



# THE JEWISH JOURNAL

OF SAN ANTONIO

TEVET - SH'VAT 5777

Published by The Jewish Federation of San Antonio

JANUARY 2017



### PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

When the fires in Israel broke out, the Western Galilee Partnership consortium stepped up.

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### HOW THE ISRAELI FLAG CAME TO BE

A Brandeis University scholar traces the roots of the Israeli flag to Boston.

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### THANKFUL FOR PJ LIBRARY FAMILIES



PJ Library offers families with young children a wide variety of programs in our community. Find out more!

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## In Central Asia, Netanyahu scores diplomatic home run in Iran's backyard

By Cnaan Liphshiz

(JTA) — You wouldn't know it from the front pages of newspapers in Israel, but its prime minister has completed a landmark visit to two of the world's wealthiest Muslim nations.

Largely eclipsed in the Israeli media by sexual harassment scandals, the Knesset dress code and the impending evacuation of the Amona outpost in the West Bank, Benjamin Netanyahu's state visit in December 2016 to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan nonetheless represents a diplomatic coup against Iran. It also underlines Israel's ability in recent years to punch holes in the former taboo

See **HOME RUN**, page 37

## Jewish Community to join Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Observances – January 13 - 16

The San Antonio Jewish community will join in the 30th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. interfaith observances

### SEE STORY ON PAGE 12 FOR THE DETAILS ABOUT:

- MLK Jr. Interfaith Shabbat Service
- MLK Jr. Interfaith Worship Service at Antioche Baptist Church
- MLK Jr. Citywide Interfaith Service
- 30th Annual MLK Jr. March
- Bus Transportation to and from MLK Jr. March



San Antonio's 30th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. March will take place on Monday, Jan. 16, at 10 a.m.



### STRONGER TOGETHER!

Catch up on all of the happenings in your San Antonio Jewish community,

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Also read the Journal online at: [www.jfsatx.org](http://www.jfsatx.org)

 THE JEWISH JOURNAL  
OF SAN ANTONIO

**PUBLISHED BY**

The Jewish Federation of San Antonio  
12500 N. W. Military Highway, #200  
San Antonio, TX 78231

(210)302-6960

www.jfsatx.org

**SUPPORTED BY**

Grants from the Helen Arronge Fund, the Eilenberg Family Memorial Endowment Fund, the Charles Atkin Memorial Trust Fund, the Freeman Education Fund and the Jewish Federation Annual Campaign.

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**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Lauren Sandoval

**PROOFREADERS**

Idelle Abramson

Barbara Argo

Eleanor Komet

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**EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS:**

The submission deadline for the FEBRUARY 2017 issue of the Jewish Journal is JANUARY 12, 2017 at noon. All materials submitted after this date will be considered for the following issue.

**How to submit:** Email submissions to jewishj@jfsatx.org

- Articles & Announcements - Email as word documents. Articles submitted for consideration are subject to editing.
- Photos - Email high resolution images (300 dpi) in jpg attachments only.

**ADVERTISING:**

To place an advertisement or request ad rates, contact Sandy Leigh at (240) 498-8999 or advertising@jfsatx.org.

**Ad deadlines for FEBRUARY 2017 ISSUE:**

- Ad space reservations due no later than JANUARY 12, 2017 by noon;
- Press ready ads due by JANUARY 16, 2017.

Please include a contact name and phone number with all submissions.

The Jewish Journal is a free publication of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio, and is published in print and online 11 times a year as a public service to the community. Donations to offset production and mailing costs are always welcome.

**JEWISH JOURNAL EDITORIAL POLICY**

The Jewish Journal of San Antonio is a monthly publication created and paid for by the Jewish Federation of San Antonio. The Journal's primary focus is creating awareness and engagement within the local Jewish community about activities, programs and issues with which the Jewish Federation is involved.

As a service to the broader Jewish community, area synagogues and organizations are invited to submit content relevant to the Jewish community at large for publication consideration.

Items selected for publication are done so solely at the discretion of the Journal Editor and the Jewish Federation. Submissions may be edited and/or re-written for content and length.

We aim to fairly reflect the breadth and depth of activities and Jewish life taking place in the San Antonio Jewish community.

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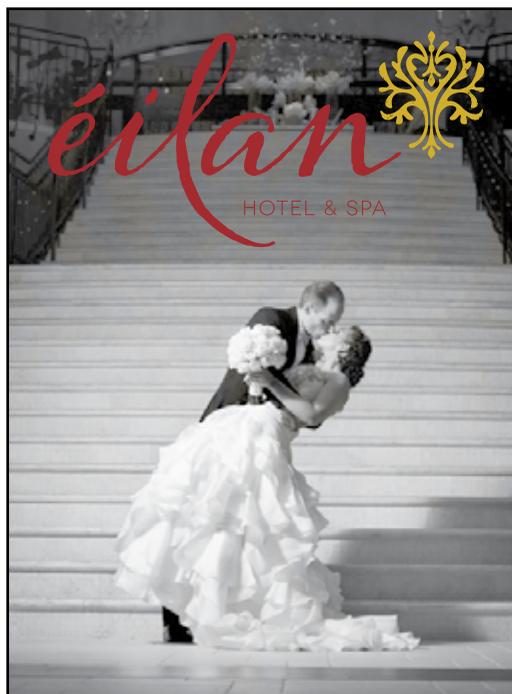
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# YOUR FEDERATION DOLLARS AT WORK

## The power and responsibility of our next generation

I am deeply proud that our Holocaust Memorial Museum of San Antonio is launching our first ever Holocaust Study Seminar for local high school students. The goal of this program seeks to educate and expose high school students to the history and atrocities of the Holocaust, with the intent of broadening their world views and empowering them to positively impact the world in which they live. A group of eight selected students will embark on a five-month study of the Holocaust which will



**Letter from our CEO**

**RONIT SHERWIN**

culminate in a 12-day trip to Europe to see and feel the sites of history. It will be a hands-on learning experience like no other that have had in their schools' classrooms.

During the interview process, many of the students ask, "What do you expect from me?" And my answer is, "I expect you to change the world." And I do. What I tell

these young, bright and inquisitive students is that we live in a crazy world where bad things have and continue to happen, but they have power. As the next generation to shape the world, they have the power of knowledge and critical thinking and most importantly, they have their voices to speak truth to power. I want these students to be troubled and to be emboldened enough to speak what they think is right in the world and to speak what they feel is wrong in the world. These students have great power

and great responsibility, and I want them to embrace it.

I have hope for 2017 because I believe in our youth and I believe in our community. I am choosing to embrace optimism, as well as activism. In the words of cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

*Ronit Sherwin*  
Chief Executive Officer  
Jewish Federation  
of San Antonio

### HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

With your help, the extraordinary impact of the 151 Jewish Federations across North America changes lives here at home, in Israel and in more than 70 countries around the world. The Jewish Federation system identifies, supports and addresses the full range of social service issues, provides lifesaving humanitarian relief, supports breakthrough programs for all ages, and sustains the Jewish community today and for future Generations.

The Jewish Federations of North America raise and distribute more than \$3 billion annually for social welfare, social services and educational needs. The Federation movement protects and enhances the well-being of Jews worldwide. We make a difference through our team and partner agencies in each Federation community, and globally through key partners including The Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.



## The Holocaust Memorial Museum of San Antonio Presents:

### Holocaust Book Series

Dr. Edward Westermann will present his book *Hitler's Ostkrieg and the Indian Wars: Comparing Genocide & Conquest*

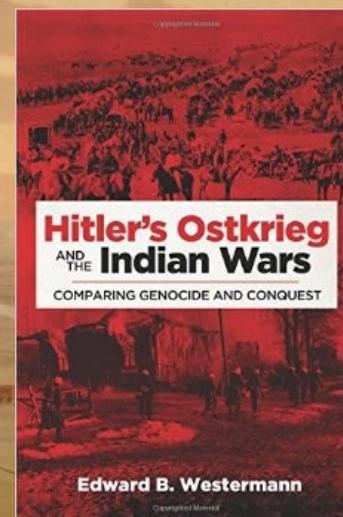
**January 25th, 2017 at 6:30pm**

In Auditorium C at the Campus of the San Antonio Jewish Community

**Westermann's book takes an empirical approach that highlights areas of similarity and key distinctions between the Nazi East and the American West.**

After the discussion, the Holocaust Memorial Museum will be open to the public where visitors can purchase a signed copy of Dr. Westermann's publication.

**This event is free and open to the public. Please RSVP online at [www.jfsatx.org/events](http://www.jfsatx.org/events) or by contacting Matthew Faulkner at (210) 302-6807 or email at [faulknerm@jfsatx.org](mailto:faulknerm@jfsatx.org).**



## IN LOVING MEMORY

Mitzi Efron  
Marilyn Lebo

Joan Ross  
Linda Wilk

### Join us!

Do you have an eye for punctuation? Do you secretly like to correct the grammar on everything you read? Would you enjoy giving back to the community with a great group of volunteers?

Then becoming a volunteer proofer is for you! The Jewish Journal is seeking a few new proofers to help us proof the Jewish Journal each month. The volunteer position requires only 3 hours one day a month. Training will be provided. Come join a great group of proofers and help the Jewish Journal shine!

For more information, please contact editor Leslie Komet Ausburn at [jewishj@jfsatx.org](mailto:jewishj@jfsatx.org) or (210) 326-8992.

## CANDLE LIGHTING

**Friday, Jan. 6** Light Candles at 5:32 p.m.  
Shabbat, Jan. 7 Shabbat Ends 6:29 p.m.

**Friday, Jan. 13** Light Candles at 5:38 p.m.  
Shabbat, Jan. 14 Shabbat Ends 6:35 p.m.

**Friday, Jan. 20** Light Candles at 5:44 p.m.  
Shabbat, Jan. 21 Shabbat Ends 6:40 p.m.

**Friday, Jan. 27** Light Candles at 5:50 p.m.  
Shabbat, Jan. 28 Shabbat Ends 6:46 p.m.

**Friday, Feb. 3** Light Candles at 5:56 p.m.  
Shabbat, Feb. 4 Shabbat Ends 6:51 p.m.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The monthly calendar for the San Antonio Jewish Community is now available online on the website of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio. Keep up with the most up to date happenings at [www.jfsatx.org](http://www.jfsatx.org).

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# 2016 Annual Campaign Closing featuring Israeli Superstar David Broza in concert



Jewish Federation of San Antonio hosted a celebration on December 14 to mark the success of the 2016 Annual Campaign. The event featured Israeli musician David Broza in concert.



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# YOUR FEDERATION DOLLARS AT WORK



Amy Sugerman and Aliza Cantu



Margarat Gofman-Klein and Elisa Reinsmith

## Women in Jewish community gather for 2nd annual Shower Our Community with Love event

By Tracy Morris,  
JFSA Women's Philanthropy Associate

Dozens of women in the San Antonio Jewish community came together on December 1 for the second-annual Shower Our Community with Love event. The evening, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of San Antonio Women's Philanthropy division, was infused with the spirit of generosity, social action and camaraderie.

Attendees filled the Holzman Auditorium at the Jewish Campus, and spent the early part of the evening schmoozing and shopping from fifteen vendors prior to evening's program. Co-chair, Elisa Reinsmith reflected, "I looked around the room and



Ronit Sherwin, Dr. Richard Wayne, and Amy Benedikt



Susan Butler, Susan Goldberg and Brenda Robbins

See **SHOWER**, page 7

# Israeli-American Council issues statement after U.S. abstains from vote

(JTA) — on December 23, the U.N. Security Council adopted a resolution condemning Israeli settlements, with the United States abstaining.

The resolution was adopted with 14 votes in favor and only the U.S. abstention. It called Israeli settlements "a flagrant violation of international law" that damage the prospects of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Israeli-American Council (IAC) issued the following statement after the U.S. abstained from voting:

"The Israeli-American Council is troubled and deeply disappointed by the

U.S. President's decision to abstain from voting on an anti-Israel resolution in the UN Security Council today.

For many years, America has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Israel as it has faced shameful discrimination and bias at the UN. Today we saw a disturbing break of this precedent.

Bipartisan majorities in the U.S. Congress had urged the Administration to exercise America's veto of this kind of one-sided resolution, which is a direct attack on Israel's legitimacy.

Although this is an unfortunate day in the history of the U.S.-Israel relationship, the

extraordinary friendship between our two countries – built on common values

and shared interests – will endure.

The IAC will continue

our work to strengthen the extraordinary bonds between the United States and Israel."

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## SPOTLIGHT ON . . .

### Deb Field



Deb Field was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and lived in many small communities in Iowa while growing up. Deb and her husband Kit Walker are the Innkeepers of A Yellow Rose, a bed and breakfast in the historic King William District of downtown San Antonio. Deb is active on the Community Relations Council (CRC), as well as on the Board of Temple Chai, currently serving as the Vice President of Ritual. Last year Deb traveled to

Israel for the second time as a participant on the Partnership Mission to the Western Galilee, a place she hopes to return to again soon.

*What brought you to San Antonio?*

In 1996, my husband and I sold our business in New Mexico and looked for opportunities in the Dallas area where my family lives. We came to San Antonio to visit friends and decided that the culture and

diversity appealed to us a lot more than Dallas. We did not take South Texas heat into consideration, but still enjoy living here.

*What is your strongest Jewish memory?*

My recent bat mitzvah. I panicked the first time I listened to a recording of what I needed to chant. For months, while I walked my dogs each morning I chanted Hebrew. It's probably a pretty safe bet that I was quite a

spectacle holding on to two dogs, carrying poo bags and chanting. But it worked and I did it! I remember the moment when it clicked and I realized I had actually memorized my portion and the blessings. Then I worked on my d'var Torah. To my surprise, my thoughts came out quite naturally. But, the most memorable and touching of all was the reactions of my friends and loved ones. I was not prepared for how deeply they would feel and appreciate my big step. I still get emotional when I think about that outpouring of affection.

*What volunteer activities do you find the most rewarding and why?*

Over the years, I've served on boards and executive committees. It's very

satisfying to figure out how systems can work better and stay on track with the particular mission. In the end, though, I much prefer one on one relationships and doing the boots on the ground work.

*Please share your favorite Jewish holiday. Why?*

The High Holy days. The introspection and self evaluation appeal to me and help me remember who I want to be.

*Name a hope or aspiration you have for the San Antonio Jewish community?*

It would be nice to see our population expand. Mostly, I'd like to see our individual commitment to living Jewish lives and participation in the Jewish community grow.

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## SHOWER

continued from page 6

felt proud to be a part of such a giving community. Regardless of your Jewish affiliation or your level of giving, this was truly a night dedicated to giving back and fulfilling a need together. This night is a true mitzvah."

During the program, co-chair Margaret Gofman-Klein shared her story of immigrating to San Antonio in 1979, and honored this year's event beneficiary, The Children's Hospital of San Antonio.

"The Jewish Federation of San Antonio assisted my family in starting a new life in this country. The San Antonio Jewish community welcomed us with open arms and got us back on our feet again. Three decades later, it is a privilege for me to give back to this community and to work with the Federation

Philanthropy Board. I am also privileged to be working with the Ohr Lanu Foundation, taking care of those in our community who are vulnerable and in need of assistance navigating our complicated healthcare system." She continued by connecting why the Federation's collaboration with the hospital was so important, "This event was close to my heart for both reasons - giving back to Federation and working with our medical community in helping patients."

The Children's Hospital of San Antonio is a state-of-the-art facility with cutting edge medical innovations that serves our most vulnerable young patients from San Antonio and around the world. Dr. Richard Wayne, Professor of Pediatrics and former Chief-of-Staff, shared his passion for the work provided by the

hospital and hospital staff and highlighted the role the community plays in aiding the families who seek their services.

As part of the event, guests were asked to bring new, unwrapped presents that were delivered to the hospital by members of the committee. Most of the toys will be used to stock the playrooms on each floor while some were to be used as holiday gifts. Among the recipients was a family that had travelled from Israel to seek care for their son. They were given an HEB gift cards to help alleviate the costs of being here.

Event attendee Elisa Reinsmith commented, "This evening of tzedakah will have a lasting impact for the families and their children. The Shower Our Community event should be a day we look forward to for years to come."

# YOUR FEDERATION DOLLARS AT WORK



Rabbi Ariel Platt and educator Bobi Stern accompany members of the Agudas Achim Religious School to the performance.

## HMMSA celebrates remarkable story of *Life in a Jar*

Community Organizers Fran Vanecko and Valerie Katz and the Holocaust Memorial Museum of San Antonio presented *Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project* on November 12 and 13 at the Campus of the San Antonio Jewish Community.

*Life in a Jar* is the inspirational story of

Members of the cast of the play, *Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project*



a Catholic Polish woman who saved 2,500 Jewish children from the Warsaw ghetto, and the history teacher and three students who brought Irena's story to the world.

Following the performances, the Holocaust Memorial Museum was open for guests to explore.



Norm Conard (Director of the Milken Center for Unsung Heroes), Susanne Jalmos (local survivor), and Megan Stewart Felt (creator of the project).



Becky Hoag, HMMSA Docent Committee Chairperson, greets guests in the museum.



## JEWISH COALITION FOR LITERACY

The San Antonio Jewish Coalition for Literacy hosted a Volunteer Breakfast on Wednesday, Dec. 6. The Coalition organizes volunteers to tutor in elementary schools to work with students during school hours. For more information on getting involved, contact Nathan Ratner at [ratnern@jfsatx.org](mailto:ratnern@jfsatx.org) or (210) 302-6972.

AT RIGHT: (Pictured L to R): Volunteer Breakfast attendees included Loretta Van Coppenolle, Steve Pepper, Jennifer Cohen, guest speaker, Tonie Schwab of NEISD, and member Jim Dodds

## Maimonides Society to host Jewish genetics lecture featuring JScreen co-founder

The Maimonides Society of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio will be hosting a lecture on Jewish Genetics titled *Knowledge is Power: Impacting the Health of Future Generations* on January 26 at 7 p.m. at the Jewish Campus.

The keynote speaker will be Karen Grinzaid, the Senior Director of JScreen, a national online Jewish genetic disease carrier screening program based out of Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta.

One in four people are carriers for a preventable genetic disease, even though they may have no symptoms or family history.

JScreen's mission is to improve access to comprehensive, affordable genetic screening by making it possible for people to test



Karen Grinzaid

from the comfort of their own homes.

JScreen, a nonprofit initiative, works with local physicians and rabbis, and provides follow-up counseling by certified and licensed genetic counselors.

Grinzaid has been part of the Emory University Genetics team since 1986.

She has extensive experience in prenatal, pediatric and adult genetic counseling, newborn screening, and Jewish

genetic disease screening, clinical care and research.

She currently serves as Instructor and mentor in Emory's Masters in Genetic Counseling training program.

The Maimonides Society of San Antonio is organized and sponsored by the Jewish Federation of San Antonio. The San Antonio chapter has been active for over 20 years, and is part of a national organization of Jewish physicians, dentists and other medical practitioners.

The Society is set up to strengthen the bonds among medical professionals, the Jewish community and Israel through educational and social activities.

For more information, contact Susan Kariv at (210) 302-6968 or [karivs@jfsatx.org](mailto:karivs@jfsatx.org).

## HMMSA joins other Holocaust organizations, scholars and educators sound alarm on surge in hate crimes

(New York, NY) – In a powerful statement issued by an array of Holocaust institutions, including scholars and educators from around the world, an alarm is being sounded on the rise of groups that promote intolerance and hate speech. The Holocaust Memorial Museum of San Antonio has joined 89 other institutions and 71 individuals to call on lawmakers to condemn white nationalist groups and ask citizens to be vigilant.

The statement, issued in December, is as follows:

Recent months have seen a surge in unabashed racism and hate speech – including blatant antisemitism and attacks on Hispanics, Muslims, African-Americans, women, the LGBTQ community, as well as other targeted groups. Journalists have been threatened. Places of worship, schools and playgrounds have been defaced with Nazi symbols intended to intimidate and arouse

fear. White supremacist groups have become self-congratulatory and emboldened.

As Holocaust scholars, educators and institutions, we are alarmed by these trends. History teaches us that intolerance, unchecked, leads to persecution and violence. We denounce racism and the politics of fear that fuels it. We stand in solidarity with all vulnerable groups. We take Elie Wiesel's words to heart: "I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation."

Therefore, we call upon all elected officials as well as all civic and religious leaders to forcefully and explicitly condemn the rise in hate speech and any attacks on our democratic principles. We call upon all media and social media platforms to refuse to provide a stage for hate groups and thus normalize their agenda. And we call upon all people of good conscience to be vigilant, to not be afraid, and to speak out.

*This statement was co-authored by members of the Association of Holocaust Organizations, a network dedicated to the advancement of Holocaust education, remembrance and research.*

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## PJ Library teams up with GMJSS to bring Thanksgiving cheer to Madison Estates residents

By Lauren Abraham,  
PJ Library Coordinator

On Sunday, Nov. 20, fifteen PJ Library Families celebrated an early Thanksgiving with a large group of seniors at the Madison Estates. Between thankful crafts, stories, and schmoozing, many generations were in attendance to get ready for the upcoming holiday. Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services (GMJSS) arranged for two guest readers, Rivka Schechter and Jeff Siegel, to attend the event and share messages of thankfulness and greetings with families.

After the two “thankful stories,” residents and the children were eager to share what they are thankful for. PJ Library prepared edible turkeys, Native American crafts, thankful cards, and other projects.

PJ Library parents Rebecca and



Guest reader, and Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services volunteer, Rivka Schechter began story time with a PJ Library favorite, *Oy Vey, Said the Matzah Balls!*

Scott Pollack attended the event with their six-month old Ethan. Rebecca shared her positive sentiments from attending the event. “It made me so proud to live in such a special Jewish community that really cares about each other,” she said. “The seniors

seemed so happy doing the art projects and watching and working with the kids. Everyone was all smiles all around, such an uplifting morning. Although baby Ethan’s PJ Library Native American hat did not make it to our family Thanksgiving

trip to California, the meaning of the holiday and the sentiments of thankfulness truly came with us. We look forward to returning to more types of programs like this.”

For more information on PJ Library, call Federation at (210) 302-6960.



Three generations of Siegels attended the PJ Library event — Madison Estates residents Rose Siegel (far left), and Phyllis Siegel (far right) with GMJSS volunteers (in back from l to r) Megan Siegel, Jeff Siegel, and Scott Siegel. Phyllis is Jeff and Scott’s mother, and Rose is their grandmother.

## Harold Grinspoon Foundation awards \$4,350 in grants to SA Jewish community

This past fall, PJ Library San Antonio was selected as one of the ten pilot communities across the United States to participate in a PJ Library Get Together micro grant program. Grants of \$150 have been awarded directly to PJ Library families in San Antonio who submitted ideas for get togethers to create a Jewish experience for themselves and at least two other PJ Library families.

In all, twenty-nine PJ Library San Antonio families have been selected to host a “PJ Library small event” with the goal of improving friendships with other Jewish families and engaging a Jewish learning or Jewish experience together. Some families have completed their get togethers, and others will take place this year.

Among the micro grant

recipients was PJ Library Committee member Suzanne Patrick, whose children, Joshua and Ryan, are ages 1 and 5. Patrick’s event focused on the oil element of Hanukkah, where she hosted four families of PJ readers from age one to age 9. She says her favorite part of the event was getting everything organized and making it more formal with a focus more on Judaism than any of her other usual playdates. She hung her Hanukkah decorations, and put out placemats and table clothes early in the season in order to be ready for her event. She also made copies of song sheets as well.

Patrick took an intergenerational approach to her PJ Library Get Together. The date that she chose worked for all of the families, except



one who said their children’s grandparents would be in town. This “challenge” created a wonderful multi-generational opportunity. Patrick invited the grandparents, including the grandmother, who happened to be a retired Rebbitzin and former pre-school teacher. Grandma Chester read the *Runaway Latke* PJ book, and Patrick said “She had all of the children

sitting in true rapture. They all sang along with her and had such a meaningful afternoon.”

Patrick said program ensured she would plan a Hanukkah get together for both of her sons in an early, yet timely manner. It helped her get organized and formalize the Jewish lens of the evening. She included other PJ Library books and set up activity tables for the families. Patrick says she’s



now inspired to plan another PJ Library get-together in the future, and hopes to do one for Purim and make *hamantashen*.

Be on the lookout for more PJ Get Together Grant experiences in the coming months featured in the Jewish Journal. To learn more about PJ Library San Antonio, follow the group on Facebook or contact PJ Library coordinator Lauren Abraham at (210) 302-6960.



## PARTNERSHIP CORNER

### Top US firefighters ‘dropped everything’ to help Israel battle the blazes

By Andrew Tobin

JTA) – Call them Israel’s American volunteer fire brigade.

Dozens of firefighters from across the United States put their lives on hold – leaving behind jobs and families – to help subdue the wildfires that swept Israel in late November. While they all share a love of Israel, only a handful of them are Jewish.

“We’re just firefighters. When guys hear about a situation like this one, where the Israelis are working as hard as they can, they want to come help,” said Billy Hirth, a Protestant who retired last



American and Israeli firefighters posing for photographs after returning from a call in Jerusalem. (Courtesy of Emergency Volunteers Program)

year after a 24-year career as a firefighter in Arlington, Texas, and has been coordinating the American effort from Jerusalem.

“It’s a brotherhood. Firemen are firemen,” he said.

Hundreds of fires flared up in Israel starting Tuesday, forcing tens of thousands of people to flee. Some 32,000 acres of forest and brush burned along with hundreds of homes and businesses.

Israeli authorities said the fires started because of an unseasonably long dry spell and high winds, and then were exacerbated by Palestinian and Arab-Israeli arsonists with nationalist

motives.

Israel’s Public Security Ministry formally requested firefighting help from the Emergency Volunteers Project, a network of over 950 American volunteers and professional first responders. By the next day, with the fires coming under control, the firefighters started arriving at Tel Aviv’s Ben Gurion Airport, from where they were schlepped to overstretched fire departments across the country.

Some went to work battling the remaining wildfires and those that flared up, while others chipped in with routine firefighting. The Israeli stations remain on high alert, with firefighters having worked grueling shifts for over a week.

“Many of the firefighters here, including myself, had been working for over 90 hours straight,” said Oren Shishitzky, a spokesman for Israel’s Fire and Rescue Authority. “Because most of the Americans were trained in Israel, they are familiar with how we operate, and they were able to easily relieve some of the burden on the crews, whether with regular fire response in local districts or in extinguishing the remaining wildfires.”

“I cannot emphasize enough our appreciation that these guys dropped everything around the Thanksgiving holiday to come here.”

Adi Zahavi, 39, founded the Emergency Volunteers Project in 2009 after serving as an overwhelmed first responder during the second intifada and the Second Lebanon War. He set out to prepare willing Americans to help in future crises, from wars to terrorist attacks to natural disasters. Training sessions are held in the United States and Israel. The deployment of the volunteers is coordinated with Israeli authorities.

Of the 39 firefighters now in Israel, 33 are full-timers, including the first female firefighter the group has brought to Israel, and six are part-time volunteers. Several, including Hirth, also came to Israel during the 2014 Gaza war, when the south and center of the country were bombarded with rockets. Many are now working alongside firefighters with whom they have built friendships during training.

“The quality of the American firefighters that have arrived is excellent,” Shishitzky said. “They are elite firefighters, with years and

years of experience. Many are veterans who serve in some of the best departments in America.

“Where there are distinctions in training and practice, those were overcome long ago with the training we have conducted.”

He said he has been responding to routine calls, like traffic accidents, elevator accidents and reports of smoke.

“I was here last year and really bonded with the guys, so I wanted to come back. They do have pretty steady action and a lot of equipment to get familiar with,” Raber said. “We’re coming in here while these guys have already been up for three, four days. We can basically help them out and be on standby if the wildfires come back.”

Having been born in Israel and served in the Israel Defense Force, Raber views being here as a part of his “calling.”

“Unfortunately, there’s a lot of bad press for Israel, so I hope to show that people are willing to drop everything to show solidarity with the people of Israel. I think people see that, and it’s a good thing. Firefighting was my calling, so I’m happy to help out,” he said.

A fellow Jew on the other side of the country helped bring Raber to Israel on short notice. Eli Row — the Orthodox Jewish owner of Jet911, an air ambulance company based in the Queens borough of New York City — scrambled to arrange flights for the firefighters over Shabbat, something that Jewish law requires if it could mean saving lives. Row landed in Israel on November 28 to thank the American firefighters for their service.

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## Martin Luther King, Jr. interfaith observances

**A Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Shabbat Service** will be held at Temple Beth-El on Friday, Jan. 13, at 6:30 p.m. in the Wulfe Sanctuary. Antioch Baptist Church's Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Kemp will speak, and the Antioch Baptist Church Choir will lift spirits in song.

On Sunday, January 15 at 11 a.m., a **Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Worship Service** will be held at Antioch Baptist Church, 1001 N. Walters. Temple Beth-El Rabbi Mara Nathan will speak, and Temple volunteer choir, Kol Simcha, will sing with the Antioch Baptist Church Choir.

At 4 p.m. that Sunday afternoon, **30th Annual**

**Martin Luther King Jr. Citywide Interfaith Service** will take place at New Creation Christian Fellowship Church, 8700 Fourwinds Drive, 78239. The service includes members of the Muslim, Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu, and Baha'i communities.

The gathering will feature praise and reflective dance from members of the Arathi School of Indian Dance and Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, hymns from the combined choirs of San Antonio Presbyterian churches, Sikh chant, Buddhist chant, and the blowing of the Shofar (ram's horn) from a representative of Temple Beth-El; among other activities.

Guest speaker for the

event is United Methodist Bishop Woodie W. White, retired bishop-in-residence at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta. An active leader in the Civil Rights Movement, every January he writes a "birthday letter" to Martin Luther King, Jr., chronicling the strides and missteps in matters of race during the previous year. White has also written extensively for both popular and scholarly publications. Each year, White also takes seminary students to Selma, Alabama to participate in the annual march across Edmund Pettus Bridge in commemoration of "Bloody Sunday."

Proceeds from an offertory collected at

the gathering will be used to benefit the MLK Scholarship Fund. The event traditionally concludes with the powerful singing of *We Shall Overcome*.

Afterwards, a reception will be held in the Fellowship gymnasium, where attendees can view an MLK Exhibit from Allee A. Wallace and listen to music by the Raindrop Ensemble from Turkish House. For information, call (877) 567-6223.

Temple Beth-El member Dan Klein will sound the Shofar, Rachel Walsh served on the planning committee, Rhonda Grimm served as publicity chair, and Temple Beth-El Brotherhood and Agudas Achim Sisterhood will help provide

refreshments.

**The 30th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. March will take place on Monday, Jan. 16, at 10 a.m.** The march will begin at 10 a.m. at the MLK Academy located at 1801 MLK Drive and end at Pittman-Sullivan Park, 1101 Iowa.

Buses will leave from both the Jewish Campus and Temple Beth-El at 9 a.m. and will bring walkers back, so we can walk together as a Jewish community. RSVPs are a must for the buses. To reserve space on a Campus bus, log onto [www.templechaisa.org](http://www.templechaisa.org). To reserve space on a bus leaving from Temple Beth-El, call Geri Gregory at (210) 733-9135, ext. 120.

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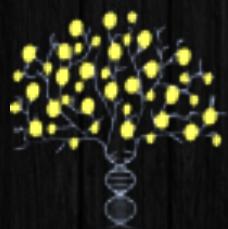
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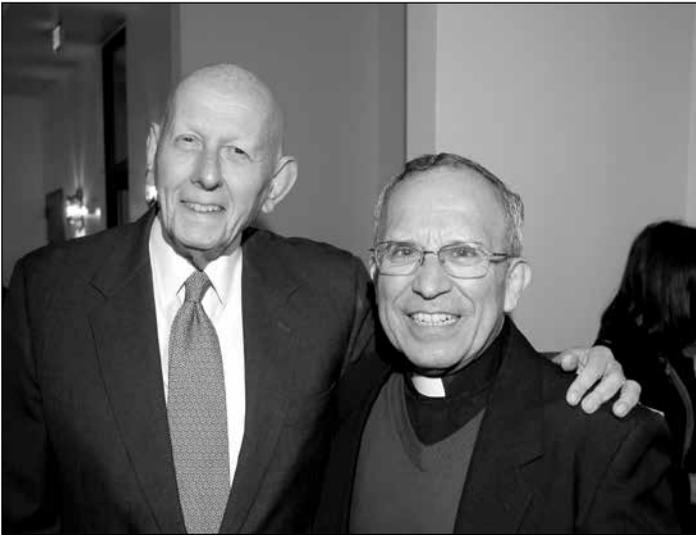


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## Catholics and Jews gather for annual interfaith Hanukkah celebration

On Thursday, Dec. 15, members of the San Antonio-area Roman Catholic and Jewish communities gathered at San Fernando Cathedral hall for the 15th annual interfaith Hanukkah celebration. The event was co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of San Antonio and San Fernando Cathedral.

The featured speaker was Dr. Philip A. Cunningham, Professor of Theology and Director of the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia.



# IN THE COMMUNITY

## Jewish, Muslim and Christian rituals from cradle to grave

How do different faith traditions celebrate the times of our lives? What are the rituals of birth, coming of age, marriage, and death in these different faiths? Three learned religious leaders will enrich our understanding of the response of their communities to the cycle of human life.

Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth-El in San Antonio, is deeply committed to enhancing interfaith relations. Imam Beytullah Çolak is the San Antonio branch imam of The Islamic Institute (Houston Blue Mosque). He serves as an ambassador of Turkish and Argentine culture in San Antonio. Reverend San Williams, an

ordained Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), currently serves as interim Pastor at University Presbyterian Church in San Antonio.

Classes will meet Tuesdays, January 3, 10, and 17 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., at University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell, 78212. Tuition is \$40. To register call (210) 732-9927, [solcenter@upcsa.org](mailto:solcenter@upcsa.org), or [www.upcsa.org/registration](http://www.upcsa.org/registration).

*The SoL (Source of Light) Center at University Presbyterian Church is an interfaith education center for adults who seek to explore the full dimensions of life and faith in the spirit of respectful curiosity.*

## Author and autism advocate Liane Kupferberg Carter to present at the JCC

The JCC Author & Speaker Series will welcome Jewish Book Club author, Liane Kupferberg Carter, at the J Thursday, Jan. 12 at 7:00 p.m. Her book, *Ketchup is My Favorite Vegetable: A Family Grows Up with Autism*, provides an in-depth reflection of what happens in the two decades after an Autism diagnosis.

The memoir follows Carter's son, Mickey, through the struggles and triumphs of growing up with Autism and epilepsy, all the while taking part in Hebrew school, Bar Mitzvahs, and other Jewish life and community events. Carter also reflects on autism as a family experience, noting how



each member learned how to thrive with autism during the course of Mickey's journey to adulthood.

As part of her presentation, Carter will speak about raising a child with special needs in the Jewish community, answer questions, and be available for a book signing. Tickets are \$10 and may be purchased online at [jccsanantonio.org/authorspeakerseries](http://jccsanantonio.org/authorspeakerseries) or by calling (210) 302-6820.

## Community Unity March Honoring the Legacy of MLK, Jr.

The CRC is organizing our ENTIRE Jewish community to march together under a single banner.

### MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2017

The march begins at 10am and should last approximately 1.5 hrs

#### TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS INCLUDE:

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[www.templechaisa.org](http://www.templechaisa.org)

Bus leaving from Temple Beth El at 8:30 (sponsored by Temple Beth El)  
Call Geri Gregory at (210) 733-9135 ext. 120

We will be meeting at the Eastside Boys and Girls Club at 3503 MLK Drive

Visit [www.jfsatx.org](http://www.jfsatx.org) to RSVP.

Please contact Ellen Ollervidez at 210.302.6962 or [ollervidez@jfsatx.org](mailto:ollervidez@jfsatx.org) for more information.



Jewish Federation  
OF SAN ANTONIO



# Hadassah to host two events in January

A book review and a panel discussion are on the agenda for San Antonio Hadassah in January.

The Leah Goot Group of Hadassah will host a panel discussion on resources and services available to the seniors of the Jewish community. The session will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 8, at Adante Independent Living, 2702 Cembalo Blvd.

The panelists will include M.H. Levine, executive director of Jewish Family Service; Daniel Laser, executive director of Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services; Margaret Gofman-Klein, executive director of the Ohr Lanu Foundation; and Saul Levenshus, president / CEO of the Barshop Jewish Community Center of San Antonio. Each will make a

brief presentation, which will be followed by time for questions from the attendees. The discussion will be moderated by Pat Kalmans, a former president of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio and immediate past chair of the Community Relations Council. Seating is limited. For reservations, due before January 7, or more information, contact Debbie Linck at

[marketinglinck@yahoo.com](mailto:marketinglinck@yahoo.com).

On Sunday, Jan. 22, from 10 a.m. to noon, the Rose Treiman Group will host a potluck brunch and book review at the home of Roberta Abelman. Several books of Jewish interest will be presented by Tevia Friedman. Reservations should be made by contacting Sandy Shaenfield at (210) 493-9562.

## Hadassah re-launches young women's group

The San Antonio Chapter of Hadassah is reviving its younger women's group – named *Aviva* – intended for women in their 20s-40s. The group's first event will be a lunch at La Fonda on main, 2415 N. Main Street, at noon on January 18. Lunches will be monthly, generally held on the third Wednesday of the month.

Hear a bit about the latest Hadassah news and then socialize. RSVP to Suzanne Patrick at [suzannepatrick@gmail.com](mailto:suzannepatrick@gmail.com) or to Leslie Hickey at [lcarsman@hotmail.com](mailto:lcarsman@hotmail.com). The next two lunches will be on February 15 and March 15. For more information, contact Leslie Hickey at (719) 233-9353.

## JCC winter programs will begin in early January

The Barshop JCC's Winter/Spring Program Guide, containing a variety of recreational, educational, and enrichment programs and services offered at the JCC December through May is available at the JCC or online at [www.jccsanantonio.org/publications](http://www.jccsanantonio.org/publications). The guide is intended to complement the JCC's monthly *Center Peace* publication, providing members and the community a snapshot of programs and services available.

While continuing to offer community favorites, such as Soccer and Dance Academies, tennis, theatre, senior lunches, and more, the JCC will also offer a handful of new classes.

Some of the new classes for children include Shabbat Shaboom, a Parent-Child interactive Jewish playgroup that meets Friday mornings and Bellydancing for youth ages 5-12. Adults can try their hand at Canasta for Beginners, or take Anyone Can Act, a class for adults interested in

exploring basic acting skills. Coffee, Books, & More, a newly enhanced book club for adults, will first meet Tuesday, Jan. 10.

Most programs are available to the community with JCC members receiving a reduced rate. Visit [www.jccsanantonio.org/register](http://www.jccsanantonio.org/register) to register online or download a registration form. Registration forms may be turned in at the JCC or faxed to (210) 408-2341. For more information, call (210) 302-6820.

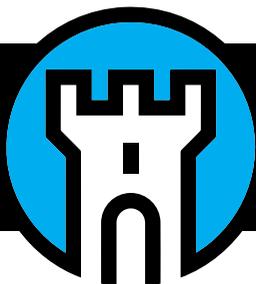
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## IN THE COMMUNITY

### Rabbi Marcy Greene to lead services at Congregation Beth Am

Rabbi Marcy Greene will travel to San Antonio for four Shabbat services with Congregation Beth Am. Her first visit will be on Saturday, Jan. 28, Rosh Chodesh Shevat. She will help lead services, read Torah and provide a d'var Torah. Services begin at 10 a.m.

Rabbi Greene is the founder and spiritual leader of the L'Chaim Center in Houston. The L'Chaim Center, created in the fall

of 2009, is a progressive, independent Jewish, "haimish" havurah providing worship services and educational opportunities to those who wish to experience the joys of Jewish living and learning in a warm and embracing setting.

She will also lead Shabbat morning services at Congregation Beth Am on February 18, May 27, and June 24.

### Agudas Achim Sisterhood Shabbat Weekend - January 20-21



Agudas Achim Sisterhood will host a Shabbat Weekend from Friday, Jan. 20 – Saturday, Jan. 21. Friday night will include a Shabbat dinner following *Friday Night with Friends Musical Kabbalat Shabbat*. Services begin at 6:15 p.m. Special guest, Randy Schwartz, President of Women's

League for Conservative Judaism, will be speaking at the service. Schwartz will also attend the Sisterhood sponsored Shabbat Kiddush luncheon on Saturday following Shabbat services.

For more information and Shabbat dinner prices, contact Sandra Wartell at (210) 696-3388.

### Save the date for the Agudas Achim Purim Ball

Congregation Agudas Achim will host the Second Annual Purim Ball on Saturday, March 4. This event is open to the community. The evening will include a silent auction, musical entertainment, a seated dinner, drinks and dancing.

Along with individual ticket sales, table sales will be available at several price points which includes reserved parking. Early ticket and table sales are now open.

Please call Sherri Samuels at Agudas Achim, (210)479-0307 for details.

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## Join the JCC in January and don't pay dues until March

New members who join the JCC in January will not be charged monthly dues until March. A one-time, \$75 enrollment fee must be paid upon joining. Join any day in January and there will be no prorated dues owed for January, nor any dues for February either. New members can save up to two full months of membership dues and the earlier one joins, the greater the savings.

The JCC offers memberships for individuals, couples, and families, with special pricing for young adults and seniors. A new category, tennis individual, permits use of the tennis facilities for those who wish to focus their time on the courts. In addition to tennis, the JCC has aquatics

and fitness facilities, as well as programs and classes for all ages.

Those who are already JCC members can earn money and help their friends who join save through the Member Get a Member program.

When a current member refers a new member to the JCC, they will earn \$50 cash and the new member will have their registration fee waived.

Prospective new members are welcome to stop by the JCC seven days a week for a tour.

Visit [www.jccsanantonio.org](http://www.jccsanantonio.org) or call (210) 302-6820 for more information. Restrictions may apply for both offers.

## NCJW provides holiday attire for children

Each year, BCFS hosts a gala Christmas party at Sunset Station for youth in foster care, along with their foster parents, natural parents, caseworkers and other supporters. Many of the children lack clothing appropriate for the occasion, so National Council of Jewish Women step in to provide what's missing. This fall, about fifty outfits in sizes ranging from 0 to 22 were displayed at "party closets" manned by NCJW volunteers. Dozens of girls took

advantage of the resource. In addition to the clothing, licensed hair dressers and makeup artists, NCJW members or supporters, help the girls get ready for the special event.

These services, and many others are part of NCJW's Transitions Project. To learn more about joining NCJW's efforts to aid young people in foster care transition to independent living, contact Lee Markman at [lmarkman7500@gmail.com](mailto:lmarkman7500@gmail.com).

## Chabad to host author Rabbi David Eliezrie

Author Rabbi David Eliezrie will review his recent book *The Secret of Chabad: Inside the World's Most Successful Jewish Movement* at the Chabad Center for Jewish Life & Learning on Sunday, Jan. 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Eliezrie, a veteran Chabad rabbi in California, is a member of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency; he serves as Chabad's "Secretary of State." As president of the Rabbinical Council of Orange County and Long Beach, he serves on the board of the Jewish Federation of Orange County. He is active in local and national Jewish



Rabbi David Eliezrie

affairs. Eliezrie serves as the Chabad's National Liaison to Jewish Federations of North America. He is a noted speaker and author.

Eliezrie will be available to sign books following his talk and a Question and Answer session. Light refreshments will be served.

For more information and reservations, please visit [www.ChabadSA.com/Eliezrie](http://www.ChabadSA.com/Eliezrie) or call (210) 764-0300.

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## IN THE COMMUNITY

# Kuwaiti Muslim turned observant Jew to share his journey in two-part presentation

Born in Kuwait and raised a Muslim, Mark Halawa was taught from a young age to hate Jews. That all changed while pursuing his education in a Canadian university.

The community is invited to attend a two-part presentation at the Chabad Center for Jewish Life & Learning, 14535 Blanco Rd.

On Friday, Jan. 13, services will begin at 5:45 p.m. followed by Shabbat dinner and a talk entitled *From Kuwait to Jerusalem* at 6:45 p.m. A children's program during the lecture will be provided. Cost for Friday night dinner is \$20 for adults, \$12 for children under 12.

Saturday, Jan. 14 morning services will begin at 9:30 a.m., Torah reading at 10:30 a.m. followed by a Kiddush



Mark Halawa will speak at Chabad about cultural awareness and acceptance on January 13 and 14.

luncheon and a presentation, *Change, Social Media and the Arab World*, at 12:15 p.m. The luncheon and address is free and open to the entire community.

For more information and reservations, please visit [www.ChabadSA.com/Halawa](http://www.ChabadSA.com/Halawa) or call (210) 764-0300.

# Texas lawmakers file legislation blocking discriminatory trade practices against Israel

AUSTIN — On November 14, 2016, Rep. Phil King (R-Weatherford) and Sen. Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) announced the filing of HB 89 and SB 134 that boosts the state's global economy by prohibiting the state from investing public funds in companies that boycott Israel.

"This bill sends a strong statement that Texas stands with its friends," King said.

"Boycotts of entities and individuals on the basis of national origin, particularly Israel,

often amount to ethnic, religious, racial and/or nationality discrimination, which directly contradicts state public policy."

Israel is Texas' fourth leading trade partner with numerous joint projects in agricultural research and development, science and technology and industrial research.

The Lone Star State exports \$495 million of product to Israel and, in 2012, had \$118 million in military contracts.

Nearly 300 Texas companies do business

with Israel. The state also has more than \$50 million in high-rated State of Israel Bonds.

"Israel is an oasis of freedom in the Middle East and our nation's most valuable ally in the region," said Creighton. "Israel's economic strength is reflective of essential values they share with Texas, so people of good conscience should be encouraging them, not stifling their success. It's time for Texas to send a

See **TRADE**, page 19

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## 2017 MISSION TO AUSTIN

**Jewish Communities Day at the State**

**Wednesday, February 22, 2017**

**9:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m.**

**Join us and other Jewish organizations throughout the state as we meet in Austin to advocate for issues that are important to the Jewish Community.**

Please contact your CRC representative or Ellen Ollervidez at [ollervidez@jfsat.org](mailto:ollervidez@jfsat.org) for more information.



**TRADE**

continued from page 18

strong message of unity with Israel.”

Texas is just one of a growing number of states in the country to respond legislatively to the national origin discrimination. Prior to the pre-filing, Gov. Greg Abbott launched an anti-boycott, investment, and sanction effort with governors throughout the country.

Twelve states have adopted similar legislation.

## New JLI Winter course: *The Dilemma: Modern Conundrums, Talmudic Debates, Your Solutions*

It happens every so often that you read a news story, observe a case, or hear of a dilemma, and it grips you, forcing you to consider right versus wrong, and justice versus injustice. As people with an internal moral compass and an inner sense of fairness, we are well equipped to delve into these matters intelligently. And the opportunity to discuss and debate these issues with those who have differing viewpoints is often stimulating and deeply meaningful.

This is why the Chabad Center for Jewish Life & Learning is launching *The Dilemma: Modern Conundrums, Talmudic*



Students in JLI's How Success Thinks class graduated on December 14. Registration for the next JLI course on *The Dilemma* is now underway.

*Debates, Your Solutions*, a new six session course from the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) that provides a platform to explore, discuss, and debate

six modern and gripping legal-ethical dilemmas with intersecting moral imperatives.

Apply mind-bending, brain-twisting, hair-splitting Talmudic arguments to solve real-life modern dilemmas—situations that seem impossible to solve. What do you do when your gut tells you one thing, and your brain tells you exactly the opposite?

The *Dilemma* is being offered at two different

times: six Tuesday afternoons with Rabbi Chaim Block, beginning Jan. 31, 12:00 p.m.-1:15 p.m. at the Law Office of Golden Steves Cohen & Gordon, 300 Convent St., Suite 2600; and six Wednesday evenings with Rabbi Levi Teldon, beginning February 1, 7:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. at the Chabad Center, 14535 Blanco Rd.

For information, call (210) 764-0300 or visit [www.myJLI.com](http://www.myJLI.com).

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING

## N'SHEI CHABAD JEWISH WOMEN'S RETREAT

More than 150 Jewish women from around North America enjoyed three days of inspiration and workshops at the El Tropicano Riverwalk Hotel as part of the 55th Annual N'shei Chabad Women's Retreat held this year in San Antonio, Nov. 18-20.



## THE TRAVELING CHASSIDIM VISIT RODFEI ON DECEMBER 3



The Traveling Chassidim at Rodfei



Jacob Kluger dances with his son during The Traveling Chassidim visit

Rabbi Ashi and Rodfei kids dance to the Traveling Chassidim

## AGUDAS ACHIM'S 4TH ANNUAL TEXAS KOSHER BBQ CHAMPIONSHIP



Rain didn't stop the fun and food as thousands attended the 4th Annual Kosher BBQ Championship. A portion of the proceeds benefitted the San Antonio Police Department and a portion of the food was donated to the SA Food Bank. HEB donated all of the food for the event.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING



## HEINTZ PRESCHOOL CELEBRATES INTERGENERATIONAL HANUKKAH

Heintz Preschool of Congregation Agudas Achim celebrated Hanukkah with all generations through their Yad B'Yad Intergenerational Program. The Red Bird Pre-K students visited Jewish seniors at Madison Estates for a special Hanukkah show and activities on Thursday, Dec. 15. The entire school then hosted a Hanukkah performance for Jewish seniors on Friday, Dec. 16 at Agudas Achim.



## SUNSHINE CLUB OFFERS SENIORS OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY NOSH, NEWS AND NETWORKING

In late November, members of the Sunshine Club enjoyed a pre-Hanukkah Latkes & Brisket luncheon at the Chabad Center for Jewish Life & Learning. The event featured the acclaimed film Above & Beyond about American Jewish WWII veterans who volunteered and created Israel's Air Force in its War of Independence in 1948. The Sunshine Club is a grant recipient of Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services. For upcoming luncheons visit [www.ChabadSA.com/SunshineClub](http://www.ChabadSA.com/SunshineClub).



## HANUKKAH CELEBRATION WITH SENIORS

On Sunday, Dec. 11, Temple Beth-El volunteers, including Kol Simcha, (volunteer choir) helped to make the GMJSS Hanukkah Party at Adante Senior Living a little brighter.



Congregants with San Antonio firefighters.

## RODFEI GIVES BACK ON THANKSGIVING DAY

On Thanksgiving Day, members of Congregation Rodfei Sholom continued an annual tradition of preparing and serving meals to San Antonio's first responders.



Rabbi Aryeh Scheinberg and Rabbi Avraham Scheinberg with San Antonio police officers.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING



## EARLY BIRD HANUKKAH PARTY

An Early Bird Hanukkah Party at UTSA provided an opportunity for University students to learn about Hanukkah and its symbolic meaning in Jewish history. On December 1, 2016, Christians United for Israel at UTSA invited Professor Rosalind Horowitz, their advisor, to speak about the history associated with Hanukkah and the traditions worldwide on the Festival of Lights. Students heard international



## MOVEMENT CLASS TEACHES HOW TO IMPROVE STRENGTH & BALANCE

Anita Lemon, a Pilates, Yoga, and movement specialist for over 50 years, led a group of seniors in movement and instruction on Thursday, Nov. 17 at the GMJSS office. Through an introduction to Pilates, yoga, tai chi, and other movement, participants learned about strengthening bones and gaining better balance.



## JCC HONORS COMMUNITY WOMEN AT MAIN EVENT FUNDRAISER

The JCC's annual fall fundraiser, The Main Event, took place on Saturday, Nov. 19 at the JCC. Event Honorees were (pictured top left, l to r): Sharon Stern, Shari Pulman and Varda Ratner. Each served as JCC Board Chair for two years in the 2000s.



Bottom left:  
JCC Board Chair Danna Half (left) with Main Event Co-Chairs Adam Zeldes and Leslie Hyman.

## GIVING THANKS AT GAN GANI

Gan Gani Preschool families were treated to a Thanksgiving luncheon on November 22 prepared in part by the children themselves. For more information on Gan Gani Preschool, call (210) 492-1085 or visit [www.GanGani.org](http://www.GanGani.org).



# WHAT'S HAPPENING



## ON STAGE WITH STARZ/NOVA

STARZ photo: Students in STARZ Youth Theatre Performance Troupe, which includes grades five through twelve, performed Disney's Mulan JR in the Sheldon Vexler Theatre in early December. The group will present Singin' in the Rain JR in March 2017.



## HANUKKAH AT ADANTE

Temple Beth-El's sixth grade families celebrated Hanukkah with residents at Adante Independent Senior Living on Sunday, Dec. 4.



## GOLDEN CALF GRILLERS COMPETE FOR 4TH YEAR

The Golden Calf Grillers returned to the Texas Kosher BBQ Championship at Agudas Achim on Sunday, Dec. 4 to cook up beans, chicken, salmon and brisket. The team, sponsored by Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services, was led by pit boss Tim Williamson.



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# WHAT'S HAPPENING



## JEWISH YOUNG ADULTS ENJOY SUNDAY FUNDAY

Jewish Federation's Young Adult Division, known as YAD, hosted a Sunday Funday on November 20 to see the matinee showing of *Wild Beasts and Where to Find Them* followed by dinner at Max and Louie's. For information or to get involved with the Young Adult Division, contact Samantha Mazuz at [mazuzss@jfsatx.org](mailto:mazuzss@jfsatx.org) or (210) 302-6970.



## HEBREW SCHOOL HAPPENINGS AT CHABAD

Chabad Hebrew School Aleph Champ students learn to read the Aleph Bet through a variety of color coded books, games and flash cards. Students also test each other before moving up in rank. Learn more at [www.ChabadSA.com/HebrewSchool](http://www.ChabadSA.com/HebrewSchool).



Christine Arredondo (right), owner of San Antonio Gourmet Olive Oils, explains the process of making kosher, cold-press olive oil during a GMJSS EDGE outing in December.

## SENIORS TOUR SAN ANTONIO GOURMET OLIVE OILS

On Tuesday, Dec. 13 a group of area seniors took a free tour of The San Antonio Gourmet Olive Oils during a social outing of the E.D.G.E. program sponsored by Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services. The tour of the facility included learning about the chemistry of oils, and tastings. For more information about E.D.G.E., call GMJSS at (210) 616-4811.

## SUNDAY FUNDAY

Congregation Rodfei Sholom's Hanukkah Sunday Funday including cookie decorating for the children, along with other fun activities.





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Julie Schack  
Schackj@jfsatx.org



Ministry of Diaspora Affairs  
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# WHAT'S HAPPENING



## AGUDAS ACHIM HANUKKAH CELEBRATIONS

Hanukkah at Agudas Achim began with Lots of Latkes on December 14, which included a performance by the Heintz Preschool and Inda Posner Religious School, and entertainment by Small Wonders Puppet Theater, sponsored by Camp Young Judea. Other events included Hands on Hanukkah at Whole Foods at the Vineyard on December 18; Story Time at Barnes & Noble on December 21 and Donuts and Dreidels on December 27. To end the month of celebration, the congregation hosted a Hanukkah pot luck dinner after Kabbalat Shabbat services on December 30.

**Did you know that PJ Library is now for older kids too?**

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For questions, or more info contact Lauren Abraham at [abrahaml@jfsatx.org](mailto:abrahaml@jfsatx.org)

# KIDDIE CORNER

## PINAT YELADIM פינת ילדים

**Tu B'shevat, known as the New Year for the Trees, is February 11th.**

See how many words you can find in this Tu B'shevat themed word search!

A W S Q Q E P G E F W Y C S L  
L C Y G E I O K O B E G X E M  
M Y Y R I D M Q N N O O N V S  
O Y T J A F E D V X G L U E B  
N L X D F U G I A V R O I N L  
D E S E P A R G Y T T C L Q F  
J E W S E O A B D Q E E I R K  
L A W M N P N I E P D S U Z S  
E N N M R B A B S F T I Y M E  
M R E U A H T N E E T F I F V  
Z N U R A A E B S H E V A T I  
T T L T V R S S P R I N G N L  
I E V E A I Y T R U U M J C O  
Y E H B W N C Y M O L E Q Z Q  
T S R E D E S T K F G M B D L

The words in the puzzle are:

ALMOND

BARLEY

BSHEVAT

DATES

ECOLOGY

ENVIRONMENT

FEBRUARY

FIFTEENTH

FIGS

FOUR

FRUIT

GRAPES

JANUARY

JEWS

NATURE

NEW

OLIVES

POMEGRANATES

SEDER

SEVEN

SHEVAT

SPECIES

SPRING

TREE

# IN THE COMMUNITY: YOUTH

## JCC Block and Dreeben School for Young Children opens 2017-18 registration

A meeting will be held for prospective families interested in learning about the nationally accredited Block and Dreeben School for Young Children Wednesday, Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. The philosophy and curriculum will be highlighted, and a tour of the classrooms will be given.

Currently enrolled children and their siblings may register for the 2017-18 program year beginning Tuesday, Jan. 17. Following the New Family Meeting Wednesday, Feb. 8, priority will be given to children of JCC members who are not currently enrolled in the program. Registration will open to the community at large Monday, Feb. 13. JCC membership applications must be completed, along with the registration forms.

Jewish customs, traditions, and values are integrated into the curriculum. Children participate in Jewish holiday celebrations through activities, which include cooking traditional foods, singing songs, reading stories, and role-playing.

The school serves children ages six weeks through five years old (pre-kindergarten). The program is open year round Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, call Alissa Levey Baugh, Director of Early Childhood Services, or Calla Pfeifer-Campos, Assistant Director of Early Childhood Services at (210) 302-6846, or visit [www.jccsan-antonio.org/eccd](http://www.jccsan-antonio.org/eccd).

## TASA VOLUNTEERS AT THE SA FOOD BANK



TASA Students, staff, and volunteers sorted food at the San Antonio Food Bank during their 2nd annual volunteer day.

On December 2, 2016, the Shmuel Bass Torah Academy of San Antonio (TASA) took part in its 2nd annual volunteer day at the San Antonio Food Bank. Students were coached by Food Bank staff on how to sort foods into specific boxes, while looking for expiration dates and keeping or disposing the food accordingly. Once trained, students in grades K-4 sorted through extra-large crates of mixed foods and placed them in the correct boxes.

Veteran middle school sorters asked Food Bank staff if they could switch to a larger section of the warehouse sorting room in order to be more efficient; the Food Bank staff gratefully complied and the middle school students immediately got to work. TASA's volunteer work produced 7,073 pounds of boxed foods, a 32% improvement from last year, equivalent to 1,887 meals for needy children in San Antonio.

## Free programs for families with young children at Agudas Achim

Congregation Agudas Achim is offering two free programs open to the community. Beginning at 9:30 a.m. on the first Sunday of the month, Babies Bagels and Blocks, and Toddlers Toys and Torah will meet in the Gurinsky Family Social Hall.

Babies Bagels and Blocks is a social get-together of parents and babies, ages 0-18 months of age. Babies play in a safe environment while parents can

meet other families.

Toddlers Toys and Torah is a parent and toddler program for children ages 18 months – 4 years old. Parents and children enjoy stories, songs and a lot of interactive play.

No RSVP is required for these programs. Agudas Achim welcomes families with young children to stop by on January 8 and February 5, for a light bagel breakfast and to connect with other families.



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## HAVING A (PAINT) BALL!

It was all about fun and games as area teens competed at the NCSY Paintball event on November 27, 2016.



## TASA rolls out new skills-based report cards

What do “As” or “Bs” mean on a report card and how do they help parents and teachers understand student performance and progress? The Shmuel Bass Torah Academy of San Antonio (TASA) is taking an innovative approach to report cards, focusing on mastery of skills to provide parents a clear and detailed view of their

child’s progress at meeting and exceeding grade level objectives. Students in the TASA middle school also receive the standard composite numerical grade in their report.

The report cards were developed by the staff of the school to reflect course objectives, highlighting what is actively being taught in the classrooms. The report cards are multiple pages long, detailing key aspects of every subject, and therefore serve as both a communicative and diagnostic tool. They are also the basis for parent-teacher conferences, allowing in-depth analysis and planning specifically tailored to each individual student.

Interested parents can find out more by scheduling a tour with the TASA Office at (210) 607-7261 or by attending their open house on January 19 at 7 p.m.

## HEINTZ PRESCHOOL TO HOST ANNUAL MOVIE NIGHT



Heintz Preschool will be hosting its annual Movie Night on Sunday, Jan. 22 at 5 p.m. with a viewing of the film *Secret Life of Pets*. The evening will include arts and craft projects for the children related to the film, plus pizza, popcorn, and other snacks. The cost is \$10 per adult, \$5 for children ages 3-12 and children 2 and under are free.

For more information on Heintz Preschool’s programming, including Winter Camp and Movie Night, contact Preschool Director Taryn Bretado at (210) 479-0429 or [t.bretado@agudas-achim.org](mailto:t.bretado@agudas-achim.org).

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## IN THE COMMUNITY: COLLEGE



# Students host 2nd Annual Hanukkah Diwali Dinner at Texas Hillel

On November 17, Texans for Israel (TFI), the Israel organization under Texas Hillel, the Indian Culture Association and the Hindu Students Association organized the 2nd annual Hanukkah Diwali Dinner at Texas Hillel. The event is a great opportunity for the different cultures to come together to learn about Israel, India, each other and celebrate each religion's Festival of Lights. During the dinner, students enjoyed traditional foods from each culture, shared stories and played dreidel games. Students also heard from Raz Tidhar, an Indian Israeli Jewish Agency for Israel fellow at Hillel Montreal, who spoke about her experiences and journey. Like last year, the Hanukkah Diwali Dinner was a great success with 250 students attending.

For two months, the Hanukkah Diwali Committee, comprised of representatives from each group, met weekly for dialogues about Israel, India and their respective

faiths, customs and cultures. During the weekly meetings, students learned about the similarities in the different religions, such as dietary laws and specific foods for holidays, and realized how much they share in common. As Rachel Sasiene says in *A Festival of Two Faiths*, a student-made documentary about Hanukkah Diwali, "It's always great to bring two cultures together that maybe don't have a lot in common at the surface, but once you dig underneath, we both celebrate the festival of lights and so much more."

Recognizing the importance of bringing cultures together, TFI and Texas Hillel's Outreach Committee hold events throughout the year that bring different campus organizations together to build relationships. For TFI, hosting the Hanukkah Diwali Dinner is a natural fit. TFI's goal is to build partnerships with other organizations on campus, educate the UT community

about Israel and build a pro-Israel community on campus. This education and outreach was very evident at the Hanukkah Diwali Dinner, where students ate traditional Jewish and Hindu foods, wore saris, played dreidel games and easily mingled with one another.

Amanda Booth, a Junior from Sugar Land, Texas and a Journalism and Radio-Television-Film major, together with fellow students Sung Jai Lee and Jack Keyes, made *A Festival of Two Faiths* for a documentary class. As Amanda Booth wrote about the documentary, "We saw it as an opportunity to explore themes like faith and coexistence that many people are familiar with in the context of an event most have never heard of." We look forward to more cross-cultural events and next year's Hanukkah Diwali at Texas Hillel. To watch *A Festival of Two Faiths*, go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNnKVdOAGQE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNnKVdOAGQE).

## IN THE COMMUNITY: SENIORS

# New patient advocacy program to be discussed at Rodfei Sholom's L'Chayim Club – January 18

The L'Chayim Club will have their monthly get-together on Wednesday, Jan. 18, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The program will feature a presentation by Margaret Gofman-Klein about the Ohr Lanu Foundation. The Ohr Lanu Foundation (Our Light) is a non-profit advocacy program assisting patients through a network of community physicians and volunteers.

Ohr Lanu facilitates and enhances medical care for the Jewish community of San Antonio. Volunteer services provided through Ohr Lanu are intended to supplement and strengthen the individual's own capabilities and resources. Their services

includes patient advocacy, physician referral, ancillary and financial aid. Ohr Lanu has been operational in San Antonio since April of 2015 and to date, has assisted more than 100 members of our community in navigating our complex healthcare system.

There will be a D'Var Torah given by Rabbi A. Scheinberg, followed by home-cooked meal. Seniors are invited to attend at no charge, thanks to a generous grant from Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services and co-sponsorship of Rodfei Sholom. The cost for all others is \$5 per person. RSVP if attending by Monday, Jan. 16 to the synagogue office at (210) 493-3557 or [rodfeisa@gmail.com](mailto:rodfeisa@gmail.com).

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## IN THE COMMUNITY: SENIORS



A class (pictured) about the pitfalls of computers and phones, led by Tim Grossman, was held December 11.

### E.D.G.E. events in January

E.D.G.E., a program that presents opportunities for seniors to learn about important topics and attend social events, will feature a couple of educational workshops in January.

#### Lizette Davis to speak about falls in the home

On January 17 at 7 p.m., Lizette Davis, an occupational therapist and Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist, will speak about falls in the home. Davis works to help individuals increase their independence and safety within their home through home modifications and adaptations. She will share tips and ways to help prevent falls.

#### Dr. Evan Ratner to inform seniors about concussions

On January 24, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., Dr. Evan Ratner, a leader in concussion care for children and adults, will present valuable, potentially life-saving information about concussions. Ratner is one of the first physicians in South Texas to be certified in concussion management. He is certified by the Texas Education Agency to provide continuing education to coaches, trainers, parents, and students about the importance of proper concussion awareness and management.

For reservations for E.D.G.E. programming, call Lety at (210) 616-4811 or by email [letyv@goldenmanor.net](mailto:letyv@goldenmanor.net). The presentations are free and open to anyone who would like to attend. The classes will be located at the Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services office, 13409 N.W. Military Hwy., Suite 210 and is accessible by stairs and elevator. Parking is available in front and behind the Acropolis building.

The E.D.G.E. program was developed to help seniors to continue to engage, develop, grow and explore as they age.

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# PERSPECTIVE

## At Issue: The Deformation of the Reformation

Throughout 2017, Protestants – Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and others – will be celebrating the quincentenary of the Reformation. According to legend, on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther, a professor of moral theology at Wittenberg University, posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg. The Theses, which Luther wrote in Latin but soon translated into German, attacked the practice of papal indulgences, by which a sinner who made a financial contribution to the Church could be absolved, granted release from purgatory. Luther's challenge led to a full-scale revolt against a Church that, abandoning the spirituality of its founders, had grown corrupt and sclerotic. The new Christian denominations that arose in the wake of Luther's bold move stressed a direct relation between the individual and God without priestly intermediaries. Luther and others translated the Bible into vernacular languages that ordinary Christians could read for themselves.

An outsider might admire



Perspective:

STEVEN G. KELLMAN

Luther's moral courage in risking his life for what he considered fundamental principles. A Jew might also lack sympathy for a Roman Catholic Church that had sponsored the Crusades and the Inquisition, both of which exacted an enormous toll in Jewish lives. However, in addition to being a theological trailblazer, Martin Luther was a rabid and dangerous anti-Semite.

Luther began his career supportive of Europe's Jews. But when he observed how averse Jews were to converting to Christianity, he turned hostile, characterizing them as "base, whoring people, that is, no people of God, and their boast of lineage, circumcision, and law must be accounted as filth." In a treatise he graciously titled *Von den Juden und Ihren Lügen (On the Jews and Their Lies)*, Luther calls for setting fire to Jewish schools and synagogues, destroying copies of Jewish prayer books, and confiscating Jewish property and money. Finally, he argues,

"We are at fault in not slaying them."

That fault has been repaired many times. It is not hard to see a direct line from Martin Luther to Martin Bormann, the Nazi leader who supervised the Holocaust. Kristallnacht, the deadly pogrom that occurred on November 9-10, 1938, was not only the culmination of centuries of European scapegoating of Jews as Christ-killers; it was also the fulfillment of Luther's call to destroy Jewish property. Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Treblinka, and the other camps were designed to slay Jews with an efficiency that might have thrilled Luther.

In recent decades, Lutheran organizations have publicly repudiated their founder's anti-Semitism. In 1982, the Lutheran World Federation issued a public statement that: "We Christians must purge ourselves of any hatred of the Jews and any sort of teaching of contempt for Judaism." In 1994, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America declared that: "We recognize in anti-Semitism a contradiction and an affront to the Gospel, a violation of our hope and calling, and we pledge this church to oppose the deadly working of such bigotry, both within our own circles and in the society around us."

That is a belated but encouraging reformation of the Reformation.

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# YOUR JEWISH COMMUNITY

## JEWISH FEDERATION OF SAN ANTONIO

Main Number: (210) 302-6960 / Holocaust Memorial Museum: (210) 302-6807 / Beldon Library: (210) 302-6805

**Ronit Sherwin**, Chief Executive Officer  
*Sherwinr@jfsatx.org / (210) 302-6961*

**Lauren Abraham**, Special Programs Coordinator  
*abrahaml@jfsatx.org*

**Leslie Komet Ausburn**,  
Marketing/Editor *The Jewish Journal*  
*jewishj@jfsatx.org*

**Jane Briggs Gamez**, Chief Financial Officer

**Linda Brown**, Campaign Administrator  
*brownl@jfsatx.org*

**Alan Carney**, Accounting Manager  
*carneya@jfsatx.org*

**Matthew Faulkner**, Programs Coordinator,  
Holocaust Memorial Museum  
*faulknerm@jfsatx.org*

**Susan Avitan Kariv**, Chief Development Officer  
*karivs@jfsatx.org*

**Sandy Leigh**, Advertising Director  
*The Jewish Journal, advertising@jfsatx.org*

**Samantha Mazuz**, Young Adult Division  
Director & Marketing Manager  
*mazuzss@jfsatx.org*

**Ellen Ollervidez**,  
Community Relations Director and  
Director Holocaust Memorial Museum  
*OllervidezE@jfsatx.org*

**Nathan Ratner**, Coordinator  
San Antonio Jewish Coalition for Literacy  
*ratnern@jfsatx.org*

**Danielle Roberts**, Accounting Associate  
*robertsd@jfsatx.org*

**Kristin Hernandez**, Collections Manager,  
Holocaust Memorial Museum  
*hernandezk@jfsatx.org*

**Juana Rubalcava**, Education Director  
Holocaust Memorial Museum  
*rubalcavaj@jfsatx.org*

**Julie Schack**,  
Director of Women's Philanthropy  
*Schackj@jfsatx.org*

**Tracy Morris**,  
Women's Philanthropy Associate  
*Morrist@jfsatx.org*

**Caitlin Strayer**, Office Manager

**Lynn Waghalter**, Librarian Beldon Library  
*waghalterl@jfsatx.org*

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

### Barshop Jewish Community Center

12500 NW Military Highway, Suite 275, San Antonio, TX 78231  
Phone: (210) 302-6820 Fax: (210) 408-2341

**Executive Director:** Saul F. Levenshush Email: [jcc@cc-sa.org](mailto:jcc@cc-sa.org)

**President:** Stephen J. Kramer **Website:** [www.jccsanantonio.org](http://www.jccsanantonio.org)  
JCC programs include a nationally-accredited nursery school, after school care and programs, summer camps, programs for adults, plus cultural, educational and recreational programs open to the community.

### Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Campus

of the San Antonio Jewish Community  
12500 NW Military Hwy, Suite 100, San Antonio Texas 78231  
Phone: (210) 302-6801 Fax: (210) 408-2322

**President:** Alice Viroslav **Website:** [www.thecampustx.org](http://www.thecampustx.org)

The Campus features a variety of spaces available to rent for small or large events.

### Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services

13409 N.W. Military Hwy, Suite 210, San Antonio, TX 78231

Phone: (210) 616-4811 **Website:** [www.goldenmanor.net](http://www.goldenmanor.net)

**Executive Director:** Daniel L. Laser **President:** Alice R. Troy  
Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services (GMJSS) works to enhance the lives of Jewish seniors in the San Antonio area.

### Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America

**Website:** [www.hadassah.org](http://www.hadassah.org), [www.facebook.com/hadassah](https://www.facebook.com/hadassah)

Phone: (212) 355-7900 (National) or (210) 394-7405 (Local)

**Contact:** Roberta Abelman, [rabelman@satx.rr.com](mailto:rabelman@satx.rr.com)

Hadassah partners with the land and people of Israel, enhances worldwide health through medical care and research, and empowers members, supporters, and youth in Israel and America through opportunities for growth, education, advocacy and Jewish continuity.

### Hebrew Free Loan Association of San Antonio

P.O. Box 780264 San Antonio, TX 78278 Phone: (210) 736-4352

Non-profit organization offering interest-free loans to members of the San Antonio Jewish community in need of temporary assistance

### Jewish Family Service

12500 NW Military Highway, Suite 250, San Antonio, TX 78231

Phone: (210) 302-6920 Fax: (210) 302-6952

**Executive Director:** M. H. Levine **President:** Marion Bernstein  
Jewish Family Service (JFS) offers a wide range of professional counseling, social services, advocacy for victims of crime, and services for seniors including senior living and care options.

### National Council Of Jewish Women (NCJW)

**Website:** [www.ncjwsa.org](http://www.ncjwsa.org) **Membership:** Cathy Pottorf - [catpot52@gmail.com](mailto:catpot52@gmail.com) NCJW is a grassroots organization that advocates for women, children and family issues both locally and nationally.

### Hillel San Antonio

**Website:** [www.hillelsa.org](http://www.hillelsa.org) Phone: (210) 201-Jews (5397)

**Contact:** Alan Yancelson Email: [ayancelson@hillelsa.org](mailto:ayancelson@hillelsa.org)

San Antonio Hillel serves college students throughout the San Antonio area.

### After School Judaics (JAS @ The J)

12500 NW Military Hwy, 78231 / Phone: (210) 302-6969

### Gan Gani Preschool

14535 Blanco Rd. 78216 / Phone: (210) 764-0300

### Heintz Preschool

16550 Huebner Rd. 78248 / Phone: (210) 479-0429

### JCC Block & Dreeben School for Young Children

12500 NW Military Hwy., 78231 / Phone: (210) 302-6846

### Shmuel Bass Torah Academy

3003 Sholom Drive, Suite #200, 78230 / Phone: (210) 607-7261

## SAN ANTONIO CONGREGATIONS

### Congregation Agudas Achim (Conservative)

16550 Huebner Road, 78248

Phone: (210) 479-0307 Fax: (210) 479-0295

**website:** [www.agudas-achim.org](http://www.agudas-achim.org)

Rabbi Jeffrey Abraham, Senior Rabbi

Hazzan Jeremy Lipton

Rabbi Ariel Greenberg, Director of

Congregational Learning

### Congregation Beth Am (Reconstructionist)

7150 IH 10 West, 78213

Phone: (210) 492-2173 Fax: (210) 342-8935

**website:** [www.bethamsatx.org](http://www.bethamsatx.org)

Lay Leader Marion Bernstein

### Congregation Rodfei Sholom (Orthodox)

3003 Sholom Dr., 78230

Phone: (210) 493-3557 Fax: (210) 492-0629

**E-Mail address:** [rodfeisa@gmail.com](mailto:rodfeisa@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.rodfeisholom.org](http://www.rodfeisholom.org)

Rabbi Aryeh Scheinberg

Rabbi Avraham Scheinberg

### Temple Beth-El (Reform)

211 Belknap Place, 78212

Phone: (210) 733-9135 Fax: (210) 737-8946

**E-mail address:** [Temple@beth-elsa.org](mailto:Temple@beth-elsa.org)

**Website:** [www.beth-elsa.org](http://www.beth-elsa.org)

Rabbi Mara Nathan, Senior Rabbi

Rabbi Marina Yergin

Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl, Emeritus

Cantor Julie Berlin

### Jewish Community of the Hill Country

Kerrville, Texas

For information: (830) 331-8941

### Temple Chai (Reform)

2121 Lockhill-Selma

San Antonio, TX 78213

Phone: (210) 340-2090

**website:** [www.templechaisa.org](http://www.templechaisa.org)

Rabbi David Komerofsky

### Chabad Lubavitch of South Texas

14535 Blanco Rd., 78216

Phone: (210) 492-1085 Fax: (210) 493-9460

**website:** [www.chabadusa.com](http://www.chabadusa.com)

Rabbi Chaim Block

Rabbi Yossi Marrus

Rabbi Levi Teldon

### Congregation Israel of San Antonio (Conservative, Covenantal)

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**Office & Mailings:**

16320 Huebner Road at St. Andrew

San Antonio, Texas, 78248

**website:** [www.congregationisraelsatx.org](http://www.congregationisraelsatx.org)

**All Faiths Chapel:**

5000 Fawn Meadow Drive at Floyd Curl

San Antonio, Texas 78240

Phone: (210) 387-2436

Hazzan David Silverstein, JD,

## Kugel Cook-Off registration underway

Registration for Temple Chai's Doris Toubin Memorial Kugel Cook-Off is now underway. The event will be held on Sunday, Jan. 29 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the congregation's building, 2121 Lockhill Selma.

Anyone in the community is welcome to submit an entry for the culinary competition.

The community event includes a light brunch. The cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids.

For more information, visit [www.templechaisa.org/kugel-cook-off](http://www.templechaisa.org/kugel-cook-off) or call (210) 340-2090.



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## Pianist Virasinha to perform Copeland at Temple Chai recital

On January 17, Temple Chai will present a recital by pianist Manahara Virasinha who will perform the music of Aaron Copeland. The performance will take place at Temple Chai, 2121 Lockhill Selma, at 8 p.m. following its regular Shabbat Service.

Virasinha grew up in Sri Lanka where his mother, also a pianist, was his first piano teacher. He came to the United States and

attended high school in Philadelphia and then the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, where he majored in piano performance. He did Master's level work in music at Texas State University in San Marcos where he won a concerto competition playing Rachmaninoff's 3rd Piano Concerto. He has also performed with a number of orchestras in Texas and Sri Lanka playing, in addition to

the Rachmaninoff concerto, the Brahms 2nd Piano Concerto.

Virasinha gives private piano lessons in San Antonio and has worked with student choirs at Clark and Marshall High Schools. He has also performed as the accompanist for Temple Chai's cantorial soloists at its High Holy Day services for the past several years.

The entire community is invited to attend.

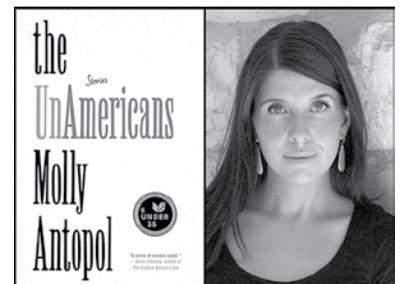
## Rodfei Sholom Book Club plans January event

Have you always been interested in Jewish-themed books and want to join a Book Club?

The community is invited to join Congregation Rodfei Sholom's Book Club, which will kick off its 2017 season on January 4 at 7:30 p.m., with a discussion about *The UnAmericans: Stories*, by Molly Antopol.

The book, celebrated for its wit, humanity and heart, examines how again and again, Molly Antopol's deeply sympathetic characters struggle for footing in an uncertain world, hounded by forces beyond their control. Their voices are intimate and powerful and they resonate with searing beauty.

The Rodfei Sholom Book Club meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the synagogue, 3003 Sholom Drive. The books are selected by members of the group and offer a wide variety of reading.



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## Get your cards ready for Mah Jongg

Hadassah is selling 2017 Mah Jongg cards. Orders must be in by January 15. The cost is \$8 for small cards, \$9 for large.

Checks may be made out to Hadassah and mailed to Roberta Abelman.

For mailing information or other details, call (210) 394-7405, or email [rabelman@satx.rr.com](mailto:rabelman@satx.rr.com).

## Senior Moments musical offers inspiration and a dose of humor

Growing older is filled with new realities and challenges that can be humorous at times, but physically and/or emotionally difficult at others.

Local playwright/composer Linda Kaufman captures both extremes and everything in between in her powerful new musical, *Senior Moments*, coming to San Antonio's Carol B. Conway Theater for nine performances January 14-29.

*Senior Moments* is a series of musical vignettes that deal with growing older as well as having aging parents. Kaufman, who turned 79 in December, says every vignette is drawn from her own personal experiences with aging family members



and friends.

"For me, the show is like a musical autobiography. These are my own observations and relationships set to music and put on stage," says Kaufman.

Kaufman, who started writing songs for musical theater in her early 50's, says *Senior Moments* acknowledges the challenges seniors and their children may be facing but with a light-hearted and upbeat approach.

"The show doesn't focus on the downside of getting older, but doesn't ignore it either," Kaufman said. "The

secret is to keep your sense of humor. There is still time for dreams to come true, and a reason to look forward to each day."

The show's director Mark A. Lit, who worked with Kaufman on the script, says the musical is sure to resonate with just about anyone.

Performances for *Senior Moments* will be Saturdays (7:30 p.m.) and Sundays (1 p.m. and 5 p.m.) from January 14-January 29, 2017. The Carol B. Conway Theater is located at SASPA, 11210 Disco Street (off Hwy. 281 near Nakoma). Tickets are \$20 each; \$18 each for groups of 10 or more. For tickets, visit [SASPA.org](http://SASPA.org) or call (210) 490-0129 to order by phone.

## Poetry workshop at Temple Beth-El

Learn or practice your poetry skills with Dr. Bonnie Lyons during a special poetry workshop on Wednesday, Jan. 25 at 7 p.m. in the Block Conference Center at Temple Beth-El. The free workshop is part of Temple Beth-El's ongoing art series, *Hiddur Mitzvah*.

Lyons retired in May 2014 with emeritus status from the University of Texas in San Antonio. She has published a book about Henry Roth and *Call It Sleep* as well as a book of literary interviews with fiction writers. She has also published two full-length books of poetry: *In Other Words* (Pecan Grove, 2004) and *Bedrock* (Pecan Grove, 2011) and three chapbooks:

*Hineni, Meanwhile, and So Far* (Finishing Line Press, 2003, 2005, 2015). Her current project is *WOW: Wonderful Old Women*, a book of interviews with San Antonio women over 80.

Upcoming events in the Series include:

Fri., 2/10, 12 noon Lunch and Learn with Musician-in-Residence, Saul Kaye

Fri., 2/10, 6:30 p.m. *Shabbat Shirah - Sabbath of Song* with Musician-in-Residence, Saul Kaye

Sun. 2/26, 12:15 p.m. Family Shabbat Arts & Lunch: baking challah with Sisterhood, and making challah covers with Chantel Nasits

For more information, contact Temple Beth-El at (210) 733-9135.



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## How Israel can trace its flag's roots to Boston

By Josefin Dolsten

If a blue-and-white flag with a Star of David and two horizontal stripes were to hang proudly outside a Jewish organization in Boston, it would hardly be news.

Unless, of course, if that happened in 1891 — nearly 60 years before the founding of the State of Israel.

The flag that today is synonymous with the Jewish state has a uniquely American history, reveals new research by Jonathan Sarna, professor of American Jewish history at Brandeis University in suburban Boston.

Scholars previously knew about the existence of the Boston flag, but Sarna's research — which was presented Monday during a meeting in Jerusalem between



A flag created by Rabbi Jacob Askowith in 1891 for a Boston Jewish group, B'nai Zion (Courtesy of Brandeis University)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker — illuminated additional points in the flag's history that helped show its connection to the modern Israeli flag.

The flag was created in 1891 by Rabbi Jacob Baruch Askowith, a Lithuanian immigrant who settled in Boston, for a local Jewish organization, B'nai Zion. It bore striking similarities to today's Israeli flag — except for the fact

See **FLAG**, page 36



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# JEWISH WAR VETERANS CORNER

## Remembering deceased Jewish military veterans

Jewish War Veterans of America Post 753 asks you to remember these Jewish military veterans whose *yahrzeit* (anniversary of individual's death) occurs in the month of September and who are buried in a local cemetery. (If you know of a name that is missing please contact Herschel at 210-468-5598).

ALEXANDER PHILIP KATZ	JOSEPH PITTS	JOSEPH STEIN
CHARLES APTER	GASTON CHASAN	HARRY GOLDSTINE
MORRIS LEONARD	JOSEPH POKLOFF	MELVILLE STEIN
MORRIS BELDON	ALEXANDER COHEN	MARTIN GREENSPOON
MORRIS LESSER	MALCOM SAMUEL	ARTHUR TUDZIN
PHILIP BLOCK	MORRIS COLE	SAM GROSSMAN
EPHRAIM LEVINSON	HARRY SCHARF	LEON VEXLER
DANNY BLOOM	STANLEY COOPER	SHELDON HARRIS
BERNARD MILLER	ELMER SCHNEIDER	BENJAMIN WEINER
IRVING BRAUNSTEIN	MAX COTTRELL	LOUIS HELBER
JEROME MILLER	SYLVIA SERGI	GEORGE WEISSER
NED BURGHEIM	ARTURO CUKIERMAN	SEYMOUR HOEFLE
JOSEPH MILLMAN	DAVID SHALLET	JOE WHITE
SAMUEL BURRIS	EDWARD EASTMAN	SAMUEL JAFFE
KENNETH NORMAN	HENRY SPECTOR	GERALD WOLF
PAUL CAHAN	BERNARD EIGENBERG	DAVID KAHN
LEON PITLUK	AILEEN STEPNER	BERNARD WULFE
LOUIS CHAFETZ	OSCAR ERGAS	

## Upcoming events:

**Friday, Jan. 13 to Sunday, Jan. 15** - semi-annual Department of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and Oklahoma meeting, hosted by the Houston post, in Houston, Texas.

**Saturday Jan. 21** - Installation of post 753 officers for 2017 at 7 p.m. at the Barn Door restaurant. For further information contact Jeff Hoffman at (210) 492-4980.

## JWV Post 753 receives awards

At the recently held JWV National Convention in Savannah, Georgia, San Antonio Post 753 was the top post in its group for membership recruitment.

At the San Antonio Audie Murphy VA Hospital quarterly meeting, Post 753 won the attendance award for perfect attendance of the post

Volunteer to Audie Murphy VA Hospital volunteer program. This group composed of Ken Ashworth, Herschel Sheiness, Irwin Barath, Garland Scott and Frank Aleman well represented the post in 2016.

## Trip to Israel

JWV's 30th annual trip to Israel will take place from Monday, April 24 to Thursday, May 4. The trip will begin with a non-stop flight from JFK Airport in New York to Tel Aviv. The trip will include visits to Tel Aviv, a meeting with US military attache, tours of Sderot, Jerusalem, Masada, the Dead Sea, Latroun, Tiberius, Nazareth, the Golan Heights, Akko, and Haifa. For further information, contact Christy Turner at (202) 265-6280 or [cturner@jwv.org](mailto:cturner@jwv.org).

**YAD**  
2017 Upcoming Events

Young Adult Division of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio

**JScreen Event Jan. 26 @ the Jewish Campus**  
Genetic Screening event sponsored by the Maimonides Society

**YAD goes to the Jewish Film Festival Feb. 18**  
At 8pm for Opening Night to see: "Jewish Blind Date" & "Remember"

**Dinner for 8 on Mar. 2 @ the RIM**  
Stay tuned for more info

For more information, or to get involved, contact **Samantha Mazuz** at [mazuzss@jfsatx.org](mailto:mazuzss@jfsatx.org) or (210) 302-9070.

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CHAIR, YAD BOARD

## JCC Association new president

(JTA) — The Jewish Community Center Association of North America tapped the head of the American fundraising arm of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev as its new president and CEO.

Doron Krakow, who also has worked as a senior vice president at what is now the Jewish Federations of North America, will succeed Stephen Hazan Arnoff this spring, the JCC Association announced Tuesday. Arnoff left in March after just over a year at the organization. He had taken over in 2015 for Alan Finkelstein, who led the organization for over 20 years.

While working for Ben-Gurion University, Krakow's tenure coincided with the largest charitable donation in Israel's history — a \$400 million estate gift from Howard and Lottie Marcus of California.

# Israel's chief rabbis form panel to set standards for recognizing foreign converts

By Andrew Tobin

**JERUSALEM** (JTA) — Israel's Chief Rabbinate formed a panel to set standards for which Diaspora rabbis' conversions it would accept as valid.

The Ashkenazi and Sephardi chief rabbis issued a joint statement December 14 saying they had formed the five-member committee following a meeting earlier in the day of members of the Rabbinate Council and the Supreme Rabbinical Court.

In announcing the meeting, Sephardi Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef said a list of recognized rabbis

would be created based on the standards that were determined. The Rabbinate would automatically recognize conversions — as well as marriages and divorces — by the listed rabbis. Israel's rabbinical courts have in the past handled disputes over the legitimacy of conversions performed abroad.

Orthodox rabbis in North America, especially representing modern Orthodoxy, have complained over the past few years that the haredi-controlled Chief Rabbinate was rejecting the conversions performed by modern Orthodox rabbis.

Yosef also promised the

Jewish conversion of Ivanka Trump, the daughter of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, would be recognized under the new standards. But the new committee includes a rabbi who sat on the panel of judges that recently rejected a conversion overseen by Haskel Lookstein of New York, the rabbi who helped Ivanka Trump convert.

The Chief Rabbinate is Israel's highest Jewish authority, with control over personal status issues such as conversion, marriage and divorce. The Chief Rabbinate Council is its advisory body. The Supreme Rabbinical Court is the highest rabbinical court, which

resolves disputes regarding personal status issues.

During the meeting, Lau issued his own statement saying the discussion at the meeting was based on principles he had submitted at a September meeting of the Chief Rabbinate.

According to those principles, rabbis must believe in Jewish law, be Orthodox, serve in places with rabbinical courts that are recognized by local rabbis, be accepted by their community and be members

of existing rabbinical organizations. Alternatively, they can be vetted by the chief rabbis in consultation with "the heads of the rabbis of the community."

The members of the committee to develop the standards were announced as High Rabbinical Court judges Rabbi Aaron Katz, Rabbi Shlomo Shapira, and Rabbi Yitzhak Elmaliah, and Chief Rabbinical Council members Rabbi Yitzhak Ralbag and Rabbi Yehuda Deri.



## Archie L. Nations Lecture



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## FLAG

continued from page 34

that the Star of David in the middle contained the word “Maccabee” in Hebrew letters, referring to the famed Jewish warrior family that defended Jerusalem against the Greeks.

A year later the “flag of Judah,” as it was then called, was paraded in the streets of Boston at an event celebrating the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s arrival in America. The only difference: “Maccabee” had been replaced with another Hebrew word, “Zion.”

From there, the “flag of Judah” started to gain traction.

The flag — minus the Hebrew words in the middle — made its way to the Second Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1898, Sarna found.

At the Third Zionist Congress a year later, a different flag was displayed — one created by Theodor Herzl that featured a lion and seven stars. But

Askowith’s flag had already captured the attention of American Jews.

In 1904, it was flown along with the flags of the rest of the world at the World’s Fair in St. Louis, solidifying its status for American Jews as “an emblem of the unified Jewish people,” Sarna told JTA.

“That was absolutely a turning point — it was the first time that a Zionist flag was flown along with all the other flags of other countries,” he said. “It was a huge deal that the flag was recognized, and because it was recognized and got so much attention, I think that that became the flag that American Jews knew.”

So, when time came to pick a flag in 1948 for the newly established State of Israel, American Zionists would not budge, rejecting some 164 other flag proposals. Ultimately they got their way, and today the flag recognized as representing Israel worldwide looks an awful lot like the flag that hung outside Boston’s B’nai Zion building in 1891.

## HOME RUN

continued from page 1

in the Muslim world on openly embracing the Jewish state, experts on the relevant countries said.

“The media apparently missed the historic visit that I’m making to two Muslim nations that simply admire Israel, with whom we are pursuing closer ties,” Netanyahu wrote December 14 on his Facebook page. Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, he added in a video message, “are nurturing coexistence and fraternity between Jews and Muslims. This is where we are making the future.”

The visit to Azerbaijan, an oil-rich Shiite nation with a border and tense relations with Israel’s archenemy Iran, is Netanyahu’s second. He visited in 1997, during his first stint as prime minister. His visit to Kazakhstan, the world’s ninth-largest country and Central Asia’s undisputed economic powerhouse, is the first by an Israeli prime minister to that mineral-rich land.

And while Netanyahu’s remarks about the visits may be somewhat hyperbolic, they are essentially on the money, according to Guy

Bechor, a former lecturer on Islam and the Middle East at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya.

The halving of oil prices since 2014, Bechor said, has “deeply hurt Iran’s economy, which is further burdened by military conflicts in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere.” The same developments have also weakened the Arab Gulf states, which in the past have played key roles in imposing boycotts against Israel among Muslim nations with weaker economies.

“So countries that are drawn to the innovation and technology of the Israeli startup nation have stopped caring about the boycott directive,” he said.

In recent years, Israel has been strengthening ties as well with non-Muslim countries — notably India, Japan, South Korea and China — that had abstained from appearing close to Israel for fear of angering Iran and the Arab League.

And while Arab and Iranian economies languished, Israel’s has experienced a meteoric leap. Its gross domestic product per capita rose to \$38,127 in

2015 — higher than Spain, Italy and even France, according to the Economist — after averaging \$20,318 from 1960 until last year.

Disregard for Iran’s hostility for Israel was particularly striking in Azerbaijan. During the Netanyahu visit, President Ilham Aliyev for the first time quantified the extent of his country’s military cooperation with Israel.

Azerbaijan has bought nearly \$5 billion worth of military equipment from Israel since 1997 — the year of Netanyahu’s first visit there as prime minister. The openness of Aliyev’s remark stunned even longtime observers of his nation’s largely clandestine alliance with Israel. The revelation followed the 2013 disclosure that about one-third of Israel’s gas comes from Azerbaijan.

“This is cooperation on a massive scale,” said Roman Bronfman, a former Israeli lawmaker and well-known commentator about Israel’s relations with former Soviet states. “The volume of trade is enough to persuade the Azeris to defy the Iranians and receive Netanyahu.”

However, Azerbaijan has, under Iranian pressure, declined to open an embassy in Israel, as Israel did in Azerbaijan in 1992.

During his visit, Netanyahu praised the treatment of the country’s Jews — a population of about 16,000, according to the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress — by their government. Azerbaijan’s diplomats, in deflecting criticism over major human rights violations, often insist that they come from a country that “has no anti-Semitism.”

A case in point is Krasnaiya Sloboda, a Jewish town of a few thousand residents in northern Azerbaijan.

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# FROM THE COVER

Hundreds of years of peaceful coexistence between Jews and Muslims have led to so much interfaith cross-fertilization that some Muslim shop owners there today separate dairy and meat for their Jewish clients — who in turn pray in a carpeted synagogue that the men, like Muslim worshippers, enter barefoot.

Perhaps out of consideration for Azerbaijan's diplomatic position, Netanyahu made no references to Iran during his visit to Baku, the capital, which is located just 160 miles from the Iranian city of Parsabad. Perhaps his mere presence there, amid talk of security cooperation, was powerful enough.

But the Israeli leader addressed the Iranian issue during his visit the following day to Kazakhstan.

In a meeting with Nursultan Nazarbayev, the

nation's authoritarian ruler since 1989, Netanyahu said that "if Iran attacks Israel, it will put itself at risk," according to The Times of Israel.

Asked by Nazarbayev, who has visited Iran five times, what message he should convey to Iran's president, Netanyahu replied, "Ask him why Iran continues to threaten us with annihilation. Don't you understand: We're not a rabbit. We're a tiger."

Experts agree that part of Israel's ability to forge strong alliances in the Muslim nations of Central Asia is the region's strong tradition of religious tolerance, which sets it apart from many other Muslim countries.

The reasons for such tolerance are complex and rooted both in the region's history under Soviet rule and in the fact that the

countries are ruled by dictators who are quick to ruthlessly uproot any sign of religious radicalism that they view as a threat to their countries' stability — and that of their own authoritarian rule, said Giora Pozailov, a historian at Bar-Ilan University in Israel who specialized in Central Asia's Jewish communities.

"The Soviet years, the anti-religious oppression of communism, has generated a kinship of religions in Central Asia that exists in few other places," Pozailov said. And while that trait is "grass roots," he said, there is also vigorous top-to-bottom action to prevent Islamists from changing the relatively secular nature of the society of these Muslim nations."

Chaim Chesler, the founder of Limmud FSU, a Jewish learning organization, said the

relative tolerance of Central Asian Muslims is on display each year at his organization's annual conference in Kazan, the capital city of the predominantly Muslim Russian state of Tatarstan.

The event is part of the city's annual Jewish festival, which includes street celebrations by hundreds of Jews flying Israel flags who convene in the center of the city safely with little to no security arrangements.



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## Viramontes honored for his work to engage Spanish-speaking Jews in San Antonio

San Antonio resident and member of Congregation Agudas Achim, Octavio Viramontes has been awarded the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's 2016 Shoshana S. Cardin Award for Leadership.

He received the award in New York City on December 4. The Cardin award recognizes an emerging Jewish leader who is making a difference in strengthening and transforming Jewish life through the lens of Conservative Judaism.

Viramontes, an immigrant from Mexico, was recognized for his efforts to engage San Antonio's largely unaffiliated Jewish Spanish-speaking population with a monthly Shabbat service. A member of Agudas Achim's congregation



Octavio Viramontes (left) is presented with the 2016 Shoshana S. Cardin Leadership Award by USCJ President Margo Gold at USCJ's General Assembly for Kehillot, December 4, in New York City.

board, ritual committee, and its Youth Commission Chair, Viramontes spearheaded and helped create a monthly Spanish

language Kabbalat Shabbat service and dinner at the synagogue and secured the funding necessary to create a customized Spanish

siddur, modeled after the Rabbinical Assembly's Lev Shalem.

Rabbi Jeffrey Abraham, who nominated Viramontes for the award, says the monthly service has brought in dozens of new congregants.

"Octavio is an incredibly dedicated leader in our congregation. [He] has helped grow our Jewish-Spanish speaking population who joined thanks to his vision in serving this underserved population," he said.

Though he is now an involved member of the congregation, Viramontes didn't grow up observant. He married a Catholic woman, but after becoming more religious later in life he and his wife were "challenged to find the best way to raise our children in a strong relationship with

Hashem, the world, and themselves," he explained. They decided that this was best achieved through Conservative Judaism and Viramontes's wife converted.

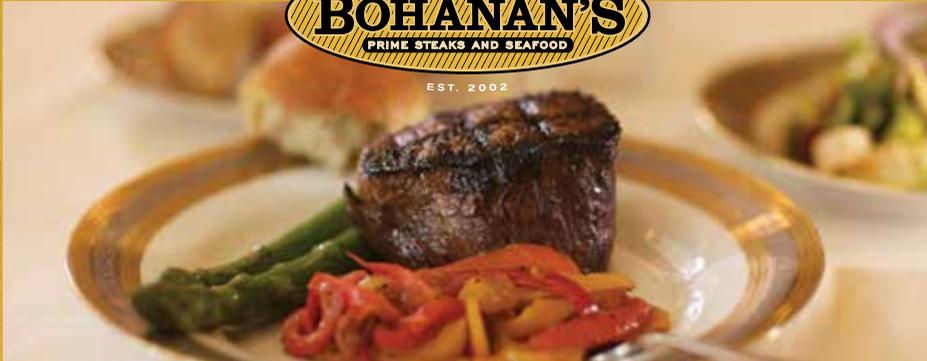
However, even after making the decision to raise their six children Jewish, the family had a difficult time connecting to the Jewish community in Mexico.

They fled far from a synagogue and eventually decided to move to the United States to find a congregation.

"The opportunity to get involved in the amazing transformation that our synagogue has gone through has been a true blessing, since one of the things that motivated [my family] to move was being part of a vibrant Jewish community and raise our children involved," Viramontes said.



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