



Shalom 02|20

The Journal of the Reading Jewish Community published by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

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Join us for brunch with Jamie Bernstein

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Describing a legendary musical figure as "Daddy," instead of Maestro, "Famous Father Girl" is a daughter's view of composer-conductor Leonard Bernstein. Meet Bernstein's eldest daughter at a community brunch featuring Jamie Bernstein on Sunday, March 1, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Reading (800 Penn St. Reading).

Inheriting her father's passion for sharing and teaching, Jamie has devised several ways of communicating her own excitement about classical music. In addition to "The Bernstein Beat," a family concert about her father modeled after his own groundbreaking Young People's Concerts, Jamie has written and narrated concerts for audiences of all ages about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Aaron Copland and Igor Stravinsky, among others.

The community is invited to a brunch



featuring Jamie on Sunday, March 1. The cost is \$36 per person and includes your meal and musical entertainment. Please

make RSVP and payment by Feb. 21.

If you would like to pre-order a paperback copy of "Famous Father Girl," you can do that with a ticket for brunch for \$50.

Registration and brunch begin at 9 a.m. followed by Jamie's speech at 10 a.m. Following her talk, Bernstein will sign copies of her book, which will be available for purchase through the Literatour Berks official book vendor, Reads & Company of Phoenixville. You can register online at <https://events.idonate.com/bersteinbrunch>

Bernstein's appearance in Literatour Berks is presented by Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks in partnership with Exeter Community Library and Sinking Spring Public Library. Thank you to the sponsors and patrons of Literatour Berks for making this event possible.

Day of Service celebrates civil rights hero



Youth volunteers and their adult helpers gathered Jan. 20 for the second annual Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Day of Service at the JCC. The event was sponsored by PJ Library and PJ Our Way of Reading.

Youth under 12 worked on projects putting together supplies for a birthday celebration for children and young adults who are experiencing homelessness; and making bagged lunches for youth experiencing homelessness.

Participants also did work to benefit Berks Connections/Pretrial Services and men in its community reentry programs. Volunteers organized hygiene items for care packages that will help people recently released from incarceration

Jewish legacies are essential to our future

By **Richard Nassau**
Development Director

Jewish legacies are our future. I heard this from a volunteer several years ago. It's true.

In many Jewish communities, including ours, the annual campaign receives support from legacy funds created by bequests. Every year these funds distribute a portion of their income to the campaign. The amount of support varies by community. However, there is not one community that would not welcome more Jewish legacies.

Creating a Jewish legacy is an opportunity to do something lasting. It is a way to convey your values across generations and provide for the Jewish causes you care about.



Jewish legacies secure our future. They ensure provide communities will have the resources to meet future needs. It could be an unforeseen emergency, a new program initiative or a service that needs additional funding. Jewish legacies benefit everyone.

How would you like to be remembered?

With a simple gift in your will or estate plan, you can choose to help your synagogue or another Jewish organization or a favorite community program. You will impact the future Jewish community, making a difference in the lives of generations to come.

To date, 47 people have signed a Letter of Intent indicating their desire to leave a legacy for our Jewish community. The Letter of Intent is not a binding contract, but a statement of values.

These 47 people come from all walks of life and represent different income levels. What they have in common is a desire to ensure the strength and vibrancy of our

Jewish community.

Creating your Jewish legacy or signing a Letter of Intent is not just for the wealthy. Nor is it done apart from your family. You can create your Jewish legacy in ways that will meet all the needs of your family and still accomplish your charitable goals.

Make a statement. Consider joining with me and others in our community who have signed a Letter of Intent or created their Jewish legacy. It is statement about our future.

Jewish tradition tells the story of the man who plants a tree knowing the fruit would only be available to future generations. Creating your Jewish legacy with a bequest in your will helps secure a vibrant and strong future Jewish community here in Berks County.

To learn more about creating your Jewish legacy, contact me at RichardN@jfreeding.org or call Jewish Federation of Reading 610-921-0624 to arrange a confidential discussion.

Month filled with fun Israel-themed activities

By **Adi Shalev**

What excitement!

In January, we started some new activities.

So, what did we have?

We had an Israeli cooking class where we made amazing Shakshuka and Chocolate balls. The kids (and adults) did a great job and got a gift to take home (to find out what you will need to participate)!

We had our first Israeli movie night with the fun movie "Maktub." This helped us to know a little bit more about the diversity of Israeli society, showed us the beauty

of Jerusalem, and we also laughed!

In addition, I had the opportunity to go to RCOS' Sunday School to do some fun and educational activities about Israel. We read an Israeli children's story ("Room for Rent"), we made bookmarks with words in Hebrew, we continued with the fun game "Taboo," and finished with trivia on various topics about Israel.

In Hebrew High, in addition to the very interesting online lessons, we have activities with me on various topics related to

Israel. If there is something you want to know, tell me!

There were many more things (don't worry, you keep me busy) but I'd also love to tell you what we plan during February!

In February, Jonathan Indorsky, the creator of the successful series "Shtisl," will give a talk about his life and the process of creating the series.

We will also have:

- A lecture about the Israeli elections, and I promise to try to answer all your questions
- A cooking class where we will prepare Israeli salad and Arais

• An Israeli movie night where we will show the movie "The Angel"

- RCOS religious school activities,
- Hebrew High classes
- Lectures and activities at colleges and universities in the area,
- Shabbat Dinner for the youth of the Berks County community!

Looking forward to seeing you in the different programs and events.

Any questions or requests are welcome! Contact me at adiS@JFReading.org.

College student makes difference by baking challah

By **Abby Goldberg**

A year and a half ago, as an incoming freshman in college, I was browsing through a list of extracurricular activities and trying to figure out what I might want to join. When I was a student at Wyomissing Area Junior/Senior High School, I was involved in a number of clubs. However, I wanted to branch out and try something different while at Brown University. I came across a description of my school's chapter of Challah for Hunger.

Challah for Hunger is an organization with chapters across the country that work to fight food insecurity on college campuses. The chapters bake and sell challah, donating the proceeds to organizations that target hunger. I have always loved to be in the kitchen, so I was excited at the prospect of baking for such a great cause and connecting with my Judaism. However, upon getting to campus, I was disappointed to learn that the chapter had disbanded.

I tried other activities, but I kept wishing that the Challah for Hunger chapter was still running. The summer before my sophomore year, two of my friends and I decided to take matters into our own hands. After some planning, contacting individuals at our campus Hillel, talking with national Challah for Hunger directors, and taking a training guide, our chapter was officially restarted.

As my friends and I had never baked challah, the next step was to make some practice loaves and test a few recipes. This resulted in some successes and some serious flops. There was a significant learning curve to ensure we had a tasty product that was not a dense brick. Being artistically challenged, I found the braiding of the challah to be the hardest part of the process to master. However, with the use of an online four-strand braiding guide, I managed to reach a level of competency (although I'm



Abby Goldberg, right, and friends in the Brown University Challah for Hunger program.

still not very good at braiding, to be honest).

Once the fall semester started, we needed to recruit volunteers. We set up a booth at our Hillel's club fair and made the chapter Facebook page active again. We were pleasantly surprised to see that many people were interested in helping us bake for this cause. This past semester, we baked challah once every two weeks using the Brown/RISD Hillel's kitchen. At each baking session, we made 35-40 individual sized loaves, which we sold prior to Shabbat for \$5 a loaf. To keep our product interesting, we tried out mix-ins and flavors such as apple pie challah and pumpkin challah. Thanks to our wonderful volunteers, this past semester we managed to raise more than \$1,000. Half of our proceeds went to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, and the other half went to Swipe Out Hunger, which works to combat campus hunger. Since this was our

first semester running a chapter, we were not expecting to raise much money, and we are pleased with our initial success. We hope to continue building on our efforts this spring.

Food insecurity refers to a lack of consistent access to enough food for a healthy lifestyle. Individuals who struggle with food insecurity do not know how they are going to get their next meal. And 41% of four-year college students grapple with food insecurity. This large percentage is partially due to the cost of tuition, which is rising faster than family income and financial aid. Challah for Hunger at Brown is excited to contribute to helping those in need, both on campus and in our local community.

To donate to Challah for Hunger and help people who struggle with food insecurity, go to challahforhunger.org. Like us on Facebook at Challah for Hunger at Brown University.

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From the President's Desk

Pennsylvania governor makes fruitful trip to Israel

By William D. Franklin
President

What started out as a vacation trip for Gov. Tom Wolf and wife expanded to a state business trip with the assistance of the Pennsylvania Jewish Coalition. PJC advocates for Jewish communities in Pennsylvania through local Jewish Federations and community representatives. They educate government officials about the



issues, concerns and needs of these Jewish Federations and communities throughout the commonwealth

As a PJC member, the Federation was informed as the trip took shape, but due to security concerns, details were not made public until the Wolfs returned.

The Wolfs were accompanied by two people from the Department of Community and Economic Development who focus on international business. They met with Israelis to initiate startups from Israel and propel joint ventures between Israeli companies and Pennsylvania companies in the

areas of technology, health care and agriculture. This is an exciting possibility for our Jewish and general community. We will form a committee to explore possibilities for Reading and Berks County, reaching out to partner with others in our community.

We were touched that the Wolfs made a point to go to Yad Vashem and planted a tree at a memorial for the 11 victims of the mass shooting at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue.

In other state areas, we will be working to apply for community grants. This is a result of the recently

signed Non-Profit Security Grant Program (Act 83) which authorizes \$5 million in security grants for nonprofit communal facilities. These include synagogues, mosques, churches, YMCAs, JCCs, JFS, senior centers and others. Our thanks to state Sen. Judy Schwank for co-sponsoring and pushing through this important piece of legislation.

These are positive, important initiatives for our Jewish community. If you are interested in being part of these efforts, please let me know.

Thank you.

Speaker at JCC to share unique story of resilience

From Federation staff

Come join us Thursday, March 5 at 7 p.m. in the JCC to learn about ImpactIsrael, Batya Shmueli and the important work she does as Yemin Orde's Youth Village Resource Development and Community Relations Manager.

Batya grew up on the banks of the Blue Nile in Ethiopia. Her story is one of transition from agrarian village life to the fast pace of modern Israel — the land that her forefathers dreamed of. After arriving in Israel in 1991, Batya and her family lived in a caravan adjacent to a small town in the Galilee. After living there for three years, she attended a residential high school. The institutional environment of this school proved to be a tremendous culture shock to Batya.

Today she is responsible for finding established Israelis who are willing to give their time, experience and financial resources to children and graduates of



Batya Shmueli

Yemin Orde Youth Village. She arrived in Israel in 1991 and, with her family, lived in a caravan adjacent to a small town in the Galilee. After high school, Batya served in Israel's Navy with an elite naval commando unit. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Haifa University, where she studied

teaching and the history of the Jewish people.

In 2009, Batya returned to Ethiopia with the Israeli Foreign Ministry to teach village women about entrepreneurship. Batya is married and has three children. She is completing a dual Master's degree in Israel history and Jewish law at Haifa University.

Friends of Yemin Orde has changed its name to ImpactIsrael. The new name and brand identity represent the expansion of its national grassroots educational movement, called the Village Way, to all segments of Israel's diverse society, including Jews, Arabs, Druze and Bedouin, religious, secular, and youth of all cultures and countries of origin.

ImpactIsrael continues to focus to support Yemin Orde Youth Village and the many Village Way Educational Initiatives, reflecting its broader mission of impacting parents, educators, IDF commanders, Border Police and others

who impact marginalized youth. The Village Way methodology, first modeled at Yemin Orde Youth Village, impacts 2,500 educators and 22,000 youth in 55 educational communities in Israel, including youth villages, therapeutic residential communities and high schools. By 2026, they expect to work with 4,100 educators and 55,000 at-risk youth in 91 educational communities, changing the nature of education and providing a hopeful future for Israel's marginalized populations.

The traditions and values of Judaism are woven into every aspect of life at Yemin Orde.

Your Jewish Federation is proud that our community has supported the important work of ImpactIsrael and Yemin Orde since 2006 and kvell that our own Vic Hammel serves on the board of ImpactIsrael. He and his wife, Dena, have supported Yemin Orde for many years.

Donate Purim costumes to make children happy

By Adi Shalev

What goes through your mind when I say Purim?

I think of hamantaschen, gift deliveries, beautiful Esther, evil Haman, Ahasuerus, Mordechai, reading the Megillah, and of course — costumes!

Purim in Israel is an amazing day! Schools and kindergartens

break routines, from pre-school kids to high school students. Everyone dresses up! They come to schools, play different games, dance, enjoy exchanging gifts, and then walk around town and malls wearing unique costumes.

I tell you this because we have the opportunity to help at-risk children experience the fun and beauty of

this holiday like every other child in Israel!

In the city of Hadera, there is a place called Talpiot Village for at-risk children aged 4-15. Talpiot Village runs a therapeutic boarding school where the children sleep in a family-style environment and run a day-care center for children who arrive after school hours until evening.

We can make the children of Talpiot Village happy if we send them

costumes that we no longer need.

We will send the costumes to Yemin Orde Youth Village, and their teenagers will distribute them to the children of Talpiot Village.

With your donation, the children will experience a happy, fun Purim holiday like any other child in Israel.

You can drop off the costumes at the federation until Feb. 11.

Toda Raba!

Famous Father Girl: A Memoir of Growing Up Bernstein with Jamie Bernstein

Sunday, March 1st • 10am

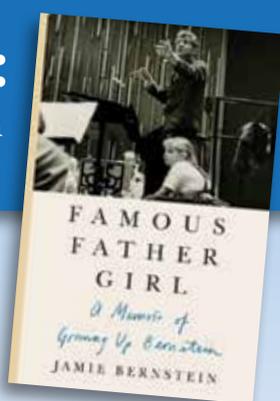
(9 am registration)

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Reading

Registration required. To register, visit

ReadingJewishCommunity.org/home/literatour

This community event includes brunch. Cost is \$36 per person.



Copies of *Famous Father Girl* will be available for sale on-site through Reads & Company

The oldest daughter of revered composer/conductor Leonard Bernstein offers a rare look at her father on the centennial of his birth in a deeply intimate and broadly evocative memoir. An intoxicating tale, *Famous Father Girl* is an intimate meditation on a complex and sometimes troubled man, the family he raised, and the music he composed that became the soundtrack to their entwined lives. Deeply moving and often hilarious, Bernstein's beautifully written memoir is a great American story about one of the greatest Americans of the modern age.



Shalom

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The opinions expressed in *Shalom* are of the writers and not the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks



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- Honoring our Past
- Celebrating our Present
- Envisioning our Future

'The Interpreter' tells story of discovering past

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Slovakia's official entry from 2019 for Best Foreign Language Film, "The Interpreter," is next in the Reading Jewish Film Series. The drama focuses on two old men who take a road trip and discover the truth about their respective pasts. "The Interpreter" will screen on Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 7 p.m. at Fox Berkshire, 800 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing.

An 80-year-old translator, Ali Ungár, comes across a book written by a former SS officer recounting his war experiences in Slovakia. Ali realizes that one of the chapters may well describe his own parents' execution. And so, armed with a pistol, he sets off to Vienna to look for the SS man and take his revenge.

But once there, the only person he encounters is the man's 70-year-old son Georg, a former teacher who has spent his whole life avoiding his father and suffering from an addiction to alcohol. The translator's visit arouses Georg's curiosity and he decides to invite Ali on a trip through Slovakia. But



whilst Georg is basically out to have a good time, Ali is hoping to find out how his parents really died. Gradually, these two very different men begin to warm to each other and together, they discover a country that would prefer to forget about its past.

The 2020 Reading Jewish Film Series is

co-sponsored by the Rubin Educational Fund of the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks and Fox Theatres. Admission is \$8 per film (\$6 for JCC members).

All films will be shown at Fox Berkshire (800 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing). Tickets can be purchased at the theater box office or kiosks or online at www.foxshowtimes.com. All seats are reserved heated recliners, and seat selection takes places at the time of purchase. We highly encourage you to purchase tickets in advance.

The list of upcoming dates and films are:

March 4, 7 p.m. — "93 Queen," an American documentary about the Hasidic women who create the first all-female volunteer ambulance corps in New York City.

May 17, 3 p.m. — "Picture of His Life," an American documentary about legendary Israeli photographer Amos Nachoum on his quest to photograph a wild polar bear, with an in-person discussion with the filmmaker, Dani Menkin.

Filmmaker to lead discussion after interfaith film event

By Amanda J. Hornberger

The community is invited to join the greater Reading community for a brand-new documentary film screening on Sunday, Feb. 16, featuring "American Muslim" by veteran filmmaker Adam Zucker.

Zucker will lead an interfaith panel discussion immediately following the screening at 3 p.m. at the Goggleworks Film Theatre (201 Washington St. Reading) on Sunday, Feb. 16. Tickets are \$5 per person and can be purchased with cash 30 minutes prior to the screening at the box office.

"American Muslim" is a new feature documentary about being Muslim in the age of Trump.

Zucker spent months with five diverse Muslim-Americans in Brooklyn and Queens, telling the story of people and communities dealing with increased Islamophobia and the Muslim ban. The political struggle is interwoven with intimate, personal stories of a Palestinian-American community organizer, an Indonesian-American imam, an Algerian-American social services

provider, a Bengali-American mosque president, and a Yemeni-American activist. They are each trying to navigate the changing landscape of Muslim identity.

The film premiered at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival in July and held its East Coast premiere will be at DOC NYC in November. Just last month Zucker screened the film at Sundance Film Festival.

In addition, Zucker is initiating The American Muslim Interfaith Project, designed to utilize the film as a centerpiece for interfaith events. The growth of Muslim-Jewish alliances is a theme in the film,

and this screening is being planned in conjunction with the Islamic Center of Reading and the Greater Reading Unity Coalition. The goal is to join for the screening, followed by facilitated discussion led by representatives of the different communities, and Zucker.

Many may remember Zucker from his last visit to Reading in 2016 with his film "The Return" about the resurgence of Jewish life in Poland.

We hope you can join us for this one-time only screening of an important and timely film.

Princesses and superheroes invited to event with PJ Library

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Princesses and superheroes are invited to gather for the end of Shabbat at a special Leap Day Havdalah with PJ Library and RCOS.

Join us on Saturday, Feb. 29 at 5 p.m. at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing.

Come in your princess best or superhero cape and join Rabbi Brian Michelson for a Havdalah to celebrate the end of Shabbat.

We will be doing a craft, singing songs and reading a PJ Library story. Afterwards join us for a pizza dinner.

Princesses and superheroes through age 8 are invited with older siblings and parents welcome.

The event is free but RSVPs are requested to info@jreading.org or 610-921-0624 by Feb. 25.

PJ Library of Reading is generously sponsored by the Sue B. Viener Memorial Fund of Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks.

The Friends of Chamber Music of Reading present

The Tesla Quartet

with Alexander Fiterstein, clarinet

A concert in memory of Jake Krumholz

Ross Snyder, violin

Michelle Lie, violin

Edwin Kaplan, viola

Serafim Smigelskiy, cello

Friday evening, February 21, 2020 – 7:30 PM

The WCR Center for the Arts

140 N. Fifth St., Reading 19601

Program:

Finzi: Five Bagatelles for Clarinet & String Quartet, Op. 23

Corigliano: Soliloquy (1995)

Carolina Heredia: Jus in Bello (2014)

Mozart: Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K. 581

No admission fee charged

Parking is available in the Trinity Lutheran lot; enter on N. Fifth St.

This concert is funded in part by a grant from the William Davidson Foundation.

For more information, visit chambermusicreading.org or call 610.698.8465

92nd St. Y Programs

Game Nights

Community Shabbat

Reading Jewish Film Series

Great Decisions

Interfaith Mitzvah Day

Yom Ha'atzmaut

PJ Library

PJ Our Way

Leo Camp Lecture

Tech Tuesday

Yom Hazikaron

Art Exhibits

Yom Hashoah

Annual Meeting and Picnic

Purim Carnival

Richard J. Yashek

Memorial Lecture

Kristallnacht Remembrance

Youth Events

Purim Masquerade Party

Bridge

Chevra

Mahjong

Trips to NYC/Philadelphia

Lakin Holocaust Library

& Resource Center

Shabbat B'yachad

Community Calendar

Two great Literatour events taking place in February

By Amanda J. Hornberger

From the first notes of the theme song or the infamous “Rachel” haircut, the television show “Friends” captured Americans hearts and entered our pop culture. Learn more about the lasting impact of the show as well as some behind the scenes gossip, when Saul Austerlitz comes to Literatour Berks on Monday, Feb. 3.

Austerlitz, a freelance writer and adjunct professor of writing and comedy history at New York University, is the author of *Generation Friends: An Inside Look at the Show that Defined a Television Era*. The book is a nostalgic, fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the blockbuster success of NBC’s *Friends*, including brand-new interviews with the series creators, published for the 25th anniversary of the show’s premiere.

Appearing in a special Q&A moderated format at the Exeter Community Library on Monday, Feb. 3, at 7 p.m., Austerlitz will answer all our burning questions about the hit TV show.



Saul Austerlitz

Afterwards copies of “*Generation Friends*” will be available for purchase thanks to Literatour Berks official book vendor Reads & Company of Phoenixville. You can register by calling 610-406-9431.

Then on Sunday, Feb. 9, gather your friends and prepare to laugh as Mark Oppenheimer, of *Tablet*’s *Unorthodox* Podcast joins us for an afternoon of



Mark Oppenheimer

everything you wanted to know about being Jewish! Oppenheimer is one of the authors of “*The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia: From Abraham to Zabar’s and Everything in Between*” and a panelist on the well-known Jewish podcast “*Unorthodox*”.

Described as an unorthodox guide to everything Jewish, *The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia* is deeply knowing, highly entertaining, and just a little bit irreverent. This unputdownable encyclopedia of all things Jewish and Jew-ish covers culture, religion, history, habits, language, and more. Includes hundreds of photos,

charts, infographics, and illustrations. It was named one of *Library Journal*’s Best Religion & Spirituality Books of 2019.

Join us at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 9, for an entertaining afternoon of all things Jewish. Afterwards Oppenheimer will be signing copies of his books, which will be available for purchase thanks to Literatour Berks official book vendor Reads & Company of Phoenixville.

You can register for the event on our website: <https://readingjewishcommunity.org/home/literatour> Both appearances in Literatour Berks are presented by Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks in partnership with Exeter Community Library and Sinking Spring Public Library. Thank you to the sponsors and patrons of Literatour Berks for making this event possible.

2

February

Israel Program calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
Hebrew high (JCC, 10-12am) 2		RCOS religious school (4:15-6pm) 3		“Shtisel” episode (JCC, 7pm) 4		5
Hebrew high (JCC, 10-12am) 6		Albright college-movie night (Albright, 7pm) 7		Jonathan Indursky (“Shtisel”) lecture (JCC, 7pm) 8		9
	Israel election lecture (JCC, 7pm) 10	RCOS religious school (4:15-6pm) 11		Israeli movie night “The Angel” (JCC, 7pm) 12	Albright college-Shabbat Dinner (Albright, 6pm) 13	14
Hebrew high (JCC, 10-12am) 15			Israeli cooking CLASS (Arais & Israeli salad, 5:30pm) 16		Hebrew high youth- Shabbat Dinner (JCC, 6pm) 17	18
						19
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Israeli Cooking

ARAIS and Israeli Salad

Wednesday, February 26, at 5:30pm

\$12 PER PERSON



RSVP at <https://events.idonate.com/israeli-cooking-2-26>
Questions? AdiS@JFReading.org or 610-921-0624

Congregational News

RCOS to present volunteer award to Miriam Gavigan

By Mark Nemirow

This year Ruth & Irvin Balis Volunteer Appreciation Award will be presented to Miriam Gavigan at a gala dinner to be held Saturday, April 4, at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom. Cocktails will be served at 6 p.m., with dinner to follow at 7. Watch for details on reserving a seat.

Miriam Gavigan, known to many in the community as “Mimi,” has been a member of RCOS for more than three decades. During that time she has done crucial work in a variety of roles.

She sent her three sons through our Religious School and has played a leading role in our education programs, putting her expertise in early childhood education to work for RCOS.

Miriam is a stalwart member of the synagogue choir, serving as the coordinator/secretary/chief music copier. She plays the important role of liaison between Ina Grapenthin, the rabbi, and the group.

Miriam has been deeply



Miriam Gavigan

involved with the Social Action Committee, particularly with the Community Garden. She has acted in Purim Spiels, involved herself with numerous Sisterhood projects and headed soup making for the Food Festival for several years.

She said she joined RCOS after her family moved to Reading. Congregation members Marilyn Frank and Harriet Baskin played

particularly important roles in encouraging her to get involved and ultimately join the synagogue. It has made a great difference in her family’s life.

“Belonging to RCOS allowed us to continue to practice and expand our knowledge about Judaism, be part of a community and build relationships,” she said, making particular note of her involvement in the choir.

“Hearing and joining in the music of my childhood has provided joy and meaning in my life. It’s built connections to my 97-year-old father’s and my 3 year-old granddaughter’s religious experiences. Choir has brought me friends with whom I have many things in common.”

As for her work in social action, she said it was a natural outgrowth from many years of work.

“Social action has allowed me to continue my work in supporting children and families in need,” she said. “My work in this field

started in the trial year of Head Start. Over 40 years I volunteered, administered and monitored a wide range of similar programs. With RCOS it allowed us to support our community in new ways.

“Working on the RCOS and Sisterhood boards and Religious School committee and others was an opportunity to build connections. I am proud of sharing my family with the congregation as well. My father told his famous collection n of Jewish jokes and our thousands of matzo balls were enjoyed by many.”

“Overall, the key to my involvement has been focused on connections and meaningful relationships that expanded my family.”

The Balis Award is named after the late Ruth and Irvin Balis, longtime members and avid volunteers for the congregation. It honors a congregation member who has provided consistent and important volunteer service to the RCOS community.

Tricky Tray event a big hit at Keshar Zion



Keshar Zion Synagogue hosted its fifth annual Tricky Tray event in December and achieved another success.

From left are Tricky Tray co-chairs Sue Wilson, Carole Robinson and Sue Farrara.

Tricky Tray participants purchased tickets in hopes of winning a variety of prize baskets ranging from instant pots, massages, and restaurant gift cards to doctor visits, hockey tickets, and tickets to Broadway.

Everyone went home a winner, whether winning an actual prize or enjoying a fun afternoon with friends.

All Around the Town

Mazel tov to **Naomi and Alex Knoll** on the birth of their granddaughter Sophie Mira, daughter of Avi and Liz, sister of Jacob of Denver, Colo.

We love good news about members of our community! Please share it by emailing Marknem@aol.com or calling the JCC office at 610-921-0624.

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND SERVICE TIMES

CHABAD CENTER OF BERKS COUNTY (610) 921-0881
Saturday mornings: 9:30 a.m.; Friday evenings: 6:30 p.m.

KESHER ZION SYNAGOGUE (610) 374-1763
Weekly services Saturdays: 9:30 a.m.; Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM (610) 375-6034
Friday, Feb. 7: Shabbat service, 6 p.m.
Fridays, Feb. 14, 21 and 28: Shabbat service, 7:45 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 22: Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.

CONGREGATION SHOMREI HABRITH

Obituaries

Mervin J. Lewis, 89, of Reading. Merv was a graduate of Reading High School and then served in the Air Force for four years. He was a salesman for Duo-Fast Corp. for 37 years and an active volunteer for Easter Seals and various Jewish organizations. Merv is survived by his wife, Gladys; his daughter Mindy and her husband, Robert Coopersmith; and his son Gary Lewis. He is also survived by his three grandsons, two great-grandsons and his sister Eileen.

February Shevat-Adar



Shabbat Candle Lightings

February 7
5:11 p.m.

February 14
5:20 p.m.

February 21
4:47p.m.

February 28
4:54 p.m.



Torah Portions

February 8/13 Shevat
Beshalach (Exodus 13:17-17:16)

February 15/20 Shevat
Yitro (Exodus 18:1-20:23)

February 22/27 Shevat
Mishpatim (Exodus 21:1-24:18)

February 29/4 Adar
Terumah (Exodus 25:1-27:19)

Chabad

Keshar Zion

Reform Congregation

Oheb Sholom

Presidents Day: Bowl to strike out illiteracy

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Bowling for books! Youth ages 6-12 are invited to spend Presidents Day, Monday, Feb. 17, bowling to strike out illiteracy with their friends from PJ Our Way.

Did you know that more than 43% of third-graders throughout Berks County are reading below grade level? According to Ready Set Read Berks,

that means that 1,996 children in our community — in urban, rural and suburban schools — are four times more likely to drop out of school and 13 times more likely to drop out if they also live in poverty.

Educators note that third grade reading proficiency is a critical component of learning and an indicator of long-term educational and life

outcomes. Those students without reading proficiency are less likely to develop skills essential for contributing to the 21st century economy and less likely to be effective citizens.

Youth are invited to collect used (or new) books to be donated to the Ready Set Read program in Berks County.

As part of the fun we'll be bowling to strike out illiteracy at Berks Lanes! We

will be meeting at the JCC at 9:30 a.m. to travel by bus to the bowling alley, where we will bowl and enjoy a pizza lunch before returning to the JCC by 12:30 p.m.

The cost for participating is \$5 per child with registration required by Monday, Feb. 10, to info@jfreading.org or 610-921-0624. We hope you can join us as we work together to strike out illiteracy in Berks!

What do we celebrate on Tu B'Shevat?

By Adi Shalev

The holiday of trees is coming! What are we celebrating on this day?

On Tu B'Shevat we celebrate Rosh Hashana for trees. It is a celebration of flowers, trees, fruits, vegetables and all nature. This day marks the end and beginning of an agricultural year. Tu B'Shevat was a day for the farmers to set aside a tenth of their crop of fruit for donations.

We celebrate Tu B'Shevat with the understanding that we are only a small part of creation and there is a whole world for which we are responsible. Judaism celebrates this creation and our responsibility.

This day also expresses the connection between the Jewish people and their land.

Tu B'Shevat in Israel is a celebration of planting trees. Schools and families plant trees that will provide us beauty, shade and oxygen. In addition, we have a Tu B'Shevat Seder during which we eat and welcome the fruits of the land and say thank you again.

In addition, Tu B'Shevat is defined as a conservation holiday. Nature gives us air, food, water, peace and more.

How does planting trees affect the environment? There are so many ways!

- Trees are an integral part of the photosynthesis process.
- The trees help with better water penetration into the soil.
- The shade of the trees reduces the heat to a lower temperature.
- Trees hide noise sources and help



- reduce noise.
- The trees are habitats for many creatures: birds, bees, beetles, etc.
- The trees serve us as a source of enjoyment in the outdoors, picnics, climbing,

hiking. When I did a year of service (the volunteer year before my military service) at the JNF, Tu B'Shevat was a key and essential part of our activities. We trained

a lot of people on the significance of the holiday and the importance of protecting the environment. And of course — we planted lots of trees together. I wish everyone a happy Tu B'Shevat!



HAPPY PURIM!

פורים שמח!



donate your old costumes for at-risk children from "Talpiot Village" in Israel



Drop off your costumes at the ICC
(1100 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing).

The collection will be until Tuesday, February 11.

Questions?
AdiS@JFReading.org or 610-921-0624

Yemin Orde is Youth Village in Israel. The Village is a home, school and safe haven for at-risk immigrant youth from around the world. Yemin Orde youth will handed your costumes to at-risk childrens from **Talpiot Village**. Talpiot's mission is to reduce the number of at-risk children and youth in the region of Hadera and prevent risk situations in families.





NAMI Berks offers important mental health programs

By Sari Incledon

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI Berks County is an affiliate of NAMI. The dedicated volunteers and leaders of NAMI Berks County work to raise awareness and provide education, advocacy and support group programs for people in our community living with mental illness and for their loved ones.



The following are some of the NAMI Berks programs:

Family to Family Education Program

- Free eight-session program for persons 18 years and older who have family members living with mental illness
 - Designed to help family members understand and support their loved ones, while maintaining their own well-being.
 - Program taught by trained teachers who are also family members
- Family to Family runs Tuesday evenings, 6:30 to 9 p.m., from March 3 to April 21. .

Location will be provided after registration.

NAMI Family Support Group

The family support group is a free, confidential and safe place where families help other families who live with mental health challenges. By sharing their experiences and collective wisdom, families can achieve a renewed sense of hope.

NAMI Family Support Group meets on the second Wednesday of each month from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Calvary United Church of Christ, 640 Centre Ave., Reading (lighted parking lot access is off Oley Street with rear entrance into building by NAMI sign.

NAMI Peer to Peer Education

NAMI Peer to Peer is a free eight-session course for adults living with mental health conditions. Taught by peer mentors, it is an educational program focused on recovery that offers respect, understanding, encouragement and hope.

Peer to Peer Education began Jan. 7 and meets weekly until Feb. 25. It meets from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Location provided with registration.

NAMI Connection Peer Recovery Support Group

NAMI Connection Peer Recovery Support Group is a free, confidential group that meets every other week for 90 minutes. Trained facilitators living in recovery

lead the program, designed to connect, encourage and support participants.

NAMI Connection group meets the second & fourth Thursday of each month 6:30 to 8 p.m. at St. James Church, 644 Penn Ave., West Reading. Entrance is the glass door at the rear of the church on Cherry Street.

To learn more about these programs and other NAMI activities contact Janice Sommerhoff at 610-685-3000 or email berksnami@gmail.com. The NAMI website is a great source of information www.namiberkspa.org

Attention Students, Retirees and Anyone Looking for a Job Opportunity

I was recently contacted by a recruiter for the United States Census Bureau who is hoping to hire people for the 2020 census. JFS is happy to spread the word that the U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting to fill hundreds of thousands of temporary positions across the county. Please share this information with friends, family, neighbors — anyone who may be in need of a job.

Census jobs provide great, weekly pay, flexible hours and paid training.

You can apply online – 2020 census.gov/job or for more information or help applying call 1-855-JOB (562) – 2020.

Jewish Family Service

- Food Pantry
- Friendship Circle
- Counseling Services
- Transportation
- Financial Assistance
- Hospital and Home Visitations
- Living with Loss
- Information and Referral
- Case Management
- Holiday Programs

Great times at Friendship Circle



There have been plenty of fun and interesting activities at Friendship Circle. Clockwise from top, the Bob Cistik duo returns for another klezmer performance; Mariette Jacobson and her daughter Rachel dance to the music; and Runette Gabriel teaches the group about Harriet Tubman.

Your contributions to Federation's Community Campaign strengthens Jewish communities throughout the world.

This month we are highlighting Federation's overseas partners that provide social services, community support and emergency assistance wherever it is needed.



Israel & Global Jewish Communities

Our work is based on people helping people and strengthening our connections with Israel. We are part of a global partnership with Israel at its heart.

Social Services in Israel

Support in 2019:

\$ 6,000 Meir Panim
\$12,000 Yemin Orde Youth Villages

Meir Panim provides both immediate and long-term relief to the impoverished – young and old alike – via a dynamic range of food and social service programs, all aimed at helping people gain dignity and respect.

Yemin Orde support programs and activities for at-risk immigrant youth through its Youth Villages in Israel and its Village Way Educational Initiatives. The Village is a home, school and safe haven for at-risk immigrant youth from around the world.

Jewish Federations of North America

Support in 2019: \$19,200

Strengthening Jewish Life Overseas & Assisting Frail Elderly in Former Soviet Union

Today, European Jewish communities face a growing number of challenges, including a marked increase in anti-Semitism, economic uncertainty, educational challenges, assimilation, and rapid shifts in modes of Jewish identity and affiliation.

We will continue to help re-emerging Jewish communities in the former Soviet Union (FSU) increase their self-sufficiency and work toward a vibrant Jewish future. Plus develop capable young leaders within the community who can create, inspire, excite and educate.

The more than 165,000 elderly Jews in the former Soviet Union (FSU) are among the most destitute Jews in the world. War in Ukraine and the re-emergence of anti-Semitism has put these Jewish communities at increased risk.

Our goal remains to continue helping these frail, elderly Jews to live their last days in relative comfort by supplementing their pensions so they can purchase additional groceries, medication, heating oil and modest home care support.

Israel Scholarships

Support in 2019: ongoing need

Israel engagement among our youth is a key predictor of future communal leadership. There is an ongoing demand for financial assistance that enables teens and young adults to participate in short term education programs or enroll in post-secondary education in Israel.

Israeli Cultural Connections

Support in 2019: ongoing need

Events that feature culturally diverse Israeli artists, performers and art exhibitions help connect us as Jews and introduce Israel to the broader community. We currently offer a number of Israel cultural events. Our goal is to continue creating a positive dialogue about Israel through these events, including theater, music, authors and artists.

Jewish Agency for Israel

Support in 2019: \$22,900

Since 1929, JAFI has served as the prime connector between Jewish communities separated by distance. JAFI's focus remains on placing the Israeli people at the heart of these connections.

Joint Distribution Committee

Support in 2019: \$22,900

JDC, the leading Jewish humanitarian organization, works in 70 countries to strengthen communities. JDC's priorities support rescuing Jews in danger, providing aid to vulnerable Jews, developing solutions to Israel's most complex social challenges, cultivating a Jewish future and leading the Jewish community's response to crises.

Learning to communicate meaningfully with G-d

By Rabbi David Sislen

Kesher Zion Synagogue

Remember the good old days? When you saw somebody in public who was having a spirited conversation with an unseen partner, that was your cue to give them a wide berth so as to avoid being drawn into the discussion.



Nowadays the people who appear to be talking to themselves in the car, on the street, or in a store are taken for granted; you know that there is an earbud, headset, or speakerphone somewhere nearby and there is nothing abnormal about their behavior save for the fact that they may be having a private conversation in full earshot of the public. My favorite ones are the people at the grocery store who are so engrossed in conversation as they hold the phone in front of them and shouting at it that they can't steer the cart one-handed — to the detriment of piles of produce, endcap displays,

and their fellow shoppers.

Modern technology has made communication so easy that we have evolved into a culture where it's indispensable. If we want to speak or text with someone, we need to do it immediately. If we have something we want to share with the entire world, we post it, whether the world needs to hear it or not. Even worse, we now can sum up our entire view on a subject with a single graphic, meme or emoji. Communicating on a high, intelligent level is what sets us apart from others of G-d's creations, but the ease with which we can talk nowadays has had the unfortunate by-product of cheapening what we say, and how and when we say it.

Judaism has certainly benefitted from technology. The internet certainly revolutionized the study of Jewish texts. One can cross-reference dozens of commentaries at once, when it used to take a table full of books to do the same. Rabbis can share insights and cantors can share melodies or techniques quickly and efficiently. But one thing that hasn't changed or evolved is the importance

and value of conversation — with G-d. The development of our current liturgical system saw to that. The siddur and the act of prayer were designed to stress the importance of our words combined with the experience itself. One can certainly pray on their own, but in order to take full advantage of the opportunity, we need to find at least nine other like-minded people to join us. There's power in numbers. The text of the siddur, fundamentally unchanged for over a millennium, holds something for everyone. On the most basic level, simply showing up for the conversation with G-d alongside other people who are (literally) on the same page can be very rewarding on multiple levels. Reciting and singing the same prayers that were central in generations past renders the experience timeless. Studying our sacred texts deepens our appreciation of them, and allows us to approach them from a fresh point of view every time we encounter

them.

The point is that we all need to make the time for the conversation. Whatever your style, at least one of your local synagogues has some point of entry for you to get started or to continue the conversation. The important thing is to take a dynamic, motivated role in the dialog, rather than being a dispassionate or anonymous provider or consumer.

In Masechet Brachot 30a, Rabbi Elazar asks the rhetorical question: if one cannot concentrate on prayer, should they not pray? The sugya continues by saying that one missed opportunity will be followed by another, and by another, and so forth. If simple, superficial conversation has become so automatic for us that we do it without thinking, that's the first step toward making regular, meaningful discourse with G-d be part of our normal routine. It's never too late to start. And I promise you can do it without knocking over any grocery products in the process.

Learn about world affairs; join us for Great Decisions

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Climate change. India and Pakistan. Human trafficking. China and Latin America. The Philippines and U.S. These are just a few of the hot-button international topics that will be discussed at this year's Great Decisions series at the JCC.

Moderated by local professors from Albright, Alvernia and PSU Berks as well as community members, Great Decisions is the country's largest discussion group on world affairs. Each week a different global issue will be discussed by the group after reading the Great Decision

Briefing Book and watching the related DVD.

Our group will be meeting on Monday mornings from 10:30 until noon at the JCC beginning March 2.

Great Decisions runs for eight weeks through April 20. The cost is \$35 per book or \$40 for two people sharing one book. We always have a lively and intellectual discussion and are welcoming new participants!

To register for Great Decisions and to order a copy of the Great Decision Briefing Book please contact the JCC at info@jcreading.org or 610-921-0624.



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Learn the history of our prayers, the structure of our services, experience the beauty of the poetry, and the wisdom of our tradition in a monthly class taught by Rabbi/Hazzan David Sislen.

First semester schedule:

December 12

January 9

February 13

March 12

May 14

June 11

The second Thursday night of the month, 6:30-7:30 pm
(Minyan will follow the class)

Please register at the Kesher Zion office
or contact us for more information:

kzsecretary@entermail.net or keshertzionrav@gmail.com

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Anti-Semitism and BDS event to be held March 30

By Debbie Goldberg

Want to acquire new insights into how to fight anti-Semitism and the growing BDS movement? The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Reading is pleased to have our own Michael Fromm, National Chairman of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), along with David Bernstein, JCPA's President and CEO, to address our community on these pressing issues facing Jews across the nation. The event will take place on March 30 at 7 p.m. at the Jewish Cultural Center of Reading.

Anti-Semitism is clearly on the rise in our country and around the world. In the United States, we have seen attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway, Calif. Kosher supermarkets, holiday

gatherings and even the streets of New York have been beset by incidents of hate and violence. Unfortunately, the words and actions of anti-Semitism are working their way into our neighborhoods in greater numbers. In New York City alone, the police department recorded a 24.4% increase in hate crimes in the first nine months of 2019.

U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania said, "As we have seen an uptick of vile, anti-Semitic actions recently, our nation must demonstrate unity in confronting such hate. We must never become numb to bigotry or violence or be complacent in its face." Jewish communities need to learn how to respond to anti-Semitism with tools that help defuse and not inflame these

potentially volatile situations.

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement is another form of intolerance toward Israel and the Jewish people. This organization is rapidly gaining strongholds on college campuses nationwide. BDS leaders try to portray themselves as peace activists who are using nonviolent means to force Israel to withdraw from the West Bank. BDS uses its methods to criticize Israel without acknowledging that the issues in the region are two-sided. This movement leads to a negative view of Israel and an increase in anti-Semitism. In fact, during the last year, anti-Semitic harassment has seen a 70% rise on our college campuses.

We invite you to attend this important program on March 30 and hear Michael Fromm and David Bernstein offer recommended strategies to combat racism and hate in our community.

Learn how to help college students combat the BDS movement on their

campuses.

As Jonathan Greenblatt, Anti-Defamation League CEO and national director, says, "It's clear we must remain vigilant in working to counter the threat of violent anti-Semitism and denounce it in all forms, wherever the source and regardless of the political affiliation of its proponents."

This evening with Michael Fromm and David Bernstein is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Reading's Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC). The JCRC is in place to serve the needs of the Jewish community through the practice of community relations, social action, and advocacy. We aim to promote ways to improve our community at large through programs that teach tolerance, acceptance, and inclusion.

In addition, the program is co-sponsored by the Social Action Committees of Keshet Zion Synagogue and Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom.

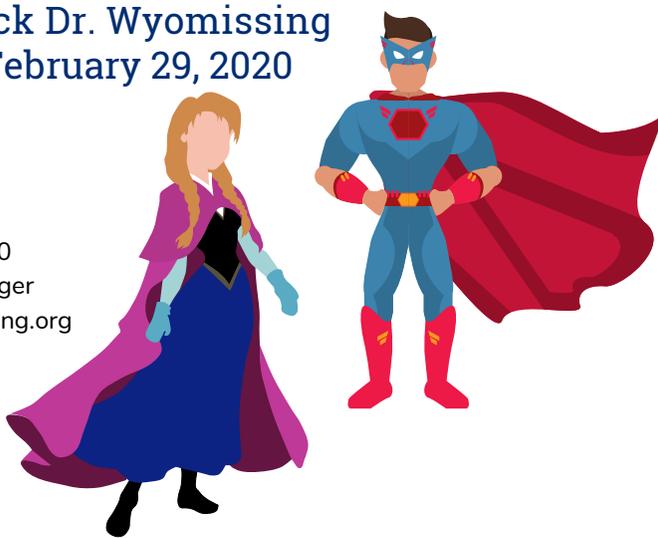
PJ Library Princess & Superhero Havdalah

Join Rabbi Michelson for a fun conclusion of Shabbat filled with music, crafts and pizza dinner. Come dressed as your favorite princess or superhero!

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
555 Warwick Dr. Wyomissing
Saturday, February 29, 2020
5 PM

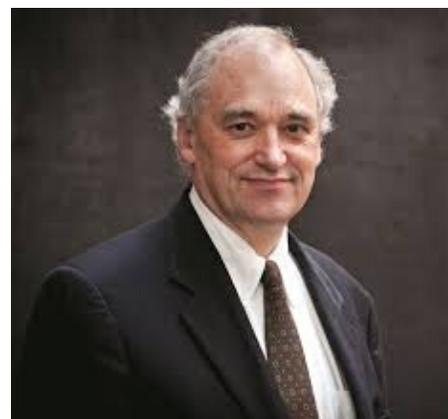
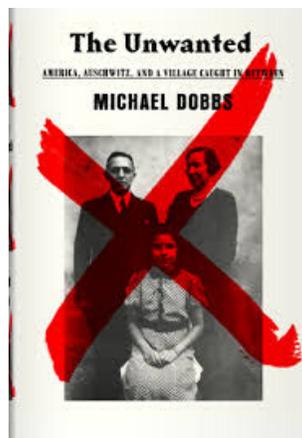
RSVP

February 25, 2020
Amanda Hornberger
amandah@jfreeding.org
610-921-0624



Save the Date!

16th Annual Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lecture
Thursday, March 26, 2020
7:30 p.m.
Wachovia Theatre, Albright College



"The Unwanted: America, Auschwitz, and a Village Caught in Between"



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February 28th

Hebrew High



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Join us at RCOS for Tot Shabbat on Sat, Feb. 22 at 10am & Tot Pajama Havdalah with PJ Library on Sat, Feb. 29 at 5pm

Tot Shabbat

Members and non-members are invited. No registration is required. Tot Shabbat services are held Saturday mornings at 10:00 am at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing unless noted. Please call the Temple office with any questions, 610.375.6034.

A musical, story-filled, interactive hour for children through grade 2. Bring your family & friends to celebrate with Rabbi Michelson & stay for a pint-sized oneg of juice, challah, fruit, & child-friendly treats!

FUTURE TOT SHABBAT DATES:
March 14, April 25, May 16, & June 13

Cities with mixed populations are breaking down barriers

Something interesting happened in Israel's mixed Jewish-Arab cities in the last municipal elections. Arabs running on national party lists or as independent candidates were elected to city councils, and they all, without exception, joined

the municipal coalition governments and announced their support for the elected mayors or local council heads. Five of these local council heads are from the right, representing the Likud or Yisrael Beytenu.

Despite the ideological gaps and political polarization, city residents can still have identical interests, and there are many fields in which elected officials from Hadash (the Arab-Israeli communist party), Balad, or the Islamic Movement can work effectively with representatives of the Likud or Habayit Hayehudi.

In every mixed-population city, one finds close cooperation between Jews and Arabs at every level of municipal administration and activity, even though it's rare that the city's schools are bilingual or serve both sectors.

Although the government devoted billions of shekels to a special economic plan for the Arab sector, there is no special attention being paid to the advancement of Arab residents of mixed cities. The Abraham Fund recently hosted a conference in Acre about its "Shared Cities" initiative, during which representatives of mixed cities laid out their positions as well as presenting some very interesting statistics about the Jewish and Arab residents of those cities.

"Shared Cities" is a project that seeks to foster an approach to city management for existing mixed cities, as well as ones that are developing, and steer them toward becoming fully integrated cities in the fullest sense of the term.

According to a study that Dr. Hisham Jubran conducted in Haifa, Acre, Lod, Ramle, Jaffa, Nof Hagalil, and Ma'lot-Tarshiha, the Jewish and Arab residents of mixed cities value one another and are satisfied with relations between the two groups. The study showed that

81% of Jewish residents described relations with Arab residents of their cities as good, and 89% of the Arab residents described relations with Jewish residents as good.

Some 79% of Arab residents of mixed cities and 61% of Jewish residents said they were in contact with members of the other sector. This indicates that a clear majority of residents of mixed cities meet and interact with members of the other population sector at work, in the neighborhood, and during leisure activities.

Also, 61% of Jewish residents of mixed cities said they agreed with the statement: "I allow my children to play with Arab children," while 86% of Arab residents said they allowed their children to play with Jews.

These figures show a heartening picture of coexistence, but when it comes to joint school systems, there is still a long way to go.

Coalitions and cooperation at the local government level offer a mirror image of what is taking place in the Knesset and in national politics as a whole, where polarization, alienation, and incitement run rampant.

Mixed cities are important points of intersection that can prevent a bigger schism and help forge social bonds, especially given the fact that Arabs — especially young couples and members of the middle class — are moving from Arab communities into mixed cities in an attempt to improve their quality of life and enjoy better municipal services. They are open to the multicultural lifestyle these cities offer.

Jalal Bana is an Israeli journalist and media adviser.

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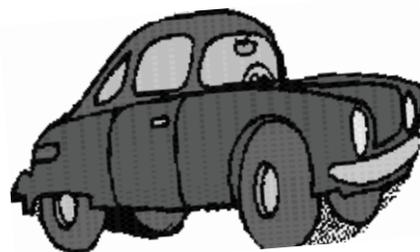
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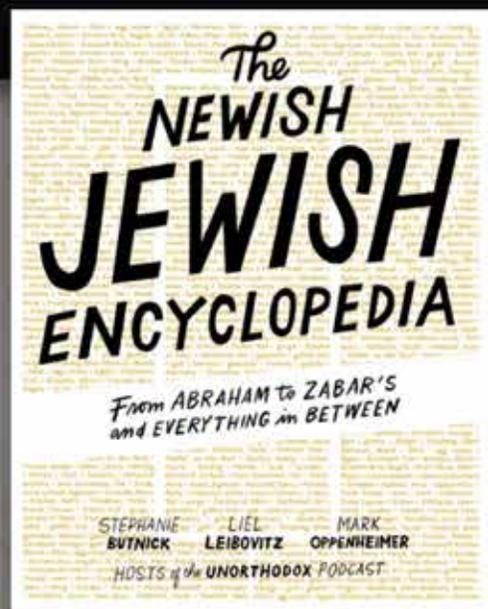
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Keren Keet

The Jewish App Store

The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia: From Abraham to Zabar's and Everything In Between with Mark Oppenheimer



Sunday
February 9th
4 p.m.

Jewish Cultural Center
1100 Berkshire Blvd
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Wyomissing, PA 19610

Registration required.

To register, visit:

www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org/home/literatour

Deeply knowing, highly entertaining, and just a little bit irreverent, this unputdownable encyclopedia of all things Jewish and Jew-ish covers culture, religion, history, habits, language, and more. Includes hundreds of photos, charts, infographics, and illustrations. It's a lot.

Copies of *The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia* will be available for sale onsite through Reads & Company.



Israeli researchers working toward Alzheimer's vaccine

Israel21c.com

A team of researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have successfully associated the Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine with reducing the risk of Alzheimer's.

The disease affects one in 10 adults over the age of 65 — a number that is expected to triple by 2030, according to HU.

BCG is the vaccine used to treat tuberculosis worldwide. Though in the past it was administered routinely in the United States, it is today mainly used in developing countries or with high-risk populations in Western countries.

However, the vaccine has another use, according to Hervé Bercovier of HU's Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics.

Bercovier, who led the BCG study with colleagues Charles Greenblatt and Benjamin Klein, said that BCG is also

used to treat and cure certain types of bladder cancer.

"People with bladder cancer tend to be 70 years or older," he explained to *The Jerusalem Post*, "so they are close to the population that has an increased risk for developing Alzheimer's."

Furthermore, Bercovier explained, BCG has been shown to lower general chronic inflammation. Patients with Alzheimer's suffer from chronic inflammation in the brain as a result of proteins that improperly unfold inside and outside of the brain.

As such, the HU team followed 1,371 bladder cancer patients receiving treatment at HU's Hadassah Medical Center. During follow-up visits, 65 cancer patients had developed Alzheimer's, a release explained. Those who had not received BCG as part of their treatment had a significantly higher risk of developing Alzheimer's than did BCG-

treated patients: 8.9% (44 patients) as opposed to 2.4% (21).

Moreover, when compared with the general — non-bladder cancer — population, people who had never been treated with BCG had a four-fold higher risk for developing Alzheimer's than did those who were treated with BCG.

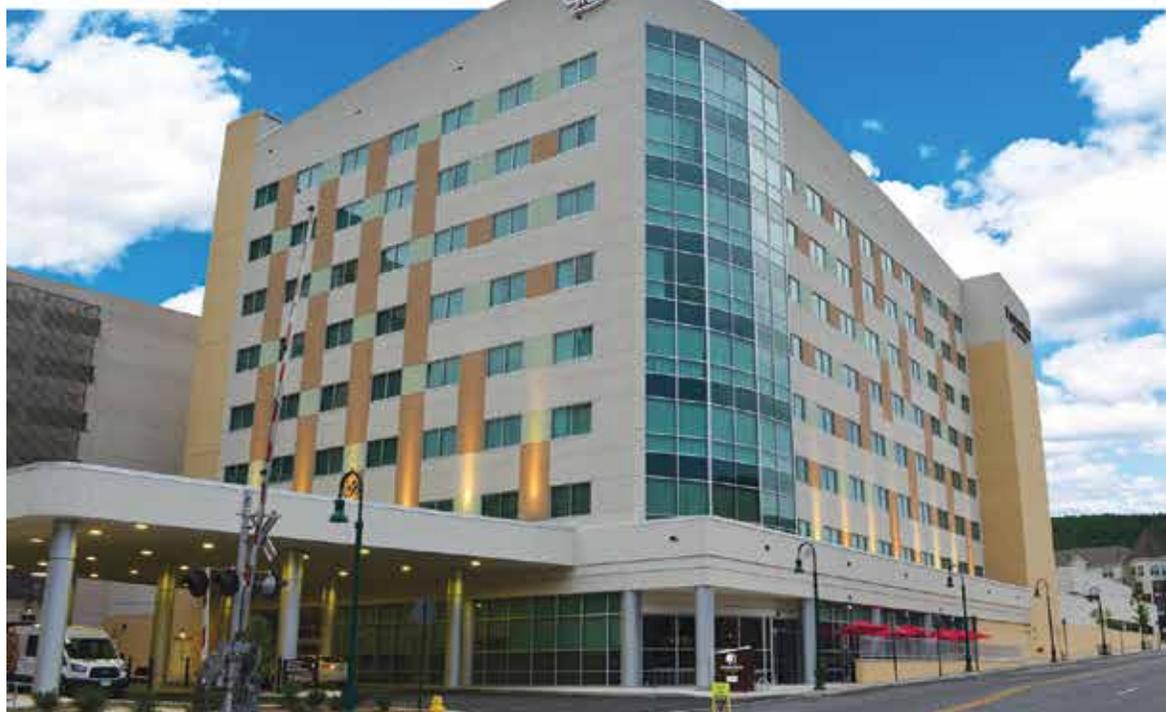
"There's data reaching back to the 1960's that shows that countries treating bladder cancer patients with the BCG vaccine had a lower prevalence of Alzheimer's disease but it hadn't been properly analyzed," said Bercovier.

With this study, he said he believes we are closer to understanding the vaccine's impact.

Bercovier noted that the next steps are to reproduce the study in different populations. Then, he said, to prove causality, the team will conduct a formal clinical trial.



Herve Bercovier



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FBI: Jews victims in 60% of religiously motivated hate crimes

From online news sources

According to the FBI hate crime statistics for 2018, Jews were the victims in nearly three-fifths of the offenses committed against people due to their religion. Furthermore, there was a 105% increase in physical assaults on Jews over the previous year, the worst of which was the Oct. 27 massacre of 11 worshipers by a white supremacist at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Since that tragic event, more than a dozen white supremacists have been arrested for plots, threats or attacks against Jews. The specific incidents include a threat on Facebook to kill Jews at a synagogue in Washington state, a threat on Instagram to attack a Jewish community center in Ohio, a deadly shooting at the Chabad synagogue in Poway, California, and a plot to bomb a historic Colorado synagogue.

There's no disputing that Jews are the primary target of white supremacist hate. It would be unthinkable (not to mention patently absurd and highly offensive) for anyone to accuse the very victims of this odious far-right antisemitism of being white supremacists themselves.

Unthinkable, that is, unless we're talking about the twisted moral universe of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. As if the outrageous claims of Israeli apartheid and genocide of the Palestinians were not enough to demonize the Jewish state, BDS activists are increasingly casting Jews —

specifically, the Zionists among us — as agents of white supremacy.

Given the reality that Zionism provides for fully safeguarding the civil liberties and political rights of non-Jewish Israeli citizens, what's behind this nefarious campaign to misrepresent it as a hate-filled, racist ideology? The goal is similar to that of comparing Israel's treatment of the Palestinians to the Nazis' treatment of the Jews: to influence progressive-minded people, especially impressionable young college students who know virtually nothing about Israel, to condemn the Jewish state and its supporters in the same way they condemn white supremacy.

To be sure, Zionism has long been the target of the Israel haters going all the way back to 1975 when the UN General Assembly adopted its infamous "Zionism Is Racism" resolution. Although Resolution 3379 was revoked in 1991, over the last several years the BDS movement has eagerly taken up the mantle of defaming Zionism.

I first became aware of the insidious tactic of equating the national liberation movement of the Jewish people with white supremacy when three Jewish women who were carrying rainbow Star of David flags were expelled from the 2017 Chicago "Dyke March" in support of LGBTQ rights. Their crime? They refused to disavow Israel. In a statement following the march, organizers explained that the

women couldn't participate because, after all, "Zionism is an inherently white supremacist ideology."

According to AMCHA Initiative, a nonpartisan group that investigates and combats antisemitism on college campuses, demonization campaigns seeking to marginalize pro-Israel students as white supremacists have more than doubled. At the University of Virginia, in the town where neo-Nazis marched through campus two years ago shouting, "Jews will not replace us," it was Jewish students who were barred from joining a minority student coalition to confront white supremacy.

In May 2018 at Stony Brook University in New York, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) issued a statement asking the administration: "If there were Nazis, white nationalists and KKK members on campus, would their identity have to be accepted and respected? Absolutely not. Then why would we respect the views of Zionists?"

In November, the Brown University

chapters of SJP and the anti-Zionist Jewish Voices for Peace hosted a pro-BDS program featuring Palestinian-American activist Linda Sarsour, who stepped down as co-chair of the national Women's March following concerns over her association with notorious anti-Semite Louis Farrakhan. Sarsour, proclaimed that "Jewish people deserve to [live] in safety" while calling Zionism a form of racial supremacy. She failed to explain how vilifying Zionists — i.e., the vast majority of American Jews — would make us feel safe.

Given the rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes in the U.S., it's understandable that many Jews would consider combating white supremacy to be the highest priority of our community. But we must also pay close attention to anti-Semitism on the left and devote ample resources to fighting those divisive forces that seek to delegitimize Israel by maligning a core part of our Jewish identity. Ignore that threat, and it will be just a matter of time before the "Zionism-is-white-supremacy" slander goes mainstream.

RCOS shoe collection a big success



The RCOS Sisterhood shoe drive collected 3,650 pairs of shoes and raised more than \$1,400 thanks to support from the congregation and the broader Jewish community. Sisterhood surpassed its goal of bringing in at least 100 bags of shoes. The mitzvah project generated 146 bags of shoes. These shoes are headed toward Third World micro-entrepreneurs. The effort also raised some funds that will be added to the congregation's Cantor Endowment Fund.

Lunch & Learn

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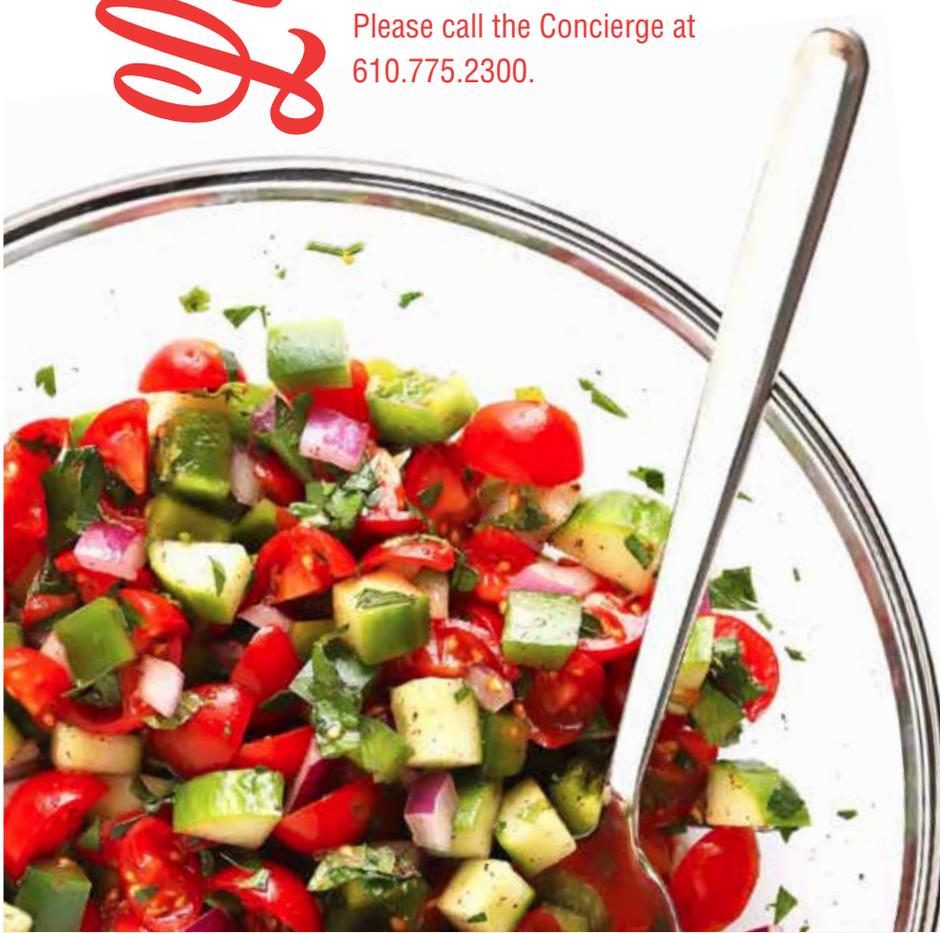
Tuesday, March 3rd
11:30 am - 1:00 pm

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\$10 per person due the Temple office by Tuesday, Feb. 25th. Your check is your reservation. Please call the Temple office with questions, 610.375.6034. Transportation is available for residents of The Highlands.

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Seven things you should know before starting a diet

Israel21c.com

It's time to get real. We all know what happens when we overindulge in Hanukkah sufganiyot or Christmas fruitcake, and it's not a pretty picture. After one too many cups of eggnog or a mountain of sour cream and latkes, we resolve to slim down in the new year. Again. How can you make your weight-loss plan more successful this time around? We reviewed Israeli research and found these suggestions for effective dieting.

1. Time meals to lose weight

Have meals at set times, eating more in the morning and less in the evening. That routine resets your circadian clock and results in better health and weight loss no matter how many total calories you consume, according to Prof. Oren Froy, director of the Institute of Biochemistry, Food Science and Nutrition at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The identical meal can make you gain or lose weight depending on when you eat it.

2. Have a big breakfast

A high-calorie breakfast synchronizes your circadian clock, while skipping breakfast disturbs your rhythm and can cause weight gain, says Froy. Furthermore, a big breakfast and small dinner effectively reduces insulin resistance — a factor in type 2 diabetes. And finally, research Froy did with colleagues at Tel Aviv University suggests that a hearty, protein-rich breakfast (even with a small piece of cake for dessert!) increases metabolism and decreases hunger throughout the day.

3. Follow a Mediterranean diet

A major multinational study led by Ben-Gurion University Professor Iris Shai used unique methods to measure and map the effects of different diets on body-fat deposits in 278 overweight

people over 18 months. Comparing the results of subjects who reduced calorie intake through a low-carb Mediterranean diet or a low-fat diet, they saw that both groups lost a moderate amount of weight — especially those who also were put on a moderate exercise regimen.

However, test subjects on a Mediterranean diet emphasizing vegetables, nuts, legumes, olive oil and moderate amounts of fish and poultry showed more significant reductions in measurable risk of heart disease. A low-carb Mediterranean diet is more effective than other low-fat diets in reducing hepatic (liver) fat and some of the body's other fatpools.

4. Don't depend on a small plate

The popular trick of using smaller plates to help you control food portions doesn't work, according to a study led by Dr. Tzvi Ganel, head of the Laboratory for Visual Perception and Action at Ben-Gurion University. "Even if you're hungry and haven't eaten, or are trying to cut back on portions, a serving looks similar whether it fills a smaller plate or is surrounded by empty space on a larger one," said Ganel. "Over the last decade, restaurants and other food businesses have been using progressively smaller dishes to conform to the perceptual bias that it will reduce food consumption," says Ganel. "This study debunks that notion. When people are hungry, especially when dieting, they are less likely to be fooled by the plate size, more likely to realize they are eating less and more prone to overeating later."

5. Determine which foods make your blood sugar spike

Each person's blood-sugar level reacts differently to food because everyone's gut microbiome is unique. That was the conclusion of the groundbreaking Personalized Nutrition Project pioneered by

Weizmann Institute of Science professors Eran Elinav and Eran Segal in 2015. "This was a big paradigm shift," Elinav said. "Diet advice used to be based on quantifying or grading food to determine which is good and which is not. We showed that rather than scoring food we should score people because people react uniquely." The Israeli-American company DayTwo used the study's findings to develop personalized microbiome analysis enabling users to choose, log, and track foods that best balance their blood sugar.

6. Carrots over candy

Israeli research has shown that no matter which diet you choose to follow, the simplest recipe for success is increasing

consumption of vegetables and decreasing consumption of sugary foods.

7. If you go off your diet, don't give up

The food we eat has a cumulative effect, so a day of eating the "wrong" things doesn't mean you should give up on your healthy diet. Ben-Gurion University researchers found that most people achieve the greatest weight loss in the first six months of a diet plan. However, the health benefits — including reversal of hardening of the arteries — continued for years after weight loss leveled off. If you're getting proper nutrition most of the time, your body will be flexible enough to withstand the effects of that occasional binge.



ISRAELI MOVIE NIGHT

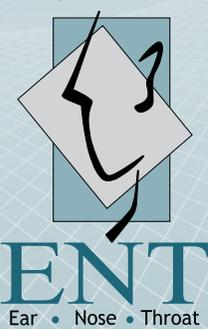
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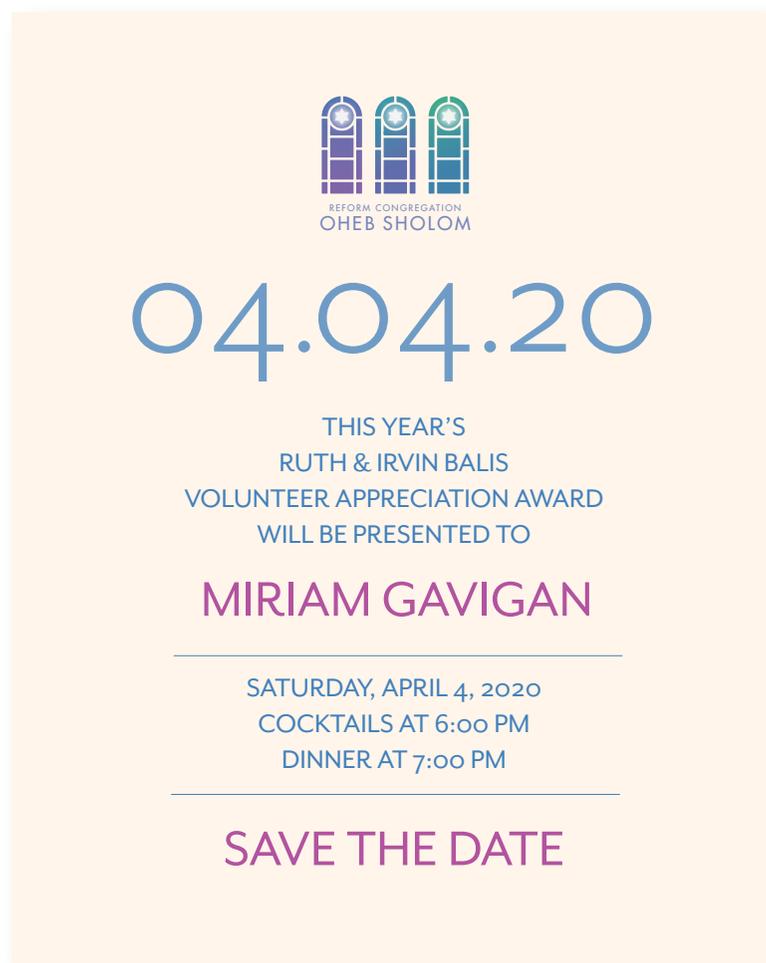
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SAVE THE DATE

Israeli pancreatic cancer treatment could extend lives

From online news reports

An ongoing study found that 77% of patients suffering from stage IV metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma (pancreatic cancer) and treated with a protocol developed by an Israel-based biopharmaceutical company were able to get their disease under control.

Among the patients evaluated in the study, 32% saw a reduction in tumor size (of more than 30% from baseline), as opposed to 17% of patients treated with chemotherapy based on historical data. Furthermore, another 45% of patients were able to stabilize the disease, meaning that tumor size neither grew nor was reduced by much over the course of the trial.

"That means 77% of patients were able to achieve disease control rate," said Philip Serlin, chief executive officer of BioLineRx. This is compared with 52% of patients who are treated with chemotherapy alone. "Although it cannot be automatically assumed, one could surmise that if there is a higher response rate, there will be a longer progression free survival," he said. "Our hope is that therefore patients will live longer."

He noted that already some patients have survived with the treatment for more than 330 days — almost a year — which is a substantial increase for those diagnosed with stage IV metastatic pancreatic cancer who have failed first-line treatment.

Serlin further noted that "pancreatic cancer is a terrible disease. The prognosis with metastatic cancer is only a 3% survival rate over a five-year period. Most patients die within a few months to half a year. It is a very difficult disease. There have not been many advances in pancreatic cancer treatment over the past decade and that it is the only cancer among the top five cancers where the number of patients that are dying each year is going up. Most other cancers, even if the number of diagnoses is on the rise, due to better treatments, deaths are going down."

There are two reasons for this, he said. One is that most people are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the late stage: "It is considered a silent killer, as it is often not detected until it is in stage IV," he said. Moreover, he said that pancreatic cancer has developed mechanisms that enable it to



protect itself from the body's immune system.

"It is therefore very encouraging to see robust and durable responses to the triple combination treatment, especially as we continue to see a trend of patients

receiving treatment for an extended period that move from stable disease to partial response," he continued. "We hope to see these results translate into an extended survival benefit for these patients."

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Israeli driver signed by Formula One racing team

Israel21c.com

At 8 years old, karting enthusiast Roy Nissany announced that he was going to be a Formula One racecar driver. Not that he wanted to be an F1 driver. That he would be an F1 driver.

On Jan. 15, at age 25, Nissany became an official test driver for the UK-based Williams Group, one of only 10 Formula One teams in the world.

No other Israeli has ever reached F1, the highest class of single-seater auto racing.

"I never said Formula One was my dream. Formula One was my target," Nissany said.

His self-assured declaration 17 years ago so impressed Gyárfás Oláh — a Hungarian karting champion and now FIA's Off-Road Commission president — that Oláh became the Israeli boy's personal manager to this day.

Nissany began motor racing at 14. He had 13 podium finishes in two seasons in Formula V8 3.5, two consecutive victories at the Silverstone track in UK, and wins at Italy's Monza track, France's Paul Ricard circuit and Jerez in Spain. He competed in the Formula Two championship in 2018, missing last season due to injury.

The Tel Aviv native has spent most of his life working toward his target in Europe, especially Italy, since there's no F1 racing infrastructure in Israel.

But it's pure Israeli pride that fuels Nissany's ambition.

"The mentality and mindset that we have as Israeli sportsmen helps me to go forward and gives me some extra power in and outside of the car," he said.

That attitude inspired Israeli-Canadian philanthropist Sylvan Adams

last year to found and head Roy Nissany Formula One Management in support of the driver's development.

Adams actively showcases Israel through international sporting events.

"The fast-track plan is for Roy to be an actual F1 driver as early as 2021," said Adams. "Of course, he has a few hurdles to accomplish before he can be selected to be one of the two drivers."

Adams explained that F1 "is one of the most exclusive sports in the world. There are only 20 Formula One racecar drivers. The idea of seeing Roy and the Israeli flag every week or two — hopefully — being beamed to 350 to 400 million television viewers gives me goosebumps."

Nissany first approached Adams at an event of the Israel Cycling Academy, a professional team Adams co-owns. This June, the team of cyclists from different nations will compete as Israel

Start-Up Nation in the Tour de France.

"The two Israeli Start-Up Nation cyclists, Guy Yaniv and Guy Sagiv, are also leaders on the international scene," said Nissany. "We are, all together, putting Israel on the map in big events like the Tour de France and Formula One."

The Israel Cycling Academy's collaboration with Start-Up Nation Central is already introducing the latest advances in sports-tech to the team.

Adams also pointed out that Nissany did two days of test driving in Abu Dhabi in December. His flawless performance there clinched his position as the team's third test driver.

"An Israeli test driving in Abu Dhabi would have been unthinkable three years ago and now it's the new normal. It proves that through sport we're building bridges," said Adams.

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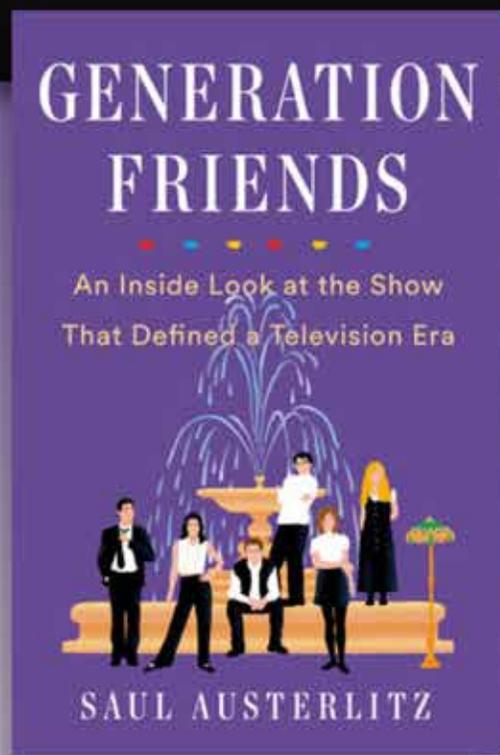
Monday
February 3rd
7 p.m.

Exeter Community Library

Registration required.

To register, visit:

www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org/home/literatour



A nostalgic, fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the blockbuster success of NBC's *Friends*, including brand-new interviews with the series creators, published for the 25th anniversary of the show's premiere.

Copies of *Generation Friends* will be available for sale onsite through Reads & Company.



New Israeli aid group assists fire victims in Australia

Israel21c.com

A team of nine Israeli and two Australian volunteers with SmartAID were among the first to enter Australia's Kangaroo Island in January to help locals affected by ongoing wildfires.

"The wildfires which hit Kangaroo Island looks like a scene from an apocalypse movie. The team drives through the fire trail in Kangaroo Island, with burned trees, some still on fire. The earth is black and smoke fills the air," reported SmartAID Global Goodwill Ambassador Alethea Gold.

The SmartAID team is working alongside the Australian army, firefighters and local nonprofit partner BlazeAid to clear the rubble of burned homes, help open access routes and assist farmers in rebuilding their livelihood.

"We are here shoulder to shoulder helping our Australian friends who lost everything to the fire," said Gold.

SmartAID, formerly called iAID, has been operating quietly for the past three years since it was cofounded by Shachar Zahavi. He previously founded and headed global humanitarian aid organization IsraAID.

We reported on iAID assistance following natural disasters in Mexico, Texas, and Peru, often alongside other Israeli humanitarian aid groups.

The international not-for-profit aid agency has been renamed SmartAID to reflect its unique focus on "harnessing the power of innovation and technology to save lives, alleviate suffering and empower communities."

Based in Israel, SmartAID has branch offices in Australia and United States, and soon in Europe.

"In the humanitarian aid field today, there's a slow shift from traditional forms of aid to more technological

and innovative solutions," Zahavi tells ISRAEL21c, explaining why as a serial social entrepreneur he took the lead in forming SmartAID.

"International aid organizations are slowly entering this tech scene with food, clean water, clean energy, agtech and fintech solutions. Our idea is that the 'startup nation' is the obvious place from which to offer Israeli and Jewish knowhow from Israel and globally. The added value we bring is innovation in disaster settings and long-term programs."

This is accomplished in collaboration with entrepreneurs, startups, manufacturers, impact investors, local governments, donors and academics.

SmartAID brings in low and high-tech solutions adapted to local needs in cooperation with local partners, Zahavi explains.

"It could be anything from solar panels to water storage," he says. "In the Bahamas we partnered with a local group, HeadKnowles, and established a coordination center where we put in telecommunications infrastructure to help aid agencies working across the island after Hurricane Dorian."

SmartAID also brought clean water solutions, hygiene packs and solar lights from Little Sun to people displaced by Dorian.

In Mozambique, following a March cyclone that also brought IsraAID to help victims, SmartAID worked with local partners to deliver solar lights from a South African company.

SmartAID also has responded to natural disasters in Indonesia, Puerto Rico and Northern Iraq.

Zahavi says his organization's office in Australia coordinated its response to the fires. Many of the Israeli volunteers were already in the country on backpacking

trips. "Some are trained already and some are being trained on the ground," he said. "We deployed our volunteers about two days ago when Kangaroo Island was opened to aid groups. It is a difficult location to access. We did an evaluation and are in the process of developing our program there in the three areas we have been asked to focus on. We're trying to see what local resources and technologies can be provided to help affected communities."

Funding for SmartAID's mission at Kangaroo Island is from Australian donors and the Tel Aviv-based Ted Arison Family Foundation.

Other Israeli groups helping fire victims in Australia include the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo, which raised funds to treat wounded animals; and the Gan Garoo Australian Park in northern Israel, which is donating money toward Australian relief efforts and plans to send a veterinary team to assist injured kangaroos.



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Are West Bank settlements illegal? Who gets to decide?

By Isabel Kershner

The Trump administration's declaration that Israeli settlements on the West Bank are "not inconsistent with international law" reversed American policy on the settlements and contradicted the view of most countries.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel applauded the announcement as a "policy that rights a historical wrong," while Saeb Erekat, the secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said it was an attempt by the Trump administration "to replace international law with the 'law of the jungle.'"

Who is right? What does international law say? What difference does the United States announcement make?

Here's a brief guide.

Are Israeli settlements in the West Bank illegal?

The United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Security Council and the International Court of Justice have all said that Israeli settlements on the West Bank violate the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan in the 1967 war and has occupied the territory ever since. The Fourth Geneva Convention, ratified by 192 nations in the aftermath of World War II, says that an occupying power "shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

The statute that established the International Criminal Court in 1998 classifies such transfers as war crimes, as well as any destruction or

appropriation of property not justified by military necessity.

The American announcement was the latest political gift in a series to Netanyahu.

Israel argues that a Jewish presence has existed on the West Bank for thousands of years and was recognized by the League of Nations in 1922. Jordan's rule over the territory, from 1948 to 1967, was never recognized by most of the world, so Israel also argues there was no legal sovereign power in the area and therefore the prohibition on transferring people from one state to the occupied territory of another does not apply.

The International Court of Justice rejected that argument in an advisory opinion in 2004, ruling that the settlements violated international law.

The Israeli Supreme Court and the government do consider settlement construction on privately owned Palestinian land to be illegal.

Under the Oslo Accords, signed by Israel and the Palestinians in the 1990s, both sides agreed that the status of Israeli settlements would be resolved by negotiation. However, negotiations have stalled and there have been no active peace talks since 2014.

Israel has built about 130 formal settlements in the West Bank since 1967. A similar number of smaller, informal settlement outposts have gone up since the 1990s, without government authorization but usually with some government support.

More than 400,000 Israeli settlers now live in the West Bank alongside

more than 2.6 million Palestinians.

Some of the settlements are home to religious Zionists who believe that the West Bank, which Israel refers to by its biblical names of Judea and Samaria, is their biblical birthright. Many secular and ultra-Orthodox Jews also moved there largely for cheaper housing.

Some settlements were strategically located in line with Israel's security interests. Other, more isolated communities were established for ideological reasons, including an effort to prevent a contiguous Palestinian state.

Israel also captured East Jerusalem in 1967, and annexed it. The Palestinians demand East Jerusalem as the capital of a future state, and much of the world still considers it occupied territory.

Most of the world views the expansion of Israeli settlements as an impediment to a peace agreement.

While most blueprints for a peace agreement envisage a land swap — Israel retains the main settlement blocs, where a majority of the settlers live, and hands over other territory to the Palestinians — the more remote and populated the settlements, the harder that becomes.

What difference will the United States policy make?

Mr. Netanyahu, who is currently fighting to remain prime minister after two inconclusive elections, has promised to annex the settlements and the strategic Jordan Valley, constituting up to a third of the West Bank.

In June, the American ambassador to Israel, David M. Friedman, said

that Israel had a right to retain at least some of the West Bank.

The Trump administration's declaration may be seen by supporters of the settlement enterprise as giving a green light to Israeli annexation plans. But Israeli experts cautioned that might not be the case.

"It's one thing saying the settlements are not in violation of international law and another to say whether they are good for peace or not," said Michael Herzog, an Israeli-based fellow with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. The Trump administration neither rejected nor endorsed Mr. Netanyahu's annexation proposal, he said, and it remains "an open question" how it would react if Israel unilaterally annexed West Bank territory.

He and others said that while the policy change could affect the public perception of the settlements, the legal question would have little bearing on a comprehensive peace deal, which is ultimately a political act.

"The settlements are an agreed upon issue for negotiation between Israel and the Palestinians," said Alan Baker, a former legal adviser to the Israeli Foreign Ministry. "It's an issue that has yet to be negotiated."

But in the absence of negotiations, the American policy could be used to justify even more settlement construction.

Isabel Kershner is a correspondent in Jerusalem for The New York Times covering Israeli and Palestinian politics and society, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and diplomatic efforts to resolve it.

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In fact, the Israeli settlements were never illegal

By Richard L. Cravatts, PhD

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently stated what has been obvious to many legal scholars and others who have assessed the facts on the ground; namely, as Pompeo put it, “The establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not per se inconsistent with international law.” As he noted, while the decision “does not prejudice or decide legal conclusions regarding situations in any other parts of the world,” the secretary emphasized that the affirmation of the settlements’ legality “is based on the unique facts, history, and circumstances presented by the establishment of civilian settlements in the West Bank.”

Those “unique facts, history, and circumstances” have existed for some time now but were ignored or purposely contorted to promote a defective diplomacy in which, it was thought, the realization of Palestinian statehood was being compromised by the construction of Jewish housing in the West Bank. The settlement debate had been hijacked by the Arab world and its Western apologists who, willingly blind to history, international law and fact, continued to assign the blame for the absence of peace on the perceived offenses of occupation and Israeli truculence. Thus, for instance, administrations of both political parties have said Israel was being “unhelpful” by letting Jews live in the West Bank.

What was truly “unhelpful,” however, were the repeated references to the West Bank and Gaza, as well as East Jerusalem, as “Arab” land, the putative Palestinian state in waiting, encumbered only by Israeli oppression, the dreaded occupation, and those pesky settlers. This widely held notion that European Jews, with no connection to historic Palestine, colonized Arab land and displaced the indigenous Palestinian population, of course, is a key part of what Professor Richard Landes of Boston University defined as the “cognitive war” against Israel; it serves the perverse purpose of validating Arab territorial rights to the West Bank and Gaza, and, more importantly, casts Israelis as squatters who have unlawfully expropriated land that is not — and never was — theirs.

Pompeo’s confirmation of the legality of the settlements serves to reverse the faulty historical assumptions and misreading

of law that has animated the settlement debate, principally the fact that not only all of the land that is current-day Israel, but also Gaza and the West Bank, is part of the land granted to the Jews as part of the League of Nations Palestine Mandate, which recognized the right of the Jewish people to “close settlement” in a portion of those territories gained after the breakup of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. According to Eugene V. Rostow, the late legal scholar, “the Jewish right of settlement in Palestine west of the Jordan River, that is, in Israel, the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, was made unassailable. That right has never been terminated and cannot be terminated except by a recognized peace between Israel and its neighbors,” something which Israel’s intransigent Arab neighbors have never seemed prepared to do. Moreover, Rostow contended, “the Jewish right of settlement in the West Bank is conferred by the same provisions of the Mandate under which Jews settled in Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem before the State of Israel was created,” and “the Jewish right of settlement in the area is equivalent in every way to the right of the existing Palestinian population to live there.”

The Six Day War of 1967, in which Israel recaptured Gaza and the West Bank, including Jerusalem, resulted in Israel being cast in another perfidious role — in addition to colonial usurper of Arab land, the Jewish state became a brutal “occupier” of Arab Palestine, lands to which the Jews presumably had no right and now occupied, in the opinion of many in the international community, illegally.

But when did the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem become Palestinian land? Never. In fact, when Israel acquired the West Bank and Gaza and other territories in 1967 after being attacked by Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, the Jewish state gained legally recognized title to those areas. In Israel’s 1948 War of Independence, Egypt, it will be recalled, illegally annexed Gaza at the same time Jordan illegally annexed the West Bank — actions that were not recognized by most of the international community as legitimate in establishing their respective sovereignties. Israel’s recapture of those territories in 1967, noted Professor Stephen Schwebel, State Department legal advisor and later president of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, made the Jewish state what

is referred to as the High Contracting Party of those territories, both because they were acquired in a defensive, not aggressive, war, and because they were part of the original Mandate and not previously under the sovereignty of any other High Contracting Party.

It is also morally repellent, for those arguing on the Palestinian side, that the West Bank, like Gaza, eventually be made *judenrein*, totally absent of Jews, that, as Mahmoud Abbas has loudly announced on more than one occasion, the future Palestinian state would not have one Jew living within its borders. Putting aside the fact that it is Israel that is continually derided for being racist and exclusionary (despite having 1 million Arab citizens), only in a world turned upside down would diplomats uphold a principle that Jews — and only Jews — not be allowed to live in certain territories, and particularly those areas to which they have irrevocable and inalterable biblical, historic, and legal claims.

In fact, Professor Emeritus Jerold Auerbach of Wellesley College has written that “Israeli settlement throughout the West Bank is explicitly protected by international agreements dating from the World War I era, subsequently reaffirmed after World War II, and never revoked since ... The [Mandate for Palestine] recognized ‘the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine’ and ‘the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country’ ... This was not framed as a gift to the Jewish people; rather, based on recognition of historical rights reaching back into antiquity, it was their entitlement.”

While those seeking Palestinian statehood conveniently overlook the legal rights Jews still enjoy to enable them to occupy all areas of historic Palestine, they have also used another defective argument in accusing Israel of violating international law by maintaining settlements in the West Bank: that since the Six Day War, Israel has conducted a “belligerent occupation.” But as Professor Julius Stone discussed in his book, “Israel and Palestine,” the fact that the West Bank and Gaza were acquired by Israel in a “sovereignty vacuum,” that is, that there was an absence of High Contracting Party with legal claim to the areas, means that, in this instance, the definition of a belligerent occupant is invalid.

The matter of Israel violating Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention

is one that has been used regularly, and disingenuously, by those wishing to criminalize the settlement of Jews in the West Bank and demonize Israel for behavior in violation of international law. It asserts that in allowing its citizens to move into occupied territories Israel violates Article 49, which stipulates that “the occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into territory it occupies.”

The use of this particular Geneva Convention seems particularly grotesque in the case of Israel, since it was crafted specifically to prevent a repetition of the actions of the Nazis in cleansing Germany of its own Jewish citizens. Clearly, the intent of the Convention was to prevent belligerents from forcibly moving their citizens to other territories, for malignant purposes — something completely different than the Israel government allowing its citizens to willingly relocate and settle in territories without any current sovereignty, to which Jews have long-standing legal claim, and, whether or not the area may become a future Palestinian state, should certainly be a place where a person could live, even if he or she is a Jew. Does anyone doubt that once the Palestinians have purged Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem of all Jews, that new calls will then arise accusing Jews of “occupying” more “Arab” lands in Tel Aviv, Netanya, Tiberias, or Haifa?

The settlement debate is part of a decades-old effort to write a false historical account that legitimizes Palestinian claims while air-brushing away Jewish history. “Throughout Israel’s occupation,” Rostow observed, “the Arab countries, helped by the United States, have pushed to keep Jews out of the territories, so that at a convenient moment, or in a peace negotiation, the claim that the West Bank is ‘Arab’ territory could be made more plausible.”

With Pompeo’s bold statement, at least for the time being, that “convenient moment” may be less likely to occur and at least one key element in the cognitive war against Israel seems to have neutralized.

Richard L. Cravatts is immediate Past-President of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East and author of “Dispatches From the Campus War Against Israel and Jews and Genocidal Liberalism: The University’s Jihad Against Israel and Jews.”

Let's talk elections!

Monday, February 17, 7:00pm at the JCC



Israelis working on treatment for cause of blindness

From online news reports

An effective treatment for Macular degeneration (AMD), which causes blindness in millions of people in the Western world, could be on the cards in the future.

A new study done by researchers from Bar-Ilan University and Stanford University found, for the first time, evidence indicating that the brain knows how to integrate natural and artificial vision, while maintaining processing information that is important for vision.

Professor Yossi Mandel, head of Bar-Ilan University's Ophthalmic Science and Engineering Lab and the study's lead author, explained to *The Jerusalem Post* that AMD stands for age-related macular degeneration, which "is caused by aging changes of the light receptors (photoreceptor layer and an adjacent supporting layer called retinal pigment epithelium).

"Continuous exposure of these layers to light, heat and oxidative stress cause chronic damage which eventually can lead to photoreceptors loss and blindness," he said. "AMD is the leading cause of blindness in the western world" among those aged 50 and over, and its prevalence increases with age.

Though there is no cure for AMD, significant recent advancements in artificial retina implants may lead to effective treatment.

Inside the eye's retina are light receptors or photoreceptors, which absorb light, a press statement said.

"Information is then processed and transmitted to the brain. The macula, the central area of the retina, processes most of the information that reaches the brain from the eye, enabling one to see while reading and driving, facial recognition, and any other activity that requires accurate



vision," it continued. "In the peripheral retina, the area of the retina outside the macula that assists mainly with spatial judgment, vision is 10-20 times less precise."

In AMD precise vision is impaired due to damage to the center of the retina, while peripheral vision remains normal.

The researchers explained that when there is damage to the photoreceptor layers in the retina, an artificial retina — a device built from tiny electrodes smaller in width than a hair — may be implanted.

"Activating these electrodes results in electrical stimulation of the remaining retinal cells and results in visual restoration, albeit partially," they said in the statement. "AMD patients implanted with an artificial retina possess a combination of artificial central vision and normal peripheral vision."

Mandel highlighted that it is important to study the combination of artificial and natural vision "in order to understand how to help the blind.

"One of the critical questions in this regard is whether the brain can integrate artificial and natural vision properly," he added.

Mandel told the *Post* that the research was conducted in his lab during a process of about two years and was mainly carried by Tamar Arens-Arad as part of her doctoral studies.

"This is part of a long collaboration with Professor Daniel Palanker of Stanford University, who developed the retinal prosthetic device," he said. "The device is composed of tenth of tiny solar cells, each is connected to an electrode" and the device is implanted below the retina of rodents.

"We have developed a unique projection system that can project invisible light or visible light (green light) to stimulate either the prosthetic device or the normal adjacent retina, respectively, while recording the activity of the visual cortex, which is the area in the brain responsible for processing the information arriving from the retina," he continued.

"Using this model enables us to study the interactions between prosthetic (artificial) and natural vision," he said.

According Arens-Arad, the researchers "used a unique projection system which stimulated either natural vision, artificial vision or a combination of natural and artificial vision, while simultaneously recording the cortical responses in rodents implanted with a subretinal implant.

"The implant is composed of dozens of tiny solar cells and electrodes, developed by Professor Daniel Palanker

at Stanford University," Arens-Arad added.

For Mandel, "these pioneering results have implications for better restoration of sight in AMD patients implanted with retinal prosthetic devices and support our hypothesis that prosthetic and natural vision can be integrated in the brain.

"The results could also have implications for future brain-machine interface applications where artificial and natural processes co-exist," he highlighted.

Asked about when this could be available to patients, he said "the treatment is under evaluation in humans.

Mandel said that the animal studies enables us to study basic questions, which can not be performed in humans.

"For example, it is very difficult to non-invasively record brain activity in humans at high resolution," he said.

"These studies can aid in deepening our understanding on prosthetic vision and improving the vision restoration in humans," he emphasized.

"We are now carrying more research to study brain activity using optical recording which enable high resolution recording during prosthetic activation."

My family and I would like to thank everyone who made a donation in memory of Jeff. We are glad he will be remembered in a meaningful way.

Deborah Frank



Come to meet Jonathan Indursky, Shtisel creator!

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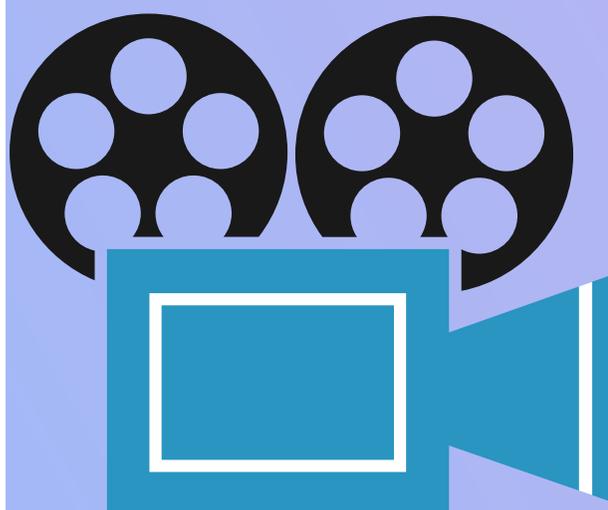
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