact the Arts & Culture Office at 330.746.3250 ext. 106, or ext. 105, or [bwilson@jewishyoungstown.org](mailto:bwilson@jewishyoungstown.org).

[jccyoungstown.org/bustrips](http://jccyoungstown.org/bustrips)

## BUS TRIP

Sunday, July 26  
12:30–11:00 p.m.

\$150/Member  
\$200/Non Member

Explore and dine at Legacy Village before the 6:30 p.m. performance of Disney’s “The Lion King” at Playhouse Square (Orchestra A seating).

All Ages. Participants under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information or to register contact the Arts & Culture Office at 330.746.3250 ext. 106, or ext. 105, or [bwilson@jewishyoungstown.org](mailto:bwilson@jewishyoungstown.org).

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LEGACY  
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## New National Junior Honor Society inductees recognized



Akiva Academy welcomed new members into the National Junior Honor Society on February 11.

Inducted were (pictured from left) Marleigh Schonberger, Olive Woodard, David Riley, Troy Williams, Jayden Sutton, Adeline Wagner, Neela James, Oliver Briggs,

and Giovanni Aiken.

Akiva Academy congratulates these outstanding students and their families on this significant achievement. Their dedication to scholarship, leadership, service, character, and citizenship reflects the values we strive to instill in our school community.

## Akiva Academy launches partnership with Israeli school

Akiva Academy recently announced the launch of a twinning school partnership with Evron School in Nahariya, Israel, made possible through the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation's partnership with Mateh Asher.

Beginning in January, Mrs. Sigler's Advanced Hebrew class has been building a meaningful connection with seventh-grade students in Israel. Akiva students correspond in Hebrew, while the students at Evron write in English, providing both groups with the

opportunity to strengthen their language skills while forming friendships across continents.

Through sharing about their daily lives, Jewish holidays, and cultural traditions, students are deepening their understanding of one another and strengthening the bond between our communities.

Akiva Academy is honored and grateful to be part of this meaningful connection with Israel.



Through a new partnership with a school in Israel students in Akiva Academy are watching a video they received from students in Israel.



Students in Israel are watching a video Akiva Academy students sent through a new partnership with the Israeli school.

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## Akiva celebrates Tu B'Shevat

Akiva Academy celebrated Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish New Year of the Trees Feb. 2.

The lunchroom was beautifully prepared for the occasion, and students enthusiastically participated in holiday-themed activities. They enjoyed dried fruits and nuts in keeping with tradition, along with a variety of fresh fruits. Throughout the day, excited voices could be heard:

“What a beautiful setup in the lunchroom!”

“Tu B'Shevat is so delicious!”

“I love this school!”

In addition to celebrating together, students also contributed funds to support the planting of trees in Israel, helping connect their celebration locally with meaningful action abroad.

“It was a festive and memorable day that brought the spirit of Tu B'Shevat to life,” said Kobi Sigler, Hebrew/Judaic coordinator.



Students enjoyed Tu B'Shevat activities during the celebration on February 2.

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10/11

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APRIL  
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Leyba



APRIL  
24/25

DOUGIE  
Almeida



MAY  
1/2

RYAN  
Goodcase



MAY  
9TH

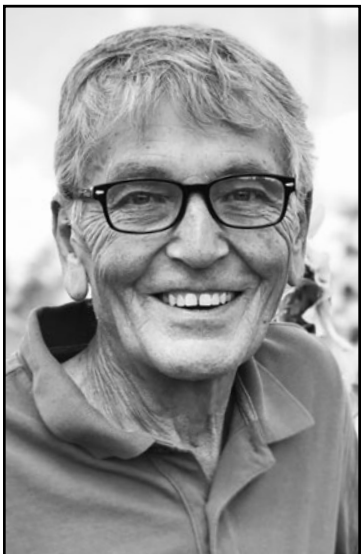
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Pescatelli



## Bernard “Bernie” Gross

Bernard “Bernie” Gross, age 73, University, earning his Juris Doctorate. passed away peacefully on Feb. 1, 2026, surrounded by family.

Bernie was born on Aug. 31, 1952, in Youngstown to Martin Gross and Emmy Gross (Thanheiser), both of whom preceded him in death. Bernie was immensely proud to be the son of a Holocaust Survivor. He grew up in Youngstown, where he formed lifelong friendships and developed a deep appreciation for community and learning. He attended The Rayen School, where he played trumpet in the marching band. Bernie later graduated from The Ohio State



A lifelong gardener, Bernie turned his passion for plants into his treasured business, Garden Partners, a reflection of his love for growth, care, and patience. Gardening was not just his work, but a philosophy he carried throughout his life. He often said, “The earth laughs in flowers, and I have always lived by that.”

Bernie was also a devoted lover of live music, attending countless concerts over the years. He enjoyed trivia and was known for sharing little-known facts, delighting friends

with his curiosity and sharp mind. His love of sports endured through the ups and downs of his favorite teams—the Yankees, Buckeyes, Jets, and Giants. A deeply social person, Bernie cultivated many close friendships and cherished conversation, laughter, and shared experiences.

Bernie is survived by his beloved wife, Susan Powell of Pataskala, Ohio; his daughter, Tovah Emmy Gross (Nathan) Foster; and his two cherished granddaughters, Lilah G. Foster (10) and Marti Emma Foster (eight). He is also survived by his stepchildren, Curt (Sarah) Powell, Tricia (Curt) Douglas, and Tyson (Stacey) Powell, as well as his step-grandchildren, Jonathan, Kennedy, Adam, Austin (Kellyn), and Matthew.

Bernie believed that life should continue to grow. In that spirit, the family

requests flowering or living plants in lieu of cut flowers. Donations in Bernie’s memory may also be made to a Hebrew school of your choice to help others connect to their Jewish faith; Tifereth Israel in Columbus; or the Lori Schottenstein Chabad Center in New Albany, Ohio, where Bernie especially enjoyed watching his granddaughters grow through their Hebrew school experience. Bernie would also encourage planting a perennial or a tree at your home in his memory.

A graveside service was held at Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens, Temple Israel Section, in Columbus.

Bernie will be remembered for his warmth, curiosity, generosity of spirit, and his belief that the best things in life—like friendships and gardens—are meant to be nurtured and shared.

## Gary Bassin

Gary Bassin passed away Feb. 17, 2026 after a long illness. He was 92. Burial with graveside services was at Ohev Tzedek Cemetery in Cornersburg, Ohio,

Gary’s life encapsulated much of the experience of the Youngstown Jewish community. His parents were members of Temple Emanuel; he married the love of his life, Darlene Feldman, at Anshe Emeth Synagogue, and he raised his family at Ohev Tzedek Synagogue. He spent 30 plus years working in the Tamarkin organization.

Gary bowled with B’nai B’rith and golfed with the Ohev Tzedek golf league. He served as an officer, trustee, and Gabbai at Ohev Tzedek over the years.

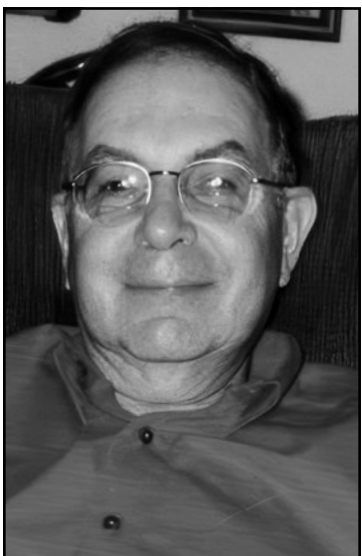
Gary and Darlene were married for over 69 years, until her passing last year. Together, they raised three children:

Stuart, Mindy, and Edward. They all married and gave Gary and Darlene six grandchildren, along with a recent great-granddaughter.

Gary and Darlene moved to Pittsburgh after Gary’s retirement to be closer to Mindy and her family. While in Pittsburgh, Gary and Darlene were members of Congregation Beth El of the South Hills, where they regularly attended services and helped out at Bingo. Gary was also a frequent participant in Rabbi Greenbaum’s weekly Torah study sessions until very recently.

Gary earned his bachelor’s degree from Ohio University while on a ROTC scholarship. After graduation, he served in the U.S. Army for six years, retiring as a captain in the Army Reserve.

Gary was well-loved by many and will be sorely missed.





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## Cory Alan Altman



It is with deep sorrow and much love that we mourn the passing of Cory Alan Altman, of Muirfield Dr., in Canfield, Ohio, on Jan. 9, 2026, at the age of 55 years.

He was born on March 8, 1970, in Youngstown, Ohio, a son of Martin M. Altman and the late Sherry Hope Altman.

Cory was a very kind and personable soul with an incredibly bright mind. He never met a person who didn't instantly like him. He began his studies at Bowling Green University, went on to Ohio State University, and continued his education at Youngstown State University for two

years more, majoring in business with communications as his minor. He later went on to put his education to good use as assistant plant manager at Brentwood Originals, a career which spanned over 20 years. In his free time, he enjoyed traveling the country and going to see two of his favorite bands, the Grateful Dead and Phish, in concert. He never quite outgrew his youthful side, unapologetically and happily living life on his own terms, and making lasting memories throughout the years with his very dear, longtime friends.

In addition to his mother, he is preceded in death by his maternal

grandparents, Robert and Helen Nelson.

In addition to his father, Cory is survived by his sister, Lisa Altman of Canfield, Ohio; his niece, Alayna Lucia Spencer of Boardman, Ohio; and many loving cousins, all of whom he will forever be sadly missed by.

At the family's request, a graveside service was held at the Ohev Tzedek Cemetery, with family and close friends attending.

In Cory's memory, contributions may be made to the Humane Society or Congregation Ohev Beth Sholom.

Professional arrangements were handled by Shriver-Allison-Courtley-Weller-King Funeral Home.

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## Making my Passover Seder uniquely my own



By Nic Bush

What other Jewish holiday lets you turn your house into Hogwarts, dress up like a wizard, and still explain to your non-Jewish friends why we avoid *chametz* and are

commanded to drink three glasses of wine? None, which is exactly why Passover is the perfect way to celebrate, have fun, and share the core traditions of Judaism.

Last year, I hosted my very first Seder, and naturally, it had to be nerdy and over-the-top. From the moment we conceived the idea of teaching my non-Jewish friends about Passover through the lens of Harry Potter, we knew it would be magical. The house was soon transformed: flickering candles floated from the ceiling, bubbling cauldrons appeared on every surface, hundreds of Hogwarts acceptance letters spilled from the fireplace, and the movie soundtrack blared so loudly that even the neighbors might come over to see what's going on.

After countless trips to Michaels and a mountain of Amazon packages, the decorating plans were done. Next came the real challenge: weaving the world of Harry Potter together with the true meaning of a Seder. It turns out, the story of Harry Potter and Passover are great parallels. That's because

the themes of Passover are universal: standing up to evil, uplifting the oppressed, and celebrating liberation. These ideas can easily be explored through the magical world of Harry Potter.

Just as Pharaoh wielded tyranny over the Israelites, Voldemort's rhetoric and power cast a shadow over the wizarding world.

Self-sacrifice, a central theme in the Passover story, mirrors Lily Potter's brave act to save her son. Similarly, the Haggadah's "Four Children"—Wise, Wicked, Simple, and Unknown—can be compared to the four Hogwarts houses, each reflecting different personalities and ways of learning.

Even the traditions themselves find whimsical parallels. The search for leavened bread (*chametz*) before Passover is reminiscent of the hunt for Horcruxes in the final book, with both quests uncovering hidden elements that must be confronted and removed. And the Hillel sandwich, which combines *matzah* and bitter herbs, has a playful counterpart in Hogwarts fare—like the corned beef sandwiches Ron devours on the Hogwarts Express.

What I learned was that the best part of a Passover Seder is the opportunity to make it uniquely your own. A themed Seder brings the ancient story of liberation to life, making it engaging, personal, and meaningful for people of all ages and backgrounds. By adding creative touches, like costumes, themes like social justice or favorite films, or interactive games, you can inspire curiosity, encourage participation, and turn the traditional ritual into an unforgettable experience.

## PJ Library offers free Passover information for families

**Editors Note:** For local PJ Library information visit [jccyoungstown.org](http://jccyoungstown.org) or contact Barb Wilson at [bwilson@jewishyoungstown.org](mailto:bwilson@jewishyoungstown.org).

Passover is the ultimate Jewish story – a tale of freedom, hope, and food – which makes it the perfect holiday to share with the entire family. From the experiential delight of the seders to the eight days of *matzah* pizza, macaroons, and storytelling, Passover is time for gathering, reflecting, telling stories, and working towards a world with freedom for all. Visit PJ Library's Passover Hub at [pjlibrary.org/passover](http://pjlibrary.org/passover) to find everything you need to plan your festive Passover meal (*seder*), set your table, and answer your kids' curious questions (and encourage them to ask some of their own).

On the Passover hub, families will find PJ Library's free downloadable spring holiday guide, "A Time to Gather." This primer lays out Jewish holidays spanning late March to late June, including Passover, in a thoughtful, creative, and colorful way that can help anyone feel more secure in their holiday planning and hosting. Learn how to prepare for the seders and the foods you need for your table, and find meaningful activities to make the most out of all eight days.

Also available for digital download from the Hub is the thoughtfully crafted "In Every Generation: A PJ Library Family Haggadah." It follows the arc of a traditional Haggadah and features all of the major songs, prayers, and moments, but also incorporates helpful framing and stories for kids so they can get the most out of this experiential meal. Over the past eight years, PJ Library has sent over

840,000 Haggadahs to more than 215,000 families and enabled downloads on our site for thousands more, ensuring that this storytelling tradition continues into the next generation. The PJ Library Family Haggadah is available for purchase in paperback for \$7.99 through the PJ Library storefront.

This Passover, PJ Library subscribers are also eligible to host a Get Together and receive \$100 reimbursements for planning Jewish-themed gatherings with at least two other families raising Jewish children. Whether you're having an *afikomen* hunt, a parents-only *kosher-wine-tasting* night, or a plague-making craft session, families can count on PJ Library to help them enjoy and pay for holiday hangouts.

Finally, PJ Library is proud to once again partner with Streit's Matzos, bringing together two beloved names in Jewish family traditions to supermarkets and Passover grocery lists across North America. PJ Library will be prominently featured on Streit's iconic *matzah* boxes; both kids and adults will enjoy a new, engaging "Search and Find" activity on the box.

PJ Library inspires joyful Jewish experiences by sending free storybooks and activities to families with children ages 0-12 and offering ways to connect with community. The program was founded in 2005 by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF) and, with the support of generous donors and partners, now distributes books in seven languages to more than 650,000 children in over 40 countries every month.

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## Banana Bread Matzah Brei

The perfect Passover breakfast, ready in 15 minutes

By Hannah Paperno

There's something about the comfort of a warm slice of banana bread with some butter that never gets old. If there are a million ways to consume the flavors of banana bread, I can assure you I'll find them. During Passover, when we're meant to be reflecting on our liberation from slavery in Egypt and avoiding *hametz*, I find myself craving my favorite comfort food — banana bread.

Though I love some of the standard Pesach fare like *matzah* ball soup and spoonfuls of *charoset*, the decadence of banana bread is something I yearn for. I have fond memories of waking up to the smell of *matzah brei* wafting from the kitchen downstairs as a child. Last year, I finally decided to set out to learn how to make *matzah brei* myself. Admittedly, this was a dangerous choice because now it means I can have my favorite kind of pancake any time of year, but I digress. After several rounds of my standard favorite (plain *matzah brei* topped with a mound of butter and sugar), I looked at the slowly browning bananas in my kitchen and decided to do some experimenting. With the power of sheer hunger and willpower on my side, banana bread *matzah brei* was born. It's a simple *matzah brei* recipe that you can whip up in under 20 minutes, with the addition of all the flavors that make banana bread so great.

Overripe mashed bananas paired with cinnamon and butter make for a Passover breakfast that I'll be coming back to for years. I traded out my standard butter and sugar for butter and maple syrup to make it a more traditional pancake experience, however, you're welcome to top them in whatever way you see fit. However you choose to enjoy them, I hope they bring all who try them the same comfort that they bring me.

**Total Time:** 20 minutes

**Yield:** 20 pancakes

**Ingredients:**

- 10 sheets of *matzah*
- hot water
- 3 overripe bananas, mashed
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp cinnamon



Banana Bread Matzah Brei (photo by Hannah Paperno)

- pinch of salt
- 1 stick of butter, for cooking

**To top:**

- cinnamon-sugar
- walnuts
- sliced bananas
- maple syrup

**Instructions:**

1. In a large bowl, crush *matzah* and soak in hot water for 15 seconds before draining excess water.
2. In a separate bowl, combine the bananas, eggs, vanilla, cinnamon, and salt.
3. Into the large bowl of drained *matzah*, add the egg and banana mixture, and stir to combine.
4. In a small pan over low heat, melt about 1 Tbsp of butter (per pancake), then use a 1/2 cup to measure out your pancakes. Flatten with a spatula and fry until golden brown on each side, about 3–5 minutes. Repeat with remaining batter.
5. Top with cinnamon sugar, walnuts, bananas, and maple syrup.

This story originally appeared on *The Nosh*.

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## Brazil's beloved Cheese Bread is perfect for Passover

**Pão de queijo is delicious, packed with cheese and naturally hametz-free**

By Eduardo Lifchitz

I've always been passionate about the easy Brazilian cheese bread, *pão de queijo*. For me, it's a snack to eat all year round (please don't tell my nutritionist), but when it comes to Passover, *pão de queijo* is the card up my sleeve.

First, because if you're like me — someone who follows at least some of the laws, cooks for the seder (and in my case, also cooks for other people) — by the time the seder night rolls around, all you want is to throw your family out the window and eat in peace. So it would be pretty cruel of me to give you yet another recipe that means more hours in the kitchen and more dishes to wash.

*Pão de queijo* is a snack you can make in under an hour, it's kosher for Passover and if you're not sure what to do during those hours before the seder (when eating hametz and matzah is prohibited), it's an easy snack to make for the kids. Pro tip: Let them help roll the little balls.

Everything indicates that *pão de queijo* originated in Minas Gerais, a region in central Brazil known for its *cerrado* (savanna) landscape. It is believed to have emerged around the mid-18th century, a time when wheat flour was an imported good brought from Europe to Rio de Janeiro and the surrounding areas. As a result, various *cassava* derivatives were developed, such as tapioca, *cassava* flour and *polvilho* (cassava starch). In Brazil, we typically use either sour or sweet *polvilho*. If you can find it in a specialty market, buy it! (At home, I mix half sweet and half sour.) But rest assured that generic tapioca flour can be easily sourced in chain grocery stores and the end result will be just as delicious.

So, what's the connection between *pão de queijo* and Passover? Since *pão de queijo* contains no wheat flour or leavening, it has become a popular dairy snack for Passover. I've been seeing more and more versions of *pão de queijo* specifically adapted for the holiday. Forget *gefilte* fish, brisket and *mina de matzah* — *pão de queijo*, like Brazilians themselves,



*Pão de queijo* (photo by Milton Rodney Buzon via Getty Images)

is easygoing and unfussy. Plus, it's gluten-free! There are a few ways to make it, but the most common method involves pouring boiling liquid over the flour. In Brazil, the defining characteristic of *pão de queijo* — and a source of pride for people from Minas Gerais — is the type of cheese used.

Years ago, many people made it with *queijo Minas*, a soft yet firm white cheese, sometimes adding Parmesan. Nowadays, most recipes call for Canastra or *meia cura*, both aged cheeses that range from white to creamy in color, with *meia cura* being a favorite. If you don't have the luxury of being surrounded by delicious Brazilian cheeses, we suggest a mix of  $\frac{3}{4}$  mozzarella and  $\frac{1}{4}$  Parmesan or a half-and-half blend. But if you have a favorite white cheese, go ahead and use that! And if you want to enjoy it like a true Mineiro, once your *pão de queijo* is ready, cut it open, spread a little butter or creamy

cheese inside, and pair it with a good cup of coffee from the Minas Gerais *cerrado*.

Note: You can wrap the balls in plastic wrap and freeze for up to three months before baking if you want to bake later.

**Total Time:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Yield:** 12–15 cheese bread balls

**Ingredients:**

- 55 g neutral oil, like canola, avocado or vegetable oil
- 100 g water
- 100 g whole milk
- 250 g tapioca flour
- 7.5 g salt ( $\frac{1}{2}$  Tbsp)
- 250 g shredded cheese (a mix of mozzarella and Parmesan is recommended)
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  eggs, mixed

**Instructions:**

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F.
2. Add the water, oil, and milk to a medium pot and bring to a boil.
3. In a separate bowl, mix the tapioca

flour and salt.

4. Pour the boiling mixture of water, oil, and milk over the dry ingredients and mix well until lumps form.
5. Let the mixture rest until it becomes lukewarm and the bowl has cooled. If the mixture is too hot, it will cook the eggs in the next step.
6. Once the bowl is cool, add the cheese and eggs.
7. Now mix all the ingredients together until well mixed.
8. Measure out dough balls in 45 g increments (about the size of a golf ball) and roll into balls in the palm of your hand.
9. Put the balls on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and into the pre-heated oven.
10. Bake for 30 minutes, or until the balls are golden in color. They're best eaten straight from the oven.

*This story originally appeared on The Nosh.*

## Passover Spinach and Cheese Lasagna

A year-round favorite reimagined for Passover

By Adeena Sussman

Lasagna for Passover? You bet. After days of preparing two (probably meat-based) seders, this dairy dish will be a welcome change — especially on a holiday where pasta is strictly forbidden. *Matzah* makes a suitable replacement for lasagna noodles, and the moisture released by the marinara sauce and the cheese softens the stiff, unleavened boards, resulting in a tender lasagna with layers just as delicious as one made with conve-based noodles.

I decided to keep this recipe simple, using frozen spinach and store-bought marinara sauce. If the inspiration strikes you, by all means make your own sauce. One cup of sautéed mushrooms would also be a welcome addition, but the goal here was to liberate cooks from hours in the kitchen. Since ricotta cheese is difficult to find with kosher-for-Passover certification, cottage cheese is substituted. If you'd like a more ricotta-like consistency, whirl the cottage cheese in the blender or food processor for a few seconds before combining with the other ingredients.

Note: This recipe constitutes *gebrochts*, the Yiddish word for “broken” which refers to *matzah* products that have come into contact with liquid. Some Ashkenazi Jews do not eat *gebrochts* on Passover, believing that liquid causes the *matzah* to rise, rendering it unfit for Passover consumption.

**Total Time:** 1 hour 25 minutes

**Yield:** Serves 4–6

**Ingredients:**

- 8–9 whole boards matzah (regular or whole-wheat)
- 2 jars (about 6 ½–7 cups) marinara sauce
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ¾ tsp salt
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- ½ cup shredded parmesan cheese
- 3 cups (¾ lb) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 3 cups (1 ½ lbs) small-curd cottage cheese
- 1 lb package frozen spinach, completely defrosted

**Instructions:**



Passover Spinach and Cheese Lasagna (Getty Images)

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Combine cottage cheese, 1½ cups mozzarella, parsley, salt, and pepper in a bowl and stir to incorporate. Reserve.
3. Using your hands, squeeze excess moisture from spinach and separate spinach until it is no longer clumped (you should end up with about 3½–4 cups spinach). Reserve.
4. Spoon ¾ cup marinara sauce into the bottom of a disposable, high-sided lasagna pan. Fit *matzah* to cover as much of the bottom of the pan as possible, breaking into pieces where necessary. Pour 1½ cups sauce on top of *matzah* and distribute evenly.
5. Spoon about 1 cup of the cheese mixture onto the *matzah* and distribute evenly. Sprinkle about 1¼ cups of the spinach on top of the cheese, then sprinkle 2 Tbsp parmesan cheese. Repeat *matzah*-sauce-cheese-spinach-parmesan process two more times, then cover with a fourth layer of *matzah*.
6. Pour remaining 1½ cups sauce on top of *matzah*.
7. Let lasagna rest for 15 minutes before baking to allow *matzah* to moisten slightly. Cover lasagna with foil and bake for 35 minutes.
8. Remove foil and sprinkle remaining 1½ cups mozzarella on top of lasagna.
9. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F and bake lasagna an additional 30 minutes, until cheese is bubbly and browned around the edges.
10. Remove from oven, let rest for five-minutes and serve hot.

*This story originally appeared on The Nosh.*



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## Documentary about Jews killed by their Polish neighbors after the Holocaust could be banned in Poland

By Shira Li Bartov

**Editor's Note:** *The Youngstown Area Jewish Film Series will show "Among Neighbors" at 5:30 p.m. April 15 at the JCC. For more information and to register visit [jcc-youngstown.org/filmseries](http://jcc-youngstown.org/filmseries).*

(JTA) — A documentary about the murder of five Jews in a Polish town is being threatened with a ban in Poland — not because they were killed in the Holocaust, but because they weren't.

The Jews at the heart of "Among Neighbors," from California-based filmmaker Yoav Potash, died six months after the end of Nazi occupation. They were among a handful of Survivors from Gnięszów, a town where about 1,500 Jews made up half the population before World War II. When they returned home in 1945, they were killed by their Polish neighbors.

Since premiering at the Warsaw Jewish Film Festival in November 2024, "Among Neighbors" has been screened in six countries and qualified for Academy Award consideration. But its release on TVP, the Polish public broadcaster, has prompted uproar from right-wing politicians and a national investigation.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency hosted a U.S. stream of the film Feb. 26, followed by a live conversation with Potash.

Potash stumbled into making "Among Neighbors" on a 2014 trip to Gnięszów, where he planned to document a modest rededication ceremony for the Jewish cemetery. As he began talking with the oldest residents, one woman, who has since died, told him that Jews were killed there well after the war.

"That just really struck me as a very different kind of story, because it was not the Germans doing the killing, it was the Poles,"

said Potash. "It was not during the war, it was well after, when it should have been a time of peace."

When "Among Neighbors" appeared on televisions across Poland in November 2025, it was hit with backlash from the office of

should not be broadcasting it."

Jędrzak oversees state awards and Polish diaspora relations. Before joining the president's office, she spent 15 years working at the Institute of National Remembrance — previously headed by Nawrocki — which

War II. What is particularly outrageous is the fact that the production was released by Polish Television."

The National Broadcasting Council responded by opening an investigation into the film.

"Among Neighbors" was made over the course of a decade that largely spanned the Law and Justice regime. In 2018, the country passed a law that outlawed accusing Poland or the Polish people of complicity in Nazi crimes. The infraction has since been downgraded from a crime punishable with prison time to a civil offense, but the law remains in effect.

For Potash, reactions to the film from right-wing nationalist officials were "not surprising at all."

"They have adopted this mindset where there's an almost sacred sense that Poles during World War II were either

victims or heroes," he said. "Any story that anyone tells that contradicts that, or that adds that some Poles were perpetrators, is anathema to that."

TVP has stood by the film and continues to air it. The network has been backed by the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland and the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, whose representatives sent a letter of support to the TVP Program Council's chair, Barbara Bilińska.

"Among Neighbors" unfolds around a man and a woman who grew up in Gnięszów. In the last breaths of their lives, they seek to answer questions that have possessed them for 80 years — he as the Jewish child of Holocaust Survivors who



Director Yoav Potash greets Yaacov Goldstein, one of the last Jewish survivors of Gnięszów, Poland. (Courtesy of 8 Above)

Polish President Karol Nawrocki, a right-wing historian who led nationalist efforts to rewrite Poland's Holocaust history. His Law and Justice party, which governed Poland from 2015 to 2023, promoted historical narratives about Polish victimhood and resistance to the Nazis while delegitimizing research on Polish antisemitism or Poles who killed Jews.

Prime Minister Donald Tusk now leads the Polish government with a centrist coalition, but Nawrocki has been a counterweight to Tusk since he was elected last year.

Six days after "Among Neighbors" aired on TVP, Agnieszka Jędrzak, a minister in Nawrocki's office, attacked the broadcaster on X. Calling the documentary "historical anti-Polish manipulation," she said "a television station that has 'Polish' in its name

gained a reputation for advancing nationalist narratives about the Holocaust. According to Jędrzak's government profile, she led the IPN as it "responded to defamatory statements which damaged the reputation of Poland and the Polish nation."

A probe into "Among Neighbors" launched after the Ordo Iuris Institute, a far-right Catholic think tank, filed a complaint with the National Broadcasting Council, comparable to the Federal Communications Commission in the United States.

"The narrative presented in the documentary film 'Among Neighbors' clearly undermines values important to Poles, such as historical truth," the institute said in November. "Above all, the film creates a false image of Poles as a nation co-responsible for the German genocide of Jews during World

*Neighbors continued on page 38*

## Yet again, Israel's public shelters become sites of camaraderie amid steep danger

By Deborah Danan

(JTA) — TEL AVIV — Spirits ran high inside a large public bomb shelter in the Israeli coastal city of Jaffa, with loud chatter, singing and greetings of “Happy Iran Holiday,” an incongruous soundtrack to the joint U.S.-Israeli strike on Iran and the hundreds of missiles that followed.

The room itself looked much cheerier than most shelters, with a ball pit and bright Gymboree mattresses left over from its other job in peacetime, when it doubles as a kindergarten.

A day earlier, the shelter became the accidental venue for a bar mitzvah celebration, when worshipers from the synagogue across the road took refuge there.

One particularly raucous group was made up mostly of American-Israelis from the neighborhood. One of them, Steph Graber, said she was in a good mood despite being exhausted from middle-of-the-night runs to the shelter.

“I’m not sure why, maybe it’s the adrenaline of war or something,” she said. “But also it’s amazing to see the U.S. and Israel as allies working together to reduce the threat from Iran.”

Graber said she had been sheltering elsewhere but had “FOMO” about not being with her friends, so she switched over in the brief lull between sirens.

Martine Berkowitz, a friend of Graber’s, also said the community around her was what made the disruption feel manageable. Sirens kept interrupting even basic tasks, she said, including her attempt to take a shower, which she tried five times.

“My friends live on my corner, so I’m doing great. We’re all together all the time,” she said. During the last Iran flare-up in June, she didn’t have that kind of built-in circle nearby, she said. “Being alone then was really rough.”

The mood wasn’t confined to Jaffa. Across the country, similar scenes played out in shelters and spread on social media, including one from Nachlaot in Jerusalem of people singing “For the Jews There was Light and Joy,” a Purim song marking the story’s turn after Haman’s plot to kill the Jews was thwarted. The parallel to the current moment, as the Jews once again sought



Israelis take cover in a public shelter in Tel Aviv as a siren sounds warning of incoming ballistic missiles fired from Iran toward Israel, March 1, 2026. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

to topple a Persian rule who had called for their death, was not lost on anyone.

In a sprawling underground parking lot turned shelter at Dizengoff Center in central Tel Aviv, Shabbat prayers gave way to dancing and songs of “Don’t Be Afraid, Oh Israel” and “Am Yisrael Chai.” Saul Sadka, who was there, posted a video of the revelers, captioning it “joy and stoicism.”

Sadka later said he was struck by the “sense of solidarity,” and noted that it was Shabbat Zachor, when Jews read the passage about Amalek, a nemesis that they are commanded never to forget. “People seem willing to suffer for a while if it means the defeat of the IRGC,” he said.

Another bomb shelter in Tel Aviv struck a less pious tone, turning into a makeshift night club with red lights, a DJ, and people dancing.

In one video, one of hundreds of comedic shelter clips circulating online, a comedian quipped, “The nation of Israel lives” — but only as long as the shelter “has wifi and the iPads have battery.”

Natalie Silverlieb was in the *mamak*, the communal reinforced safe room on her building’s floor. She said the logistics of repeated alerts had become harder since she became a mother.

“Doing this with a baby is crazy,” she said. The room was packed, including other babies and dogs, and she and her partner tried to follow a system that would get their baby back to sleep quickly.

“I’m so, so, so exhausted,” she said. “When I was doing this on my own the last time, I could at least come back to my apartment and just lay on the couch. But now there’s no laying on the couch. It’s go, go, go.”

For Silverlieb, the uncertainty of the past few weeks hadn’t disappeared so much as changed shape. “The waiting for it to end is more stressful than the waiting for it to begin,” she said. “I just hope it ends quickly. It’s a lot, period.”

In a nearby grocery store, another siren, the 30th or so in as many hours, sent shoppers scrambling. In the residential building

next door, the shelter downstairs was decrepit and doorless. Children played limbo with a strip of red cloth. One woman began pitching HAAT, a new, mostly Arab-run delivery service she said was giving Wolt a run for its money. A few people pulled out their phones to download the app, trading jokes about whether it would deliver to shelters, and during sirens. Because it is Ramadan, Muslims in Israel are doubly on edge, from fasting on top of the missiles.

Sasha, who lives in the building, said she was “half happy” the waiting was over. The repeated dashes up and down the stairs, she joked, were at least getting her to her daily goal of 10,000 steps. Still, she said, it “won’t help us if the [Iranian] regime doesn’t fall.”

A Ukrainian who grew up under Soviet rule, taught her what it meant to live without freedom, she said. “We want to see the Iranian people free and a better Middle East for everyone.”

Evyatar said he doubted the regime

*Shelters continued on page 39*

## Bob Hendricks honored, grandchildren establish scholarship in his honor



Bob Hendricks, Youngstown State University Class of 1964, was recognized and honored as the Penguin of the Year at a YSU dinner in February. Following the presentation, his grandchildren Annie Kostovny, Elle Clementi, and Andrew Hendricks announced the establishment of the Robert K. Hendricks Scholarship at the YSU Foundation in his honor. Pictured from left are Andrew Hendricks, Kostovny, Bob Hendricks, and Clementi.

## Golden Age Vintage Marketplace to open April 10

Girard — Golden Age Vintage Marketplace, 1282 Trumbull Ave., will open April 10 with a ribbon cutting ceremony at 10 a.m., unveiling a 4,000-square-foot, secure marketplace designed to support small businesses, artisans, antique dealers, and creative curators.

Open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Golden Age Vintage Marketplace will operate as a small business retail incubator, offering vendors permanent retail space within a professionally managed and monitored environment. The marketplace is an extension of Sweet Memories Vintage Tees & Candy, providing enhanced security, built-in foot traffic, and operational stability—advantages independent vendors often struggle to achieve on their own.

The marketplace brings together antiques, oddities, handmade goods, vintage collectibles, and emerging makers under one roof.

At the heart of the marketplace is a tribute to Nathan Darsky, a Russian Jewish immigrant whose entrepreneurial vision led to the founding of Golden

Age Beverages in Youngstown in 1932. Darsky's journey—from immigrant beginnings to local innovator—embodies the resilience, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurial spirit that Golden Age Vintage Marketplace seeks to carry forward.

“Golden Age Vintage Marketplace was created to give small businesses a real leg up,” said founder Linda Barton. “This is not a weekend pop-up or a temporary market. It’s a secure, permanent space where vendors can operate seven days a week, build consistency, test ideas, and grow—just like the entrepreneurs who helped build Youngstown generations ago.”

Golden Age Vintage Marketplace has a limited number of vendor spaces available and is currently accepting applications from small businesses serious about growth. Applications will be reviewed to ensure a balanced and diverse marketplace.

Vendors interested should contact [goldenagevintagemarketplace@gmail.com](mailto:goldenagevintagemarketplace@gmail.com) or visit Sweet Memories Vintage Tees & Candy to pick up a vendor application.

## League of Women Voters announces 2026 Hall of Fame honorees

YOUNGSTOWN – The League of Women Voters Greater Youngstown is honoring outstanding women in the greater Youngstown Community. This year’s honorees are:

Marie Dockry, Governing Board Member for the Educational Service Center of Eastern Ohio and the Mahoning County Career and Technological Center

Amanda Fehlbaum, PhD, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director, Women and Gender Studies, Youngstown State University

Julie M. Green, Director, Trumbull County Planning Commission

Lisa Lee Kohler, community leader and volunteer, President, League of Women Voters of Greater Youngstown

Jessica Lev, JD, Associate General Counsel, Phantom Fireworks

Sarah Lown, Director of Public Finance, Western Reserve Port Authority

Brandi Shamara Parker, Assistant Director, Outreach, Axxess Family Services

Cheryl Saffold, JD, President, Community Concerned Citizens II

Jorine Stone, community leader and past President, American Association of University Women, Youngstown Chapter

These women will be inducted into the Women’s Hall of Fame at a ceremony to recognize all of their accomplishments. The ticketed event will be held at 5 p.m. March 19 at the Jewish Community Center of Youngstown, 505 Gypsy Lane.

Dinner will be provided by Inspired Catering. RSVP online at [lwvgy.org](http://lwvgy.org) or <https://square.link/u/u904mE6j>.

In 2026, efforts will be focused on the importance of primary elections, and helping voters understand recent changes to the new voting laws.

The League of Women Voters is a

nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy. They never support or oppose any political party or candidate. The League of Women Voters has two separate and distinct roles.

- Voters Service/Citizen Education: They present unbiased nonpartisan information about elections, the voting process, and issues.
- Action/Advocacy: They are nonpartisan, but, after study, use their positions to advocate for or against particular policies in the public interest.



*Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy Passover!*

## After 4 years of war, Ukraine's Jews adapt to a life of sirens, shortages and uncertainty

By Theia Chatelle

(JTA) — KYIV, Ukraine — Viktoria Maksimovich's students at the Sha'alavim Jewish Day School no longer run for shelters when air raid sirens sound.

"They don't want to hear the alarms. They don't care about the shots and bombs. They don't care about it. This is the biggest problem right now, as they won't look for a shelter," she said in a virtual interview from her school in Kharkiv, Ukraine. "It's like usual life for them, and a lot of them grew up like this during the war and don't remember normal life."

Indeed, the Russian invasion, which marked its fourth anniversary in February, has reshaped everything in the lives of Ukrainian Jews, from big choices about whether to stay or flee to the seemingly mundane decision about whether to take the elevator or the stairs when visiting high-rise buildings.

With Russian strikes on Ukrainian energy infrastructure a near-daily occurrence, taking the elevator means risking being trapped for hours if the power goes out. Recognizing that the dilemma has trapped elderly Jews in their homes, Maksimovich and her colleagues recently organized a service day for their students, who baked *challahs* and hiked up many flights of stairs to deliver them to Kharkiv's elderly Jews.

"They managed it and were so happy about it because they met those old people and saw in their eyes, 'You are here and brought us *challahs* and candles for Shabbat,'" Maksimovich recalled. "It was amazing."

The fourth anniversary of the Russian invasion arrives in grim fashion for Ukrainians, with the Russian and Ukrainian armies locked in a bloody stalemate and support from the United States and Europe increasingly uncertain. Ukrainian cities are regularly barraged with drones and missiles, not only exacting a devastating tally of civilian deaths and injuries but making it increasingly challenging for Ukrainian civilians to carry out the basic functioning of their lives.

The last four months have been



*Jewish Ukrainians line up to receive aid distribution in Kyiv in the fall of 2025. (Theia Chatelle)*

particularly challenging due to power and water cuts that have left Ukrainians frigid and in the dark. Whereas during the first three years of war, especially in the metropolitan center of Kyiv, life went on largely as normal, albeit punctuated by attacks. Now, mobile "resilience hubs" offering warming and charging dot the landscape, and the sound of generators is overpowering.

For Ukraine's Jews, the situation means that children are gathering in bomb shelters to light Shabbat candles, the elderly rely on intermittent aid deliveries, and everyone is hunkered down for the worst winter since the war began.

"When the full-scale invasion began, I did not think it would last two weeks, but here we are," said Julia Goldenberg, founder of the Ukrainian Charitable Funds and partner of World Jewish Relief. "And I still do not think the war will be over even this year."

Before the start of Russia's full-scale

invasion, according to the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, there was a core Jewish population of 40,000 living in Ukraine. Since then, however, thousands have fled to Israel and Europe, reshaping hubs of Jewish life in the country. Now, with conditions worsening, even far from the front lines, Goldenberg expects even more to leave.

Many will be seeking security for their children, whose schooling and experiences have been peppered with trauma and interruption since even before the war. In-person schools had only resumed after a yearlong COVID closure for a semester before war broke out.

"Parents tell us of children who can't sleep at night, children who react to all kinds of different sounds. It's challenging to work with them," said Rabbi Irina Gritsevskaya, who is based in Tel Aviv and travels to Ukraine regularly to lead Masorti Kyiv, one of the country's only Conservative congregations.

Jewish schools have borne a wide range of effects. Ariel Markovitch, director of the JCC in Kyiv, recounted how a Russian missile struck the Perlina school and kindergarten in Kyiv in October 2024, where refugees fleeing fighting on the front lines in Ukraine's east had been sleeping.

Inna Federova, 55, the head of Ukraine's oldest Jewish day school, Lyceum No. 299 or Orach Chaim, said missiles were only one challenge of many.

"It fractured our community," she said about the war. "I am a Jewish mother first, and I wanted to be there for the kids, but I couldn't be once they were scattered all over Europe."

At least one of the school's alumni, Igor Tish, was gravely injured while fighting on the frontline, while the Israeli teachers who taught Hebrew and other subjects have not returned since being

*Ukraine continued on next page*

*Ukraine continued from previous page*

evacuated in the days before the Russian invasion. Instruction is more rudimentary now, Federova said.

“We have a physical education teacher who does exercises with the children in the shelter, because it’s very hard for them to sit still for so long without moving,” she said, adding: “They’ve lived through bombings, evacuations, constant anxiety. Our teachers received special training from psychologists, including Israeli specialists, on how to support children emotionally during wartime.”

Other support for Jews in Ukraine has come from the Joint Distribution Committee, which leads disaster response for Jewish communities living in conflict zones around the world; Chabad, the global Jewish network whose emissaries are at the front line of Jewish life in many smaller communities; and Goldenberg’s group, which works to preserve Jewish life and welfare in Ukraine.

Sustained by a network of global donors, the Ukrainian Charitable Funds has helped elderly Jewish Ukrainians repair their homes after Russian airstrikes. Goldenberg recalled one woman she worked with: “She had no windows. She lost all of them in a Russian strike, but did not have the funds to fix them.”

While the advent of war in Israel in 2023 spurred concerns about whether Jewish donors would continue to send support to Ukraine, Gritsevskaya said aid from both inside and outside had made a difference.

“I think in the Jewish community,

there is a huge sense of being hugged,” she said, adding, “Ukraine is an amazing example of the ability of Jews to unite and to help others in unbelievable situations. In general, I think that people who are connected to Jewish communities are more capable of going through the difficult things they go through because they have the wider Jewish world.”

Even as she gears up for a potential war in Israel, Gritsevskaya is planning on heading back to Ukraine this summer for another session of Ramah Ukraine, a camp that has already filled with Ukrainian Jewish teens eager for a respite from the challenges of war.

“I would rather not think of the fears I have,” she said. “They are so overwhelming, we have to focus on what must be done.”

Federova, too, said she continues to focus on the positives as she and her students start a fifth year of war.

“We have children from different backgrounds, some from observant families, some who are just discovering their roots, and the school gives them that connection,” Federova said about Orach Chaim. “Even during the hardest times when the alarms go off and when we don’t know what will happen tomorrow, I look at them and think ‘if we can give them knowledge and faith, then we have done something important.’”

This reporting was supported by the International Women’s Media Foundation’s Women on the Ground: Reporting from Ukraine’s Unseen Frontlines Initiative in partnership with the Howard G. Buffett Foundation.

## What happened during the 2025 Israel-Iran war? A timeline.

By JTA Staff

(JTA) — The U.S.-Israeli military attack on Iran that launched early Feb. 28 comes eight months after the last Israel-Iran war, in June 2025.

As we wait to see what happens in the current war, here’s a look back at how the 2025 conflict played out, from uneasy tensions to U.S. intervention to a grim death toll for Israelis.

April 2024: First exchange of missiles between Israel and Iran in the 45-year history of the Islamic Republic

May-June 2025: Tensions built in the weeks and days leading up to the attack, with the international community condemning Iran’s failure to abide by past nuclear agreements. Diplomatic efforts stalled as officials on all sides signaled that a direct confrontation was possible.

June 13: Israel launches its attack on Iranian nuclear facilities and ballistic missile program, followed shortly by a warning from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that retaliation by Iran was “expected in the immediate future.”

June 13: As Israel continues to pummel targets in Iran, Tehran counter-attacks, sending missiles almost nightly. Twenty-eight people are killed in Israel, including four women in an Arab town in northern Israel; a Ukrainian family that had come for cancer treatment for their daughter; and an activist at her home in Beersheba. Many others lost their homes. Flights, schools and workplaces are all massively disrupted.

June 18: Donald Trump, who had run on a platform of opposing all war, sends mixed signals about whether he will jump in, as the Israelis clearly hoped he would. Trump tells reporters days into the conflict that “nobody knows what I’m going to do.”

June 21: The United States joins the fight, striking three sites associated with Iran’s nuclear program, including Fordow, Natanz and Esfahan, alongside Israeli forces. The deeply buried facilities were seen as impossible to target without U.S. arms.

June 23: Trump announces a ceasefire on social media. Iran’s Supreme National Security Council claims victory following the announcement despite striking Israel in its immediate wake. Israel does not say it had acceded to a ceasefire until many hours later.

Aftermath: The extent of damage to the Iranian regime was unclear. Even on Feb. 28, as Trump renewed the fight against the Islamic Republic following negotiations that he said had not been satisfactory, he said last year’s strikes had “obliterated” Iran’s nuclear program. But the regime was rebuilding it, he and other observers said, and Iran had reportedly stockpiled more missiles than it had before the 2025 war. And the regime remained intact, clamping down a domestic protest movement by killing tens of thousands of protesters within 48 hours last month. Trump initially threatened to strike over the mass killings but did not.

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## Poland returns 91 Jewish objects to Greece, decades after they were stolen by the Nazis

By Shira Li Bartov

(JTA) — A trove of sacred Jewish objects from Greece that was stolen by the Nazis and displaced for decades in Poland is finally heading back home.

Poland returned 91 religious and ceremonial artifacts to the Greek government at a ceremony in Warsaw March 4. Among them were Torah scrolls, a Torah mantle, and silver finials that adorned a scroll's wooden rollers — fragments of a rich Greek Jewish heritage that was nearly wiped out.

This marks the first time Poland has repatriated cultural property held under its care that was illegally taken from another country.

The Nazis stole the objects from synagogues in Thessaloniki, a port city once known as the “Jerusalem of the Balkans.” Jews made up half of Thessaloniki's residents in 1919. Some 59,000 Greek Jews, over 83 percent of the country's Jewish population, were killed in the Holocaust.

These items were seized by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, a Nazi agency dedicated to looting Jewish valuables, as it plundered homes, synagogues, cemeteries, and cultural institutions across Greece in 1941. The objects were transferred to Nazi depots in southwestern Poland and rediscovered at a castle in Bożków after the war. In 1951, the Polish Ministry of Culture moved them to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, where they remained until now.

This return follows years of advocacy and provenance research. The Greek government formally requested the collection's restitution in 2024, and the World Jewish Restitution Organization coordinated with Greek and Polish authorities to facilitate it. Now, the objects are headed to the Jewish Museum of Greece in Athens.

About 5,000 Jews live in Greece today.

Poland is the only member of the European Union with no comprehensive legislation to address the restitution of property seized by the Nazis and later nationalized by the communist regime. Since the country became a democracy in 1989, several bills have been proposed to return private property to Holocaust survivors and their descendants, but none became law.

In 2021, Poland passed a law that prevented people who sought to claim property from challenging administrative decisions more than 30 years old. This time limit made it virtually impossible for former owners, including Holocaust survivors and their descendants, to recover properties that were appropriated during the communist era.

In a statement, WRJO president Gideon Taylor and COO Mark Weitzman said the return of the Greek Jewish collection represented a milestone in international cooperation for Holocaust-era restitution.

“While Poland has broader restitution issues to address, we hope this historic act marks the beginning of a consistent, systematic approach to historical justice,” they said.



A pair of finials, which adorned the wooden rollers of a Torah scroll, are among the artifacts being returned to Greece. (Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw)



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## In JFNA's first 'State of the Jewish Union' address, security, antisemitism loom large

By Grace Gilson

(JTA) — Speaking from Washington, D.C. Feb. 19, the president and CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America, Eric Fingerhut, laid out his assessment of the state of Jewish life in America.

“The state of the Jewish union in America is strong, but it is being tested,” said Fingerhut. “We are united in our commitment to America and to Jewish life, even as we worry about the real threats of violence and the growing acceptance of antisemitic rhetoric.”

During his remarks, which was billed as JFNA's inaugural “State of the Jewish Union” address ahead of President Donald Trump's State of the Union address, Fingerhut issued six recommendations to Congress which centered on increasing security for Jewish communities.

They included providing federal support for security personnel, expanding FBI capabilities to counter domestic terrorism, increasing support for local and state law enforcement, prosecuting hate crimes aggressively, and holding social media companies accountable for amplifying antisemitic rhetoric.

“Jewish children and teens are facing growing risks online, including antisemitic harassment, bullying, and extremist content,” said Fingerhut. “We recognize the difficulty of legislating in this field, but states are moving forward, and it's time for Congress to move forward as well.”

Fingerhut also called on Congress to increase funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to \$1 billion annually, and “make the program more flexible and simpler to use.” (This year, the program is requiring recipients to support federal immigration enforcement and avoid programs advancing diversity, raising concern among many Jewish groups, including JFNA.)

At the beginning of his address, Fingerhut also emphasized the ties between the American Jewish community and Israel, which have come under scrutiny since JFNA published a survey in February which found that only one-third of American Jews say they identify as Zionist.



*The president and CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America, Eric Fingerhut, gives the organization's first “State of the Jewish Union” address on Feb. 19, 2026. (Screenshot)*

“The focus of today's talk will be about the state of Jews in America, but it is not possible to have that conversation without acknowledging and addressing the emotional, familial, and religious connection between the American Jewish community and the people of Israel,” said Fingerhut.

Fingerhut's remarks come shortly after Bret Stephens, the right-leaning Jewish New York Times columnist, argued during his 92NY's annual “The State of World Jewry” speech that groups devoted to combating antisemitism, including the Anti-Defamation League, should abandon their strategy and instead focus on bolstering Jewish education and communal infrastructure.

During Fingerhut's address, which largely centered on the security burdens placed on Jewish communities and concern for changes to social services funding, he also pivoted to a broader vision of Jewish life beyond the need for protection alone.

“It is important for the Congress to know that Jewish life is not only what we are protecting, but what we are building,” said Fingerhut. “It is Jewish education and Jewish experiences, but it is also human services, dignity, and belonging.”

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*Long View continued from page 2*

but for others.

This brings me to Oct. 7. The Jewish community has stood alongside so many communities in their moments of need... marching, fundraising, advocating, comforting. That is who we are. Which is why it was so disorienting, and painful, to feel alone in the days that followed Oct. 7.

At FedPro, one speaker said something simple but powerful, “Pay attention to who showed up for you in those days.”

When I came home from the conference, I did something I should’ve done years ago. I sent messages to the people who reached out and showed up after Oct. 7. I thanked them. I told them their support mattered.

So today I ask you to join me. Find those people and thank them.

Passover teaches us that freedom is not automatic. It is not permanent. It requires responsibility. It requires memory. It requires courage.

Every year, we tell the story of leaving Egypt, not because we are still enslaved there, but because remembering shapes who we become. This holiday reminds us that even in difficult chapters, we are still responsible for walking forward together.

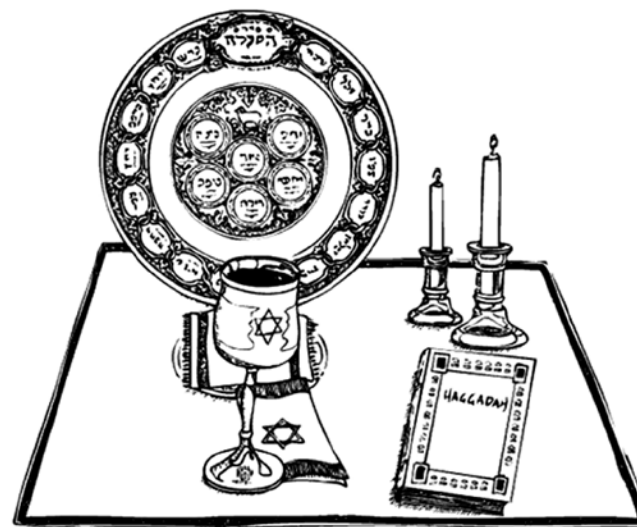
*Numbers continued from page 7*

13, when it returns to God by proclaiming the 13 attributes by which God governs the world. In doing so, the song connects practical human activity with Divine actions. This, then, is the essence of how Jewish thought views the way the world should operate, and gives us guidelines as to how to implement these ideas into practice. These life-ordering ideas are so important that we want an easy way to remember them.

A simple numbering song, *Echad Mi Yodea*, sung towards the end of the seder, helps us to commit these ideas to memory. Which brings us back to the very beginning of the seder. We have another song: *Kadesh Urchatz*. This song reminds us, also through numbered steps, that our evening will be orderly and productive.

Those certainly are Jewish values. First things first, and, step by step, our world will be an orderly, and productive one. Numbers are more than numbers. They help us gain control over our lives, and thereby create a more pleasant and safe world to live in. That’s something for which we could lift our *kiddush* cups this Passover and “make a toast” (four times over).

Chag sameach from my home to yours.



**Have a Happy  
Passover**  
*from  
The Sokolov Family*

*Neighbors continued from page 31*

were killed in their hometown, and she as a Polish eyewitness to the murders.

In a statement, TVP said the reckonings of these two people were neither “anti-Polish” nor “a judgment of the entire Polish nation.”

“We are open to dialogue regarding historical memory and believe that even difficult topics allow society to understand the fuller context of past events,” said TVP. “As a public broadcaster, we have a duty to facilitate such conversation and not shy away from presenting those fragments of history that require reflection and civic courage.”

Beyond Gniezów, “Among Neighbors” touches on a wave of murders that struck Jews returning home to cities and towns across Poland after liberation from the Nazis. In the most notorious instance, 42 Jews in the southeastern town of Kielce were killed by a mob of Polish residents, soldiers, and police officers in July 1946. The Kielce pogrom convinced many Survivors they had no future in Poland, spurring an exodus.

A film dramatizing the Kielce pogrom drew protests from Polish Americans, and

the Berlin office of its Jewish producer was destroyed by an arson in 1996, the same year the Polish government formally apologized for the pogrom.

“Among Neighbors” confronts the simultaneous intimacy and violence woven through small towns, where Poles lived and worked with Jews, where their children played with Jewish children, and where some Poles also killed their Jewish neighbors. That complex relationship still rests under the surface of skirmishes over Poland’s history.

Konstanty Gebert, a journalist interviewed in the film, compared the relationship between Poland and its Jews to the phenomenon of phantom limbs — the sensation that a body part remains attached after it has been amputated.

“Poland is still suffering from its Jewish phantom pains, and Jews are suffering from their Polish phantom pains,” said Gebert. “Until those two amputated hands can actually shake — and I don’t know how you do that to amputated limbs — but I know that if you don’t, we’ll be still standing there, swallowing painkillers for a pain that cannot be relieved, because the amputated limb is gone and it still hurts.”



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## MAZEL TOV

### Tres and Blythe Hively

Tres and Blythe Hively, members of the Springfield Local girls swim team, recently participated in the 2026 OHSAA DII State Swimming Tournament in Canton. Tres Hively finished seventh in both the 500 Freestyle with a time of 5:13.28 and the 100 Backstroke with a 58.45. It was her first year making the podium at State. Both Tres and Blythe are on the Springfield 200 Yard Medley Relay team, and finished eighth with a time of 1:51.05. They're pictured here with their teammates. Tres is on the far left and Blythe on the far right.



### Shelters continued from page 32

would fall “unless the Iranian citizens themselves finish the job.”

Ma’or, another neighbor, said he would “happily sit in my bomb shelter if it meant giving my Iranian friends, both in Iran and out, a chance at a normal life.” He pointed to a friend in Tehran who works as a tattoo artist, an illegal trade under the regime.

“I mean, he’s not even free to give someone a tattoo without going underground,” he said. “I’m baffled by the people cheering [on] the IRGC. People who say this war is illegal are out of their goddamn minds.”

Evyatar said he began Feb. 28 uneasy, but grew calmer as the hours passed and he gauged the pattern of the strikes. The alerts came far more often than the 12-day war, but the blasts felt less intense. “At the beginning I felt scared, like it was June

all over again.” Over time, he said, he has learned to tell the difference between the sounds of interceptions, shrapnel, and direct impacts.

As he spoke, a loud boom hit outside, rattling the shelter and stopping the conversation. “That, for example, was a June sound,” he said.

It turned out to be shrapnel coming down not far away. The impact was part of a wider series of strikes across central Israel, including one that turned lethal in Beit Shemesh, west of Jerusalem, when a public bomb shelter was hit. Nine people were killed including multiple from the same family. Dozens more were wounded, and others still were unaccounted for.

In Beit Shemesh, the strike changed the atmosphere in a city that had so far heard only occasional sirens, during both this round and the last one.

Netanel Alkoby, a Beit Shemesh resident who spent 12 years in the reserves with the Home Front Command, said he has always taken alerts seriously, but that over time a degree of complacency still set in. The strike, he said, “changed our perspective a lot,” forcing him to be more careful, more on guard, and to treat every warning “with the utmost seriousness.”

In the underground shelter at Wolfson Medical Center in Holon, a sign overhead read “the safest shelter in existence.” Patients hobbled in, some with casts and crutches. With doctors also sheltering there, patients used the moment to button-hole them with questions.

One staffer watched a line of women form to speak to a physician. “Poor thing, he can’t even enjoy the siren in peace,” she said.

Back in the central Jaffa shelter, a couple

in black leather and dark glasses stood apart from the banter around them.

“Any fear and terror that Israeli citizens are feeling right now is a direct result of this violent racist Islamophobic power hungry greedy fascist government,” said the woman, who declined to give her name, referring to the Netanyahu-led coalition.

Asked whether she thought attacking Iran was a bad idea, she said: “I think it’s a bad idea to attack anyone in 2026. We teach toddlers not to fight and here we have fully grown men doing this, dooming all of us.”

“It’s time we take the power from aging white men,” she said.

Nearby, Martine Berkowitz agreed — in part. “Yep, they are behaving like toddlers. And they are aging white men. Who are fighting evil brown men. If it brings freedom to Iran then it was worth it. But if it doesn’t, then it was all for nothing.”

**Lewis**  
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*Best wishes for a happy and healthy passover!*

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