



Shalom03|24

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

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‘The Art of Remembering’ topic of 2024 Yashek Lecture

By Amanda J. Hornberger

The community is invited to join us for the 2024 Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lecture on Wednesday, March 20, at 7:30 p.m. in the Campus Center, South Lounge at Albright College. Our speaker will be Karen Frostig with a lecture entitled “The Art of Remembering.” The lecture is free and open to the public.

Karen inherited letters written by her grandparents to her father during the Holocaust. Following translation of the letters, she began to research her family’s Holocaust history, traveling to Vienna and Riga in 2006. Two decades years later, Karen has produced an abundance of material concerning family memory and public acts of memorialization following genocide in Vienna and Riga.

“The Art of Remembering” will focus on five generative projects: Earth Wounds, the Exiled Memory project, the Vienna Project, the Locker of Memory project, and a Day of Remembrance. Emphasis will be on symbolic repetition among the projects, continuity of thought and meaning, and the evolution of an artist’s voice grappling with issues of identity, loss, and healing.

Karen Frostig is an interdisciplinary



Karen Frostig

conceptual artist, public memory artist, cultural historian, and writer. Karen is artistic and executive director of the Locker of Memory memorial project, a multimedia project restoring lost history to a forgotten camp in Latvia. She was director of The Vienna Project, Vienna’s first naming memorial.

Karen presented her family’s history and her work at the United Nations General Assembly, 2023 Holocaust Day Remembrance Program, broadcast worldwide and featured in the Sunday

New York Times. Karen is a professor of art at Lesley University teaching coursework in public art and art activism.

Brian, Margo and I heard Karen speak at the UN last year, and she is a powerful speaker using her art to share her family’s story in a unique way.

Richard Yashek and his family were also sent to camps in Riga during World War II, so this topic has deep personal ties to the Yashek family, which has generously supported this lecture series, now in its 18th year.

In addition to her lecture, numerous pieces of Frostig’s artwork will be on display at the Freedman Gallery. Immediately following the lecture, the community is invited to view Frostig’s art at a dessert reception in the gallery, located on the Albright campus. Frostig’s art show, “The Holocaust in Personal and Public Memory,” is currently on display through April 14.

Thank you to the Yashek family for their continued support and commitment to this lecture series. Special thanks to the Yashek family and Vic & Dena Hammel for their support of Frostig’s art exhibit, “The Holocaust in Personal and Public Memory.”

Hope and the pursuit of peace

By Brian Chartock
CEO

We are very truly humbled with the progress of the Berks County Stands with Israel Emergency Relief Campaign. So many have heeded the call thus far, and to each of you, Federation sends a heartfelt “todah rabah” — thank you very much.

As Israel remains one of the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) pillars, and with all the disinformation circulating throughout various media outlets, it is incumbent upon the Jewish Federation of Reading to make certain that our Jewish community understands and realizes just how important peace has been and continues to be to the nation of Israel and to the Jewish people.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one of the most protracted and contentious conflicts in modern history, has been marked by a series of peace negotiations and attempts to reach a resolution. Israel, as a gesture of goodwill



and a commitment to peace, has made numerous offers to the Palestinians, including concessions of land and efforts to establish a lasting peace.

Below is an outline of some of the most significant moments when Israel offered peace and land to the Palestinians.

1. Camp David Summit

(2000):

In July 2000, then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, under the auspices of President Bill Clinton, participated in the Camp David Summit with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. During the summit, Israel offered the Palestinians significant

territorial concessions, including the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital; however, the offer was rejected by Arafat, leading to the breakdown of negotiations.

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Development

- Annual Campaign
- Women's Philanthropy
- Maimonides Society
- Your Jewish Legacy
- Chai Circle
- L'Chaim Society
- Book of Life
- Letter of Intent

We need your support

By Laurie Waxler
Development Director

Forbes magazine recently published an article stating that “Jews made up nearly half of America's biggest philanthropic donors last year.” Out of 25 top givers, 12 of them had Jewish backgrounds, which is an amazing statistic when you think about the proportion of Jews in the overall U.S. population.

Another interesting point of the article was that only one of those 12 donors focused on Jewish causes. While they couldn't compare it with past giving, the author offered three thoughts of why this might happen.

Number one was assimilation and the fact they may not have had a strong Jewish upbringing and it wasn't at the forefront of their thinking. Second was the thought process that the donors may prefer tackling more massive global



issues such as climate change. The third reason was that being associated with ‘Jewish causes’ might not fit their personal branding.

Imagine a time when universities, hospitals, and/or museums weren't always excited to have Jewish donors, but it's true. Now they're thrilled to add those names on their donor plaques as the Jewish community as a whole is generally philanthropic, living up to the idea of the Jewish tradition of Tikkun Olam, saving the world.

I'm incredibly proud of everything our Jewish community does for the many causes

here in Reading and across the country but, as development director for Federation, I feel compelled to ask you if the next time you support a cause outside of Federation, you think of us as well. I promise you our Jewish Family Service will put it to good use.

To everyone who gives to our Annual Campaign on an annual basis, I sincerely thank you as you are what keeps us going and allow us to be present in the community. For those who haven't given, or who have let their donations slip, please make this the year you renew your support.

ISRAEL

Continued from Page 1

2. Taba Summit (2001):
Following the collapse of the Camp David Summit, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators reconvened in Taba, Egypt, in January 2001 to continue discussions. During these talks, Israel proposed further concessions, including the withdrawal from additional territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as addressing the issue of Palestinian refugees. Despite progress being made, the negotiations ended without a final agreement.

3. Annapolis Conference (2007):
In November 2007, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas attended the Annapolis Conference, initiated by President George W. Bush. During the conference, Israel reiterated its commitment to a two-state solution and offered further territorial concessions to the Palestinians; however, the negotiations failed to produce a comprehensive agreement.

4. Netanyahu's Speech at Bar-Ilan University (2009):
In June 2009, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered a landmark speech at Bar-Ilan University, where he publicly endorsed the idea of a demilitarized Palestinian state alongside Israel. This marked a significant shift in Netanyahu's position and represented a willingness to pursue peace through a two-state solution. Although Netanyahu's offer was

met with skepticism from some quarters, it demonstrated Israel's commitment to seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

5. Kerry Peace Plan (2014):
In April 2014, then-Secretary of State John Kerry unveiled a framework for peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The plan included land swaps that would allow Israel to retain some of its settlements in the West Bank while offering compensation to the Palestinians in the form of territory elsewhere. Despite initial support from both sides, the negotiations ultimately faltered, with neither party able to reach a consensus.

Throughout the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel has consistently demonstrated its willingness to make concessions and offer peace to the Palestinians. From high-profile summits to public declarations, Israeli leaders have repeatedly extended their hand, and olive branches, in the hope of reaching a mutually acceptable resolution. Nonetheless, the path to peace remains fraught with challenges, including deep-seated distrust, security concerns, and competing territorial claims. Despite the setbacks, the history of Israeli peace offers underscores the importance of continued dialogue and negotiation in pursuit of a lasting and just solution to the conflict.

Hatikvah, literally meaning “the hope,” is Israel's national anthem. Its lyrics were written in 1886 by Naphtali

Herz Imber, a poet originally from Galicia. The melody was written by Samuel Cohen, who based the melody on a musical theme from Bedrich Smetana's “Moldau.”

The Hatikvah's Transliteration is below:
Kol od ba'le'vav p'nima, Nefesh yehudi ho'miyah.

*U'lefa-atei mizrach kadimah,
Ayin le'Tziyyon tzofiyah.
Od lo avda tikva-teinu,
Ha'tikvah bat sh'not al-payim
Lih-yot am chofshi b'ar-tzeinu
Eretz Tziyyon v'Yerushalayim.*

English Translation:
*As long as within our hearts
The Jewish soul sings,
As long as forward to the East
To Zion, looks the eye –
Our hope is not yet lost,
It is two thousand years old,
To be a free people in our land
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.*

Allow those words above to resonate... They are relevant today as when first composed.

Israel will not give up on peace and we as the Jewish people must never lose hope.

In fact, we are taught by our sages that the Jewish people should strive to constantly chase and pursue peace.

L'shalom and Am Yisrael Chai,
-Brian



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org

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From the CEO’s Desk

Purim: Embracing timeless messages in modern contexts

By Brian Chartock
CEO

Purim, one of the most joyous and colorful festivals in the Jewish calendar, transcends its historical roots to offer pertinent messages for modern times. Celebrated annually on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Adar (this year on the evening of Saturday, March 23 and Sunday, March 24), Purim commemorates the salvation of the Jewish people from the genocidal plot of Haman, a high-ranking official in the ancient Persian Empire. However, beneath the costumes, revelry, and festive meals lie profound lessons that resonate to this very day with contemporary challenges and dilemmas.

The power of unity

The story of Purim underscores the significance of unity in the face of adversity. Queen Esther, a key figure in the narrative, exemplifies the power of collective action. Despite her initial reluctance, she bravely approaches King



Ahasuerus to plead for the salvation of her people. Esther’s courage and strategic thinking, coupled with the support of Mordecai and the Jewish community, highlight the potency of solidarity in confronting oppression. In today’s interconnected world, the call for unity reverberates across diverse contexts, from social justice movements to global crises. Purim serves as a reminder that transcending divisions and standing together as one can overcome even the most formidable challenges.

Confronting antisemitism:

The shadow of antisemitism continues to loom large in contemporary society. Purim, with its portrayal of Haman as the archetypal antagonist, offers a poignant reflection on the persistence of hatred and prejudice. The festival of Purim serves as a call to vigilance against bigotry in all its forms, whether overt or insidious. In an era marked by rising antisemitic incidents and rhetoric, the message of Purim resonates with renewed urgency. It compels individuals and communities to actively confront and combat antisemitism, thereby fostering

a culture of tolerance, acceptance, and mutual respect.

Empowerment of women:

Esther’s pivotal role in the Purim story challenges traditional gender norms and underscores the importance of women’s agency and leadership. Despite the patriarchal constraints of her time, Esther emerges as a formidable protagonist, wielding influence and effecting change through her courage and resourcefulness. In the modern context, Purim inspires efforts to empower women and to promote gender equality across various spheres of life, including politics, business, and culture. Esther’s legacy serves as a beacon of empowerment, encouraging women to assert their voices, pursue their aspirations, and continually strive for justice and equality.

Embracing Joy and Celebration:

Amidst the solemnity of religious observance and the demands of everyday life, Purim offers a welcome respite — a time for joyous celebration and communal revelry. From the spirited reading of the Megillah (the Scroll of Esther) to the exchange of gifts (mishloach

manot) and charity (tzedakah), the festival encourages expressions of happiness and camaraderie. In today’s fast-paced and often stressful world, the spirit of Purim reminds individuals to prioritize moments of joy, connection, and celebration; moreover, Purim underscores the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie within communities, nurturing bonds that sustain and uplift.

As the Jewish community commemorates Purim each year, it not only honors a historical event but also reaffirms timeless values and principles that hold relevance in contemporary times. From the imperative of unity and solidarity to the ongoing struggle against antisemitism, from the empowerment of women to the celebration of joy and camaraderie, Purim serves as a beacon of inspiration and guidance for navigating the complexities of the modern world. In embracing these messages, individuals and communities alike can draw strength, resilience, and hope for a brighter future.

L'Shalom and Happy Purim,
-Brian

JEWISH FEDERATION OF
READING/BERKS INVITES YOU TO

COMMUNITY SHABBAT
FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2024

Hosted at Keshar Zion Synagogue
555 Warwick Dr. Wyomissing

6:00 p.m. Service
6:45 p.m. Kosher Dinner
\$36 per adult
\$15 for youth (13-17)
\$8 for 12 and under
Financial assistance is available by calling JFS at 610-921-0624

Scan below or email info@jfreading.org
to RSVP by February 23



Community Shabbat is an open event for our Berks County Jewish community to come together to celebrate. This annual event is planned in partnership with Keshar Zion Synagogue, Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks, Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom and Chabad Lubavitch of Reading.

Girl Scout visit



Federation COO Amanda Hornberger hosted Girl Scout Myah for a shadow day in February. Amanda is an honoree at this year’s Take the Lead event for Girl Scouts of Eastern PA in April. Amanda and Myah had some great conversations and Myah enjoyed time with our Friendship Circle group. Berks County is in good hands with future leaders like Myah!

Shalom



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General Offices: 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125
Wyomissing, PA 19610
Phone: 610-921-0624 FAX: 610-929-0886
Web site: www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org

Jewish Federation of Reading
CEO: Brian Chartock
Chair: Sheila Bornstein
Communications Director: Mark Nemirow, Editor
Proofreaders: Federation staff

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



March ✨ Adar I-Adar II	
 Shabbat Candle Lightings	 Torah Portions
March 1 5:38 p.m.	March 2/22 Adar I Ki Tisa (Exodus 30:11-34:35)
March 8 5:46 p.m.	March 9/29 Adar II Vayakhel (Exodus 35:1-38:20, 30:11-16)
March 15 6:53 p.m.	March 16/6 Adar II Pekudi (Exodus 38:21-40:38)
March 22 7:01 p.m.	March 23/Adar II Vayikra (Leviticus 1:1-5:26)
March 29 7:09 p.m.	March 30/20 Adar II Tzav (Leviticus 6:1-8:36)

Be ready to vote by mail in spring primary

From Federation staff

This spring’s primary election in Pennsylvania takes place on Tuesday, April 23. That date is one of the Yom Tov days of Passover, a day of rest according to traditional Jewish law. For many Jews, that means voting in person will not be an option. To participate, they’ll need to vote by mail.

Below is information from the *Reading Eagle* explaining the process for getting a mail ballot.

Thousands of Pennsylvania voters have received an envelope from their county’s election office in their mailbox. Inside is an application to vote by mail in the 2024 primary and general elections. Some may wonder why they need to fill it out. After all, when widespread voting

by mail was first approved in the state, people were invited to sign up to be on the permanent mail ballot list.

So what gives?
The permanent part of the 2019 law that expanded the use of mail voting doesn’t mean voters will be sent mail ballots for every election. Instead, it means they will get annual applications to vote by mail.

Those applications have to be filled out each year for a voter to be sent mail ballots. That means that even if a voter signed up to receive mail ballots for both elections in 2023, they will need to apply again in 2024.

How do I apply for a mail ballot?
Visit pavoterservices.pa.gov/OnlineAbsenteeApplication and follow the instructions.

What will I need for the application?
If you have a Pennsylvania driver’s license or state-issued PennDOT ID, you need to use that. If you don’t have either, use the last four digits of your Social Security number.

What’s the deadline to register for the April primary?
You have until 5 p.m. on April 16 to apply for a mail ballot for the April 23 primary.

What is the annual mail ballot list?
The program is an optional box you can check on the mail ballot application form. If you check the box, you will automatically be sent mail ballots for every 2024 election. But if you want to apply for a mail ballot for only one election at a time, do not check that box.

Voters enrolled in the annual mail ballot program will remain enrolled unless they actively cancel their status.

How do I know if I’m on the annual ballot list?
Go to the “Check Registration Status” tab on [VotesPA.com](https://votespa.com), and enter your information. When your registration information is displayed, look for the question, “Are you an annual mail or absentee voter?”

If it says yes, you are already on the list. That means you will receive a renewal application in the mail from the county that you can mail back or you can skip the paperwork and fill out the application online.
If it says no, you are not yet signed up to be a “permanent” mail voter.

JFS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

This program provides transportation to members of the Jewish community, age 60 and over or those with disabilities, who have no other way of getting around. It allows participants to retain their independence and keeps them from becoming homebound and isolated. It can be used for medical appointments, synagogue attendance, shopping and other errands.

It is easy to participate. Purchase a book of 25 taxi tickets from the Federation at a cost of \$25. Each coupon is worth \$3. The phone number for Reading Metro Taxi is printed on the ticket book. Call the company and arrange your ride. At the end of the ride, sign your coupon(s) before giving them to the driver. Tipping is left to the passenger’s discretion. The coupon does not include the cost of tipping.

This program is subsidized by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

vote.pa.gov

Passover and the Primary

Passover begins at sundown on **Monday, April 22**, and Pennsylvania’s **primary election** is **Tuesday, April 23**.



If you’d like to vote by mail, request your ballot **NOW** and return it right away.



Apply for a Mail Ballot
הגש בקשה להצבעה בדואר
vote.pa.gov/MailBallot
or call 1-877-868-3772

SAVE THE DATE

Jewish Federation of Reading’s

Annual Meeting

Join us for a family picnic in the Wyomissing Hills park!
More details coming soon!

June 2, 2024

11:30 am - 2:00pm



The tremendous value of Jewish camp

By Simon Seesengood

Last summer, I went to Camp Ramah in the Poconos. I had a really fun time.

My friends and I went swimming, played games, and even went on a mini hiking trip (the big trip is set for this year). On that day, we packed a lunch and got on the bus.

After we got off the bus, we walked for a little bit and then stopped at a small waterfall to take a break and to eat our lunch. We kept walking and eventually found the campsite located next to a large meadow with tall grasses and goldenrod.

The rest of the day was spent hanging out at the campsite and playing in the river that ran alongside.

The next day we got in the bus and went upriver to get tubes so we could go tubing down the river. We stopped at a small outcropping and ate lunch.

When we were done we continued on our way down the river to the campsite and had dinner.

The next day we packed up and went back to camp. This was a very fun trip for me as it allowed us kids to just hang out with each other without parents, giving us a sense of freedom.



Simon Seesengood, in orange shirt, with friends at Camp Ramah.

To me, camp means time with friends. No one goes to camp for the activities, they go for the people.

Thanks to the Federation for their support in

Camp scholarships

Considering sending your child to summer camp this year? Federation is once again offering scholarships to Jewish children in need in our community. Applications are available via www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org, and are due no later than April 15. Our general rule is a \$250 scholarship, however, where need may be greater, please contact Brian at the Federation. As a Federation, we believe in the values a Jewish summer camp offers children in strengthening their beliefs into adulthood but understand it may not be for everyone. Every camp is different, so it's worth exploring a few different ones to be sure you find what works best for your child.

If you have any questions about camp or camp scholarships, don't hesitate to reach out to us at the Federation office at 610-921-0624.

sending me there. I can't wait to go again this summer!

Simon Seesengood is the son of Jennifer Koosed and Rob Seesengood.

Submission deadline April 15!

Jewish Summer Camp Scholarship Applications

WWW.READINGJEWISHCOMMUNITY.ORG



Jewish Federation

of Reading/Berks





PLEASE JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE

STEVEN LEVINE

RECIPIENT OF REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM'S RUTH & IRVIN BALIS VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION AWARD

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024
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COCKTAILS & HEAVY HORS D'OEUVRES TO FOLLOW

\$36 PER PERSON. DRESSY CASUAL ATTIRE, NO JEANS.
REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM, WYOMISSING, PENNSYLVANIA
THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO ADULTS ONLY.

RSVP BY MARCH 29

"ART, CULTURE & IDEAS"



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AMBASSADOR DEBORAH LIPSTADT & RABBI DAVID INGBER:
THE STATE OF GLOBAL ANTISEMITISM

MONDAY, MARCH 11
1:30 PM

CULTURAL CENTER AT THE HIGHLANDS AT WYOMISSING
2000 CAMBRIDGE AVE.



Jewish Federation

of Reading/Berks

Art, Culture & Ideas is a monthly series. Upcoming dates:

- April 8
- May 13
- June 13

The Jewish leap year, Purim, and what it all means

By Rabbi Yosef Lipsker
Chabad Center of Berks County

In recent days we celebrated the beginning of the Hebrew month of Adar.

“When the month of Adar begins, one increases rejoicing”. [Talmud. Ta’anit: 29a]

Normally, we would be actively preparing for the arrival of the exciting and fun festival of Purim. We would also be casting a nervous glance at the calendar, as the Big Cleanup for Passover begins to appear on the horizon.

But this is not a normal year, it is a leap year. All plans are now held up for one extra month. What is it all about?

A Jewish calendar year is based on the lunar cycle, which is 354 days, as opposed to the solar calendar, which has a yearly cycle of 365 days. This means that the Jewish calendar is out of sync, and falls behind the solar one by just over 11 days annually.

It wouldn’t be such a big deal, except that we are instructed to ensure the integrity of the various festivals, particularly Passover, which must be observed in the spring. Some adjustment and reconciliation is in order; otherwise Pesach will be celebrated in the middle of the winter!

This is where the extra month plays a prominent role. By including its 30 days, we peg back some of the deficit. In a 19-year cycle, adding seven leap years, the calendars gradually adjust themselves.



The next big question is: granted, we require an extra month every three years or so, but why is the month of Adar doubled? Why not be creative and exciting and add a brand new month at a different juncture in the calendar?

The answer is based on a verse from the Book of Esther — the Megillah. In conveying the story of Purim, it reminds us that it took place “in the 12th month — the month of Adar.” It is clear that Adar must always be in the 12th month.

If we introduce the additional month elsewhere in the year, Adar would be pushed forward and would not be month number 12. By adding the extra month when we do, Adar remains at number 12. Except there is still a 13th month!

Although there are indeed 13 months in a leap year, the extra month is not considered number 13! Adar number 2 is also recognized as the 12th month, along with Adar number 1!

Why?

There is a tradition that the Purim story took place in a leap year, and that the miracle happened in the second month of Adar. Accepting that the miracle took place in the second month, let’s take another look at the above mentioned quote from the Megillah, that the miracle of Purim was: “in the 12th month — the month of Adar”. Since it was in the second month of Adar, we see unmistakably that the second month (ostensibly number 13) is still considered as number 12!

The two months are linked in a variety

of ways (besides sharing a name). The zodiac sign for Adar is fish (Pisces). One reason for this is that the Jewish people are compared to fish. Just as fish are dependent on water for their survival, so too the Jewish nation is dependent on Torah (compared to water) to survive.

The relationship of the Jewish people to Adar is that their fortune changed for the good during this month.

Adar alone has a zodiac sign which is

multiple — two fish. All other months have signs that are single (Twins are essentially one unit — one set of twins. Scales are also one unit), but Adar has two fish. The implication is clear — Adar is the month that is to be doubled, and which would be a harbinger of double blessings. It is also a double month for increasing joy!

May we all be blessed with a double dose of special blessings and a double dose of tremendous joy!



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Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
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Purim Spiel

Enjoy a rollicking
"ALL BURT
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musical comedy
retelling of the
Book of Esther —
open to the
entire Jewish
community!

**Saturday, March 23,
2024 at OHEB SHOLOM:**
6:00 pm — Megillah reading
(Not intended for young children)
7:00 pm — Purim Spiel

**Stay after the spiel for
some tasty hamantashen
& coffee & schmoozing!**



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Bacharach
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This Purim event is **FREE!** Don't miss the fun!

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It’s an all Burt Bacharach Purim Spiel at RCOS

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
On Saturday, March 23, Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom is having its eighth Purim Spiel.
Writer/director Mike Pardo has decided to pay homage to the recently departed '60s songsmith Burt Bacharach by crafting a musical comedy extravaganza celebrating his iconic songs. It will be a wild night of extreme silliness that is sure to delight every member of your family.
We will start our Purim holiday in the

temple sanctuary at 6 p.m. with a reading of the megillah. This portion of the evening should last about 45 minutes and is not recommended for small children.
Our Purim spiel performance will begin in the sanctuary at 7 and should last about an hour, followed by an oneg in our social hall featuring everyone's favorite Purim dessert — hamantaschen!
Members of “Mike’s Mishegoss Players” will be returning to entertain you, led by spiel veteran Vicki Graff as the

beautiful Queen Esther. Galen Newman steps into the evil shoes of the villain, Haman. Jessica Leisawitz will be playing Cousin Mordechai.
Mike is delighted to welcome back Ron Berman who hasn’t been in an RCOS Purim spiel since our very first one way back in 2016. Ron will be playing the drunken King Ahasuerus with spiel newcomer Karen Kabakoff as his kvetchy wife, Queen Vashti. As the two Evil Plotters, we have Ellen Azrael and Marj Shearer. Rounding out the cast will be Judith Kraines, Neil Hoffman, Mike and some special guest actors.
Noisemakers will be provided to blot out the dreaded name of the evil “H-Man.” Guests are also encouraged to come to the event in costume.

One final note . . . this will be Mike's last RCOS Purim spiel. He will be moving out of the Reading area this summer to a senior community in Maryland to be closer to his daughter, Sarah, and her family. It would make Mike very happy to have a really large turnout for his last spiel.
So, reserve March 23 for an unforgettable evening of fun and frivolity. As previously stated, Purim falls on a Saturday this year. It's not a school or work night, so bring all the kiddies and have a ball.
The play is suitable for the entire family, so we're hoping to see everyone there! And by “everyone,” we mean EVERYONE! The spiel is open to one and all, whether you're an RCOS member or not.

WHAT'S COOKING? WITH ZIV

FRIDAY, MARCH 8th AT 11:00 AM

PURIM CELEBRATION!

Learn about the holiday of Purim and make your own Hamantaschen!

With Ziv Laskin from the Jewish Federation of Reading & Berks!

Please call or stop by the Library to register!



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www.berkslibraries.org/exeter
610-406-9431



BROUGHT TO US BY
Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks




RCOS welcomes scholar

By Rabbi Brian Michelson
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
Rabbi Shoshana Mambi will be serving as scholar in residence for Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom in March.
Shoshana will be joining us for services on Friday, March 8, at 7:45 p.m. She will help lead the service and share with us about her home community.
On Saturday, March 9, she will join Tot Shabbat for their service and the opportunity to share a children’s book she has written.
On Sunday, March 10, Shoshana will work with our Religious School students.
Shoshana grew up in Mbale, Uganda’s Abayudaya Jewish community, learning Hebrew at the nearby synagogue and teaching songs and the Torah portion to young children.
Shoshana, who is interested in sharing, will undoubtedly introduce Oheb Sholom to Ugandan Jewish traditions.
After graduating from the University of Kampala in 2011, she worked three summers as a camp counselor and



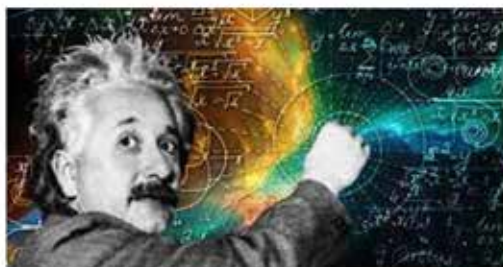
Rabbi Shoshana Mambi
Tefillah (prayer) coordinator at URJ Camp Coleman in Cleveland, Ga. Learning more about Judaism there paved the way for her dream of becoming a rabbi.
After a year of studying Hebrew and Jewish texts at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, she was offered admission to the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York.
Her 12-year-old daughter, Emunah, is a student at Schechter Manhattan.
We welcome Shoshana who said she hopes: “Most importantly, I am on my way to becoming a Jewish leader myself, just like the leaders I admired growing up.”



Please join Cantor Ted Prosnitz
on Monday
March 11 and 18 at 2pm for our next sessions
in our Adult Education series.

The topic will be


Can God and Science Co-Exist?



No prior attendance needed, no charge, everyone is welcome.

Questions?
Contact Cantor Ted Prosnitz 201-321-3030

555 Warwick Drive Wyomissing, PA 19610



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FAMILY HAMANTASH BAKE

SUNDAY, MARCH 17
3:30PM

AT CHABAD OF BERKS COUNTY
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RCOS to salute Steven Levine at event

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom will be honoring Steven Levine with the Ruth & Irvin Balis Volunteer Appreciation Award on Saturday, April 13, at 6 p.m. at the synagogue, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing.

Steven has been a member of RCOS since shortly after his family moved to Spring Township by way of New Mexico and Long Island in 2002.

He and his wife, Fran Komisar, have enjoyed watching their sons, Nick and Noah, get their Jewish education from Rabbi Brian and Holly Michelson as well as other teachers at RCOS.

Steven has served as a member of the Finance Committee since he was Temple Treasurer in 2011. He also participated in the Security Committee and Strategic Planning Committee.

In the past three years, Steven has written four grant proposals that have been funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency for security upgrades to the Temple.

He has played a leading role in sharing the congregation's services online via streaming.

He is also a volunteer for the congregation's Food Festival, working to produce the signature RCOS apple cake and brisket.

He has also volunteered with the



Steven Levine

Boy Scouts of America and Helping Harvest.

Balis award winners are decided by a committee of congregants based on nominations submitted by fellow members. The award is intended to bring attention to people whose consistent and noteworthy volunteer efforts often happen behind the scenes. It's a recognition that the congregation's activities and very survival depend on the dedication of its members.

One of the nominations for Steven

Levine summarizes why he was considered a model candidate for the award:

"Steve has served continuously on the Finance Committee since 2011. On this committee, he also served in the important role of Treasurer from 2011-2014 under then president Scott Davis. The Treasurer and Finance Committee have the challenge of overseeing the income, expenses and investments of the congregation and making recommendations to the Board regarding budget, financial planning and fiscal policy.

Steve spearheaded the development of the Temple's first Investment Policy. Later, he chaired the Dues Task Force in 2019 to address the issues of pledging under our new voluntary dues system. He also enticed Nic Cohen and Jim Harrison to join the Finance Committee, their first in a long line of duties they assumed for Temple administration.

Steve was a founding member of the Security Committee in 2019 and served as co-chairperson of the Security Grant Committee with Jim Harrison from 2020-2022. He successfully wrote grants resulting in

the award of \$54,000 for the purchase of security equipment to make our building and grounds safer.

Steve is currently the person who schedules a team of people who rotate on Fridays to stream our weekly Shabbat services and special events.

Steve serves as the chair of the Liefert-Fein Scholarship Committee that evaluates applications and awards about \$4,000 in scholarships annually to deserving higher education students.

In summary, Steve is a dedicated volunteer and unsung hero who has offered countless hours of his time to take on unglamorous responsibilities for the Temple."

The entire community is invited to join in saluting Steven Levine for his service to his congregation and community.

The evening will begin with the award presentation followed by cocktails and heavy hors d'oeuvres along with an opportunity socialize.

The cost of attendance is \$36 per person. Dressy, casual attire requested. No jeans. This event is for adults only.

RSVP deadline is March 29 at temple.office@ohebsholom.org

Obituary

Thomas Gavigan, 77 passed away Feb. 15. A native of Narbeth, Tom attended Drexel, and after designing nuclear power plants for Bechtel, he attended grad school in engineering at Penn State. He then taught at Lafayette College and then spent 33 years teaching at Penn State Berks.

Tom was an active volunteer. In his earlier years he was Reading American Little League's founding T-Ball Commissioner and later on he tutored PSU-Berks engineering

students, judged the county science fair and read to Reading school district students. At RCOS, he volunteered at the food festival and the community garden, raising produce for Helping Harvest. He loved playing board games with family and friends and rooting for Philadelphia and Penn State teams.

Tom is survived by his wife Miriam (Mimi) and sons Daniel and wife Meghan of Bainbridge Island, Wash.; David and wife Meghan Binford of Philadelphia, and Ian and partner J.P. Davis Hermann, also of Philadelphia, and four grandchildren.

All Around the Town

Mazel tov to **Jan and Jonathan Simon** on the birth of their granddaughter Claire Amelia, daughter of Zach and Katherine Simon of Birmingham, Mich.

Send good news to Marknem@aol.com or call 610-921-0624.

Until next time: Shalom!

March 25 at 1:00

Movie Monday



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"Maestro"

A towering and fearless love story chronicling the lifelong relationship between Leonard Bernstein and Felicia Montealegre Cohn Bernstein. A love letter to life and art, Maestro at its core is an emotionally epic portrayal of family and love.

RSVP by calling the JCC at 610-921-0624 or email info@jfreading.org

 Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks

Grab a seat for a Jewish themed movie each month at the JCC. It is usually held on the 4th Monday of the month, the popcorn and the movie are both free!

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Jewish Family Service is grateful to our committed volunteers!

Here are some ways that you can help:

Help Fight Hunger

Join us at a JFS Food Pantry to distribute food to our hungry neighbors.

Share your Professional Expertise

Present a program on travel, photography, or your unique interests or hobbies to our seniors.

Share your time

A small investment of your personal time can make a profound difference in someone's life. Visit a shut-in, shop for a homebound senior, or take someone to a doctor's appointment.

Donate your vehicle to JFS or donate clothing to CommunityAid

Enjoy tax benefits of donating a car or help our clients through our partnership with CommunityAid.




Contact Us
Carole Robinson at
610-921-0624

 Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks



World Wide Wrap at Keshar Zion



Some younger congregants at Keshar Zion Synagogue learned about Tefillin with the help of Beth Caster and Doris Leisawitz. They even looked inside the boxes of the tefillin and saw the scrolls with the Torah verses written on them. Then they had some fun making models of tefillin.



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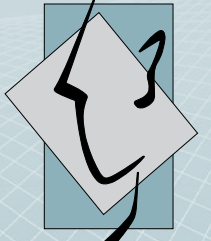
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By Sari Incledon, M.Ed.

When my family moved to a condominium development five years ago, we thought it would be perfect for aging in place.

We no longer have yard work to do or have to deal with snow removal. (As I am writing this, I am happy to watch the landscape crew shovel snow from our walkways).

Other features that were important to us were a main-floor master bedroom, main-floor laundry room and a garage, which our previous home of 32 years in Reading didn't have.

I discovered that I have something in common with 77% of adults over 50 years old who according to AARP desire to age in place.

The U.S. Centes for Disease Control and Prevention defines aging in place as, "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently and comfortably regardless of age, income or ability level."

People who age in place hope to maintain independence for as long as possible and turn to other options when needed. Living at home as you age requires careful consideration and planning.

I'd like to suggest two things to everyone considering this option. First, carefully evaluate your living space to determine how



to make it ready to age with you. Second, familiarize yourself with home-based supports that can be used as needed.

AARP's Homefit Guide can help. It features smart ways to make a home comfortable and safe. Here are just a few suggestions that may help you stay in your home longer.

Bathroom

- Install grab bars on the shower wall and near the toilet
- Replace a showerhead for a hand-held nozzle to enable sitting
- Swap out your toilet for a taller version

Bedroom and stairs

- If stairs are hard to navigate, move a bedroom downstairs by turning a room like an office into a bedroom.
- Install an electric stair lift to help you safely get up and down stairs.

Lighting

- Have ample indoor and outdoor lighting to create safe pathways, including attics, basements and closets
- Use nightlights, especially in bedrooms and bathrooms

Entries and Flooring

- Create at least one no-step entry into the home
- Put a seat in the foyer to use when removing and putting on shoes
- Avoid the use of scatter rugs that can be a tripping hazzard

Home-based supports

When you are aging in place, home-

based supports can supplement what you can do on your own. Supports can be provided by informal caregivers such as family members, friends or neighbors and can be supplemented by formal caregiver and community services. Some examples of help you can get at home include:

Personal care - help with the activities of daily living- including bathing, grooming and dressing

Household chores - Including cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping, yard work

Meals - Shopping for food, preparing meals or having meals delivered

Health care - Help with various aspects of healthcare like wound care, medication management and physical therapy

Transportation - Assistance getting around for shopping and appointments

Safety - Medical alert system that can help in case of a fall

To learn more about how you can access community resources to provide home based supports, call Jewish Family Service at 610-921-0624 or the Area Office of Aging at 610-478-6500.

There may come a time when it is no longer safe or comfortable to live in one's own home. The decision about whether or when an older adult should move is often difficult and emotional.

Perhaps the best thing to do is to learn as much as possible about housing options as you grow older (even if you are committed to aging in place) and discuss the pros and cons of each option before making a decision.

JFS food pantries serve community



A JFS volunteer loads boxes of food into a food pantry client's vehicle. Other walk-up clients are waiting in line to register before receiving food.



Many thanks to our February Food Pantry volunteers who distributed 11, 000 pounds of food to 236 households at the JFS Olivet pantry.

Cindy Balchunas

Raymond Gehring

John Incledon

Pete Jacobson

Sid Lempiner

Paul Mintz

Annette Peppard

Jennafer Reilly

Mike Schein

Jacob Sileski

Oleg Umanov



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

More fun and learning at Friendship Circle



More fun and learning at Jewish Family Service’s Friendship Circle. At right, Ellen Schwickrath and Helene Berne celebrate Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish New Year for the trees. Above, Hallie Vaughan, portraying the late U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, with Friendship Circle members. JFS Friendship Circle programs are held twice a month on Thursdays at 1 p.m. An optional lunch is served, followed by an entertaining or informative program, activity or holiday celebration. Check out the list of activities below and in each month’s issue of Shalom.



FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

March 7- “Are you ready to Rumble?”

Join the Friendship Circle gang for a game of “Rapid Rumble“, the fastest, funniest, cleverest category game! Everyone will be a winner and we will all have fun!

March 21 - “Purim Celebration”

Enjoy some hamentashen and have Purim fun with RCOS Rabbi Brian Michelson.



Friendship Circle is held twice a month on Thursday afternoons at 1:00 p.m. at the JCC. An optional lunch is served, followed by an entertaining or educational program or holiday celebration. Programs are free; optional lunch is \$7. Contact Carole at 610-921-0624 to make lunch reservations.



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Reading Jewish Family Service #50100

You can also donate clothing anytime in the
bin in our parking lot located at 1100 Berkshire Blvd.



Your donations turn into financial assistance to support the important work we do in our community!

Determined to boost connections to Israel

By Ziv Laskin

On Jan. 29, I traveled to Stamford, Conn., for a four-day conference of the Jewish Agency of Israel. There, 363 Shlichim and Shlichut (Emissaries) convened. Throughout the event, we engaged in lectures, fortified the Shlichim network, and exchanged insightful ideas. The most significant thing was being together with other Israelis and expressing our feelings since October 7th.

Encountering 363 Shlichim can be somewhat overwhelming. Each of these young, driven Israelis possesses a unique persona, stemming from diverse backgrounds, ideas, and stories, providing 363 ways to connect with Israel. I felt gratified knowing that I could expose my mind to a wealth of new knowledge and perspectives.

If you think about it for a moment, no other country besides Israel invests in sending young emissaries to create and enhance connections, it is something



unique for the Jewish people and Israel. The Shlichut program serves as a vital mission of solidarity and shared destiny, with more than 2,000 Shlichim stationed worldwide, exerting a profound influence on both Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

A crucial part of the conference was the discussions on the tragedy of Oct. 7. Shlichim who lost their loved ones shared their stories, and the devastating feeling affected everyone. However, this is what we needed, to break down and share our feelings. There is no doubt that the Shlichut program has changed after the current incidents. Shlichim shared how campuses around the USA have become insecure for Jewish students and the challenge of explaining the Israeli narrative amidst all the challenges of being far from home when your family and friends are fighting for the only Jewish country.

The main point raised during the conference is Jewish identity among young Jews. Identity is the core for solidarity and community, especially in these days when antisemitism has



Above, Ziv with Doron Almog, chairman of the executive of the Jewish Federation at a conference. Below kids have fun with Ziv at the Havdalah and Hummus program that involved the Berks and Lancaster Jewish communities.

increased, and there is criticism of Israel's actions in Gaza. I believe the main role of Shlichim is to bring Jewish people together to boost Jewish identity and the connection to Israel through personal relationships.



Coffee Time

Join our Shaliach, Ziv, for Israeli coffee and chatting about Israel

Fridays
10:30 a.m.
JCC

*March 8th
Exeter Community Library, 11:00am

March 22nd

RSVP to
zivl@jfreading.org

SECOND IN THE SERIES

THURSDAY, MARCH 28

Avi Eisen-Hovlim

Israeli Naval Academy

Avi volunteered to serve in the Navy. After graduating from the Israeli Naval Academy, he served as a ship captain and secured the Israeli-Gaza border. Avi's last position was as the director of the Israeli Navy Patrol Ships Brigade. Today, Avi holds a B.A. in Middle Eastern Studies, and he is an active reservist who played a significant role in the Israel-Gaza War.

Hybrid event. Join us in person or on Zoom

Jewish Federation of Reading
1100 Berkshire Blvd, Suite 125 Wyomissing

Zoom
A link will be provided by RSVP

7:00PM

RSVP: Zivl@jfreading.org

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

JCAL
JEWISH COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF LANCASTER

Israel21c.org

Generally speaking, we're trying to make more of an effort with one another, whether in conversation, in our awful driving or on social media. But because of everyone's drained emotional resources, patience is

One of the things visitors to Israel always find strange is the amount of visible weapons on the street. In a country with mandatory military service, a lot of people walk

At the moment, rocket attacks are fewer than they were at the beginning of the war. But that can change. Wherever you go, make sure you know where to go in case of an air-raid siren. In your hotel, that would mean safe rooms or bomb shelters; in eateries it might mean a more internal room; on the bus you'd need to go down below window level; and on the beach you'll

Feeling more alone than ever before, we are absolutely thrilled that people are coming here in our hour of need. We are thankful for visitors' love and support and hope to celebrate together once more in happier times.

Do you have topic ideas for this series? Share them with us at info@jfreeding.org or call 610-921-0624

Noontime Knowledge is a free program, held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, provided by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks to educate our community on a variety of topics

Do you have topic ideas for this series? Share them with us at info@jfreeding.org or call 610-921-0624

Chabad events bring music, meaning



At left, to honor the seventh yahrtzeit of Rabbi Lipsker’s dad, who was a professional musician and composer, Chabad hosted a soul stirring evening of Jewish and chassidic music. At right, the Torah & Tea Tu B’shvat event for ladies was a beautiful, inspiring and fun evening. The group did wood burning boards to display their fruits.


JFS hospital, outpatient visits

By Carole Robinson
and Sari Incledon

Jewish Family Service social workers visit Jewish patients at local hospitals, senior communities, nursing homes and rehab centers. Our goal in these visits is both to be friendly and supportive at a difficult time, and to provide access to social services that supplement and complement the case managers at these locations.

If you or a loved one is at a local hospital or nursing home and would like a visit, please call us. If you or a loved one are treated at a hospital out of our area we are also available for follow-up visits upon discharge. At times of ill health, stress or crisis, families are often looking for information about home care, transportation services, senior communities, nursing homes and rehabs. This is what we’re

here for. Please call Jewish Family Service social workers for help at 610-921-0624.



COMMUNITY GARDEN


Are you ready to cultivate connections and sow the seeds of community spirit? We invite youth to be a part of building our new exciting community garden!

Chabad

2320 Hampden Blvd, Reading

12:30pm


Sunday March 31



RSVP

610-921-0624

Zivl@jfreading.org



JEWISH FEDERATION INVITES YOU TO

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Tuesday, March 12
5:30-7:30 p.m.
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Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks



Free Apps
Cash Bar



RSVP TO [INFO@JFREADING.ORG](mailto:info@jfreading.org) OR 610-921-0624

Pilates, Tech Tuesday among JCC programs



At left, one of the Pilates classes now offered at the JCC. Classes run Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 to 11 a.m. See ad below for details. Below left, Mike Farrara leads one of his Tech Tuesday classes on making the best use of Apple products. Keep track of all our great JCC programs each month in the *Shalom* Centerpiece.



Shop the weekly discount days at



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NEW PILATES CLASSES AT THE JCC

Join Martha Connolly of Pilates At Any Age, LLC who will be instructing classes of Pilates, starting Tuesday, February 6th. All community participants are welcome, no experience is necessary and all levels (including beginners) are welcome. Participants should wear comfortable clothing and either grippy socks or bare feet and bring a water bottle. 1-hour class at 10 am on Tuesdays and a 1-hour class at 10 am on Friday. \$5 per class. Class fee is payable by cash or check only.



TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS
10AM - 11AM
\$ 5 PER CLASS
TUESDAYS: MAT CLASSES
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THE 18TH ANNUAL RICHARD J. YASHEK MEMORIAL LECTURE

KAREN FROSTIG

THE ART OF REMEMBERING



MARCH 20, 2024

7:30 p.m., Student Center, South Lounge. Experience Event. Free and open to the public.

Karen Frostig is a public memory artist, writer, cultural historian, activist, professor of art at Lesley University and Scholar at the Women Studies Research Center at Brandeis University. She is the artistic and executive director of the "Locker of Memory" (2019-present), a multi-media project located in Riga, Latvia, and dedicated to remembering the victims of the Jungfernhof concentration camp. Frostig also served as the director of "The Vienna Project" (2013-2014), the city's first naming memorial representing sixteen districts of Vienna. On January 27, 2023, she was invited to present her family's Holocaust history and her work in Riga at the United Nations General Assembly. Frostig's art, including a concept design for the "Mourning Shroud," will be on display at the Freedman Gallery January 23 – April 14.



ALBRIGHT COLLEGE
LECTURE SERIES

Edwin & Alma '51 Lakin
Holocaust Library
and Resource Center

 Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks

The Freedman Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of The Yashek Family and Dena and Vic Hammel.

"Deportation," 2006, digital photo montage, archival inkjet print, 40.42" x 28.9."

Federation Honorial - Memorial Card Information

Please mail your payment with complete information to the Jewish Federation, PO Box 14925, Reading, PA 19612-4925 or bring to the Jewish Cultural Center, 1100 Berkshire Blvd, Suite 125, Wyomissing. You may set up a “**savings account**” for the purpose of sending cards. Please contact the Jewish Federation at 610-921-0624 for further information.

Contributions as of Feb. 16

Jewish Family Service

In memory of:
Joseph Beller - Henry & Helene Singer

In honor of:
Birth of Jonathan & Jan Simon's new granddaughter - Betsy & Al Katz

Evelyn F. Thompson Nursery School Fund

In memory of:
Ann Greth - Beth & Bob Caster
Kurt Althouse's mother - Beth & Bob Caster
Kurt Althouse's father - Beth & Bob Caster

In honor of:
Birth of Jonathan and Jan Simon's new granddaughter, Claire - Susan Schlanger

Honorials and Memorials


Contributions may be made to the following Funds:
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Jewish Family Service
Leo Camp Lecture Fund
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In memory of:
Robert Hammel - Margie & Alan Leisawitz

Israel Emergency Relief Fund

In honor of:
Mike Fromm – Davida Fromm



LITERATOUR BERKS


CELEBRATING AUTHORS AND BOOKS

MARCH 13TH, 2024

11:00 AM AT THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF READING/BERKS

ROSANNE LEIPZIG

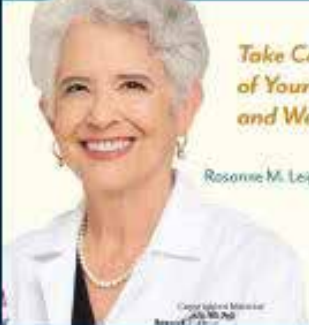
AUTHOR OF: **HONEST AGING**



A JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS HEALTH BOOK

Honest Aging

An Insider's Guide to the Second Half of Life




Take Control of Your Health and Well-Being

Rosanne M. Leipzig, MD, PhD


Rosanne M. Leipzig, MD, PhD is the Gerald and May Ellen Ritter Professor and Vice Chair Emeritus for the Brookdale Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. She is the editor-in-chief of the monthly newsletter *Focus on Healthy Aging* and coeditor of the fourth edition of *Geriatric Medicine*.

Rosanne will be spending a morning with attendees discussing *Honest Aging*, as well as signing and selling the novel.


This program is brought to us by Literatour Berks, The Jewish Federation of Reading & Berks, and the Exeter Community Library.



Jewish Book Council



exeter community library



Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

From Dr. Rosanne M. Leipzig, a top doctor with more than thirty-five years of experience caring for older people, *Honest Aging* is an indispensable guide to the second half of life, describing what to expect physically, psychologically, functionally, and emotionally as you age.

Enriched by patient stories and deep dives into science and the latest research, *Honest Aging* gives you the tools to take control of your health and well-being as you age.

JEWISH FEDERATION OF READING/BERKS
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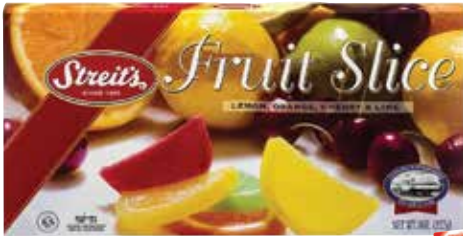
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