

the Jewish Observer

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Israelfest brings cultural fun for the whole family

The Gordon Jewish Community Center (GJCC) and the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee will host their annual Israel Independence Day Celebration, Israelfest, on Sun., April 29, on the GJCC Campus.

This year's celebration will include fun for every member of the family while providing cultural education about the country and its people. There will be Israeli food available for purchase as well as Israeli jewelry. Israelfest also includes Israeli music, dancing and a Krav Maga demonstration and instruction.

Soccer fans will enjoy cheering on a soccer match between the U.S. and Israel on the GJCC campus.

For the little ones, Israelfest will have lots to offer including a petting zoo and bouncy house.

The fun lasts from 12:30 – 4:30 p.m.; food sales are available until 3:30. The soccer match will be held from 3:30 – 4:30.

For more information, contact Claire Bernstein at claire@nashvillejcc.org or by phone at 615/356-7170. □

Yom HaShoah features 'Life in a Jar'

Yom HaShoah was commemorated on April 15 with a moving performance of "Life in a Jar," which honors the memory of Irena Sendler, a Righteous Gentile, who helped Jewish children escape from the Warsaw Ghetto. She placed them with Polish families, but kept their real names on lists she buried in jars in her backyard. After the war, Sendler sought out the children and gave them back their identities. Many of their parents had perished in the Holocaust.

Prior to the performance, survivors and their families lit Nashville's Holocaust menorah at the community-wide program at The Temple. The event was sponsored by the Jewish Federation, the Gordon Jewish Community Center, the Board of Rabbis and all five Jewish congregations. □



Survivors and family members light the Yom HaShoah menorah at the beginning of the community commemoration of the Holocaust on April 15. Photo: Rick Malkin



After the presentation of "Life in a Jar," Lottie Strupp, right, who as a child was sent from Germany to England when World War II began, speaks with the actress who portrayed Irena Sendler. Photo: Judy Saks



Members of the community, including middle and high school students from the congregational religious schools filled the seats at The Temple for the community-wide Yom HaShoah commemoration. Photo: Rick Malkin

American rabbis to Methodist Church: Don't divest from companies doing business in Israel

More than 1,200 American rabbis from all denominations have signed a letter that was sent to United Methodist Church delegates. The letter opposes an anti-Israel divestment resolution being considered at the Methodist Church's quadrennial General Conference which takes place this month in Tampa, Fla.

Among the rabbis who signed the letter were five from Nashville: Rabbi Shana Mackler of The Temple, Rabbi Flip Rice of Congregation Micah, Rabbi Kliel Rose of West End Synagogue, Rabbi Mark Schifftan of The Temple and Rabbi Saul Strosberg of Congregation Sherith Israel.

Delegates at the conference are expected to debate a resolution calling for divestment from three companies for their sales to Israel.

Additional proposals of concern under consideration are support for an embargo of goods made in settlements and an endorsement of the controversial Kairos Palestine document.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) will vote on similar divestment resolutions when it meets two months later. The PCUSA will also consider a resolution labeling Israel as an apartheid state.

"A letter signed by so many rabbis demonstrates the breadth and depth of the American rabbinate's commitment to finding a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; something which cannot be achieved through divestment," said Rabbi Steve Gutow, executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. "I am privileged to join my colleagues from all 50 states, leaders from the Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform and Orthodox movements, rabbinic

groups and seminaries, and some of the most influential Jewish thinkers and theologians of our time. There is a clear rabbinic consensus - divestment efforts will tear the fabric of our interfaith relationships and undermine ongoing efforts for peace."

The rabbinic letter spells out the profound concern of the signatories about the one-sided nature of the divestment proposals, which "shamefully" paint Israel as a pariah nation.

"For Jews, the use of economic leverages against the Jewish state is fraught with inescapable associations," the letter states. "They resonate in the Jewish consciousness with historic boycotts against Jewish companies and the State of Israel...policies that knowingly tap into the deepest fears and pain of another is, in our tradition, a serious failure of relationship."

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Rossman-Benjamin to address campus anti-Semitism at April 30 event

By Kathy Carlson

Tammi Rossman-Benjamin has taught Hebrew to college students for 15 years. “Most (of my) students are Jewish and most are very connected to Israel,” she said. “A lot of campus anti-Semitism has to do with Israel. ... “It creates a very hostile, intimidating atmosphere for Jewish students. It’s hard for someone who feels harassed and intimidated to defend themselves.”

Rossman-Benjamin will talk about campus anti-Semitism – and the larger Jewish community’s role in fighting it – in an event set for Mon., April 30, from 7-9 p.m. at the Gordon Jewish Community Center. The National Conference on Jewish Affairs (NCJA) Nashville is presenting the program. B’nai B’rith Maimonides Lodge #46, Congregation Sherith Israel, Chabad Student Center at Vanderbilt University, Chabad of Nashville and the Nashville Chapter of Hadassah are co-sponsors.

Rossman-Benjamin will present a short film and then discuss the nature and scope of campus anti-Semitism – its sources, what it looks like and its primary effects. Her goal is to examine “what do we learn about efforts we have made, so we can come up with strategies that can work.”

She has spent most of her academic career on college campuses in California, currently at the University of California Santa Cruz. Campus anti-Semitism “happens all over,” she noted, and it looks pretty much the same from campus to campus nationwide.

“In general, the new anti-Semitism focuses on the Jewish state and those who support it,” she said. She described



Tammi Rossman-Benjamin

an academic conference held at her university and titled “Alternative Histories Within and Beyond Zionism.”

“Every one of the speakers was saying how awful Zionism is,” she said. “...You hear five professors saying Israel is a Nazi state, an apartheid (state that has) no right to exist. Nobody talks about murdering Jews, but about eliminating” the state of Israel.

The conference speakers weren’t simply criticizing Israeli government policies or speaking out against Jewish settlements, Rossman-Benjamin pointed out. She recognizes room for critiques

and criticism of Israel, but said that “when somebody wants to destroy the Jewish state, that’s an anti-Semitic impulse. ... I never talk about people as anti-Semitic,” she added. “I judge people (by) what they say and what they do.”

She said she follows the U.S. State Department’s definition of anti-Semitism. On a web page titled Defining Anti-Semitism, the State Department lists possible examples of “anti-Semitism relative to Israel,” including “drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis” and “denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, and denying Israel the right to exist.”

Statements like those made at the alternative histories conference create a hostile environment for Jewish students, she said. In response, she and two other professors co-founded the Investigative Taskforce on Campus Anti-Semitism. She also filed a complaint in 2009 with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, in which she alleged a hostile environment for Jewish students on her campus.

The federal government opened its investigation of her allegations just over a year ago and the case remains under investigation. If the government finds that the university violated its rules against hostile environments, it will

probably work with the school to come into compliance, she said, adding that the government may withdraw funding as a last resort if a violation isn’t corrected.

She believes that the larger Jewish community can take a role in addressing campus anti-Semitism. “Community members need to make sure there are protections for Jewish students,” she said. Community members can speak to legislators if there are concerns about anti-Semitism at state universities. They can also build coalitions with others, write letters and withhold donations to colleges as an incentive to address anti-Semitism, she added.

Students and community members can report to the Investigative Taskforce on Campus Anti-Semitism any incidents they believe to be anti-Semitic, she said. The organization works collaboratively with legal and educational organizations dedicated to addressing the problem of campus anti-Semitism, the ITCA web site states.

Community members need to step up for students, Rossman-Benjamin said. “...It’s very difficult for students who are on campus to actually fight some of this stuff. ... Most pro-Israel and Jewish students aren’t nearly as motivated to be out there and aggressive (as the) people on campus who are causing (a) problematic situation for them.” □

Levine helps Christians see Jesus through a Jewish lens

Last month, Vanderbilt University Professor Amy-Jill Levine spoke to Nashville-area Christian clergy and educators on “Understanding Jesus Means Understanding Judaism: Tips for Preaching and Teaching.” The breakfast seminar was held at Vanderbilt Divinity School and was co-sponsored by the Divinity School and the Jewish Federation of Nashville’s Community Relations Committee. Levine teaches about the New Testament in both the Divinity School and College of Arts and Sciences at Vanderbilt. She answered via email a few questions from Observer writer Kathy Carlson on her presentation.

Q: Have you given this seminar, or one like it, in the past?



Amy-Jill Levine

A: I have done similar seminars across the country (this past month in Santa Ana, Calif., and Detroit) as well as in the United Kingdom. ... My goal is to reach anyone interested in the New Testament, and especially anyone who teaches it or preaches it.

Q: What were the main points you made?

A: I have read thousands of sermons, articles, and books on the New Testament, have taught New Testament studies for over 30 years, and have done hundreds of programs in churches across the English-speaking world. These experiences make me well aware of the major negative stereotypes of Jews and Judaism that surface in various Christian circles. In the seminars, I name the stereotypes, give examples of them, explain why they are erroneous, and provide alternative, historically accurate and religiously sensitive ways of understanding the Christian texts.

Q: What sort of questions and reac-

tions did you get from the attendees?

A: The typical reaction is, “Thank you.” Often I am asked, “Where can I find more information?” Now available is the *Jewish Annotated New Testament* (Oxford University Press, 2011), which I co-edited with Marc Z. Brettler of Brandeis University. The volume provides commentary, informed by Jewish history and theology, on all the books of the New Testament, 30 short essays on the such topics as Jewish movements of the first century (Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.), Jewish family life, including women’s roles, the Jerusalem Temple and local synagogues, Jewish views of heaven and hell, messianic speculation, and life in the Roman Empire. The volume alerts readers to where misunderstandings of Judaism surface in Christian teaching and provides corrective information.

Q: Why is it important to have these talks with Christian clergy and educators?

A: Several years ago, I petitioned the Association of Theological Schools, the accrediting organization for most U.S. divinity schools and seminaries, to recommend for their “best practices” that candidates for Christian ministry receive three hours of instruction on how to avoid anti-Jewish preaching and teaching. The ATS rejected the request. Therefore, in my “spare time” I speak to divinity school and seminary students, clergy groups, and gatherings of religious educators, and I do so for travel expenses only. If the stereotypes are not named and countered, and if good historical information is not presented, well-meaning teachers and preachers will continue—not out of prejudice but out of ignorance—either to inculcate or reinforce anti-Jewish ideas.

Q: Will this be a regular presentation?

A: Vanderbilt Divinity School has asked me to do this presentation for the entering class in the fall of this year. □

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The Temple announces appointment of new cantor

President Randy Goldstein of The Temple – Congregation Ohabai Shalom has announced the appointment of Tracy L. Fishbein as its new cantor.

The appointment was confirmed at a special congregational meeting held on April 11 where the board of trustees and congregation unanimously approved her employment.

Fishbein, a native of St. Louis, Mo., is currently a fifth-year cantorial student in the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City. She graduated cum laude from the University of Missouri, Columbia, with a bachelor's degree in K-12 vocal music education.

Fishbein will assume her duties as cantor of The Temple on July 1. Bernard Cutcheon, who has served as cantor of The Temple for the past 29 years, will become cantor emeritus of the congregation, continuing to work with b'nai mitzvah students, and available for life-cycle events.



Tracy L. Fishbein

"The Cantor Search Committee was captivated by Tracy's intelligence, warmth and passion," said Goldstein. "We are confident that her cantorial skills will engage the entire Temple community." □

Micah hosts 'Aging Well' seminar and luncheon with GJCC TGIT program

Congregation Micah's Supporting our Seniors (SOS) program is joining forces with the Gordon Jewish Community Center's TGIT (Thank Goodness It's Thursday) program to present "Aging Well," on Thurs., May 17, from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Micah.

The lunch and learn seminar will feature Laurence Solberg, M.D., assistant professor of medicine in the Department of Internal Medicine and Public Health at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, with a focus on geriatric medicine. He is a graduate of the Jagiellonian University School of Medicine in Krakow,

Poland, and completed his specialty training in internal medicine and sub-specialty training in geriatric medicine at Yale University School of Medicine.

Solberg's talk will address aging well and avoiding common hazards. Seniors, family members and caregivers are encouraged to attend.

RSVP to Congregation Micah at 377-9799 or office@congregationmicah.org by May 4.

For additional information, call Micah at 377-9799 or Meryl Kraft at 356-7170.

Thanks to generous funding from the Jewish Federation, the lunch and seminar are free of charge. □

Ancient marriage secrets revealed in Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) course

The Art of Marriage, a provocative new series of classes on the secrets of successful marriage will begin on Wed., May 9, at the new Chabad Center on Bellevue Rd. Regardless of marital status, all are invited to attend the six-session course, presented by Nashville's Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) and taught by Rabbi Yitzchok Tiechtel.

The Art of Marriage will go far beyond platitudes, to cover topics at the heart of modern marriage. Does marriage still serve any purpose at all? How far should one go to make a marriage work? When is divorce the best option?

Included as well are Jewish bedroom secrets, from ancient texts, on how to increase intimacy in marital relationships.

"Beautiful, inspiring, but most of all practical," says Dr. Patricia Love, author of *How to Improve Your Marriage Without Talking About It*, one of Amazon's top two marriage books. "Whether your mar-

riage is magical or miserable, this vital course is designed for you."

Judaism views a loving marriage as a spiritual as well as a human ideal. The Art of Marriage shows students how to attain that for themselves and for their spouses, with timeless lessons from both modern and ancient Jewish texts such as the Talmud and *Zohar*.

"The course is not only about providing techniques for success in marriage, it's about changing your attitude toward your spouse and toward marriage in general," Tiechtel explained.

The course is designed to appeal to students at all levels of Jewish knowledge, including those without any prior experience or background in Jewish learning. All JLI courses are open to the public, and attendees need not be affiliated with a particular synagogue or other house of worship.

For information, call 615/646-5750 or visit www.myJLI.com for registration and other course-related information. JLI courses are presented in Nashville in conjunction with Chabad of Nashville. □



Cindee Gold, center, playing the role of a mortgage banker, informs a "family" of their impending eviction. She was taking part in a Poverty Simulation put on in March for the Tennessee Conference of Social Workers by the Jewish Federation's Community Relations Committee in cooperation with Catholic Charities of Tennessee and Metro Nashville Social Services. The objective of the simulation is to give participants a deeper understanding of the everyday challenges facing those living in poverty. Photo: Judy Saks

CRC co-sponsors seminar on 'Environmental Stewardship' at GJCC

The Federation's Community Relations Committee is co-sponsoring a panel discussion on "Environmental Stewardship – An Ethical Approach to the Environment," on Tues., May 1, from 5:30-7 p.m. at the Gordon Jewish Community Center.

The interfaith panel includes Rabbi Shana Mackler of The Temple; Stewart Clifton, attorney and registered lobbyist; and Dr. Saleh Sbenaty, Department of Engineering Technology at Middle Tennessee State University. It will be moderated by Dr. Daniel Schafer, profes-

sor of history at Belmont University.

The panel will explain how Judaism, Christianity and Islam view concern for the environment.

Light refreshments will be served from 5-5:30 p.m.

The main sponsor for the event is the Society of Universal Dialogue. Other co-sponsors are the Istanbul Center and the Turkish American Chamber of Commerce – Southeast.

The program is open to the Nashville community.

For information, contact Judy Saks, CRC director, at judy@jewishnashville.org. □

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Israeli female scientist Naama Geva-Zatorsky named Europe's top young researcher

By Meredith Mandell

JERUSALEM (JTA) — She's young, smart and aims to help treat life-threatening diseases. Naama Geva-Zatorsky, 34, is among a growing group of Israeli women scientists who are gaining recognition for their contributions to scientific research.

The Weizmann Institute biologist was in Paris last month to accept the International UNESCO L'Oreal Prize for Women in Science. Dubbed "Europe's top young researcher" by the prize committee, she received a two-year, \$40,000 fellowship for her postdoctoral work at Harvard University.

The selection committee cited the "excellence and the originality of her work."

Geva-Zatorsky's research focuses on probiotics, which are commonly known as "good bacteria" and have the potential to treat a variety of diseases.

Geva-Zatorsky, who holds a master's degree and a doctorate in systems biology, believes there is room for more research on the potential benefits of probiotics.

Her lab work has focused on the "good" microbes that live in the human intestines and protect our bodies by stimulating the immune system. Geva-Zatorsky will use her award to continue investigating what leads the bacterial molecule, known as polysaccharide A (PSA), to react this way.

"There are 10 times more bacteria than human cells in the body, and I'm learning how do we interact with them and what the impact is on our health," she said in a phone interview from Brookline, Mass., where she has been living since September with her husband, Amnon Zatorsky, and their two sons, Yonatan, 5, and Uri, 2.

Despite the growing popularity of probiotics in an array of products — think Kefir, a dairy product made of goat's milk and fermented grains, or the trendy tea-based drink Kombucha — both the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the European Food Safety Authority say that most claims made about probiotic products are unproven.

"There's really a lot more that can be studied," she said, noting that researchers already know that probiotics can be used to treat inflammatory bowel disease and now are investigating whether microbacteria can inoculate multiple sclerosis, a chronic autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system.

Additionally, Geva-Zatorsky said, certain bacteria can make humans develop more fat cells. Someday, she said, researchers may be able to create a pill to help obese people lose weight.

The same bacteria affect emotions, she said, and eventually may be used to treat depression.

Once her postdoctoral work is completed, Naama Geva-Zatorsky plans to return to Israel to set up her own research team to probe how these bacteria can treat a myriad of diseases.

Weizmann biophysics professor Zvi Kam believes Geva-Zatorsky's determination will carry her far.

Noting that experiments are tedious and often fail, Kam said in an email that the young scientist "never complained, never was let down, and never gave up! Her optimistic spirit and joy of doing science was never broken by the tough reality."

Geva-Zatorsky's success is unusual in Israel given the dearth of women working in the fields of science and engineering.

Despite Israel's emphasis on research and development, a 2008 report by the European Commission on Gender Equality pointed out Israel's low proportion of female researchers in higher education — 25 percent — compared to the 35 percent average found among EU member countries.

Those numbers combined with a highly publicized incident recently involving Channa Maayan, a Hebrew

University professor who received an award but was told by Israel's acting health minister, who is haredi Orthodox, that a male would have to accept it for her. The incident outraged and re-energized women in the scientific community to speak out about their important role as researchers.

There are glimmers of light, however, for female scientific researchers. Geva-Zatorsky was among 10 women last year who received a Weizmann Institute of Science Women in Science Award. And she sees momentum at Israeli universities to increase the numbers of women in the field.

She hopes that she can pave the way for others.

"I encourage women to be brave and ask questions," Geva-Zatorsky said.

Geva-Zatorsky also said that gender bias alone is not the only reason that women are less inclined to do scientific research.

In Israel, many believe that those who want to pursue academic careers should do research abroad, she said, where they can gain skills that will enable them to be better scientists at home. Geva-Zatorsky said that's more difficult for women, who are still expected to be the primary child rearers.

The women who complete their doctorates are typically older than in other countries, she said, having first completed their military service and then started families.

"This is why fellowships and awards that encourage women scientists to move are important and also it helps if, mentally, people believe in us and that people would like us to go abroad and get new skills," she said.

Geva-Zatorsky, who grew up in Moshav Ometz, a small cooperative village in central Israel, said her parents "nourished her curiosity and passion."

At 22, she arrived at Tel Aviv University and decided to study chemistry and biology.

For her doctorate, she studied how cancer cells respond to drugs and therapies.

With a longtime passion for the arts — she had studied ballet until she was 18 — Geva-Zatorsky also helped to organize an exhibition at Weizmann called "The Beauty of Science."

She praises her family as well as her husband's for their strong support.

"They believed in me and pushed me forward," she said. "There have been moments of self doubt, but they give me encouragement." □

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's class of 2012 has a Jewish tune

By Matt DeFaveri

(Cleveland Jewish News) — Michael Belkin knows plenty about the music industry; he was born and raised in it.

More than 40 years ago, his father, Mike, and his uncle Jules founded Belkin Productions, which helped launch the careers of such artists as Johnny Carson, Tiny Tim, Janis Joplin, Wild Cherry, Joe Walsh, Maureen McGovern, and The Michael Stanley Band.

Belkin, senior vice president of Live Nation, was looking forward to the 27th annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductions ceremony at Public Hall in downtown Cleveland on April 14.

This year's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee class includes eight Jewish musicians and artists, many of whom set the stage for future bands in their respective genres, said Belkin.

In the performer category, Jack Irons and the late Hillel Slovak, two founding members of the Red Hot Chili Peppers; the late singer/songwriter Laura Nyro; former Guns N' Roses drummer and Cleveland native Steven Adler; and the Beastie Boys' Michael Diamond, Adam Horowitz and Adam Yauch round out 2012's Jewish inductees.

Also being inducted is producer and executive Don Kirshner as a "non-performer." He managed songwriters like Carole King, Barry Mann and Neil Diamond.

King, herself a 1990 Hall of Famer, along with Bette Midler, both Jewish performers, were presenters this year.

"I think it's clear to say that when you rise to the top of your profession, you're going to influence future generations," said Belkin. "Red Hot Chili Peppers, Guns N' Roses ... as evidenced by their induction into the Hall of Fame, are at the top of the food chain and have been for 25 years. That's pretty significant."

Belkin said he's worked with almost all of this year's inductees and has met most of them. He said he was consistently impressed by the work ethic of those groups, specifically the Chili Peppers.

"The one thing I always admired about the Chili Peppers is their commitment to their craft," said Belkin. "They were always really, really serious about their performance, how they were presented to their fans, how they performed. ... I really respected them for that."

In terms of being at the top of the pack, Belkin said the Beastie Boys also have to be included in that conversation.

"You look at the musical landscape right now, and you see and hear what (the Beastie Boys) did 20-plus years ago. You think how far ahead of the curve these guys were," he said. "Aside from their live performance, which has always been extraordinary musically, they started something and society followed. They're as big as they've ever been. How many groups can say that after 25 years?"

Despite the religious link among this year's Hall of Famers, Belkin said the focus is more on quality and less on religion, race or ethnicity.

"The fact that there are a number of qualified and talented Jewish musicians in this particular instance is certainly special, but I think what should be noted is wherever they came from, whatever their background, these guys have risen to the top of their particular profession," he said. "That's a really, really special thing. The fact that they're Jewish, fantastic. If they're anything else, still fantastic." □

GJCC and Temple host Hendersonville Shabbat Outreach at May event

After a successful run of Shabbat Outreach events in 2011, the GJCC and the Temple have planned Outreach events for 2012. Thanks to a generous grant from the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, the two organizations will host music, food and an abbreviated service in neighboring communities.

Shabbat Outreach for Hendersonville will be held at The Hyatt Place, 300 East Main St., on Fri., May 11. Jewish individuals and families of the Hendersonville community and

surrounding areas are invited to join The Temple and the GJCC beginning at 6 p.m. RSVP to Nancy Richardson at The Temple at nancy@templenashville.org or via phone at 615/352-7620.

The goal of both agencies is to give people in these areas, outside of Nashville's congregational range, a point of reference, an opportunity to gather for Shabbat and a chance to meet fellow Jews in their neighborhoods.

Everyone is welcome, regardless of affiliation. If you have questions, need more information, or wish to be added to the mailing list for these events, contact Kara Meyer at kara@nashvillejcc.org. □



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Students pose with members of the Tel Aviv indie band Acollective outside The End on Elliston Place.



Students and faculty sample falafel, pita and more at lunch on Rand Terrace.

Vandy students experience Israel in weeklong iFest

By Kathy Carlson

For a full week, Vanderbilt University students tasted Israeli music, food, culture and politics during iFest 2012, presented by Hillel.

"The main goal was to bring to everybody something about Israel," said Lital Swissa, Israel Fellow at

Hillel. It was the first time Hillel held an Israel-themed festival for a week instead of for one day, she said.

"Each event was really different," she said. Each appealed to different student interests. Student groups within Hillel coordinated each event. Activities included a Sunday night study break with coffee from Israel, a discussion on why Israel matters, a lunch and learn session

on the state of Israel, a concert at an Elliston Place venue by the Israeli group Acollective, a shuk and food events, IDF training and the Israeli self-defense discipline of krav maga. The week culminated in Shabbat services and dinner.

A program on current events in Israel – "a serious presentation without food," as Swissa described it – drew 30 students, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

The shuk and food events were like a fair, she continued, and a lot of people stopped by. "I felt it was a really, really good event. We opened a window to know Israel in a different way, not just from the media.

"...I felt that the Hillel student leaders did a really good job and put all their energies together" to make the iFest a success. □

Community Yom Hazikaron program set at Congregation Micah

Congregation Micah will host the Nashville Jewish community in marking Yom Hazikaron, Israeli Memorial Day, on Wed., April 25, at 5:30 p.m.

The event is sponsored by Congregation Micah, Congregation Sherith Israel, The Temple and West End Synagogue. Yom Hazikaron precedes Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's independence day.

"Yom Hazikaron is a day of collective and personal anguish mingled with awe and honor for the fallen," the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website states. "It is a day on which the living rededicate themselves to the State of Israel, so that they may be worthy of the sacrifice of those who died for its survival."

In Israel, Yom Hazikaron begins

with the sound of sirens proclaiming two minutes of silence and a halt to all activity and traffic. Flags are flown at half-mast and memorial ceremonies are held all over the country. Ending at sundown, the somber, reflective mood of Yom Hazikaron gives way to the celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut, a transition which emphasizes the lasting tie between the sacrifice of the country's fallen and the continued existence of a vibrant and dynamic State of Israel, the website says.

The commemorative ceremony and program at Micah is designed to help connect participants spiritually to our brothers and sisters in Israel, to the sacrifices so many have made in building a Jewish homeland, and to Yisrael shel ma'alah, a Micah announcement states.

For information, call 377-9799. □

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The inaugural meeting of the Council of Past Presidents of the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee was held recently at the home of Cynthia Morin. In attendance were, standing from left: Bob Eisenstein, Herman Kaplan, Pete Weiss, current Federation President Ted Mayden, Frank Boehm, Fred Zimmerman and Carolyn Levine. Seated from left: Alvin Stillman, Steve Riven and Federation immediate Past President Cynthia Morin. Past presidents unable to attend the meeting who also serve on the council include Ernest Freudenthal, Lois Fox, Moshe Werthan, Sandy Averbuch, David Steine Jr., Nedda Pollack, Gary Pinsly, Sandy Cohen, Rabbi Peter Haas, Floyd Shechter and Ellen Levitt.

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Community, others come together in funeral service for Rutherford woman

By Kathy Carlson

Vicki Fleming lived a quiet life in Murfreesboro nurtured by a family of her own choosing: a small group of good friends, the Rutherford Haverah, and an old schnauzer named Avram.

When she died in April at age 56, the Middle Tennessee Jewish community joined with friends and others, in the absence of any relatives, to bury her in a plot she had purchased years earlier at Congregation Micah, where she first studied and joined the Jewish people.

"I met her in the schmooze group (at Micah)," said Judy Baer. "She was converting at that time. She just read everything that she could on Judaism.

"She was very individualistic," Baer said. Fleming had served in the military

and had to leave on disability after an injury. Fleming was "extremely proud to be an American and very proud that she fought for our country. ... She felt strongly about animal rights, the rights of the poor and veterans. ... She was very proud of her Judaism.

"She had so many interests. If she found something interesting she would go all out" to learn about it, Baer said. Fleming "craved knowledge and she would read anything she could. She was an incredible person."

April 12 offered all the best of a Middle Tennessee spring day: bright clear blue sky, lush green grass and new leaves reaching for the sun, mild breezes. Vicki Fleming's friends – and some who hadn't known her – gathered at her grave to pray and remember. Rabbi Kliel Rose conducted the service.

The Jewish community in Nashville

learned of Fleming's passing through her connection with the Rutherford Haverah. A call to the Jewish Federation of Nashville helped set plans in motion for the services.

"There was really no next of kin," said Todd Evans, Congregation Micah's executive director. Fleming wasn't close with a sibling in another state, and an out-of-state elderly relative was too frail for a long trip to Nashville.

"Marshall Donnelly Combs (funeral home) really has stepped up, and Rabbi Rose and Rabbi Saul (Strossberg) and Rabbi (Phil) Lieberman," Evans said. Micah Rabbis Flip and Laurie Rice were on vacation and could not participate. Others – Hunt Memorial and gravesite worker Andy Parnell – also helped provide services, he said.

"It was nice to see how everyone stepped up," Evans said. "The rabbis,

vendors, and individuals and families came together to provide a nice service for the lady and a nice way for her to be laid to rest."

"She was an interesting friend and I'm very sad that she's gone," Baer said. Baer's family got to know Fleming over the years. At the graveside service, Baer's daughter, Barbara, wore a kippah that Fleming had crocheted for her.

Afterward, Judy Baer recalled Fleming's quirky sense of humor and love of animals. Fleming often would send emails with a saying about animals; one was, "Ask not for whom the dog barks: It barks for thee." Her email address was "barkmenot."

"That was Vicki," Baer said. "She was a neat person. It's sad for us. She never questioned that God existed. She felt very close (to God); she never questioned what happened to her." □

Rick Recht to perform for WES concert and cultural series

On Sun., May 6, West End Synagogue will host its second concert of the year starring the dynamic and popular Rick Recht. Recht is known to teens around the country for his interactive performances at such places as Camp Ramah, BBYO and USY International Conventions and NFTY National Convention. He is also a regular headliner at Jewish festivals around the country.

The concert is at 6 p.m. at the Gordon Jewish Community Center.

Due to tremendous underwriting and patron support, West End Synagogue is able to offer special pricing for this concert. All those under 18 are admitted free with parent(s), however reservations are required. For ticket prices and to reserve box dinners in advance, contact Marcia Stewart at 615/269-4592, or office@westend.syn.org. □

May 31 deadline for college aid from JCRS

Undergraduate college students from the seven states served by the Jewish Children's Regional Service have until May 31 to apply for need-based financial assistance for the 2012-2013 academic year. Students who apply after that date will receive a lower priority on their application.

Each academic year, between 90 and 130 students are funded from the region. Approximately 85 percent of the funds are distributed as grants and 15 percent as no-interest loans. Currently, average awards are approximately \$2,000 a year.

The application process is online, and the program is explained in detail on the agency website: www.jcrs.org.

The JCRS is a unique agency that funds Jewish youth from the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas. Children and youths are funded for special needs, overnight camp and undergraduate college aid. All must qualify on a documented financial needs basis. Additional services, such as The PJ Library and support groups, are provided regardless of financial need.

The JCRS is the only regional Jewish child welfare organization in the United States and is one of the oldest Jewish welfare organizations in existence, having begun in 1855 as an orphanage serving orphans and widows.

Primary support for the annual budget comes from personal contributions and the income derived when a family establishes a permanent, named scholarship fund. More than 1400 Jewish youths were served in 2011.

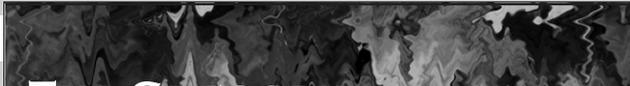
To contact the JCRS, call 800/729-5277 or go to www.jcrs.org for information about the agency's services. □



Current and future Akiva students, spent an hour of their Sunday afternoon, April 1, selling lemonade with 100 percent of the proceeds going to the Jewish Federation's Annual Campaign. In that time they were able to raise over \$52. Their sale was part of the Mitzvah Madness program launched by the Jewish Federation's NowGen group that organized ways in which community members could perform mitzvahs. One of the suggestions was running a lemonade stand. The sellers were, clockwise from left: Shayna Leibowitz, Itzik Sedek, Ilanit Sedek, Beny Leibowitz, Gabriella Roseman and Daniel Leibowitz.

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Birth

Ellen and Howard Roback announce the March 21 birth of their granddaughter, **Hannah Catherine Roback**. She is the daughter of Sarah and Harry ("HB") Roback of McLean, Va., and the sister of two-year Elizabeth Leah. Sarah and Harry are both attorneys in Washington D.C.

B'nai Mitzvah

Ryan Slosky will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah at The Temple on May 3. He was born on Dec. 25, 1997 to Anne and David Slosky. His grandparents are Miriam Slosky of Denver, Colo., and the late Ben Slosky and Irene McNamara of Bloomingburg, N.Y., and the late Leo McNamara.



Ryan Slosky

A seventh grader at Currey Ingram Academy, Ryan's special interests include archery, video games, tennis and hanging out with friends.

For his mitzvah project, Ryan worked as a volunteer and is collecting donations for Saddle Up, a therapeutic riding stable for children with special needs.

Morgan Anne Evans will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Sat., May 5, at 10:30 a.m. at Congregation Micah. She is the daughter of Christina and Todd Evans, and the big sister of Jackson and Ansley. She is the granddaughter of Anne and Lawrence Evans of Nashville, and Elizabeth DiGiovanni of Atlanta, Ga., and the late Leonard DiGiovanni of Hilton Head, S.C..



Morgan Anne Evans

An Akiva School graduate, Morgan is a seventh grade honor student at Grassland Middle School. She competes on the cross-country team and is an active member of the drama program. Morgan is an avid dancer and has danced and performed for the past several years with the Nashville School of Ballet. In her free time, she loves reading, cooking and spending time with her friends and looks forward to her summers at Camp Barney Medintz.

For her Mitzvah project, Morgan has chosen to raise money for the Leukemia foundation to help support finding a cure for this disease.

Keri Lin Friedman will be called to the Torah on Sat., May 5, at 11 a.m. at The Temple. She was born on May 10, 1999 to Ray Friedman and Jen-Jen Lin. Her grandparents are Chiang Hui-Chin Lin of Taipei, Taiwan, and the late Chin-yao Lin and the late Sam and Brena Friedman.



Keri Lin Friedman

A seventh grader at Saint Bernard Academy, Keri's special interests include guitar, soccer, performing Chinese Lion Dance, reading and talking with friends.

For her mitzvah project, Keri is volunteering at Saint Bernard Academy's aftercare program and gathering supplies

for Noah's Ark Society, a group that is a shelter for lost animals.

Morgan David Haymer will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Sat., May 12, at 10:30 a.m. at Congregation Micah. He is the son of Donna and James Haymer and younger brother of Jonathan and Daniel. His grandparents are Olive and David Smollett of Glenrothes, Scotland, and the late Helyn and Johnny Haymer of Los Angeles, Calif.



Morgan David Haymer

A seventh grader at Heritage Middle School in Thompson's Station, Morgan's main interests are computer graphics, visual effects, and video editing. He is proud to have several YouTube fans watching his videos. He loves soccer and playing golf with his Dad, and it won't be long until he beats him on the course. He also loves animals especially his rescued cat, Josie. Morgan's will be the third and final Bar Mitzvah in this generation of Haymers.

Professional notes

Rabbi Mark Schiffan will be awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree, honoris causa, at the May 14 graduation of the Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. He is being honored for his 25 years in the rabbinate. The Temple will honor him at Shabbat services on Fri., June 1, at 6 p.m.

Sympathy

... to the family of **Freda Epstein**, 96, who died on March 29 in Dallas, Texas. She born Sept. 12, 1915, in Brooklyn N.Y., to David and Sadie Waldman. She had a playful and keen sense of humor, acerbic wit, and was fiercely independent. Preceded in death by husband, Harold and son, Gary (Bette) Epstein. Survived by daughter, Sally Ann (David) Lubin and son, Dannie (Janet) Epstein; grandchildren, David Epstein, Lorre (Ram) Degani, Eliza Epstein, Cassie (Robert) Whitmire, Marc (Tammy) Lubin, Michael (Cara) Lubin, Brian (Liz) Lubin, Ruthie Epstein and Johnny Epstein; great grandchildren, Ben, Jesse and Sophie Degani, Hunter and Tanner Lubin, and Asher and Kitty Ann Lubin.

... to the family of **Irving Figlarz**, who died April 12. He was surrounded by his entire family who had assembled to celebrate his 90th birthday. While he passed away in Las Vegas, his home since 2003, in Poland his birthplace, it was already April 13 and so he achieved the magnificent age of 90 after all. He was laid to rest next to his wife of 62 years, Goldie. Irving Figlarz led a number of lives. He was born in Czestochowa, Poland and enjoyed a happy childhood as the only son of four children of Fela and Mordka Figlarz. He had a beautiful voice and sang in the synagogue on a regular basis. On April 9, 1941, after two years of occupation, the German mayor established a Jewish ghetto and on Sept. 22, 1941, the ghetto was liquidated except for able-bodied young men. The Jewish residents, including his entire family, were transported to Treblinka death camp and murdered. Irving was a slave laborer in six brutal camps and liberated on a death march in a field near Shvreen, Germany, after news came that Hitler had killed himself. In time, Irving made his way to the Bergen Belsen Displaced Persons Camp where he fell in

love with Genia Aranowicz. They married in the camp and eventually came to America with their daughter, Felicia. Irving and Goldie began new lives in Toledo, Ohio, including the birth of two more daughters, Susan and Marilyn. Goldie was a housewife and Irving was in the plastics business. With daughters grown and married, Irving and Goldie moved to North Miami Beach Fla., where they were reunited with childhood friends and friends from Bergen Belsen. They led a busy social life and their "naches" grew as grandchildren began to arrive; four granddaughters in all. Eventually with declining health, they moved to Las Vegas to be near a daughter. Irving and Goldie had a wonderful life in Las Vegas until Oct. 4, 2008, when Goldie passed away. During their marriage, they were always at each other's side. He is survived by three daughters: Felicia Anchor (Dr. Kenneth), Susan Schall (Alan), Marilyn Etcoff (Dr. Lewis); four granddaughters, Jessica Samuels (David), Stephanie Milford (Andrew), Jennifer Etcoff, Allison Etcoff and three great-grandchildren: Rebecca Samuels, Eric Samuels, Zachary Milford.

Donations may be made to the Nashville Holocaust Memorial c/o of Nashville Jewish Federation or the Tennessee Holocaust Commission.

... to the family of **Eli H. Jacobs**, who was born Dec. 5, 1924, and died April 2. He was a man of great character, honesty and integrity. Mr. Jacobs is survived by his wife, Adrian Jacobs, and daughter, Marilee Jacobs. Donations may be made to a charity of choice.

... to the family of **Dorothy Freedman Stone**, 91, of Brentwood, Tenn., and Southampton, N.Y., who died on April 6. She was born May 13, 1920, in New York, N.Y., and was the only daughter of Alan and Marie Freedman. An accomplished singer and pianist, Dorothy abandoned the opportunity for a Hollywood career, choosing instead to pursue her passion for science. She obtained a BS in biology and an MS in chemistry from Adelphi University,

and Ed.D from Teachers College of Columbia University, where she was inducted into Kappa Delta Pi, the international honor society for those in education. Dottie worked for Hazeltine Laboratories during the war where, rumor has it she was part of a team that developed, but did not think to commercialize, Silly Putty as a by-product of their research. Following the war, she returned to the classroom, this time as a dedicated high school biology and chemistry teacher at private schools on Long Island and in New York City. Seeking new challenges, she returned to school and obtained her BSN from Cornell University School of Nursing, which she immediately put to use as an RN in the neonatal intensive care unit at Cornell Medical Center. Among her other career accomplishments, she was a certified cyto-technologist, participated in numerous research projects related to maternal and child health, and co-authored a number of research papers. Growing up the sister to three brothers taught Dottie to face life head-on. She became a licensed pilot in 1940, and loved fishing, boating and gardening. Never forgetting her early talents, she was also a lifelong patron of opera, theater, music and the arts. A long time resident of New York City and Southampton, she moved to Brentwood in 2005 and was one of the first residents of the Heritage at Brentwood retirement community, where she made many new friends who became enamored with her "feistiness." Dorothy is survived by her brothers and sisters-in-law, Buck and Pat Freedman of Atlanta, Ga., and Mick and Allene Freedman of Los Angeles, Calif.; her son and daughter-in-law, Bob and Ariel Stone of Brentwood; grandchildren, Jeremy Stone of Franklin, Tenn., Jessica Stone Woods of Charleston, S.C., Shannon Stone Glover of Franklin, and Julian Agnew of Atlanta, Ga. She was the adoring great-grandmother of five, aunt to 10 nieces and nephews, grand-aunt to 15 and great grand-aunt to 11. Donations may be made either to the Adelphi College Alumnae Association or the Humane Society of the United States.

American rabbis to Methodist Church

Continued from page 1

The letter also spells out a commitment to a negotiated two-state solution, which includes Palestinian state building and economic development, programs of reconciliation, understanding of multiple narratives, humanitarian aid and other areas where collective action is needed to help foster peace.

Divestment, the note explains, runs in opposition to these goals and "is more likely to encourage those with extreme aims" - and

is so contentious that it "drowns out the real conversation about how to end the conflict."

"At a time when politics in general have become so divisive, here and abroad, our efforts should be aimed toward reconciliation," the letter continues. "Together and independently, Christians, Jews and Muslims must give the parties to the conflict the confidence they need to move toward peace."

To view the letter and all signatures, please visit www.LetterInHope.org. □

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Hillel helps VU's Jewish grad students create community

By Kathy Carlson

Jewish graduate and professional students at Vanderbilt are getting to know one another and Nashville, with an assist from the university's branch of Hillel.

Currently, the Jewish Law Students Association, Jewish Business Association, Peabody Jewish Association and Maimonides, the Jewish Society for the Medical School, are active. The groups are separate from

Hillel but partner with it on events, said Joel Abramson, the Jewish Federation of Nashville's community engagement associate. Each group plans its own programs and joins in additional events with other graduate student groups.

JLSA, for example, offers "an outlet for Jewish students in the law school to get together," said its president, Jason Coleman. The group held a Sukkot event last fall in Blackacre, a shaded courtyard within the law school, and the law students shared a pre-Yom Kippur

meal with medical students. It's nice to socialize with students in other Vanderbilt professional and graduate programs, he said, and the organizations allow Jewish students to feel connected.

Abramson wears a lot of hats as the grad school coordinator for Hillel, Coleman said. "He helped organize a dinner where we brought in several Jewish lawyers in Nashville." Hillel catered the dinner and the law students learned what it's like to practice law in Nashville. Hillel also hosted a graduate student seder for Passover, Coleman added.

Over at the medical school, Maimonides members marked Tu B'Shevat by helping with spring planting at the medical school student-run community garden, said Jordan Cohen, one

of the leaders of Maimonides this year. "We have also had a few 'lunch and learn' sessions throughout the year with topics such as Judaism and end-of-life care," he said. The medical students also plan a 10-year reunion Bar Mitzvah party at the end of the school year, where they'll relive their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs "with '90s music and cheap neon sunglasses," Cohen said.

The newest Jewish graduate student group is Peabody Jewish Association. "We're only in our first year, but have had several successful events including a Shabbat dinner and the grad student Seder," said Heidi Amster, the group's president. "PJA is glad to be working with Hillel to join the Maimonides, JBA and JLSA Jewish grad student groups." □

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Every community event is listed for your convenience.



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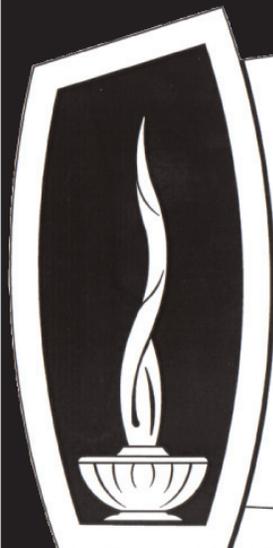
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Featured speaker: Tammi Rossman-Benjamin

- Lecturer in Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University of California Santa Cruz
- Filed the 2009 complaint with the U.S. Dept. of Education's Office of Civil Rights, alleging a hostile environment for Jewish students on her campus. This federal complaint is currently under investigation.
- Co-Founder of the Investigative Taskforce on Campus Anti-Semitism- CampusAntisemitism.org
- Founded the Amcha (means "your people" in Hebrew) Initiative -amchainitiative.org



**Monday
April 30
2012
Gordon
JCC
7-9PM**

**Admission Free and
Open to The Public**

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