

Shalom02|21

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

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- Great Decisions Series
- Jewish Community
- Relations Council
- Community Holiday Programs
- Women's Philanthropy
- Jewish Federations
- of North America
- Counseling Services
- Leo Camp Lecture
- Shabbat B'Yachad



A community tribute to Irvin Cohen

Irvin Cohen made a tremendous impact on our Jewish community and so many other aspects of life in Berks County, first as a successful businessman and then as one of the area's great philanthropists. In addition to supporting Jewish causes, he provided great leadership as one of the key forces behind the establishment of the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts and the revitalization of the Reading Public Museum. He was also a leading supporter of his alma mater, Penn State University, working to provide new opportunities for students to excel. His memory will be a blessing for his community for generations to come.

See Bill Franklin's column on Page 3, and turn to Pages 6 and 7 to read memories from many others who knew and loved him.

An inspiring MLK Day of Service



Above photos by Ben Hasty, courtesy of Reading Eagle

Members of the Weiss and Levin families were among the volunteers putting together meal kits for our MLK Day of Service.

By Amanda J. Hornberger

The cold weather couldn't stop the warmth of volunteers gathered for our 3rd Annual MLK Day of Service on Jan. 18.

Partnering with Immanuel United Church of Christ on the church campus in Shillington, youth and adults gathered for service projects: food donation sorting and creation of more than 100 power boost packs filled with a wide variety of food and snack items to be handled out by Immanuel UCC to members of the Gov. Mifflin Community dealing with hunger.

Volunteers made 100 meal kits: a five-bean vegetarian soup and a rice casserole, both of which only require water to prepare. Six no-sew blankets were created to be donated to Mary's Shelter in Reading.

Everyone worked together for a successful event! We had a lot of new volunteers as many folks told us we were the only Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service event they could find to participate in. Thank you for your food donations and for the 50+ volunteers for their time, energy and enthusiasm.

We were happy to create a service event to remember Martin Luther King, Jr. and work together as a community. We are hopeful that together we can continue our positive outreach and service to our community and continue to make MLK Day a day on, not off.



Leah Erhlikh, Bella Karchevsky and Eva Karchevsky hold up the no-sew blanket they created.

Shalom, chaverim!

Development

By Richard Nassau
Development Director

For the past six years, I have had the pleasure of working with the Jewish community of Berks County. I'm proud to say I work in this community; it has become part of my Jewish identity. For this reason, it is bittersweet to announce that I will be retiring March 1.



I have worked for and been involved with various Jewish Federations for the past 27 years, from Philadelphia to Wilmington and beyond. The Federation here in Berks County, however, stands out for so many reasons: the scope of programming, the involvement of volunteers, the friendly collaboration

within various sectors, the openness to change, the pride and passion shown by those who live and work here. I know many are unaware that this is truly a gem in the Federation world — perhaps that is part of its magic.

During my tenure we have, sadly, lost many pillars of philanthropy, which has created a hole that is hard to fill — not only financially but also in other kinds of support.

However, even with these challenges and the unique challenges we continue to face, this past year has been unexpectedly heartening. We have seen a sharp rise in new volunteers and donors. And those who have always been there have worked even harder. They have increased their financial gifts. They have given endless energy and effort to our success. Clearly, it takes more than a pandemic to squelch

the generous hearts of my adopted community.

I consider my colleagues to be friends. I am proud of the many initiatives they and our volunteers have undertaken under the leadership of Bill Franklin and our board. I will miss working with the dedicated staff of the Federation, whose work is incomparable.

Because I believe in the work I promote, I am proud to announce that I have joined with 50 other members of our community to create a bequest in my own will for the Jewish Federation here in Berks County. This will benefit our future. It is an act I hope will encourage others to do the same and create their own Jewish legacy.

Going forward, may you be blessed, as I am, with the love of family and a community you cherish.

Literatour event focuses on South African art

By Amanda J. Hornberger

South African artist Irma Stern is one of that nation's most controversial modern figures. Stern's expressive portraits rendered in saturated colors were among her most widely known pieces. The painter and sculptor traveled throughout Africa to capture not only likenesses, but also landscapes that are unique to the continent. In "Irma Stern and the Racial Paradox of South African Modern Art: Audacities of Color," LaNitra M. Berger explores the complex history of Stern. Berger will be our guest at Literatour Berks on Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 7 p.m. on Zoom.

The book explores how Stern became South Africa's most prolific painter of black, Jewish, and colored (mixed-race) life while maintaining a neutral position on apartheid.

Spanning from the Boer War, to Nazi Germany, to apartheid South Africa, Irma Stern's life and work document important cultural and political moments in modern history.

LaNitra M. Berger is senior director of fellowships at George Mason University, where she is also affiliate faculty in Art History and the African and African American Studies program. She received her MA and PhD in art history from Duke and a BA in art history and international relations from Stanford.

You can register by visiting <https://readingjewishcommunity.org/home/literatour>. Signed copies of the book will be available through the Literatour Berks official book vendor, Reads & Company of Phoenixville.

Thank you to the sponsors and patrons of Literatour Berks for making this event possible.



LaNitra M. Berger

Learn about world affairs; join Great Decisions

By Amanda J. Hornberger

International organizations and the pandemic. Brexit and the European Union. Fight over the melting Arctic. China & Africa. 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 Penn State 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 virtually on Zoom on Monday mornings from 10:30

a.m. until 2 p.m. at the JCC beginning March 1. Great Decisions runs for eight weeks through April 19. The cost is \$30 per book or \$35 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@jfreading.org or 610-921-0624.

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



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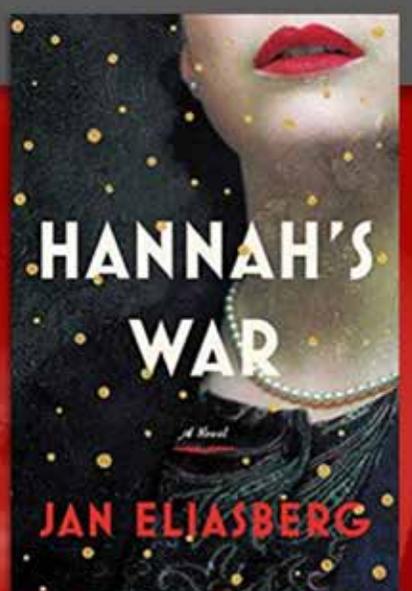
Please visit
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**Make your gift
today!**

Hannah's War
by Jan Eliasberg

**Monday
February 1st
7 p.m.
via Zoom**

Registration required.
To register, visit:
www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org/home/literatour

Literatour Berks is a program of Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks in partnership with Exeter Community Library and Sinking Spring Public Library.



From the President's Desk

Irv Cohen an embodiment of Judaism's life-changing ideas

By William D. Franklin
President



I've had the pleasure of knowing Irv Cohen for six years. It was wonderful to learn of the many ways he and Lois changed people's lives. I have been

reading Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' book, "Judaism's Life-Changing Ideas." He reviews and summarizes each Torah portion, concluding with the helpful "life-changing ideas" he took from each. It struck me that Irv's life embodied many of Rabbi Sacks' transformational ideas.

Let me cite a few:

• In the portion Miketz (Genesis 1:1-44:17), Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams and provides plans for Egyptians to survive the coming seven years of bounty

followed by seven years of drought. Rabbi Sacks concludes that "G-d does not want us to accept poverty and pain but to cure them." Irv came from an impoverished Russian immigrant family. He not only "cured" his family's financial hardship, but he and Lois helped many others through support of Opportunity House, Cambridge Day Schools and PAL, and our Federation's Jewish Family Service.

• In Yitro (Exodus 18:1-20:23), Moses' father-in-law advises an overworked Moses to find others to help him. Rabbi Sacks' transformational idea here is, "There are certain things we can do together that none of us can do alone." He and Lois worked together for 70 years. In addition, he was an integral member of the committee that planned and oversaw the construction of our Jewish Community Center and later served as its president. He was

a member of RCOS and strong supporter of the Jewish Federation. Irv was one of the founders of Goggleworks Center for the Arts and served on the board of the Reading Public Museum. Recently he and Lois, with Vic and Dena Hammel, established the Cohen-Hammel Fellows Program. This is a comprehensive new scholarship program for outstanding Penn State Berks undergraduates designed to prepare students to become engaged, ethical leaders in the 21st century.

• In Vayak'hel (Exodus 35:1-38:20), Moses, after winning G-d's forgiveness for the sin of the golden calf, works to turn a fragmented people back into a community for their own well-being. Based on this Rabbi Sacks writes, "Happiness lies beyond the self, in the strength of our relationships, our connections to community, and what we give

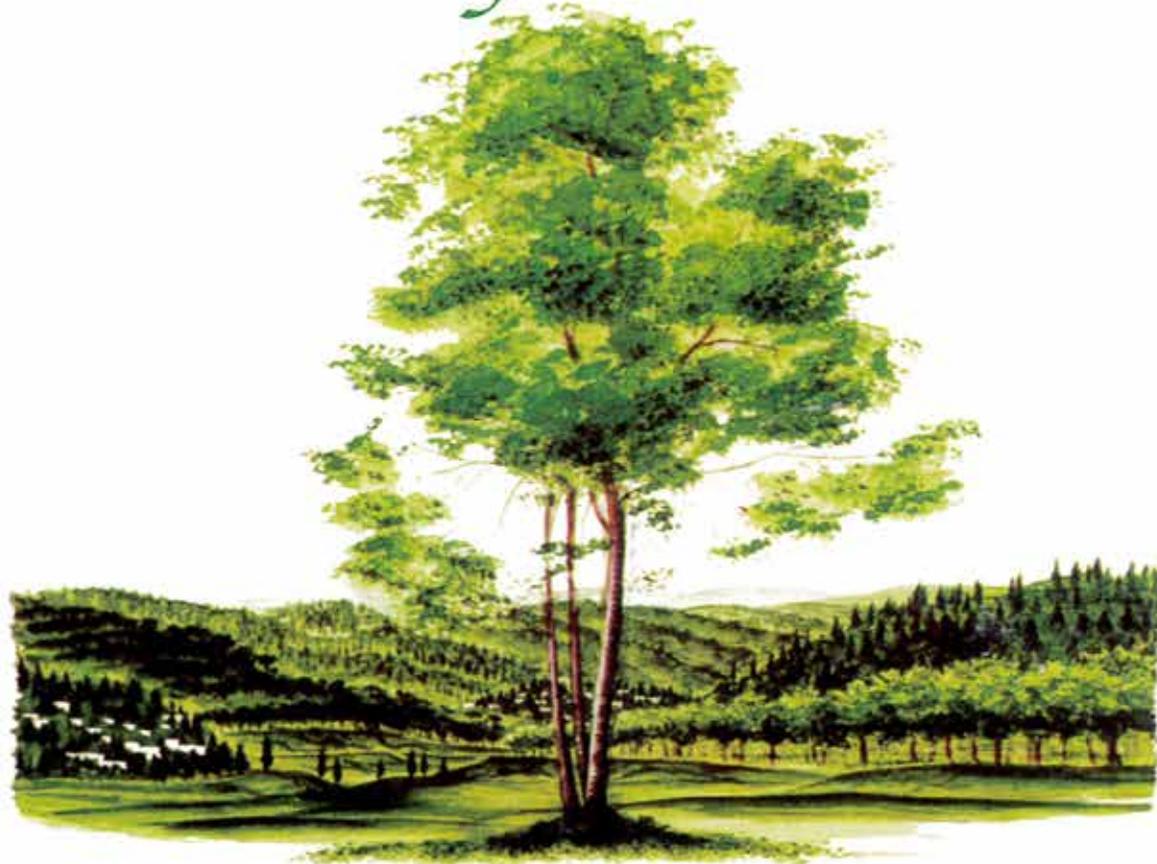
and are given by others." Irv's ever-present smile and wonderful sense of humor were clear indications of his well-being. The love and admiration expressed by his family, friends, and community members help us appreciate the many sources of his happiness.

• In Behar (Leviticus 25:1-26:2), G-d gives Moses laws and values of ethical behavior and social justice. Rabbi Sacks' life-changing idea from this portion is, "Be a blessing to others and you will find that life has been a blessing to you." Irv knew that he was blessed by his marriage to Lois, by their two children, their four grandchildren and their four great-grandchildren. He loved his blessed life and continues to be a blessing to all of us.

The best way we can honor and remember Irvin Cohen is to work together to make our world better.

He will be missed.

Trees for Israel



כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל הָאָרֶץ וּנְטַעְתֶּם (ויקרא י"ט, כ"ג)

"When you shall come to the land you shall plant trees." - Leviticus 19:23

Twenty Trees Have Been Planted

In Honor Of

The Reading Jewish Community

In Celebration Of Tu B'Shevat

Planted By

The Reading Jewish Federation



World War II thriller next in Literatour Berks

By Amanda J. Hornberger

In 1945 the Nobel Prize for chemistry went to Otto Hahn for his discovery of the fission of heavy nuclei, which paved the way for the construction of the atomic bomb. Lost to history is the truth that Hahn would not have been able to complete his work without help from Austrian-Jewish scientist Dr. Lise Meitner. Forced to flee Germany in 1938, Meitner never received credit for her role in the discovery.

Jan Eliasberg's novel "Hannah's War" is loosely based on this real-life story. Eliasberg will join Literatour Berks for a discussion on her riveting historical novel on Monday, Feb. 1 at 7 p.m. on Zoom.

In 1945, Dr. Hannah Weiss, an Austrian-Jewish physicist, is removed from her essential work with the Critical Assemblies Team at the Los Alamos National Laboratories and is taken for interrogation. Major Jack Delaney, a rising star in the shadowy world of military intelligence, is convinced that someone in the top-secret Manhattan Project is a spy; the captivating, brilliant and mysterious female scientist soon becomes his primary suspect. Is Hannah a Nazi spy, or is she protecting a far more personal and dark secret of her own? As World War II reaches its crescendo, the Allies and the Germans are racing to complete and



test the atomic bomb — a weapon powerful enough to end World War II and, perhaps, all future wars. A weapon that, in the wrong hands, could destroy the world. This is vivid, page-turning, and inspiring re-imagining of the final months of World War II and the brilliant researchers behind the first atomic bomb.

Jan Eliasberg is an award-winning writer/director. Her prolific directing career includes dramatic pilots for CBS, NBC, and ABC, such as "Miami Vice" and "Wiseguy," episodes of television series, including "Bull," "Nashville," "Parenthood," "The Magicians," "Blue Bloods," "NCIS: Los Angeles," "Supernatural" and dozens of others; as well as the feature film "Past Midnight." Eliasberg also has a storied career as a screenwriter, writing films driven by strong female leads, including "Fly Girls" about the Women Air Service Pilots in World War II. This is her first novel.

You can register by visiting our website:



<https://readingjewishcommunity.org/home/literatour> Signed copies of the book will be available for purchase through the Literatour Berks official book vendor, Reads & Company of Phoenixville.

Thank you to the sponsors and patrons of Literatour Berks for making this event possible.

Interactive story time for PJ Library kids!

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Is your house a crazy zoo? Then join us for an interactive story time with author and performer Jill Ross Nadler on Sunday, Feb. 7 at 4 p.m. for some relief!

During 2020, many of us could relate to the familiar Yiddish folktale about the husband and wife who live with their many children in a tiny, crowded and noisy house. The man asks the rabbi what to do. The rabbi suggests that he bring in the cow. But now the house is more crowded and more noisy. So the rabbi tells the man to bring

in his chickens, then his goats, geese, and ducks. Soon the man is overwrought. Finally, the rabbi says to take out all of the animals. And the man appreciates his quiet, spacious house.

Nadler has reimagined this popular tale about appreciating all that we have in a new setting: a modern-day library. Stevie tries to escape his noisy family by reading a book at the library. Ah, quiet. But with each turn of the page and the storyteller saying "Once upon a time" disturb Stevie's peace.

Nadler is co-founder of Page Turner

Adventures, a theater company that inspires kids to collect, tell and write stories. This professional storyteller is sure to offer a FUN, interactive program for young readers! We will also be doing a pop-up craft together so be sure not to miss this one!

You can register by visiting our website: <https://readingjewishcommunity.org/home/literatour> Signed copies of the book will be available for purchase through the Literatour Berks official book vendor, Reads & Company of Phoenixville.

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

Chevre

Mahjong

Trips to NYC/Philadelphia

Lakin Holocaust Library

& Resource Center

Shabbat B'yachad

Community Calendar

grades 8-9

Reading Jewish youth group

zoom hangout

Sunday, February 21st at 11:30am

To register, email AdiS@JFReading.org

Film screening in partnership with JCPA

By Amanda J. Hornberger

The 2020 Mexican Academy Award Winner for Best Feature Length Documentary, "The Guardian of Memory" will be screened on Monday, Feb. 22 in partnership with the Jewish Council of Public Affairs. Joining us will be the Jewish director of the film, Marcela Arteaga, and one of its main subjects — Carlos Spector. Moderating the conversation will be Michael Fromm.

"The Guardian of Memory" profiles Jewish Texas immigration attorney Carlos Spector. He fights to obtain asylum for Mexicans who are in extreme danger. They have been threatened, and oftentimes their family members were murdered or disappeared. Carlos' commitment to immigrant rights stems from his father's experiences as a soldier in World War II

and the atrocities he witnessed.

The Juarez Valley, a region once known for cotton production, is now nothing more than burned down houses, empty towns, and memories. Carlos Spector fights to obtain political asylum for Mexicans fleeing from violence. This is the story of Mexican men, women, and children seeking a respite from their tragedies by heading to their neighboring country, the U.S. It is also a story about the kindness and hope that still exists in people who have gone through hell, and about Carlos Spector's tireless efforts to keep memory alive.

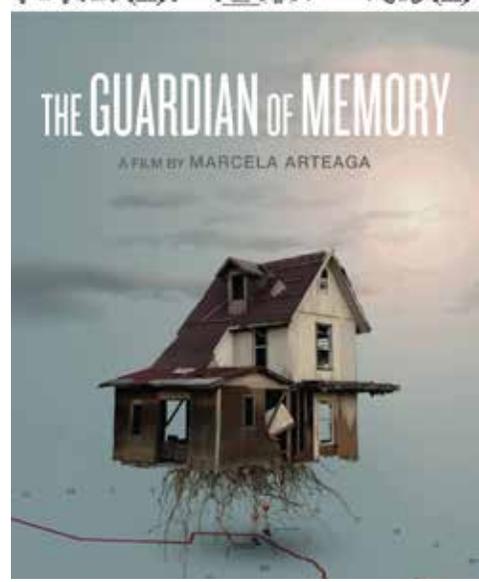
JCPA traveled to the Mexican and USA border and met with officials. "We both returned with a deeper understanding that our immigration system is profoundly broken and in dire need of reform," said Melanie Roth Gorelick, Senior Vice

President and Tammy Gilden, Senior Policy Associate

The Reading JCRC, in accordance with its commitment to advocate for human rights around the world and promote a just and pluralistic America, works together with all communities in Berks County to build bridges with our local minority communities and communities of color to bring people together in the pursuit of those values. These are the same values being pursued in this worthwhile and eye-opening film.

Jewish Federation is proud to sponsor this nationwide screening of the award-winning documentary. The event is free and open to the public. Registration is available on our website: ReadingJewishCommunity.org

2020 MEXICAN ACADEMY AWARD WINNER BEST FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARY



Proof of PJ Library's impact

Originally published in the Fall 2020 edition of PROOF, a PJ Library magazine. Visit pjlibrary.org/proof for more.

By Sarah Martin

PJ Library

Findings from the 2019 PJ Library Triennial evaluation show that as PJ Library welcomes families with a wide variety of backgrounds, it remains a trusted resource for parents.

In my job as director of evaluation at PJ Library, I'm constantly learning in ways you would expect — and in a few ways you wouldn't. I'm not a parent, and I'm not Jewish, so I often rely on my colleagues' knowledge (and patience!) to fill in gaps of my understanding.

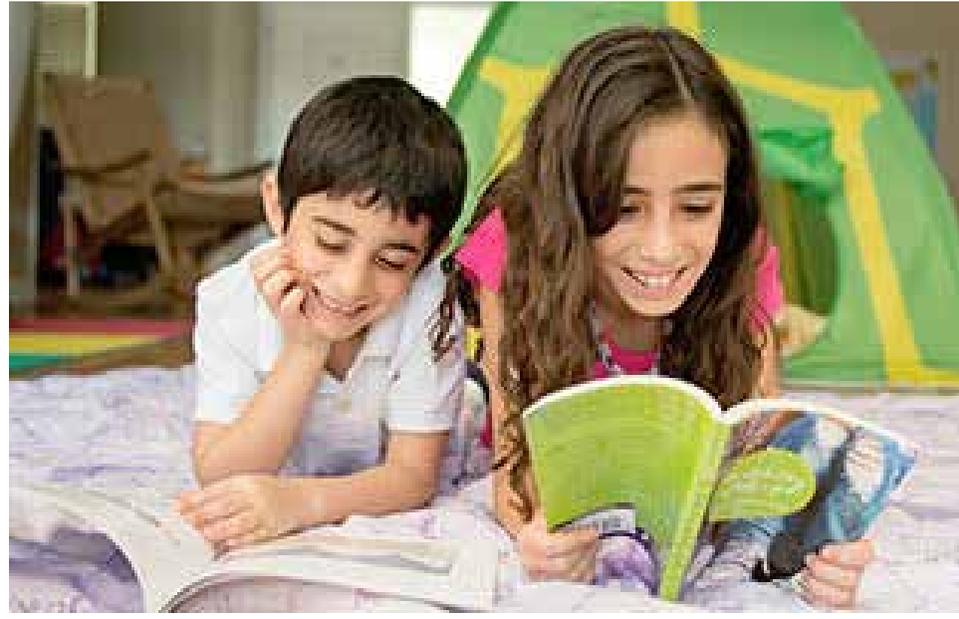
But sometimes being on the outside is an advantage. I have fewer preconceived notions about what PJ Library families look like and how they experience the program. Part of my work is to check in regularly with families and learn more about who comprises the PJ Library community. My lack of assumptions helps me see these families for who they are rather than who we think they might be.

And the PJ Library subscriber base is ever-changing, which is inherent in the nature of a program that is growing rapidly and where children eventually age out of receiving the books. Our most recent triennial evaluation, which was fielded in the fall of 2019, confirmed that fact yet again. Over the past three years, the program has not only grown by more than 40,000 families (reaching 160,000 total families in the U.S. and Canada in November 2019), but the backgrounds of enrolled families are increasingly varied. The proportions of PJ Library families who speak a language other than English, identify as an interfaith household or have a member who identifies as LGBTQ have all increased since the 2016 evaluation.

We know PJ Library will continue to grow and change as we strive to reach as many families as possible, but our commitment to quality will always remain the same. The PJ Library team works every day to make sure that parents and families are happy with program offerings and are getting what they need from PJ Library, no matter what their households look like.

Likelihood to recommend

"How likely are you to recommend this program to a friend?" This question really boils down to parent satisfaction, which is why we've asked it in many different surveys over the years — from in-the-envelope resources to in-person community programs. (We're not the only ones who ask it. You might recognize the question as a hybrid of the Net Promoter



Score, which was developed by Bain & Company and is commonly used across many industries to understand customer satisfaction.) Most respondents — 86%, to be exact — indicated that they are very likely to recommend* signing up to receive PJ Library books to family and friends, and that holds true whether families are raising their children exclusively Jewish or Jewish and another religion (87% for both groups). Satisfaction is essential to cultivating trust.

Reliable source

We've long asked how likely parents are to recommend us, but 2019 was the first year we tried to find out whether families depend on us. We're glad we asked: Half of respondents indicated they do indeed rely on PJ Library as either the main source (10%) or one of a few sources (39%) to learn about Jewish values and traditions. The proportion increases to 68% for families who don't enroll their kids in Jewish educational activities like day school, preschool, or summer camp and to 70% for respondents who are part of an interfaith household. It turns out there's a remarkable educational responsibility on PJ Library's shoulders.

Trusted name

The latest evaluation found that 68% of respondents indicated they completely agree (19%) or somewhat agree (49%) that they are more likely to attend a local event for families or parents if it is sponsored or endorsed by PJ Library. The percentage jumps to 74% for Spanish-speaking families (27% completely agree and 47% somewhat agree). PJ Library partners with nearly 200 community organizations across the US and Canada to support Jewish programming for families, so it's important that we and our partners know that parents trust the PJ Library name.

Parent support

For the second study in a row, the majority of respondents indicated they regard PJ Library as a valuable parenting tool (46% completely agree and 43% somewhat agree — that's 89% total!). For these families, PJ Library has helped parents talk to their kids about their Jewish heritage (82%), create opportunities for quality family time (63%), and support moral/ethical values (61%). Respondents who are part of an LGBTQ household, an interfaith household, or a household with a person of color are even more likely to regard PJ Library as a valuable parenting tool (91%, 93%, and 92%, respectively).

In early May, during the height of the

COVID-19 crisis in the Northeast, PJ Library's Rabbi Melanie Levav and Sarah Ruderman Wilensky hosted a webinar titled "Talking with Children about Death and Loss in the Age of Coronavirus." Registration quickly maxed out (more than 1,300 online participants), and parents submitted hundreds of questions. It was a stark, real-life example of what all these triennial evaluation findings actually mean.

When parents and families are looking for support and guidance, they turn to PJ Library as a trusted resource. This example re-energizes my commitment to leading evaluation work to understand who PJ Library families are and what they need so that we can build the best program experience possible.

Shalom

A newspaper serving the Jewish community of Berks County, Pennsylvania, and published monthly, September through June, under the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks. Funded by the Annual Jewish Community Campaign.

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



Our community remembers Irvin Cohen

My heart is filled with so many lovely memories of Irv, honestly it's hard to pick what to share, but I've settled on this one:

When I turned 16, my mother asked me what special thing I wanted to do for my birthday. Have a party with friends? See a play in NYC? Any particular gifts? I thought about it and told her what I wanted more than anything was to invite Lois and Irv over for dinner.

And I can still remember that dinner so vividly, we sat in the dining room in the atrium, with candles on the table, and Irv was so charming, he made me feel so loved, with his warmth and humour, the twinkle in his eye and his infectious laugh, it was the best gift I ever could have gotten, just spending time with Lois and Irv.

I simply don't have any memories of Irv without Lois, whom I also feel tremendous love, for and from.

—**Beth Krumholz**

I've known Irv my entire life. Our families were among the Hampden Heights contingent whose lives outside of work and school revolved around the JCC. In a community that was not overly welcoming toward Jews, we took refuge in the cultural, social and recreational programs at the JCC that made us feel like we "belonged."

Along with his beloved Lois, Irv was a constant presence when I was growing up, part of my parents' social circle and my father's tennis partner. As this cohort began to enjoy material success, Irv and Lois were always among the first to give back but the last to seek credit ... all humility and no hubris. Irv also loved to joke and laugh, but his humor was always inclusive and never at anyone else's expense.

As an adult, I got to know Irv as a businessman, philanthropist and community leader. What always struck me were the contradictions. Irv built a major, industry-leading business, and yet hardly anyone knew what he did for a living. Irv was one of the most generous supporters of both Jewish and secular causes, and yet his contributions rarely made front-page news. Irv was always the first to volunteer his time, and yet had the best work-life balance of anyone I've ever known. And perhaps most importantly, even when Irv was sitting on top of the world, he never looked down on anyone. I will miss him very much.

—**Michael Fromm**

Irv was a remarkable human being

He was brilliant. He was very knowledgeable about several subjects, but in particular, he was a connoisseur of art.

He was devoted to his wife, Lois, and to his children and grandchildren.

He was devoted to the Jewish community and the whole community of Berks County. There is an Irv and Lois Cohen Gallery at the GoggleWorks.

He and Lois were active in improving the lives of adolescents in our area.

But most of all, Irv was a real mensch, in the best sense of that word.

He always had a wistful smile on his face; and his wry sense of humor was legendary.

He was truly one of a kind. He will be missed by all.

—**Larry Rotenberg**

When Barbara and I moved to Reading in 1958, we met Irv and Lois and became very good friends. Eventually Irv and I became involved in the JCC and the Federation. Irv became president of the JCC, and I followed closely behind. Irv was a great leader, soft-spoken but firm. To know Irv and be his friend was a privilege. He was a man of intelligence, humor, and honesty.

—**Bernie Fromm**

If you ever wanted to learn how to be a better person or build a better world, you need only spend time with Irv and Lois Cohen. It was with great sadness that I learned that this incredible team, who were inextricably joined at the hip, had lost one of its members, Irv Cohen. To Lois, Helene, Richard and their families, I extend my heartfelt sadness on his recent death.

Over the years, I was blessed to have had many opportunities to work with Irv and Lois on behalf of the broader Berks County Community. Through the Jewish Federation of Reading, their generosity and passion for helping others focused on Jewish Family



Irv and Lois Cohen (Photo courtesy of Reading Eagle)

Service and extended globally to projects such as the East African Relief Fund and Yemin Orde Youth Village. Simply stated, Irv and Lois' concern for others and philanthropic efforts were never just about the big projects or limited to smaller initiatives; it was about helping those in need.

Although I worked most directly with them at the Jewish Federation of Reading, I remember with great fondness their smiling faces beaming from the audiences of countless children's theater performances at the PAL Center for the Arts. The Center was a result of the Cohens' vision and generosity. They loved children and spent much of their time committed to projects that directly helped underserved populations, the youngest and most vulnerable in particular. I was never sure who enjoyed those performances more, the children and their families or Irv and Lois. In my opinion, it was the latter.

When you worked with Irv and Lois on a project, it was never just a check or their signatures on a letter. They were invested, personally. They would roll up their sleeves or at the very minimum, call regularly to ask what more they could do to help you meet the goal. It was the effortlessness with which they gave that touched me and so many others who were fortunate to work with them over the years.

Rarely, would Irv ever talk about himself his family, yes. He adored his loving wife, Lois and his family. But it was on one particularly sunny day that I had an occasion to meet with Irv at his office at the Wyomissing Foundation. It was a day that I will always treasure because he told me a bit about his life growing up in Mount Penn, his military service and his companies that he founded through hard work and leadership. I chose the term "hard work" even though Irv never made his accomplishments seem particularly difficult or extraordinary. I think he just considered himself blessed.

There are countless numbers of people who directly or indirectly benefitted and will continue to benefit from the generosity of Irv and Lois Cohen well into the future. His legacy, their shared legacy, will be forever remembered.

—**Tammy K. Mitgang**

Irv Cohen and I first became acquainted as fellow businessmen and then became friends as we became aware of our mutual interest in the arts. We both became strong supporters of the Reading Public Museum when the opportunity developed to rehabilitate this community treasure.

Next came a long working relationship with Irv and Albert Boscov in the development of the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts. This was to be a place to house arts organizations and to make, practice and show new art as contrasted to the museum's role of exhibiting established and recognized creative work.

This working relationship turned out to be a wonderful experience as we spent many, many hours together over three years conceiving, acquiring the location, developing the plans, overseeing construction, and raising the funds to achieve the objective.

Irv was the quiet, thoughtful member of the group who frequently could put all of the discussion into a decision for action. Albert and I both had great respect for Irv's judgment and ability to reach a conclusion on conflicting options.

The GoggleWorks is just one of the legacies Irv leaves in the community but has and will have an impact on many people for many years. I consider the opportunity to develop a friendship with Irv and work together on this project as a treasured life experience.

—**Marlin Miller**

For many years, Lois and Irv were Al and my treasured friends and collaborators in community projects.

Al enjoyed working with Irv during the creation and development of the Goggle Works Center for the Arts. Al fondly spoke about Irv's thoughtful ideas and calm and fun presence. On the Reading Public Museum's Collection Management Committee, on which I had the pleasure to serve with Irv, he contributed his vast knowledge of art and the art scene. Lois and Irv were wonderful hands-on philanthropists, as well as contributing monetarily to the Jewish community, the Reading community, and in New York.

Above all, I treasure the many years of friendship I shared with Lois and Irv. They were warm, relaxed, and gracious, and always there was laughter! Irv's legendary wit set the tone, and we all joined in as if we were at the round table at the Algonquin.

—**Eunice Boscov**

Irv was a great husband, father, businessman, philanthropist, concerned citizen and everything else that was said about him at the memorial service. But, what I will remember most about Irv was the "twinkle." Yes, the twinkle in his eye. Because when you saw it, you knew something very funny was about to happen. It would probably be subtle or tongue-in-cheek and always delivered in a calm, quiet voice with a pleasant smile so the recipient would be sure, well almost sure, that Irv was kidding. And I saw it in social settings and even in business settings. He will be greatly missed.

Lois was always there with Irv, and I got to know her well some years ago and was so impressed by her intelligence and charm. They were a terrific couple. My condolences go out to Lois and the entire family.

—**Alan Leisawitz**

Really I want to write everything that everyone already said about Irv, that he was an inspiration, that he was loving and beloved, that he not only received honors but brought honor to all that he did, that he was compassionate, that he had empathy, that he had dignity, that he was gentle, that he had a strong sense of himself, and yet was humble, that he was an inspiration, that his wit was legend.

I will always remember his soft chuckle and the smile that appeared in his eyes just before that wide grin that gathered everyone in.

—**Arlene Krumholz**



Irv and Lois Cohen with Dena and Vic Hammel and Penn State Berks Chancellor Keith Hillkirk. The two couples started the Cohen-Hammel Fellows Program at the school. Photo courtesy of Reading Eagle

When Dena and I moved to Berks County in 1971 while in our 20's, Lois & Irv were already philanthropic community leaders. They became and continued to be role models for us, as they were for so many others.

As time went on, we both had the pleasure and benefit of working with Irv on various projects. About 40 years ago, I approached him for some help and advice regarding a UJA Major Gifts dinner. The help he willingly agreed to was that he and Lois would host the event in their home. I asked his advice as to what type of speaker we should use – a politician, professor, Middle East expert or...? Irv's answer, which impressed me then and to this day, was, "If you want to raise money from me, you need to have a speaker who is going to reach me in my kishkes (guts)." I had previously thought of Irv primarily as a businessman who had achieved significant financial

success because of his intelligence, analytical, and entrepreneurial skills. I was so amazed that such a man would make a decision based on emotion and do so knowingly about himself.

As the years went on and we had the privilege and pleasure to get to know Lois & Irv much better, I came to realize that Irv made many decisions from his heart. This included family decisions, philanthropic choices especially those related to children and students, even some business decisions that he shared with me. For Irv, "kishkes" or "from the heart" could be translated into meaning just "doing the right thing." He exemplified Tikkun Olam – repairing the world.

Working with Irv Cohen was a truly meaningful and memorable life experience which Dena and I will always treasure. In fact, I think you could say that it got us right in the kishkes!

—Dena & Vic Hammel



Irv Cohen with his grandson Evan Schiff, who wrote, "I just wanted to share this picture and say that ever since I was a child I was riding on my PopPop's shoulders, that didn't change my entire life. To know PopPop was a honor, to be family a blessing. He left a legacy of warmth and generosity that will stretch into future generations. He was a titan of a man and he's incredibly missed. Love between grandparents and grandchildren is uncomplicated, it's pure, and that's the thing I'll remember most about him, just being enveloped by an overwhelming love."



Reading JCC officers in 1969: Seated, from left, Irv Cohen, Bernie Fromm, Harry Sack; standing, Ellis Schein, Jack Goroff and Ed Lakin. Photo courtesy of Roger Schein.



Irvin and Lois Cohen accept the 2014 Thun Award in honor of their lifetime of community service and philanthropy. With them is Fulton Bank Regional Vice President Jeffrey Rush. Courtesy of Reading Eagle



Irvin Cohen speaks at a tribute to Albert Boscov. Photo courtesy of Reading Eagle



Lishmor Al HaOlam: Guarding the planet

What spices go with plastic?

By Andi Franklin
and Solange Israel-Mintz

Plastic pollution is huge! So, in the coming months, we will be exploring the best ways to reduce it. In our first revisit of plastic pollution, we tackle the problem of plastic micro-fragment ingestion. Reliable research indicates that tiny bits of plastic are in our food, our drinking water, and in the air we breathe. As a result, we may be ingesting as much as a credit card's worth of plastics per week.

Cracking open a new plastic bottle or tearing a wrapper off a snack releases micro-fragments into the air causing household dust to be full of plastic particles that we cannot avoid breathing. Washing plastic-based fabric, such as fleece, releases plastic particles into our water supply. Cooking, microwaving and storing food in plastic contaminates our food. Plastics, which pollute our oceans and lakes, often are ingested by sea animals. Some of these animals, especially shellfish, further digest and break the micro-fragments down into even smaller nano-fragments. Micro-fragments of some nontoxic plastics may travel quickly and safely through our digestive system. But not enough research has been done to verify this. However, nano-fragments are small enough to get into our blood stream and may do us harm.

We do not need all of that plastic, and here are some

easy and some not so easy fixes. *Consumer Reports* gives six recommended actions:

1. Drink tap water and buy soda pop in cans — avoiding bottled water is everyone's number one suggestion.

2. Buy and store food in glass, silicone, foil or paper. For good options, visit the "seven great suggestions for plastic-free alternatives for food wraps" (<https://treadingmyownpath.com/2017/06/22/7-plastic-free-alternatives-to-food-wrap/>)

3. Heat food in or on the stove. If you microwave, use glass, ceramic or silicone containers, lids, or wraps, not plastic.

4. Eat fresh food as much as possible, avoiding items wrapped in plastic. We recognize that this suggestion is almost impossible. However, we can use reusable mesh bags and silicone bags. Most farmers' markets are very amenable to using what you bring.

5. Vacuum regularly and carefully dispose of the collected contents.

6. Let's work with our community. Our impact is not limited to what we, as individuals, do. Ask groceries to 'un-plastic' their produce, give reusable non-plastic containers as gifts and let us know if you have any other suggestions so we can share them.

Next month we will dive deeper into recycling.



“Whaddya mean you don't know what it is? Who cooked it?”

Obituaries

Irvin Cohen, 95, of Reading. Irv was a graduate of Mount Penn High School and Penn State University and a World War II veteran. He was a member of Temple Oheb Sholom and a past president of the Reading Jewish Community Center. He and his wife, Lois, were proud Penn Staters who spent many weekends at football games and became supporters of the Penn State Musical Theater programs at University Park. Irv was founder and CEO of Eastern Machine Products, Inc. a metal stamping and fabricating business. He was also the CEO of Construction Fasteners Inc., an internationally recognized industrial fastener manufacturer based in Wyomissing. Irv was a passionate supporter of the arts. He was one of the founders and vice president of Reading's GoggleWorks and a board member of the Reading Public Museum. He is survived by his wife, Lois, and his daughter Helene, his son Richard, his four grandchildren and his four great-children. Other survivors include his brother Lee and many nieces and nephews.

Herbert Schneider, 103. Herb was born on Dec.17, 1917, in the Bronx. He and his family moved to Reading when he was a young child. Herb attended Reading High, where he played tennis and achieved quarterfinals of the State Tennis Championship in 1936. He earned a degree in business administration at Drexel University where he was captain of the tennis team. During World War II, Herb was an Air Force First Lieutenant of the 351st Bomb Group Division and served in England, where his men were responsible for loading bombs into B-17 bombers. He won many medals, including the Bronze Star and the Soldier's Medal, awarded for a heroic act of valor that entailed risking one's own life. In 1947, he joined the Air National Guard and served during the Korean War. Herb married Shirley (Rickey) in 1947 and was a devoted caregiver to her for 10 years until her death in 2005.

He had a 35-year career as manager of Harold's Furniture. Herb was civic-minded and volunteered on many boards, including President of Shomrei HaBrith, Commander of

Post 170 of the Jewish War Veterans, President of Reading Rotary Club, Boy Scouts, and American Lung Association. Herb was elected to the Reading School Board, Charter Study Commission and 2006 Tax Study Commission, and was vice president of the Downtown Merchants Association. For many years Herb was a regular attendee of the JCC Friendship Circle, where everyone enjoyed his jokes.

Herb is survived by daughters Nancy (Doug Nagle) and Penny Beitman, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his son Stephen Craig Schneider.

A more detailed article about Herb was written on the occasion of his 100th birthday and appears in the December 2017 edition of *Shalom*, available at readingjewishcommunity.org.

Lionel O. Asher, 92, of Sinking Spring. Lionel was the founder and president of Argo Furniture Manufacturing company and founded and served as president of the Deerfield Development Residential

Home Builders. He was a member of RCOS. Lionel is survived by his wife, Mary J.; and his son Elliott and his wife, Stacey. Other survivors include his grandchildren, nieces and cousins.

Irwin J. "Irv" Goldstein, 84, of Wyomissing. Irv was born in Brooklyn, served in the Army and was a design engineer for NGK Metals. He was an avid golfer, enjoyed walking at the Berkshire Mall, played poker and was very creative and artistic. He is survived by his daughter Amy and her husband, Daniel, of Blandon, and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Evelyn Drezner, of Reading. Evelyn was a graduate of Reading High School and Syracuse University with a degree in speech pathology. She worked in the Reading School District as a speech teacher and enjoyed playing the piano, bridge and tennis. She is survived by her sons: Jess and his wife, Robin, of Wyomissing; and Dean and his wife, Amy. Other survivors include her four grandchildren and her two great-grandchildren.

Monthly Community Meditation

Join us online for a community meditation on the first Sunday of each month. We will do a guided meditation, followed by opportunity for discussion.

The series will be led by Julie Gabriel LCSW, a Wyomissing resident, who is a therapist and certified yoga and meditation teacher.



We will meet online for 30 minutes on Sunday, February 7th at 5:00 pm and Sunday, March 7th at 7:00 pm.

To register, email AdiS@JFReading.org or check JFR weekly emails

Purim teaches us not to take our lives for granted

By Rabbi Yosef Lipsker

Chabad Center of Berks County

In Megillat Esther, The Scroll of Esther, traditionally read on the eve of Purim (Feb. 25 this year) and then again on Purim day, there is a main character that seems to be missing in action.

In a nutshell:

The wicked Haman plots to create a genocide, getting King Ahasuerus on board to have all the Jews slain and annihilated. Eventually, Queen Esther intercedes on her people's behalf with great risk to her own life, and the decree is annulled, culminating in a day of great celebration and joy for the Jewish people.

Strangely, G-d's name is not mentioned even once throughout the story. This was done deliberately to



remind us that G-d "hides Himself" in our life stories. And He hardwires us to seek meaning in all of our stories — so that we find Him in the process.

The Purim story is our universal story — a story of ups and downs, good times and bad times, that gives us the freedom to create the backdrop of perception: Do we perceive the Purim saga as a series of coincidences or Divine-driven? Do we see our own lives as luck or as G-d-given?

The code of Jewish law reinforces this concept with a curious rule: If one reads the Purim story backwards, they have not completed the mitzvah of hearing the story. The spirit of the law is that if one reads the megillah as a story that happened way back when, as a quaint tale of the past, they have missed the whole point of the story—the tale of adversity and miracles is our story today — individually, and collectively as a Jewish people.

When we read the Purim story with the proper G-dly lens, we realize that the story could have never occurred without the hand of G-d. Why did King Ahasuerus pick Esther, out of thousands of beautiful maidens? And how was it that Mordechai knew just the language that Bigthan and Teresh were conversing in, thereby able to pass on the information of their plot to kill the king? When we see how many coincidences occur in just this one story, we realize that they are ultimately not mere coincidences; they are intentional parts of the progression from the Narrator of us all.

So the core message of Purim is not taking our lives for granted. Actively looking and being grateful for today's miracles from up Above.

My commitment this Purim is to stop waiting for events or even crises to happen to appreciate what I have and to start actively appreciating

what I've got: Clean air. Running water. Overall good health. G-d's unconditional love. People who love me. People whom I love. The Torah, a treasure trove of wisdom that has worked in keeping the Jewish people together for 2,000 years and has held me personally in times of happiness and sadness and sorrow.

What about the fact that there's no guarantee for tomorrow? That's what makes gratitude something we have to actively achieve — to consciously live in the here and now.

Our humility and vulnerability is what makes our gratefulness precious and beautiful: All we have is today.

Like reading the Purim story from the beginning to the end, in the right order, with the right lenses, I'm going to work harder to see that my ordinary life is ultimately extraordinary.

It's all a pretty big miracle.

Thank you G-d.

Tips on how to cultivate a giving spirit in children

By Gail Baer

Vice President, Jewish Family & Children's Services, Phoenix, Ariz.

Young people of all ages benefit from being generous and caring about others. I have seen it in my children and by observing other families who are engaged in charitable giving. If you want happy, well-adjusted children, it is important to teach them to be compassionate. If you want your children to be tomorrow's leaders, teach them to help others. Teaching children to be empathetic can make them more likable and conscience-driven. Children learn by watching and observing their parents. We have a real opportunity to model a generous spirit. If this sounds good to you, I have a few suggestions.

Together with your children, step out of comfort zones, open their eyes,

and expose them to others' lives. The pandemic provides a unique opportunity for inspiring generosity and engagement for good. So many of our friends and neighbors need assistance. The power of being in an unfamiliar location allows children to imagine life in someone else's shoes, even for a short period. As parents, we need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. This means spending time outside of our neighborhoods, at a shelter, food bank or other social service agency that provides immediate relief for individuals facing a crisis.

Involve your children with financial giving. Giving can start at any age. It does not matter if your child has \$1 or \$50 or \$500. Can you imagine if everyone allotted a small percentage of their earnings to helping others or a designated charity? If your kids

receive an allowance, talk to them about allocating a small amount to help others.

Make a plan. Family giving should be part of a plan. Without being too specific, it is OK to give your children a basic understanding of how much you give financially to charitable organizations. Perhaps discuss the approximate percentage of your income that you give to charity. Talk to them about why you choose these organizations. Allocate a certain portion of the family's philanthropy to be decided by your children. What an opportunity to empower their generosity! You will also find out what moves them.

Prioritize empathy and be a role model. Giving should be routine and it should not just be something adults do. Cleaning out closets and donating gently used items is something everyone can have a hand in. Cook as a family and

share meals with those who may feel isolated. If your kids do not like to cook, get them outside and have them do yard work for a neighbor who may not be able to get outside. Encourage them to send hand-written notes to loved ones or seniors in your community. Be sure to acknowledge when kids are being charitable and helpful. Good things come from hard work and they also come when helping others. Kids mimic what they learn at home. Do not miss the opportunity to be a role model.

No matter how your family chooses to give, know that organizations who are the recipients of your generosity will always be grateful for the support of your time and resources. Your children will also be leading the next generation in creating a more caring, compassionate community for all.

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks & Literatour Berks Present

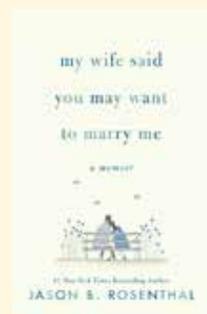
Jason B. Rosenthal



Jason B. Rosenthal is a lawyer and the executive director of a nonprofit organization created in his late wife's name, the Amy Krouse Rosenthal Foundation, which funds child literacy programs and ovarian cancer research.

He is also the subject of an essay written by his wife, Amy Krouse Rosenthal, called *You May Want to Marry My Husband*. Just days before her death, her article appeared in the Modern Love column of the New York Times, went viral and was read by millions of readers worldwide. His response to Amy's piece titled, *My Wife Said You May Want to Marry Me* was published in 2020.

Jason now speaks publicly and writes about issues related to processing grief and finding hope and joy amongst the pain.



Join us for a conversation with

Jason B. Rosenthal

NY Times Bestselling author of
My Wife Said You May Want to Marry Me

Sunday, March 14, 2021 | 11 AM
Virtual Event

Register at ReadingJewishCommunity.org

\$36 per household includes brunch basket
\$50 per household includes brunch basket
and signed copy of
My Wife Said You May Want to Marry Me

To receive a brunch basket registration must be received by March 10, 2021.

610-921-0624 or info@jfreeding.org



Jewish Federation
OF READING/BERKS



Do you remember?

By Tootie Moyer

- You did dishes in the sink, no dishwashers.
- Most homes had outhouses.
- Your mom washed clothes on a wash board — no washing machines.
- Sewing machines had a knee stick — no electric sewing machines.
- Women wore corsets and garters.
- A milkman came to your door everyday to sell you dairy products.

- The only cereals sold were Kellogg's Corn Flakes, All Bran and oatmeal.
- Grade-school children danced around the May Pole.
- Boys wore knickers and girls wore galoshes.
- You made paste for your kids with baking soda.
- You saluted the flag every morning in school.
- Reading High School's rival in football was Pottsville, and we all

listened to the game on the radio every Thanksgiving.

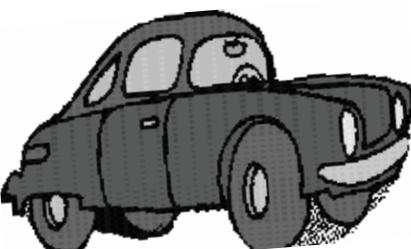
- No television — we talked, played cards or board games, and went to bed early.
- Do you remember these icons: Ingrid Bergman, Fannie Brice, Deanna Durbin, Harold Lloyd, and Carole Lombard?
- I am listening to Glenn Miller now —do you remember "I've Got a Girl in Kalamazoo"?
- Yard and garage sales were

called rummage sales.

- Bar and Bat Mitzvahs were a simple affair – today they are as big as a wedding.
 - Funeral services were held at your home.
- Do you remember when you remembered everything?
My memory has now shut down. See you again.
Stay well and we will all be together soon at the JCC.

February Shevat-Adar	
 Shabbat Candle Lightings	 Torah Portions
February 5 5:10 p.m.	February 6/24 Shevat Yitro (Exodus 18:1-20:23)
February 12 5:18 p.m.	February 13/1 Adar Mishpatim (Exodus 21:1-24:18)
February 19 5:26 p.m.	February 20/8 Adar Terumah (Exodus 25:1-27:19)
February 26 5:34 p.m.	February 27/15 Adar Tetzahveh (Exodus 27:20-30:10)

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e-mail sarii@jfreading.org
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At Chabad, 2320 Hampden Blvd.

RSVP is necessary by Feb 22 to
office@chabadofberks.org or 610-334-1577

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Local teens heal world in Tikkun Olam program

By Adi Shalev

As you know, after a lot of thinking, checking, surveying, and brainstorming, the teens and I decided to start a new program called Tikkun Olam for students in grades 10-12.

Tikkun Olam is a main value in modern Jewish tradition, and each of us can do it in her or his own way.

Our program gives the Jewish youth of the Reading area the opportunity to be partners in Tikkun Olam, the healing of the world. Once a month the teens will volunteer somewhere in our community, and this will count as service hours for school.

I am happy to say that on Jan. 10 we had our first volunteer program. We got together and we worked for a worthwhile cause, preparing lunch for the Opportunity House in Reading.

Opportunity House changes lives by educating, housing, feeding and empowering people to stand on their own feet. Our mission was to cook lunch for families, children, and single adults.

In "normal" days, we would go the Opportunity House kitchen and cook and serve the meal there. However, because of COVID-19 restrictions it was not possible. We did not let it stop us and we prepared the lunch at the Federation office, under the COVID restrictions.

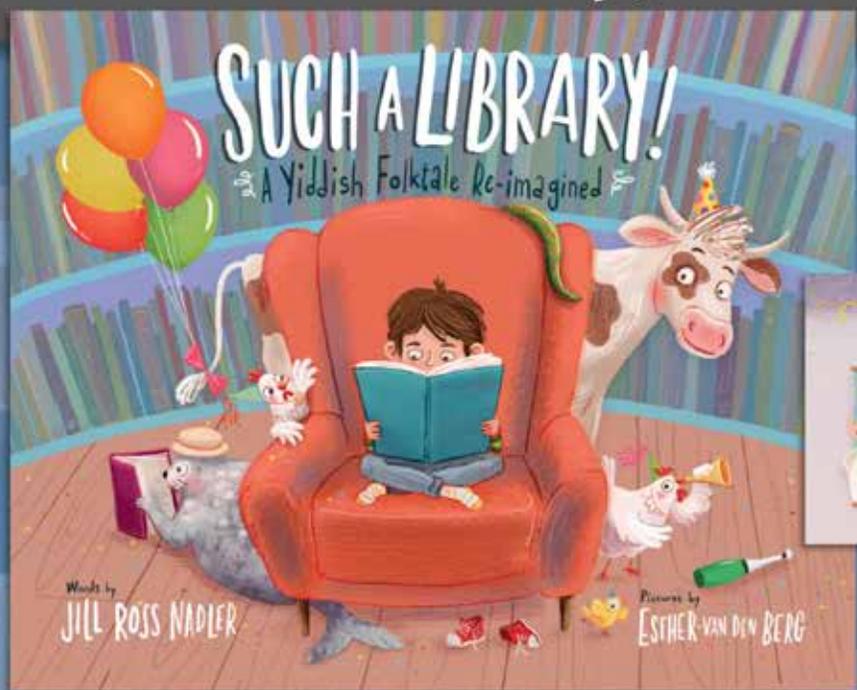
On Sunday, Feb. 7, we will again prepare lunch for Opportunity House.

Please contact Adi at AdiS@JFReading.org if you would like to join or if you have questions.



Such a Library

by Jill Ross Nadler



Sunday February 7th 4 p.m. via Zoom

Registration required.

To register, visit:

www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org/home/literatour

Program sponsored by PJ Library of Reading

Literatour Berks is a program of Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks in partnership with Exeter Community Library and Sinking Spring Public Library.



'Show the light'

By Carole Robinson

I received an unusual holiday card from my longtime friend Pam. Pam costumed herself to look like Bob Ross, a 1980-1990's instructional television painter and included one of his infamous quotes as her greeting, "You need the dark in order to show the light." Upon reflection, this sentiment recalls the light of the Chanukah candles during our dark winter evenings. Each night, we kindle an additional candle, and the light shines brighter.



Just as the light of the candles illuminates the darkness, Jewish Family Service is pleased to be able to brighten the lives of many community members during these dreary times.

Though we were unable to celebrate Chanukah in-person with our Friendship Circle friends, JFS delivered Chanukah-in-a-bag to 40 seniors. Each of them received a delicious meal complete with latkes, apple sauce and sour cream and accompanied by a dreidel, gelt, and a pack of disposable masks. Seniors in residential facilities were also treated to yummy latkes, dreidels, and gelt to wish them a joyous Chanukah.

One grateful recipient exclaimed, "It was out of this world! And the little extras made it so festive."

Phone calls from other seniors included the following comments, "They were the best latkes I had this year!" "My daughter says thanks for taking care of us." "I am so isolated. I don't take what Jewish Family Service does for granted. It is very appreciated."

JFS usually commemorates Tu B'Shevat, the birthday of the trees, with a



Nina Hornberger, left, was one of the volunteers who delivered Chanukah treats to our community's seniors in December. Haia Mazuz and Andi Franklin, right, collaborated to create gift bags for Tu B'Shevat.



Friendship Circle Tu B'Shevat Seder.

In lieu of a seder, Andi Franklin and Haia Mazuz collaborated to create lovely Tu B'Shevat gift bags for our community filled with dried fruits, nuts, and chocolate, packed in recycled pages of the *Shalom*. JFS delivered those treats and lunch to celebrate with our seniors. It means so much to them to be remembered, especially at joyful times.

We are doing our best to reach our entire Jewish community and apologize if we inadvertently missed a senior who lives alone or has health issues and would appreciate a meal. Please let us know if you or someone you know would like to receive a meal next month.

JFS thanks the Chanukah and Tu B'Shevat deliverers: Sue Farrara, Cindy Balchunas, Mike Robinson, Corinne Wernick, Sharon Syret, Stef Brok, and Amanda, Nina and George Hornberger. Thank you also to Boscov's Ala Carte for making our tasty monthly meals.

In addition, a big thank you to the Isadore and Anna Oritsky Philanthropic Foundation and to all those who have donated to JFS to allow us to continue connecting with the community in innovative ways.

I welcome suggestions for other ways to reach out to our community seniors. In the words of Bob Ross, "With all our creative power, we will create a better tomorrow."

Jewish Family Service food pantries

By Carole Robinson

According to statistics provided by Feeding America, 50 million people may experience hunger because of COVID19. There is a 60% increase in the number of people seeking help from food banks across the country.

Jewish Family Service, in partnership with Helping Harvest, operates two monthly drive-through food pantries to help meet these needs. The pantry at the Olivet Boys and Girls Club, Pendera Unit, is held on the first Wednesday of the month. The pantry at Reading/Hampden Heights SDA Church is on the second Tuesday of the month. Both pantries provide food for eligible participants in the city of Reading, as well as other areas of Berks County.

In January, the Olivet Food Pantry was a constant hubbub of activity, with cars lined up to the bridge waiting for food.

We were able to serve 191 households, consisting of 259 children, 274 adults, and 147 seniors. The SDA pantry initiated a new method of packing food. Volunteers loaded shopping carts with items and wheeled them to the waiting cars. We distributed food to 75 households, made up of 109 children, 120 adults, and 43 seniors.

Thank you to our January volunteers: Ellen Schwartz, Gordon and Carol Perlmutter, Sid Lempiner, Will and Margo Levin, Tim and Jen Reilly, Raymond Gehring, Cindy and George Balchunas, Jannine Shapiro, Oleg Umanov, and members of SDA Church.



Clockwise from top left, cars line up for the January food distribution at the Olivet Food Pantry, an SDA food pantry volunteer is ready with shopping carts, and volunteers in action at Olivet, where 191 households received food assistance at our most recent distribution..

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

Jewish Broadcasting Service available on Comcast

From Federation staff

JBS Jewish Broadcasting Service, America's leading 24/7 Jewish cultural network, is now available on Comcast Xfinity X1 CH 1684, making it available and easily accessible to more viewers than ever before.

JBS is also available on Xfinity Stream's web and mobile apps for out-of-home viewing. Through this expansion, JBS is now available to more than 70 million homes.

The addition of JBS will give all Xfinity X1 customers access to daily

news from Israel, leading Jewish figures, issues and events of Jewish importance, call-in programs, Jewish studies, 92nd Street Y, Live Friday and holiday services for the home-bound, children's programs, films, music, books and entertainment.

JBS is for members of the Jewish community and anyone with a passion for learning and a desire to gain a greater understanding of Jewish tradition, Jewish life, and the land of Israel.



JBS presents daily news and analysis from and about Israel; extensive event coverage of major Jewish conferences, addresses and lectures; an array of Jewish Studies programs including series where viewers can learn to read Hebrew

or study Talmud; and twice-daily programs for Jewish children and grandchildren.

"All of us at JBS are thrilled to be joining the Comcast Xfinity family," added JBS President Mark S. Golub. "Comcast is not only one of the premiere television providers with a long and respected history of serving the needs of all the communities it covers, it believes in connecting diverse audiences to the content and the moments that matter most to them."

IDF sees record number of Israeli Arab conscripts

From online news sources

More than 1,000 Israeli Arabs have volunteered to serve in the IDF as conscripts or reservists in the past year, and most after the coronavirus crisis began in March, the military's Manpower

Directorate announced. The number of conscripts from the Arab sector is more than twice that of previous years, and includes Muslims from areas such as Taibe, Qalansuwa and East Jerusalem.

Alongside the overall increase in the

number of new Israeli Arab troops, the number of those enlisting for combat roles has also increased. Some 450 new soldiers enlisted as scouts and fighters in the Bedouin patrol unit, while dozens more have joined prominent infantry brigades such as Kfir and Nahal and others still are serving in the Border Police.

The increase in conscripts can be attributed to a Manpower Directorate online initiative through which some 4,000 possible volunteers expressed their interest in joining the IDF this year alone. To the army's amazement, some of those who expressed an interest came from so-called enemy states in the region. The applications from these countries had to be declined however due to security considerations. "About 700 would-be volunteers called from Arab countries such as Lebanon and Syria, perhaps as part of the change the region is going through. We could not believe the demand," the Manpower Directorate said. "As a result, we opened a recruitment bureau in the Galilee, where volunteers can study to improve their Hebrew. This branch will be able to recruit a total of up to 2,500 people a year," the Directorate said.

The IDF's "Ambassadors in Uniform" initiative — which offers opinion leaders in the Arab sector a short introductory term in the army — also doubled this year with

over 100 conscripts. This year also saw a breakthrough in the willingness of young Druze people from the villages of Majdal Shams, Buqata, Mas'ada and Ein Kinya in the northern Golan Heights to enlist. In the past, the four villages have refrained from expressing formal identification with Israel, out of fear that the Golan Heights would be returned to Syrian control.

The IDF is also preparing to open classrooms for technology studies in several Druze villages and Arab high schools, in order to help them integrate as technicians in the military and allow to acquire a profession for their civilian futures. "Since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis in March, there has been a significant change in the willingness of young people in both the Arab and Haredi sectors to take part in the IDF," said a senior officer in the Manpower Directorate.

The IDF intends to utilize some of its new Arab and ultra-Orthodox conscripts as Home Front Command forces in their respective localities or villages during emergencies, due to the understanding that they best know the local population and its needs. "In the ultra-Orthodox sector alone, at least three sessions of basic training will begin by the end of April, adding 300 ultra-Orthodox soldiers to the Home Front Command," says the senior officer.

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UN singles out Israel for condemnation

From online news sources

The United Nations General Assembly in late December adopted two resolutions criticizing Israel, bringing 2020's total tally to 17 resolutions against the Jewish state versus six resolutions singling out any other country, according to a tally by pro-Israel watchdog UN Watch.

Israel and activists have long slammed the UN for routinely adopting decision after decision directed against Israel, saying it exploits an overwhelming automatic majority that votes to censure Jerusalem no matter the subject.

General Assembly resolutions are nonbinding but are seen as carrying symbolic significance. The two motions were ratified after their drafts were adopted in November by the General Assembly's Economic and Financial

Committee, UN Watch said in a statement. One of them, titled "Oil slick on Lebanese shores," condemns Israel over an alleged 2006 incident from the Second Lebanon War fought with terror group Hezbollah. It passed with 162 countries supporting it, seven opposing it and six abstaining. The second criticized the Jewish state for allegedly exploiting the natural resources of Palestinians in the West Bank and Syrians in the Golan Heights, and passed 153-6, with 17 abstentions.

Those votes join 15 others last year that singled out Israel for censure, while just six targeted all other countries combined: One each condemned the regimes of North Korea, Iran, Syria, and Myanmar, and two were on Crimea, which was seized in 2014 by Russia.

"The UN's assault on Israel with a torrent of one-sided resolutions is surreal," said Hillel Neuer, executive director of the Geneva-based UN Watch. "It's absurd that in the year 2020, out of a total 23 of UN General Assembly resolutions that criticize countries, 17 of them — more than 70 percent — were focused on one single country: Israel. Make no mistake: the purpose of the lopsided condemnations is to demonize the Jewish state. When the General Assembly gives in to politicization and selectivity by discriminating against Israel, it violates the UN Charter's guarantee of equal treatment to all nations, large and small," Neuer added.

"We note that the UK and EU states like France, Germany and Spain voted Yes to more than two-thirds of the UNGA

resolutions singling out Israel in 2020," he charged. "Yet these same nations failed to introduce a single UNGA resolution this year on the human rights situation in China, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Belarus, Cuba, Turkey, Pakistan, Vietnam, Algeria, or on 175 other countries."

He noted that there had been "modest yet notable progress" in 2020, with some EU states opposing or abstaining in votes to renew the mandates of UN bodies dedicated to Palestinian rights. "Today's farce at the General Assembly underscores a simple fact: the UN's automatic majority has no interest in truly helping Palestinians, nor in protecting anyone's human rights; the goal of these ritual, one-sided condemnations is to scapegoat Israel," Neuer concluded.

Agency's education material promote hatred of Israel

From online news sources

Educational content produced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is filled with hate and encouragement to jihad, violence and martyrdom, and entirely devoid of any material that promotes peace and peace-making, according to the research institute IMPACT-se based out of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

IMPACT-se describes itself as a "research, policy and advocacy organization that monitors and analyzes education," according to "international standards on peace and tolerance as derived from UNESCO declarations and resolutions."

According to the report, children

in the Gaza Strip are called upon to "defend the motherland with blood." It can take the form of a math problem asking students to identify the correct number of martyrs from the First Intifada, to the complete eradication of Israel, a UN member state, from any maps featured in UNRWA-created books, with the entire territory being labelled as a modern-day Palestine with no demarcation lines.

When it is mentioned, Israel is usually referred to as "The Enemy" or the "Zionist Occupation," a clear violation of the UN's principles of neutrality that UNRWA is expected to prioritize, explained IMPACT-se in the research.



A boy takes part in a Hamas protest against Israel in 2020.

The report goes on to expose the conspiracies propagated in the educational material, such as a libel that "Zionists" deliberately set fire to Al-Aqsa Mosque and that Israel deliberately dumps radioactive and toxic waste in the

West Bank.

According to IMPACT-se, this UNRWA-created material is, in places, more extremist than the Palestinian Authority material it complements.

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This class will be held online on the second Thursday of the month: 6:30-7:30 pm

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Dr. Robert Seesengood (Th.M., Princeton Theological Seminary; Ph.D., Drew University) is Professor of Religious Studies and Associate Dean at Albright College, Reading, PA. He is the author of numerous articles and five books, all on the subject of biblical studies. He's currently at work on *American Standard: The Bible in U.S. Popular Media and Culture* (Blackwell).



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Join us to learn more about ecological education farm

By **Adi Shalev**

Hava and Adam is an ecological educational farm that deals with environmental and social education and belongs to the city of Modi'in.

The farm was founded in 2003, with the aim of raising awareness of the deep connection between humans and the environment, by educating and demonstrating a sustainable lifestyle.

It grew out of the vision of the educator and intellectual, Yitzhak Gazieli, who believed that the most effective way to instill values of sustainability is by creating a practical learning environment, one that did not

previously exist in Israeli education.

As a center that demonstrates sustainability, the farm strives for ecological independence by using solar energy, independent waste treatment, rainwater collection and gray water system, ecological construction in a variety of techniques, recycling, and organic farming.

Through the educational activities, and the variety of experiences offered to farm visitors, the farm allows each visitor to be exposed and experience practical ecology - to learn, grow and develop - and be a small nucleus of change in their immediate environment.



HAVA & ADAM
Eco-Educational Farm

The zoom call, which will take place on Feb. 28 at 1 p.m., will be led by Gisela Shulman, the coordinator of the farm's international programs. Gisela will talk about the sustainability life on the farm and give simple tips for

implementation in every home.

Finally, Leila, an American participant in the eco-Israel program, on behalf of the Jewish Agency's travel program, will join to tell about her experience at the farm and Adam.

Anti-Israel movement is dying on campuses

By **Avi Benlolo**
and **Richard L. Cravatts**

The momentum against Israel and the Jewish people is shifting.

After spending 20 years in the trenches of campus warfare, we were delighted to hear that the University of Toronto has launched "an anti-Semitism Working Group to examine and address anti-Semitism on campus."

Given the fact that University of Toronto is the birthplace of the infamous Israeli Apartheid Week, it is about time that the university stepped up, as it says, to ensure it is an inclusive and welcoming place for Jewish members of its community.

Sadly, like many other universities, University of Toronto has not been an inclusive and welcoming place for many years. Students, faculty, and Jewish community members have been calling attention to anti-Semitism on campus since the very first anti-Israel meeting was held on a Sunday morning in January 2002.

Matt Gurney, a Toronto print and broadcast journalist expressed: "And now comes the hard part."

In order to enter the lecture hall on that fateful day, attendees were obligated to sign a declaration agreeing to "Palestinian resistance by any means." To put this into context, "resistance" referred to the suicide attacks that were taking place in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem at the time, in a concerted attempt to murder Jews.

From there, radicalism spread to thousands of campuses around the

world. Anti-Israel students and even faculty spread the biggest lie of this century: that Israel is an apartheid state that is treating Palestinians inhumanely; and like apartheid-era South Africa, Israel deserved to be criminalized, dismantled, and destroyed.

Over time, that lie was so widely accepted on campus that openly calling for the genocide of the Jewish people became the rallying cry of the pro-Palestinian movement: "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" — effectively meaning the elimination of Israel.

Despite our calls for a task force to counter this incessant hate, for decades now, students have graduated with a mistaken view that Israel is singularly evil among nations. They have participated in slanderous campaigns and events designed to denigrate Israel. Some have been taught by professors that Jews are colonizers, despite the fact that they are indigenous to the land.

So, what made the University of Toronto reverse course and state that its "aim is to see to it that the university not only responds when there are incidents or allegations of anti-Semitism, but is also proactive in creating a culture of inclusion within which various forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism, are better understood and tackled through education"?

It is not that the announcement coincided with the 72nd anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The answer is that the momentum against Israel and the Jewish people is

shifting. Every generation of university students needs a cause to fight for. For a time, that cause was anti-Israelism and anti-Semitism. But they are starting to fall out of fashion.

This is because of two fundamental factors. First, the changing landscape in the Middle East is making Palestinian propaganda untenable. Secondly, and more fundamentally, is that the growing global acceptance of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism is making it harder for university administrators to turn a blind eye to the hatred that has been brewing on their campuses. The declaration specifically says that those who "claim that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor" are anti-Semitic.

In August, Florida State University was one of several universities in the United States to adopt the IHRA definition, which showed that university administrators have begun to see the wisdom of having guidelines by which to identify and, hopefully, eliminate hate from their campuses.

While some anti-Israel professors and radical student groups have condemned the IHRA definition, claiming that it will chill their speech and punish their ideology, the truth is that it does nothing of the sort. The definition does not criminalize speech. Campus Israel-haters and anti-Semites can continue to defame the Jewish state and single it out for opprobrium, condemnation, and slander. What it does do is help

universities reject false claims that virulent anti-Israel activism is simply "criticism of Israel," and instead call it what it is.

According to the IHRA definition, if the behavior of individuals on campus involves "denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a state of Israel is a racist endeavor," "drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis" or "holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel," then those expressions are not mere political commentary, but are, in fact, anti-Semitic.

Of course, universities can still reject the IHRA definition on the excuse that it may suppress free speech. But they cannot disregard the rapid developments on the ground in the Middle East. The Abraham Accords have changed the playing field. They have burst the fake boycott, divestment, and sanctions campaign against the Jewish state. Trade between Israel, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates is already exploding, and this is completely and utterly invalidating the university campaigns against the Jews.

This is why we not only welcome the recent announcement by the University of Toronto but believe it will set an example for Canadian universities and lead the way in eliminating this pernicious form of hatred from our campuses.

Avi Benlolo is a human rights activist. Richard L. Cravatts is president emeritus of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East.

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252 new immigrants from lost tribe arrive in Israel



New immigrants from Bnei Menashe community step off the plane in Israel. Photo by Eleonora Shiluv/Courtesy of the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration

From online news sources

Hailing from northeast India, the Bnei Menashe community is said to be descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel — specifically the tribe of Menashe — that scattered across the globe after being exiled at the end of the First Temple period in the eighth century BCE.

The 252 new immigrants who made their way to Israel this week with the help

of the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration and the Shavei Israel organization joined the 3,000-strong Bnei Menashe community already in the country. Some 7,000 more community members await immigration in northeast India.

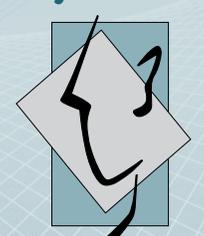
This week's immigrants include 50 families and 24 single individuals, four infants under the age of two, 39 children aged 12 years old or younger

and 19 seniors aged 62 years or older. They underwent a quick absorption process at the airport and were sent to quarantine according to Covid-19 regulations.

"As we celebrate the festival of Hanukkah and the miracle of the flask of oil, the aliyah [immigration] of the lost tribe of Bnei Menashe after 2,700 years of exile is itself a modern-day Hanukkah

miracle," says Michael Freund, founder and chairman of Shavei Israel. "The story of this unique community that maintained its connection to the Jewish people and the land of Israel down through the generations is powerful and inspiring and I fervently hope that we will soon see all the remaining Bnei Menashe make aliyah as well," he added.

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Israeli, Palestinian young entrepreneurs get to connect

From online news sources

A worldwide pandemic has failed to put a damper on an initiative that aims to bring together young Israeli and Palestinian entrepreneurs and tech enthusiasts.

Joint Israeli-Palestinian NGO Tech2Peace is barreling ahead with plans to double the size of its intensive tech seminars in 2021.

Health restrictions and lockdowns notwithstanding, over the past year 60 people took part in the organization's program, which not only provides participants with valuable tech skills but also promotes peace through dialogue.

Tomer Cohen, the 28-year-old co-founder and co-executive director of Tech2Peace, calls it a "very weird mixture of high-tech workshops alongside dialogue. Half of the time it is about high-tech. Every participant chooses his or her own track — if it's programming, mobile app development, etc.; the other half of the time it's about dialogue."

Following their pilot seminar in the southern Israeli town of Yeruham in 2018, the venture received the Israeli Hope prize, an award launched by Israeli President Reuven Rivlin that is worth \$3,100. Over the years, tech giants such as Google and Microsoft have worked together with Tech2Peace to help provide advanced technological training.

During Tech2Peace's intensive seminars, no topic is off-limits for Israeli and Palestinian participants.

"When they're becoming already friends, we start to talk about the most painful experiences: about

Nakba, [Israel's] Independence Day, the Holocaust, checkpoints, and everything," Cohen explained.

For many of those taking part, he added, it is the first time that they get to meet the so-called "other side."

"Even though those communities live so close to each other, they are so divided," Cohen said, noting that the program also encourages long-term business partnerships.

Participants come from all walks of life: secular, religious, refugee camps, peripheral towns, and major cities.

More than 150 people have so far graduated from the program and recently demand has greatly increased.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which upended so many learning programs around the globe, failed to slow Tech2Peace down, Cohen noted, as organizers turned to holding seminars outdoors to observe health regulations and maintain social distancing.

"We continue to grow very rapidly despite the coronavirus," Cohen observed.

Adnan Jaber, 25, is one of the program's successful graduates.

Jaber, who grew up in east Jerusalem, called the experience "unique" and said that he was inspired to sign up during his last year of studies at the Arab American University, located in the Palestinian city of Jenin.

"I was a tech student and wanted to get a job in high-tech in Tel Aviv," stated Jaber, now a board member at Tech2Peace. "I wanted to better



The joint Israeli-Palestinian NGO Tech2Peace brings entrepreneurs of different backgrounds together to promote peace and prosperity for Jewish and Arab communities in Israel, and the pandemic has failed to slow down the effort.

develop my tech skills and also I'm from Jerusalem and [was always curious] to know about the other side."

Since then, Jaber also has launched his own startup: a smartphone application called "Yalla Reyada" that aims to help individuals achieve their fitness goals.

"I like to call myself a social entrepreneur. I love sports a lot," he said. "If we want a better future in this region for both [Israelis and Palestinians], I think there must be collaborative businesses together. That's how people can get along and trust each other more."

While Tech2Peace hopes to bridge the divide between Israeli and Palestinian youth, the NGO does not advertise itself as presenting a solution to the conflict.

Rather, the goal is to establish a vibrant and long-lasting tech community that its leaders hope will grow significantly in the near future.

"In five to 10 years, one of them is going to be a mayor of a town in Palestine or in Israel and it's already going to make a huge change because we target those very talented leaders," co-founder Tomer Cohen said.

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Israeli officials take on claim that Gaza is occupied

From online news sources

Two of Israel's top international law officials have published a rare public article to challenge the International Criminal Court Prosecution and others who say Israel still illegally occupies Gaza.

The article, published in the journal *Iyunei Mishpat* (Legal Studies) addresses cases of alleged Israeli war crimes in ongoing fighting with Hamas as well as humanitarian obligations Jerusalem has to Gaza. These issues have major long-term implications at the national security and diplomatic levels, including whether Israel's naval blockade and other periodic closures of Gaza are legal.

The authors: Deputy Attorney-General Roy Schondorf and IDF International Law Division Chief Col. Eran Shamir-Borer have led much of Israel's handling of ICC issues and humanitarian dilemmas with Gaza. Schondorf rarely writes publicly or appears in public, and Shamir-Borer appears even less often.

It seems that the impetus for their article was to address prior statements by ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda as well as a current article by prominent Israeli Prof. Eyal Gross in the same journal, declaring that Israel still legally occupies

Gaza, despite having withdrawn in 2005.

If Bensouda, Gross and a number of Israeli critics in UN bodies and internationally are correct that Israel occupies Gaza, it could mean that the Jewish state might be restricted in what categories of force it could use to combat Hamas attacks, let alone protests or riots on the border. Further, it could mean that any humanitarian crisis in Gaza puts Israel at fault.

When there are debates about Israeli blockades to prevent rockets and other weapons smuggling, these legal questions could have a decisive impact.

Essentially, Bensouda, Gross and much of the international community say that it is irrelevant that the IDF withdrew and that Israel withdrew from Israeli settlements within the Gaza Strip. Rather, they argue that Israel can "occupy" Gaza as long as it exerts functional control. They note that Israel controls Gaza's airspace, maritime borders, wherever there is a blockade, and most of its land borders. They broaden these arguments by saying that Israel's ability to control Gaza's interactions with the outside world means it can also control the economic and humanitarian situation there.

In this light, they say that Israel is

also obligated to maintain Gaza from a humanitarian perspective, whether with special needs during coronavirus times or with sufficient medical, food, utilities, and other items during more regular periods.

In contrast, Schondorf and Shamir-Bohrer say that there is no basis to rely on the decisions of the UN General Assembly or other political bodies to decide international law. Regarding the ICTY decision, they say that critics' understanding of the decisions is misplaced. In the ICTY case in question, the court was dealing with a situation where a foreign state controlled an internal group within another state in order to impose its will on the other state. In any event, the Israeli officials' article says that the ICTY decision was an outlier creating a new doctrine which no one else has adopted.

Moreover, the article says that the ideas Israeli critics are bringing to the Gaza question are "wishful thinking" or "aspirations" to create new law which does not exist. Instead, they say that to be considered an "occupier," a country cannot merely have aspects of functional power over a territory. Rather, it must have at a minimum "effective

control." This traditionally has required boots on the ground and, at the very least, involvement in running the day-to-day affairs of the foreign territory and population.

As the article says, Israel has zero involvement in running Gaza's day-to-day affairs, which are run by Hamas. Further, the article cites a legal brief filed by Germany in the Israel-Palestinian proceedings before the ICC to support its views. All of this means that Israel has not occupied Gaza since 2005. Rather, when Israel facilitates food, economic and medical aid to Gaza, it is on a voluntary humanitarian basis and balanced along with valid security considerations, says the article.

In December 2019, Bensouda requested that the ICC Pretrial Chamber endorse by March her desire to conduct a full criminal probe of Israel and Hamas regarding the 2014 Gaza War, the 2018 Gaza border crisis, and the settlement enterprise.

The chamber has still not decided the issue, with the question remaining whether it will decide now that President Joe Biden has taken office or wait for Bensouda's successor to take over in June.

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Israeli researchers release findings on aging process

From online news sources

Researchers at Technion - Israel Institute of Technology have released findings that could explain why the body deteriorates with age.

According to the study, a body's protein quality control system deteriorates with age, and considering this system protects cells from accumulating damaged proteins, when the system is damaged or not working properly it causes clusters of these proteins to form and produces a "toxic effect, particularly ... in the brain."

The study explains that proteins take part in all biological processes, and physically they depend on a specific three-dimensional structure to interact normally with other cell components.

When proteins "misfold," as they tend to do with age, the proteins can not only function properly, but it also causes them to become "sticky" and accumulate in clusters.

These aggregations can lead to the development of neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, ALS, and Huntington's.

"Protein damage occurs frequently, and during the course of evolution a cellular control mechanism has evolved that tests the quality of proteins from the moment they are synthesized ("born") on the ribosome until they die," Technion explained in a statement.

The company went on to add: "This mechanism, called proteostasis, identifies damaged proteins and deals with them in one of three ways: it refolds them; sequesters and inactivates them so they will not affect cellular activity; or sends them to the proteasome, the cellular trash can."

"This mechanism ensures that damaged proteins, which occur in healthy cells as well, are treated and do not accumulate to form toxic aggregates, such as those that lead to neurodegenerative disease," it added.



"However, the aging process involves the deterioration of the proteostasis mechanism."

While the deterioration had been

previously demonstrated in worms, Technion recreated the conditions in human cells and presented its findings in the context of heat stress.

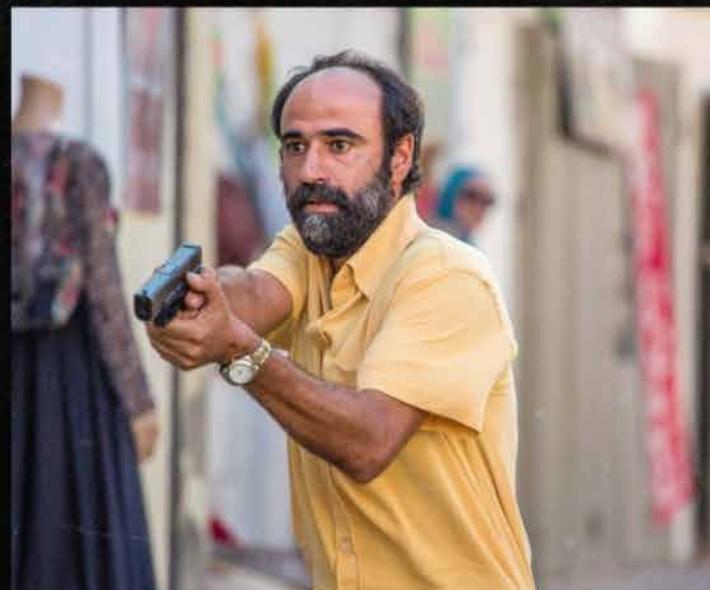


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BOAZ KONFORTY & YAAKOV ZADA DANIEL
STARS FROM THE HIT TV SHOW FAUDA**

Join **Yaakov Zada Daniel** and **Boaz Konforty**, actors in the hit TV show "Fauda" for an unforgettable talk about their unique journeys to become actors, the significance of Jews and Arabs collaborating in the name of Art and the impact of the TV series on Arabs, Israelis and Jews.

Daniel and Konforty will share their experiences on sacrifice, friendship, devotion, fear and near death experiences. You will gain an intimate insight into how they have overcome struggles early in their lives and how through hard work, persistence and faith they eventually turned their dreams into reality.

Sunday, March 7th at 4pm



National park honoring Jewish American signed into law

From online news sources

WASHINGTON, D.C. – January marked a significant win in the decades-long effort to recognize and celebrate the philanthropic legacy of Julius Rosenwald and his impact on American democratic equality.

With President Donald Trump's signing of the Julius Rosenwald and Rosenwald Schools Act of 2020, a process begins that would lead to the establishment of the first National Park Service site to honor a Jewish American and celebrate the contribution of a Jewish American to our society, while preserving a selection of iconic Rosenwald Schools.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation first highlighted the threatened nature of the Rosenwald legacy by placing Rosenwald Schools on its 11 Most Endangered Historic Places List in 2002.

The National Trust supported the preservation of Rosenwald Schools for many years, providing workshops, conferences, and technical assistance — including a publication: the Grassroots Guide to Preserving Rosenwald Schools.

The heightened awareness created by the endangered list designation and Rosenwald Schools initiative ultimately

led to a partnership between the National Trust, the Campaign to Create the Julius Rosenwald and Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park, and the National Parks Conservation Association, which together collaborated to achieve the successful enactment of the Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools Act of 2020 (H.R.3250).

Within this effort the Trust's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund established a grant fund that has provided over \$2.5 million in matching grants to advance Rosenwald School preservation, including planning, engineering studies, architectural plans, archaeology, research, and rehabilitation.

"Rosenwald Schools unearth a fascinating and true history of African American activism, achievement, and resilience in the United States," said Brent Leggs, executive director of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund. "Their permanent preservation and interpretation broadens our understanding of the civil rights fight for equality in twentieth century America and the enduring power of interracial cooperation."

The story behind the schools

Born in 1862 in Springfield, Illinois not far from the residence of President

Abraham Lincoln, Julius Rosenwald made his fortune as co-owner of Sears, Roebuck and Company. His own parents, however, had fled persecution in Germany in the late 1900s, and he began to channel his experience of hatred and bigotry into the creation of the Rosenwald School Fund, which had a lasting impact on education in America.

A prominent philanthropist, Rosenwald joined the board of esteemed black educator Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute in 1912.

Together, these two champions of social justice, one a former slave and the other a first-generation American refugee from persecution, used architecture and innovation to address the crisis in education facing Black families across the South.

Between 1917 and 1932, the Rosenwald School Fund, working in partnership with local Black communities, helped to finance the construction of more than 5,300 state-of-the-art school buildings for community and academic use.

The schools served as a lifeline for students and educators whose progress was held back by the separate and unequal school system that ruled the Jim Crow South.

By 1928, one-third of the South's rural African American school children and teachers were educated in Rosenwald Schools. Notable former students include poet and activist Maya Angelou and the late Rep. John Lewis of Georgia, among many notable others.

"History shows us," Leggs continued, "that countless ordinary citizens were the vanguards of collective action and human innovation. These stories and landmarks serve as a testament to our progress, and they remind us that our work is not complete."

Passage of the bill was a multi-year effort, but in January it was signed into law.

The legislation, sponsored by Illinois Democratic Rep. Danny Davis and Sen. Richard Durbin, directs the Department of the Interior to conduct a special resources study of sites associated with the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald, with a special focus on Rosenwald Schools and determine how they might be designated as a new unit within the National Park System.

Once established, the Rosenwald park unit would become the first of more than 420 National Park Service sites to honor the life and contributions of a Jewish American.

What's behind European bans on kosher slaughtering

By Melanie Phillips

The West's predominant ideology of moral and cultural relativism has propelled the rise of paganism, as well as the veneration of the animal and natural world, at the expense of humanity.

The European Union likes to pose as the avatar of tolerance, freedom, and all civilized values. Now it has ripped off its own disguise to reveal something rather more ugly. Its highest judicial body, the European Court of Justice, has issued a ruling upholding the ban on kosher and halal ritual slaughter in two regions of Belgium. The ruling supports the requirement that animals being slaughtered should first be stunned, a practice forbidden in both Judaism and Islam.

At present, European regulations ban slaughtering animals without pre-stunning, though exceptions to this have been permitted for religious slaughter. Some European countries, however, have forbidden such exceptions and thus banned kosher and halal slaughtering practices. These countries include Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, and Slovenia. Two regions in Belgium—Flanders and Wallonia—imposed a similar ban in 2017. Belgian Jews and Muslims challenged this, and the ruling by the European court has now provided its unpalatable response.

Bad enough that individual countries have been sliding down this path. Such a ruling by the E.U.'s highest court, however, is far worse. Not only may it prompt more countries to follow suit, but it also sends out a devastating cultural signal. This is that the core principle of Western modernity, that minority groups can freely practice their religious precepts in a private sphere within which they pose no threat to the majority, has now been junked in Europe.

Why didn't the court insist on equivalent prior stunning of animals hunted, trapped, or shot for sport or other supposed community benefits? This danger was realized even by the Advocate-General who gave his opinion in the case, Gerard Hogan. In September,

Hogan advised that E.U. member states, "are obliged to respect the deeply held religious beliefs of adherents to the Muslim and Jewish faiths by allowing for the ritual slaughter of animals," and that requiring stunning in the slaughter process "would compromise the essence of the religious guarantees" the E.U. provides. Yet the court has brushed aside the Advocate-General's warning, instead claiming that it had struck "a fair balance" between animal welfare and religious freedom.

But its ruling does nothing of the kind. It is illiberal and oppressive; it upholds neither animal welfare nor religious freedom; and its arguments are not just meretricious but fail even by their own internal logic. It first acknowledges that pre-slaughter stunning "entails a limitation" on the rights of Jews and Muslims to the freedom to manifest their religion. It then says, however, that the law permits interference with that freedom. How so? Through a piece of linguistic gobbledygook that misrepresents the religious precept itself. Thus, it states that stunning is "limited to one aspect of the specific ritual act of slaughter, and that act of slaughter is not, by contrast, prohibited as such."

This takes sophistry to a high level indeed. Both Judaism and Islam require animals to "be intact and healthy at the time of slaughter" for meat to be kosher or halal. Stunning an animal by firing a captive bolt into its head or by electric shock may harm its brain. The animal may thus become damaged and forbidden to eat. The prohibition against stunning is therefore a crucial element in the religious rituals of kosher and halal slaughter. So, the way the court claims to be respecting freedom of religious practice is by taking it upon itself to redefine that practice in a way those religions reject. It seeks to prohibit a core religious precept, requiring Jews and Muslims instead to adopt a practice forbidden to them under religious law. It then seeks to sanitize this intolerant move by claiming it is not forbidden to Jews and Muslims because the court has redefined that law. This oppressive

maneuver is supposedly motivated by concern for animal welfare. Yet the court unravels this, too, through its own lack of consistency or logic. After all, why didn't it insist on equivalent prior stunning of animals that are hunted, trapped, or shot for sport or other supposed community benefits? The court's response to this point was laughable. In those kinds of activities, it said, "compliance with animal-welfare requirements would adversely affect the very nature of the event concerned." The fact that requiring animals to be stunned before slaughter would "adversely affect the very nature of the event concerned" for Jews and Muslims is obviously of no account—because, in Orwellian fashion, the court has redefined the very nature of that event.

Hunting, fishing, or other cultural and sporting events that involve the killing of animals "result at most in a marginal production of meat which is not economically significant," the court said. "Consequently, such events cannot reasonably be understood as a food-production activity, which justifies their being treated differently from slaughtering." Why? What difference does "marginal production" make if the principal concern is for the welfare of the animal? Quite obviously, none. "Those activities," stated the ruling, "take place in a context where conditions for killing are very different from those employed for farmed animals."

Well, indeed, but not in the way the court meant. The stag suffering painfully from a bullet wound, the mink dying of its injuries in a trap or the fox torn to pieces by a pack of hounds all meet a far crueler death than does the animal slaughtered according to the rites of kashrut and halal. It is essential to those rites that the animal is killed in the most humane way possible. As a result, it has its throat slit with a sharp knife, which causes virtually instant unconsciousness and death. The idea that stunning is humane is risible. It is often ineffective, causing the animal to be subjected to this assault more than once before it eventually loses consciousness. And even with prior

stunning, meat processing plants in Europe are often inhumane places where livestock are factory farmed, pumped full of chemicals, and industrially killed.

So, if the requirement for stunning has little to do with animal welfare, what is the real driving force behind it? This argument over ritual slaughter has gone on in Europe for many years. At its base, it reflects the priority over humans that is now given to animals with a corresponding rise in ignorance, sentimentality, and hypocrisy over their welfare. That moral confusion is one of the outcomes of the prevailing dogma of universalism, which has caused much of Europe increasingly to reject the precepts of the Hebrew Bible. That in turn accounts for the secularism and hostility to religion upon which the E.U. itself is based.

The E.U. prides itself on the core Enlightenment values of liberalism and tolerance. Those values, however, emerged from British thinkers whose values were framed by the Bible. In continental Europe, by contrast, the Enlightenment was fueled by a vicious hatred of religion and the belief that reason could only be advanced if religion were suppressed. It is that European strain of universalist Enlightenment thinking that forms the values of the European Union. It has also given rise to the West's predominant ideology of moral and cultural relativism, which has propelled the rise of paganism and the veneration of the animal and natural world at the expense of humanity. And that now has Jewish and Muslim religious practices squarely in its sights.

At the start of 2020, Europeans joined other nations of the world in marking the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, vowing "never again." At the end of this horrible year, the custodians of the European Jewish graveyard have instead demonstrated all too bleakly just what they think that means for the values of freedom and tolerance so many have given their lives to defend.

Melanie Phillips is a British journalist, broadcaster and author.

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 Jan. 15

Jewish Family Service

In honor of:
Zach Simon's graduation from law school – Eleanor and Peter Reyner
Rebecca Bub's being awarded the distinguished degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Queensland in Australia – Carol Greenberg, Eleanor and Peter Reyner
Marriage of Beth and Bob Caster's son Morty to Carmen Colmenarez – Elliott and Doris Leisawitz
Birth of Ellen and Don Abramson's new granddaughter Ruth Leora Abramson – Jay and Evelyn Lipschutz

In memory of:
Stanley Ferber (Sari Incledon's father) – Carol Greenberg
Donald Love – Helene Goldman Singer
Evelyn Drezner – Corinne and Andy Wernick, Marc and Marcy Filstein, Sharon and Julian Syret, Sue Schlanger, Sid and Esther Bratt. Bill and Anne Sedlis, Roger Schein, Jay and Evelyn Lipschutz, Cheryl and Eric Farber
Irwin Goldstein – Sid and Esther Bratt
Irvin Cohen – Cheryl and Eric Farber, Alvin & Betsy Katz
Arnold Berman (Ron Berman's father) – Andy and Corinne Wernick
Ernestine Urken (Vic Hammel's mother) – Jim and Jackye Barrer, Andy and Corinne Wernick, Cheryl and Eric Farber, Manny and Yvonne Wittels, Sue and Mel Blum

JFS Food Pantry

In memory of:
Evelyn Drezner – Rosalye Yashek, Sharon Scullin and Jim Rothstein, Karen and Myron Kabakoff

Federation Jewish Community Campaign

In memory of:
Evelyn Drezner – Anzie and Edward Golden, Esta and Randy Neugroschel, Amy and Marc Besser, C. Harold Cohn, Paul Kozloff and family
Irvin Cohen – Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer, Anzie and Edward Golden
Ernestine Urken (Vic Hammel's mother) – Anzie and Edward Golden, Debbie Goodman and John Moyer, Debbie and David Goldberg
Arnold Berman (Ron Berman's father) – Debbie and David Goldberg

Honorials and Memorials

Contributions may be made to the following Funds:
Federation Jewish Community Campaign
Jewish Family Service
Leo Camp Lecture Fund
JFS Food Bank
JFS Taxi Transportation Program
Holocaust Library & Resource Center
Doris Levin Fund
PJ Library Fund
Harry & Rose Sack Fund
Evelyn Thompson Fund

Sue B. Viener Memorial Fund (PJ Library)

In honor of:
Birth of Don and Ellen Abramson's new granddaughter Ruth Leora Abramson – George Viener, Sue Schlanger
Marriage of Beth and Bob Caster's son Morty to Carmen Colmenarez – George Viener

In memory of:
Ernestine Urken (Vic Hammel's mother) – Sue Wachs

Friendship Circle Fund

In honor of:
Marriage of Beth and Bob Caster's son Morty to Carmen Comenarez – Glenn and Gaye Corbin

In memory of:
Donna Eisenberg – Lorrie Heisler and Jennie Saft
Irwin Goldstein – Lorrie Heisler and Jennie Saft

Edwin & Alma N. '51 Lakin Holocaust Library and Resource Center

In honor of:
Marriage of Beth and Bob Caster's son Morty to Carmen Colmenarez – Eleanor and Peter Reyner

In memory of:
David Bender – Eleanor and Peter Reyner

Evelyn Thompson Nursery School Fund (Lakin Preschool)

In honor of:
Birth of Alan Seltzer's granddaughter – Beth and Bob Caster
Birth of Ellen and Don's Abramson's granddaughter Ruth Leora Abramson – Beth and Bob Caster

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