BY CNAAN LIPHSHIZ

(JTA) — If the French right-wing politician Francois Fillon is elected president next year, it won’t be for his skills at promoting interfaith dialogue. The secularist candidate widely favored to win the election in May managed to enrage many Jews, Muslims and even Catholics with a single explosive statement he made recently during a radio interview shortly after winning the Republican Party primaries in France. Frenchmen need to fight against Muslim sectarianism, Fillon told Europe1 on November 23, like “we fought against a form of Catholic sectarianism or like we fought the desire of Jews to live in a community that does not respect the laws of the French Republic.”

His remark unleashed a “furious reaction” by Muslim community activists like Yasser Louati, a former spokesman of the Collective Against Islamophobia in France, who called Fillon a xenophobe. And it certainly offended some members of the Jewish community, where congregants regularly recite a special prayer in a community that does not respect the laws of the Jewish community.

UEJF, the left-leaning Jewish student group, criticized Fillon. But mainstream observers the impression that Fillon is unusually silent on the statement, giving his forgiving attitude was unusual “I’m not about to polemicize what Fillon said,” his forgiving attitude was unusual “I’m not about to polemicize what Fillon said.” His forgiving attitude was unusual for his organization, which is usually quick to denounce any expression of bias against Jews.

Fillon’s statement, however, did alarm some Jews. Following his landslide victory in the primaries with 65 percent of the vote, Fillon is poised to become president. In May, he will be running against a yet-undeclared candidate from the ruling party of President Francois Hollande, an uncharismatic candidate with dismal approval ratings amid discontent over Islamism and economic stagnation.

Fillon, with his charged statements on Islam – he has said that French Muslims who engage in “Islamic totalitarianism” cannot be considered truly French – will face a difficult challenge in winning the presidency in May.

The dwindling Irish Jewish community has a long history and traditions. In 2012, Jewish and Muslim groups condemned a ban on wearing full-body swimsuits, or burkinis, at some beaches. “Going with it [a burkini] is not in accordance of a message,” Moshe Sebbag, the chief rabbi of Paris’ Grand Synagogue, told JTA in August. Conceding that Jewish Orthodox women wear similar garb while bathing, he said the Muslim burkini “is not about women’s liberty to dress modestly, but a statement against Jews.”

The remark on Jewish sectarianism – a reference, apparently, to the Napoleon mythological beginnings. “The Jews of France are French like the Christians of France are French and the Muslims of France are French, except for those who partake in Islamic sectarianism, in Islamic totalitarianism, which needs to be fought against,” said the spokesman, Jerome Chartier. Benjamin said he found the clarification “satisfactory.” Zerbib disagreed, saying, “I think Fillon needs to clarify what he meant by his statement and his positions on religious freedoms in general.”

Fillon’s apparent suspicion or disdain for religious customs fits into the French concept of laicite, a strict form of secularism. In recent decades it has gained traction among French politicians and thought leaders, who regard it as a tool to check what they regard as the spread of Islam and its effects on French society. In summer, laicite advocates, including some leaders of French Jewry, cited the concept in defending a controversial ban on wearing full-body swimsuits, or burkinis, at some beaches.

F Federation on Facebook
The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania now has a page on Facebook to let community members know about upcoming events and keep connected.
I had been inspired to research the history of the Jewish Defender, a newspaper owned by a black woman named Ida B. Wells in the late 1800s in Chicago. Upon learning that the Defender was owned by a black woman, I didn’t appreciate the significance frankly, thinking naively that we were then living in a post-racial era in which some newspapers, including the Jewish Defender, had black owners and others would have black owners.

The Defender in those years held its own among other African-American newspapers, despite lacking the circulation or resources of the Tribune or the Sun-Times, and my initial months were a crash course in the mechanics of journalism. After 18 months on the copy desk, I was promoted to investigative reporter, where I covered the police beat as well as the political turmoil over the city’s massive high-rise public housing developments. We were all so young and so junior, understanding of race in America and revealed to me the pivotal role that Chi- cago played in American conflicts, in general, and the Defender in particular, had played in American history – a point that

To the Community:

I met Rabbi Jack Paskoff, of Lancaster’s Temple Shaarai Shomayim, reminds me that all roads seem to lead to Scranton. Perhaps this is because he learned more about his grandparents’ Pittsburgh and Scranton origins, and his mother’s family, that three Jewish people from Scranton had adopted modern newspaper techniques – and worked with “The Reporter.”ного интереса к жевонской нации.

To the Community:

I had no particular interest in civil rights and no prior knowledge of the newspaper’s history. I had been recommended for the position by a friend, another white, Jewish University of Chicago grad. When my friend mentioned that the Defender was an “African-American-owned newspaper,” I didn’t appreciate the significance frankly, thinking naively that we were then living in a post-racial era in which some newspapers, including the Jewish Defender, had black owners and others would have black owners.

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The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania partnered with the Lackawanna Bar Association for a private screening of “Denial” on November 17 at the Cinemar Knox in Moosic.

Based on the book “History on Trial: My Day in Court with a Holocaust Denier,” “Denial” recounted Deborah Lipstadt’s legal battle “to prove the Holocaust occurred” against David Irving, who accused her of libel when she declared him a Holocaust denier.

The first part of the CLE/Federation program was a presentation by Professor Tim Hinton on the topic “Denial: The Movie and Law of Defamation”—a lecture for lawyers and their guests, for which attorneys attending acquired CLE credits. Following the lecture, members of the Jewish communities of Northeastern Pennsylvania were invited to watch the movie as well.

Representatives of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania and the Lackawanna Bar Association said they were “honored to have partnered this important historical program.”

BACKGROUND TO “DENIAL”

In 1993, Professor Deborah Lipstadt, of Emory University, wrote “Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory” to expose the lies, distortions and political agendas that drive Holocaust denial. In her book, she discussed a number of specific Holocaust deniers, including David Irving, whom she called a “dangerous spokesperson” for Holocaust denial.

In 1996, Irving sued Lipstadt and her British publisher, Penguin Books Ltd., for libel, saying his reputation as a Holocaust denier was misrepresented, misconstrued, omitted, mistranslated, misread and applied double standards to the historical evidence in order to achieve his ideological interpretation of history. Gray also found that Irving was an “active Holocaust denier, that he is antisemitic and racist, and that he associates with right-wing extremists who promote neo-Nazism.”

Federation and Lackawanna Bar Association screened “Denial” film

The New York Times

BY JTA STAFF

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Yaffa Eliach, pioneering Holocaust historian, dies at 79

BY JTA STAFF

Yaffa Eliach, a well-known historian of the Holocaust who opened the first center for Holocaust studies in the United States, has died. Eliach, a Holocaust survivor, died on November 9 at 79, The Jerusalem Post reported.

In 1974, she opened the Center for Holocaust Studies in Brooklyn. It later merged with the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. Eliach created the “Tower of Chesed,” both from the Torah and how people can learn from their ancestors, and of more recent great individuals, the “true meaning of Chesed” and how “far reaching” the institution.

L-r: David I. Falik, CRC chairman of Federation; Mark Silverberg, Federation executive director; Leeann Munley, executive director of Lackawanna Bar Association, and J. Timothy Hinton, who presented the lecture.

Bais Yaakov teachers’ in-service

Bais Yaakov teachers attended an educational in-service on November 14 given by Rabbi Joshua Levy, education consultant and teacher trainer for Torah U’mesorah. The in-service was held in the Scranton Hebrew Day School for its faculty. Bais Yaakov faculty were invited to attend. Levy shared his experiences and gave practical, hands-on ideas on how to communicate with parents and taught the participants the skill of reflective listening.

Bais Yaakov students also heard Levy speak. He gave examples of “true acts of Chesed,” both from the Torah and how people can learn from their ancestors, and of more recent great individuals, the “true meaning of Chesed” and how “far reaching” it is.

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In 1974, she opened the Center for Holocaust Studies in Brooklyn. It later merged with the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. Eliach created the “Tower of Life,” or “Tower of Faces,” exhibit for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. The three-story exhibit features 1,500 photographs from Eishyshok, her Lithuanian birthplace near Vilna, showing life there before the war. Nearly all of the village’s 3,500 Jewish inhabitants were killed during World War II, according to The New York Times. Eliach also published several books about the Holocaust.

Following World War II, she fled to pre-state Israel in 1946. Several family members had been killed in the war. In 1954, she moved to the U.S. with her husband, David Eliach, and studied at Brooklyn College and the City College of New York. In 1969, she started working at Brooklyn College, teaching Jewish studies.
France.

the Muslim radicalization that is behind hundreds of antisemitic attacks annually, including several deadly assaults since 2012. Hundreds have died in France and Belgium in jihadist attacks, including in the Bataclan concert hall in November 2015 and more recently in Nice, where 84 people were murdered in July.

This sense of threat “may also be feeding the war effort, launching a ‘Double V’ campaign to advocate for victory abroad and victory at home.”

The Defender published a special “Victory Through Unity” edition with guest essays from President Franklin Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor, as well as a multi-racial, international array of intellectuals and luminaries. Author Langston Hughes wrote an essay for the edition arguing that the Nazis and their allies represented an existential threat, and that there was no alternative to war.

“Although Alabama is bad, the Axis is worse,” Hughes wrote. “Negro editors know what democracy is about because they haven’t got much of it—and they want it. But we do have in America a freedom of speech denied, for instance, to Jews—and Negroes—in Germany.”

Remarkably, the “Victory Through Unity” edition was assembled by Ben Burns, the Defender’s first white, Jewish editor, who had come to the newspaper as an act of journalistic redemption following several years in which he had written propaganda for publications affiliated with the Communist Party. He appreciated the irony when he noticed that the building housing the Defender at that time had been built several decades earlier as a synagogue.

Burns was just the first in a long line of white journalists, men and women, including many Jews, who worked as reporters on the newspaper through the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s, even when civil rights was Power. When I arrived in the early 1990s, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan had become one of black America’s most prominent leaders with a message of racial separatism and explicit antisemitism.

The Defender was careful to cover the Nation as a significant force in black America, but it made a subtle statement about where the newspaper stood on the issue of the need for an integrated society by assigning me to cover Farrakhan. For his part, Farrakhan accepted my posting and even granted me an exclusive interview, once he read my reportage and concluded that I wrote about him accurately.

My experience at the Defender removed any illusions I had that the African-American-Jewish alliance was grounded in internal similarities between the two communities, which, after all, are no longer proximate to each other, geographically or otherwise. But researching the history of the newspaper, in turn, confirmed for me that this partnership was formed in response to the threat of white supremacy at home and abroad, and that it is needed because the menace never truly vanished from the scene.

The resurgence of white supremacists in this recent election and its aftermath — especially President-elect Donald Trump’s decision to hire as his senior adviser a man who once called his website a “platform for the ‘alt-right’” — and the horrifying spectacle of neo-Nazis rallying in Washington, DC — suggests that for the foreseeable future, Jews and African-Americans will continue to hold together politically. They will likely be joined by Muslims, undocumented immigrants, white women’s rights activists, GLBTQ advocates, journalists and civil libertarians — out of an instinct for self-preservation, if not a shared vision for a tolerant, inclusive nation.

Ethan Michaeli is the author of “The Defender: How the Legendary Black Newspaper Changed America” [Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016], which was just listed as one of The New York Times’ 100 Notable Books of 2016.

Causes.

That same year, the Defender covered the trial of 31-year-old Leo Frank on charges of murdering a 13-year-old girl who worked at the pencil factory in Marietta, GA, where he was a manager. Despite questionable evidence, a flawed trial and a national appeal organized by prominent Jewish organizations, Frank had been convicted and sentenced to death. Georgia’s governor commuted the sentence, but in the middle of the night, a well-organized mob of men — the state’s leading citizens, by all reports — invaded the prison where Frank was being kept, snatched him from his cell, drove him to Marietta in a convoy of private cars and hanged him in a downtown park.

The Defender’s editorial page columnist, Z. Wihters, expressed his condolences to Frank’s family and supporters, then

"I, "In Mr. Lublin's Store" has been called a "proof of Lublin's store." Set in Leipzig during World War II, the novel is the first English translation of Agnon's final, "The S.Y. Agnon Library at The Toby Press has released the définitive collection of Agnon's works in English. Each volume also includes new word and illustrated annotations written by scholars in Hebrew literature. For more information about the S.Y. Agnon Library, visit www.tobypress.com.

While some of Agnon's works have been translated in the past by other publishers, The Toby Press' new series is the fullest collection of Agnon's works in English. Each volume also includes new content, such as a revised translation, foreword and illustrated annotations written by scholars in Hebrew literature.

For more information about the S.Y. Agnon Library, visit www.tobypress.com.
BY CNAAN LIPHSHIZ

ATHENS, Greece (JTA) — Amid preparations for her wedding 12 years ago, Errika Abouaf was happy to skip the mikvah, the ritual bath where Jewish brides traditionally undergo immersion before marrying in an Orthodox ceremony. Her excuse for opting out was that her tiny Jewish community of Larissa in northern Greece has no mikvah. “But it’s also because I didn’t feel like doing it,” said Abouaf, who now lives in Athens with her son and husband. “I felt an aversion of some kind.”

It’s a common sentiment in a country where 87 percent of Jews were murdered during the Holocaust. Members of Greece’s present-day Jewish community of 5,000 perceives its Jewish identity as mostly cultural and independent to religion, community leaders say.

But Abouaf changed her outlook last year after visiting a mikvah for the first time in Israel as part of the Jewish Women’s Renaissance Project. The group, founded in 2008, runs subsidized, week-long trips to Israel that aim to bring non-observant Diaspora women closer to Jewish practice – a so-called “Birthright for moms.” Thousands of women have participated in the trips, with each one bringing together about 400 women. “The trip changed me and my fear of Judaism,” Abouaf said.

The excursions are popular in Jewish communities from Sydney to San Francisco for what participants describe as a bonding and empowering experience for women – not to mention the welcome break it provides from the grinding routine of parenting. But they seem to have a particularly strong effect on women from small, crisis-stricken communities where mothers face a growing uncertainty over the viability of raising their children as Jews.

“Turkish Jews don’t have many options to choose from for Israel trips; this is not New York,” said Suzette, a mother of two and an organizer of Renaissance trips in Istanbul, who requested her last name be withheld for security reasons. “When we do go to Israel, it’s for family visits. A group visit to Israel, to really connect to the country, is very rare and meaningful.”

Abouaf visited Israel last year as one of 15 Greek participants in a Renaissance trip with women from various countries. She had visited Israel twice before but saw little of the country, as both trips were to undergo training for her volunteer position as a Jewish community guard. The Western Wall brought her to tears, but the hugs from other women in her group proved no less powerful. “They didn’t ask what’s wrong, just hugged all the time that day,” Abouaf recalled.

In addition to connecting to Jewish sites and traditions, Abouaf said she was also scoping out the country as a possible alternative to Greece, where rising political extremism and the lingering effects of a financial crisis are major concerns.

According to a 2015 Anti-Defamation League survey, Greece is the most antisemitic country in Europe, with 67 percent of the population harboring antisemitic sentiments. It is also the only European country with a far-right party, Golden Dawn, whose rhetoric echoes that of Nazi Germany.

Golden Dawn, whose flag features a variant of the swastika against a red background, has 18 seats among the 300 in the Greek parliament and its leaders have inveighed against Jews. The party’s main spokesman, Ilias Kasidiaris, sports a swastika tattoo, and Christos Pappas, the second highest-ranking official, said in 2014 that Greeks are the “eternal enemies” of Israel.

“I don’t see a future for Elias here,” said Abouaf of her 10-year-old son, who attends the only Jewish school in this city, the Greek capital. “When I was in Israel with the Renaissance project, I was looking at the country for the first time to see whether I could live there, what would my family do here.”

Lori Palatnik, the founding director of the Jewish Women’s Renaissance Project, said the trips play a vital role in supporting communities facing rising anti-Jewish sentiment. “Bringing women from countries like Turkey and Greece, which struggle with renewed antisemitism, is critical to keeping the strength of those Jewish communities alive,” Palatnik said.

See “Birthright” on page 12

spread the light!

May God bless us all!
The Rodriguez Family
IRA charitable rollover can be good for you, and Federation.

Anyone 70-and-a-half and older who has an Individual Retirement Account can consider how the IRA charitable rollover can be a benefit to them, and how they can make a gift to the Jewish communities of Northeastern Pennsylvania, in addition to saving taxes. IRA assets are among the most highly taxed. Making a qualified charitable distribution (the term used in the law) from an IRA directly to the Federation, before year-end, is an opportunity for donors said to be often overlooked.

Distributions from an IRA can save taxes because the distribution counts toward the required minimum distribution, but is not included in taxable income if the distribution is made directly to the charity. This tax-free distribution of up to $100,000 is available for donors who itemize and those who do not.

Distributions from an IRA directly to the Federation can be used in many ways, including creating a permanent endowment fund. In recent years, donors have used these IRA distributions to directly benefit the Jewish community. Distributions cannot be made to a donor advised fund, supporting a private foundation or for a life income plan, such as a gift annuity or remainder trust.

One way to make this gift is to instruct one’s IRA administrator in writing to distribute any amount, up to $100,000, from one’s IRA to the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Many plans have standard forms that can be used to make this gift. Qualified charitable distributions are not included in taxable income if the donor uses these IRA distributions to make a gift to a qualified organization.

Contributing gifts of securities

One’s charitable contribution to the Jewish Federation can be made with a gift of long-term appreciated securities (such as stocks, bonds and/or mutual funds) that have realized significant appreciation over time. It is considered one of the most tax-efficient ways to give. Making a gift using appreciated securities generally offers a two-fold tax savings.

- The Federation is a charitable organization; when one makes a gift of securities, one avoids paying any capital gains tax on the increase in the value of the securities transferred.
- Gifts of appreciated securities are fully deductible (subject to certain limitations) for the full fair market value of the securities at the time of the gift.

To qualify for these year-end deductions, one should have owned the securities for more than one year and ensure the gift of securities is delivered to the Federation before December 31.

Those who choose to contribute mutual fund shares to the Federation will receive the same tax advantages as if they had donated appreciated stock. However, because of the complexities involved in the transfer of mutual fund shares, donors have been encouraged to begin the transfer process well in advance of December 31.

A stock broker or trust officer can arrange to transfer a year-end gift of securities from one’s account to the Federation. For details, have them contact the Federation at 570-961-2300, ext. 3.

This material was presented for informative purposes only and should not be construed as legal, tax or financial advice. When considering gift planning strategies, one should always consult with one’s own legal, tax and financial advisors.

Israel’s blood goes underground

By MaraFahl

For most organizations, moving underground would be an ominous decision. For Israel’s National Blood Services Center, it’s an exciting one. November 16 marked the groundbreaking for the Jewish state’s new state-of-the-art central blood bank. Located in Ramla, the facility will be the world’s first completely underground national blood services center. Israel’s reality affects every key aspect of the design of the center, including its subterranean location.

Every day, bright yellow vans traverse Israel to collect blood donations. Many who donate through the vans are simply passing by, and sometimes communities organize blood donor events. Essentially all Israelis are familiar with these vans, which they can’t help but notice. The fully equipped vehicles, which collect 17 percent of Israel’s annual blood supply, are the most visible part of the mobile units of Magen David Adom – Israel’s national emergency medical, disaster, ambulance and blood bank service. The entire system of mobile units gathers 90 percent of the blood that is donated annually.

What happens to the blood after it is collected? That is lesser-known – and it will soon be even harder to see. Just 15 minutes outside of Tel Aviv, Israel’s technology and culture capital, is the country’s current central blood bank. The National Blood Services Center is a clearinghouse for sorting, packaging and storing blood, which is then delivered to hospitals and critical care units around the country. Of the 280,000 blood units that pass through the center’s doors each year, 250,000 are sent to hospitals around the country as needed. An additional 37,000 liters of surplus plasma are used by MDA’s pharmaceutical plant to prepare products such as Factor VIII, albumin and gamma globulin.

No drop of this resource goes to waste, but because it is concentrated in a single and vulnerable location, there is a risk that major damage to the center could decimate the nation’s entire system of blood resources. In fact, any damage to the center could reverberate throughout Israel if it slowed down or cut off the blood supply for hospitals and emergency centers.

After the Hamas terror group’s rockets rained down on Tel Aviv during the Gaza conflicts of 2012 and 2014, forcing the current central blood bank to operate from what it described as the woefully insufficient workspace of a bomb shelter, the need to secure the country’s blood supply became clearer than ever. Israel has responded by starting the construction of the forthcoming underground blood services center in Ramla. But security is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the carefully considered elements of the project.

See “Blood” on page 8
Jewish Federation Participants “ESCAPED” the NEPA Virus on Saturday evening, November 12th
SCRANTON
BY RABBI MOSHE SAKS, TEMPLE ISRAEL OF

Meeting God “face to face”

D’VAR TORAH

wrestling site “God’s Face,” saying, “My life has been...God into one event. First, Jacob prayed “Rescue me...struggled – Esau, Isaac and Laban – and yet, the “man” (angel?) symbolizes every person with whom Jacob...for who else is it whose name cannot be spoken?

one day, for who else is it whose name cannot be spoken? When else did Jacob struggle with God? The account, therefore, blends Jacob’s conflict with people and with God into one event. First, Jacob prayed “Rescue me from my brother, Esau” (verse 11), then he named the wrestling site “God’s Face,” saying, “My life has been a struggle with people and with God. The unnamed “man” (Israel), at the cost of a bruised thigh. In its present form and position, the story concerns “wrestling” was Jacob’s need to face his own character, and Laban) was not an episode, but a way of life. The...his relationship with Esau (and to a great extent, Isaac...effect positive change in ourselves, and thus change our...our community and the world. We all need to “wrestle” with that part of ourselves that prohibits...to “wrestle” with that part of ourselves that prohibits us from change and improvement. Let this story be a lesson to everyone!

...Today, it is more than eight million. With MDA supply-...crucial for the quick delivery of blood to hospitals. While Ramla is not one of Israel’s largest cities, it is...one of the country’s most centrally located municipalities, and is about 11 miles from Ben Gurion International Airport. Even though Israel is a small country, the new building’s easy access to major highways is considered crucial for the quick delivery of blood to hospitals.

...the country’s population was just 4.4 million. Today, it is more than eight million. With MDA supply-...prevent a major health crisis in Israel, we must build an improved and highly secured blood bank.”
Six new Chanukah kids’ books to help enlighten the holiday

BY PENNY SCHWARTZ

(JTA) — From a new audio version of “Hanukkah Bear” — a holiday favorite by National Jewish Book Award winner Eric A. Kimmel — to a novel for young teens set during the Festival of Lights, there is a fresh crop of Chanukah books that are sure to delight young readers of all stripes. The first Chanukah candle is kindled this year on the evening of Saturday, December 24. So if you’re looking to enliven and enlighten your Chanukah — or simply just send the perfect gift to a loved little one — look no further than these six new books.

“Hanukkah Delight” by Leslea Newman, illustrated by Amy Husband (Kar-Ben $5.99), ages 4-8. Toddlers and preschoolers will have fun celebrating Chanukah with a family of bunnies, an owl, kitty and even a friendly alligator. “Potatoes at Turtle Rock” by Susan Schnur and Anna Schnur-Fishman, illustrated by Alex Steele-Morgan (Kar-Ben $17.99), ages 5-9. In this enchanting fictional tale, Annie leads her family — along with their goat and chicken — on a Chanukah adventure. It’s a snowy winter night in the woods near their farm, and as they stop at various locations, Annie poses Chanukah-related riddles: How did their great-grandfather keep warm during the long winter in the shetel? (With hot potatoes.) Why is it so dark? (There is no moon in the sky on the sixth night of Chanukah.) What do they use for a menorah out in the woods? (Potatoes!) Along the way, the family lights candles, recites the blessings, enjoys some tasty treats and, in every way, the family lights candles, recites the blessings of Chanukah.

This is the second Israeli holiday book set at Turtle Rock by the mother-daughter team who also co-wrote “Tashlich at Turtle Rock” — both based on the family’s real-life holiday traditions. Aside from being a writer, Susan Schnur is a Reconstructionist rabbi. The book, she told JTA, reflects her conviction as both a parent and rabbi that when children are empowered to create their own rituals, they find meaning in Jewish holidays.

“A Hanukkah with Mazel” by Joel Edward Stein, illustrated by Elisa Vavouri (K-Ben $17.99), ages 3-8. In this heartwarming tale set in the outskirts of an Old World shtetl, a kindhearted, but poor, artist named Misha adopts a cat who turns up in his barn one cold, snowy night during Chanukah. Misha names his new black-and-gray-striped feline friend Mazel — “good luck” in Yiddish. Misha has no Chanukah candles, but he finds a creative way to celebrate the Festival of Lights using his paints and brushes. However, when a peddler arrives at Misha’s home on the holiday’s last day, he recognizes Mazel as his lost cat, Goldie. In the uplifting ending, the two find hope for the future, with the peddler offering to sell Misha’s paintings and Misha taking care of Mazel while the peddler travels. Kids will have fun following the playful Mazel, who turns up in every scene in artist Elisa Vavouri’s large, vivid illustrations.

“Dreidels on the Brain” by Joel Ben Izzy (Dial Books $17.99), ages 10 and up. Meet Joel, an awkward yet endeavoring 12-year-old boy who is looking for Chanukah miracles in Temple City, CA, where he lives with his family. In the opening pages, Joel tries to strike up a conversation with God, looking for some sign of better things to come — his life, so far, has had its share of disappointments and hard times. Author Joel Ben Izzy brings his award-winning storytelling style to this tale that unfolds during the eight days of Chanukah in 1971, as Joel navigates home, friends and school, where he is the only Jewish kid. His Chanukah takes a downward spin when Joel’s family is invited to light a menorah in front of the whole school — he’s worried about being embarrassed, but bigger worries follow when Joel’s father is hospitalized. Joel eventually discovers that magic and miracles may come in unexpected ways. Readers will have fun with the dozens of inventive spellings of Chanukah, including “Chanyukah” and “Kchkanukkah.” The novel is loosely based on the author’s childhood — Ben Izzy described himself in an e-mail to JTA as a “nerdy 12-year-old magician” who was the only Jewish kid in his school.

“Hanukkah Bear” (audio version) by Eric A. Kimmel, author; narrated by Laural Merlington (LLC Dreamscape Media $14.99), ages 4-8. On the first night of Chanukah, one huge, hungry bear smells Bubble Brayna frying her legendary latkes. The bear shows up at her door — at the same moment, it happens, that she’s expecting the village rabbi. Thanks to her poor eyesight, a fun-filled case of mistaken identity ensues as Bubble Brayna thinks the bear is the rabbi; she feeds him latkes and insists he play a game of dreidel and light the menorah. This book won a National Jewish Book Award in 2013 and now young children can smuggle up to this newly recorded audio version.

May love and light fill your home and heart at Chanukah
— author unknown

Yes! You CAN make a difference this Chanukah...

Donate canned goods and help construct a giant "CANNOBER"

The cans will be donated to local food pantries

Check out the Federation’s new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook

For more information, call (570) 589-0226
Or visit chabadofthemountains.org

Wishing Everyone a Happy Chanukah

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Israel's first Chanukah candle factory endures 77-year history

BY JUDY LASH BALINT

JNS.org

SDEROT – The Menorah Candle Company, manufacturer and exporter of millions of Chanukah candles worldwide, is one of the oldest businesses in the industrial zone of Sderot, the Negev city better known as a frequent target for Hamas rockets than for its commerce.

Menorah produces the small, bright-blue box filled with 44 multicolored candles and printed with iconic target for Hamas rockets than for its commerce. zone of Sderot, the Negev city better known as a frequent bombardment, and anxiety among workers were a constant companion. In June 2014, a direct rocket hit on a nearby paint factory was one of the attacks that brought Israel into the month-long Gaza War. The factory was completely destroyed in the attack and four workers were injured.

When that happened, Ben Moshe, who makes the 90-minute commute from Jerusalem every day, said he considered moving his factory to the Jerusalem area, but, ultimately decided to “stay here forever. I consider it our mission to be here.”

“Candles have soul,” Ben Moshe asserted. That’s what attracted him and two partners to buy the veteran company in 2012, after a successful career as a vice president of several large Israeli corporations and a brief two years to produce and export Shabbat candles, memorial candles, Havdalah candles and, in the last year, individual cups of olive oil. Many in Israel prefer to commemorate the Chanukah miracle of a single cruse of oil lasting for eight days in its original form.

Individual oil cups now constitute 15 percent of Menorah’s Chanukah trade, a number Ben Moshe expects to rise as more Jews abroad adopt the olive oil custom.

The company tries to locally source paraffin, wicks, olive oil and dye, all the components that go into making the signature candles.

A parallel part of the Menorah ethos is providing employment and occupational therapy to local people with special needs. Ten of the 40 workers at the 75,000 sq. ft. plant are from the special needs community and are involved in various aspects of packing and shipping thousands of oil cups and candles daily.

Commercial candle making is a relatively simple, but exacting, process using paraffin and oil. The Sderot plant uses machinery manufactured and imported from Germany and China some 30 years ago that still functions well today. The wicks are eight-layers strong to create a steady flame. To create different colors, sizes and shapes of candles, many kinds of paraffin additions are required.

To keep up with demand and an exacting export schedule, production starts four months ahead of the holiday. Menorah’s biggest customers outside of Israel are in North America, France, Australia and South Africa, with business growing an average of 10 percent every year, Ben Moshe said.

One last stop on the factory tour is the small synagogue on the factory premises. (Photo by Judy Lash Balint)

Ilan Ben Moshe, owner of Menorah Candle Company, in the small synagogue on the factory premises. (Photo by Judy Lash Balint)

He’s quick to note that Menorah has expanded over the years to produce and export Shabbat candles, memorial candles, Havdalah candles and, in the last year, individual cups of olive oil. Many in Israel prefer to commemorate the Chanukah miracle of a single cruse of oil lasting for eight days in its original form.

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One last stop on the factory tour is the small synagogue on its premises that is used for daily Torah study. Ben Moshe reflects on the candle legacy he’s perpetuating.

“He sent me here,” he said with a smile.
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Happy Chanukah!

Streit’s Chanukah Candles
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Kosher Boneless & Skinless
Chicken Breast Fillet - per pound
$4.99

Fresh Kosher Whole or Cut Up
Fresh Chickens - per pound
$2.49

Golden
Potato Pancakes
10.6 ounce
2 FOR $5

Paskesz Driedel
each
2 FOR $3

Elite Milk Chocolate Coins
0.63 ounce
3 FOR $1

Bake Shop Fresh
(Sufganyot) Jelly Filled Donuts
6 count
$2.99

Manischewitz
Potato Pancake
Mix
6 ounce
2 FOR $4

Kedem
Sparkling
Buch
25.4 ounce
2 FOR $6

Tabatchnick
Chicken
Broth
32 ounce
2 FOR $4

Lipton Kosher
Soup Mixes
1.9 ounce
2 FOR $4

Fox’s
U-Bet
Syrup
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Fruit
Slices
6 ounce
2 FOR $5

Kedem
Tea
Biscuits
4.2 ounce
2 FOR $1

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Nine things you didn’t know about Chanukah

BY JULIE WIENER

(MyJewishLearning via JTA) – Chanukah, which starts at sundown on Sat- 
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holidays in the United States. But that doesn’t mean there is nothing new to learn about 
this eight-day festival. From the mysterious origins of gelt to an Apocryphal beheading 
by Stephen Chernin/Getty Images)

KIDS SPIN DREIDELS AT THE ELDRIDGE STREET SYNAGOGUE IN NEW YORK CITY. THE GAME OF DREIDEL WAS INSPIRED BY A GERMAN GAME PLAYED AT CHRISTMASTIME. (PHOTO BY STEPHEN CHERNIN/GERTITY IMAGES)

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“Ticks” in the margins: how a Baptist pastor unearthed his father’s Holocaust heroism

BY JEFFREY BARKEN

Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds never spoke about his experiences as a prisoner of war during World War II. Captured during the Battle of the Bulge, Roddie survived an assassination attempt through frozen terrain and was interned for nearly 100 days at Stalag IXA, a POW camp near Ziegenhain, Germany. “Son, there are some things I’d rather not talk about.” Roddie would tell his boys, Kim and Chris Edmonds, when they were young. “We were humiliated.”

When Roddie died in 1985, Chris, now a Baptist pastor, inherited his father’s war diaries. The books are a chronological record of POW camp life and, among other pastime anecdotes, detailed plans for a restaurant that Roddie and three of his compatriots had hoped to open after the war. Now that his father’s wartime stories are known, Chris said his life has been “turned upside down.” The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, an organization that identifies non-Jewish rescuers of Holocaust survivors and pays tribute to their courage, were scheduled to honor Roddie’s memory on November 28 with the Yehi Ohr Award during the foundation’s annual dinner at the New York Public Library.

Roddie has already been recognized by Yad Vashem—the state of Israel’s official Holocaust memorial and research institute—as “Righteous Among the Nations,” the Israeli honorific for non-Jewish saviors of Jews during the Holocaust.

For Chris, there was initially an element of mystery to his father’s writings. He could only guess what the faded “ticks” in the margins of the diary entries referred to. “Jewish friends moved out,” “Dogs,” “Before the Commander,” “Scottish Chaplain,” read several of the startling, undated notes. “Those must have been reminder markers,” Chris told JNS.org. “Something happened in the camp that he didn’t want to talk about.”

Answers to Chris’ questions about his father’s war record finally began trickling in when he discovered a New York Times article published in late 2008, in which Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds is mentioned. The article rehashed the difficulty that disgraced former President Richard Nixon experienced in the 1970s, when he sought a place to live in New York and found that most prospective neighbors despised him. Oddly enough, a lifelong Democrat named Lester Tanner, although fundamentally opposed to the former Republican president’s policies, found space in his heart to reunite Nixon and his sponsor. “Son, there are some things I’d rather not talk about.” Roddie’s head. “Your father didn’t waiver,” Tanner recalled when speaking to Chris. Roddie told the German commander, “[Per] the Geneva Convention, we only have to give our name, rank and serial number. If you shoot me, you’ll have to shoot us all and when we win the war, you will be tried for war crimes.” At this point, Tanner remembered that the German commander “turned white as a ghost. Then he began to tremble.” Eventually, Siegmann lowered his weapon and retreated from the scene. In the final days of the war, the POWs ultimately self-liberated the camp and rejoined the approaching American army.

“Over the years, we have worked with and honored many Holocaust survivors and their rescuers, but the story of Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds saving 200 Jewish-American soldiers truly distinguishes the man and leader he was,” said Harvey Schulweis, chairman of the JFR foundation, in a statement on the upcoming posthumous honor for Roddie.

Chris recounted the unexpected call he received from Stanlee Stahl, JFR’s executive vice president. “Is this the real Chris Edmonds?” she asked. Once Chris confirmed his identity, he embarked on an adventure he had previously only dreamed about. JFR made it possible for Chris to travel to Germany and retrace his father’s wartime path. “The more I learn, the more alive [Roddie’s] diary becomes,” Chris told JNS.org.

Yehi Or, the name of the honor Roddie will receive, is translated in Hebrew as “let there be light.” In line with the award’s name, Chris said he is pleased that JFR will “share dad’s story with students around the world through their educational programs.”

Chris has also observed a change in his mission as a Baptist pastor. “I’m an ambassador of the Christian faith to the Jewish world and I’m also an ambassador from the Jewish world to the Christian world,” he said, reflecting on the close relationships he has forged with the three 90-year-old Jewish veterans who helped him piece together Roddie’s story.

While Chris regrets that his father never told him about his heroic deeds and couldn’t be honored during his lifetime, he knows that a powerful set of morals resonates in the diaries Roddie left behind. “My father’s story teaches that life is about all of us, not one of us,” Chris said. “We need to esteem others much more than ourselves.”

The movie shown at the Kristallnacht program, “No Place on Earth” is now a part of the Federation Film Library, and available to be borrowed.

Check out the Federation’s new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook
Once- Verdant Irish Jewish community paling over time

BY MAAYAN JAFFE-HOFFMAN

An Israeli and an Irish Jew walk into a bar. After a shot of whiskey and a pint of Guinness, they discuss neither leprechauns nor the verdant landscape, but rabbinics. That’s because Irish Jews’ claim to Jewish fame is the late Chief Rabbi of Israel Rabbi Dr. Isaac Herzog and his son, former Israeli President Chaim Herzog, the latter who was actually born in Belfast, Ireland. Chaim Herzog’s son, Member of Knesset Isaac Herzog, is the Israeli legislature’s current opposition leader.

“We are all very proud of that,” said Malcolm Gafson, chairman of the Ireland Israel Friendship League. Chaim Herzog was the first chief rabbi of the Irish Free State (as Ireland was known from 1922-1937) before Immigration to Israel. He was trained in law in Dublin before going on to his Israeli political career. Herzog National Park, opened in the Dublin suburb of Rathgar in 1993, is a site frequented by Jewish tourists in Ireland.

“One of Herzog’s first visits abroad as [Israel’s] president was to Ireland,” Gafson said proudly.

According to Gafson, many Irish Jews claims to this bit of Irish-Jewish history because it reminds them of better times. Today, Ireland’s Jewish community is no longer robust.

Ireland’s 2011 census revealed that there are 1,900 Jews in the country. Dublin-based Cantor Alwyn Shulman said the actual Jewish population figure is likely lower because many Jews remaining in Ireland are intermarried or non-practicing. Others are transient Israelis working in Ireland’s high-tech sector.

Shulman and Chabad-affiliated Rabbi Zalman Lent serve the city’s Jewish community, a 150 member Orthodox synagogue. Around 12 people attend daily prayer services, and up to 80 attend on Shabbat. Two other synagogues remain in Dublin. According to Stuart Rosenblatt, head of the Hebrew Congregation, a 150-member Orthodox synagogue, which does not communicate with either Orthodox synagogue has 180 members. A fourth synagogue, which does not communicate with any other Jewish institution has 40 members. Around 12 people attend daily prayer services, and up to 80 attend on Shabbat. Two other synagogues remain in Dublin. According to Stuart Rosenblatt, head of the Hebrew Congregation, a 150-member Orthodox synagogue, which does not communicate with either Orthodox synagogue has 180 members. A fourth synagogue, which does not communicate with any other Jewish institution has 40 members.

Jews have a rich history in Ireland – Rosenblatt recounts how, according to Irish mythology, a “Hebrew princess” came to the country from the east, bringing with her the harp that is until today Ireland’s national symbol. The Hebrew princess also brought the Stone of Destiny, considered the rock on which the biblical patriarch Jacob rested the night he wrestled with the angel. When Scottish tribes conquered Ireland, this stone was brought back with them and became known as the “Stone of the Scone.”

“Scottish kings and later British kings have been crowned on it ever since,” Rosenblatt told JNS.

The first formal record of Jews living in Ireland is the year 1079, when five Jews “came to Ireland from over the sea, bringing with them gifts to Toidelbach, king of the Munster, and then were sent back to sea,” said Rosenblatt. A handful of Jews immigrated to Ireland in the 1200s following the Jewish expulsion from Britain by King Henry III, and then again in the 1490s and 1530s following the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions. The first Irish synagogue was established in 1660 and the first Jewish cemetery around 1718, both in Dublin. Jewish immigration picked up in the late 1800s, mainly from Lithuania. By 1900, Ireland was home to more than 3,000 Jews, said Rosenblatt. The largest influx of Jews came between 1880 and 1910, when approximately 2,000 Jews arrived from Eastern Europe. Most settled south of the center of Dublin in an area eventually dubbed “Little Jerusalem.” The community peaked around the end of the 1940s, with approximately 5,500 Jews, mostly Holocaust refugees. Since then, the community has been declining.

Rosenblatt said the first Jewish immigrants in Ireland were peddlers, petty traders and money lenders. Second-generation Irish Jews became a force in the clothing and furniture manufacturing business, and later doctors and lawyers.

Multiple synagogues and a Jewish day school thrived in 1940s Ireland. Born in 1942, Rosenblatt remembers the Shulchan Aruch stipulates that a menorah should be no taller than about 31 feet. Incidentally, Guinness lists at least three other Chanukah-related records: most dreidels spinning simultaneously for at least 10 seconds (734), most people simultaneously lighting menorahs (834) and largest display of lit menorahs (1,000). We’d like to know the most latkes ever eaten in one sitting.

Julie Wiener is the managing editor of MyJewishLearning.
Irish

In the 1960s the Irish Parliament had one Jewish member in each of the country’s three major political parties. In recent years, only one Jewish representative remained, Alan Shatter of the Fine Gael Party, but he lost his seat in last February’s election.

“Times have changed,” Rosenblatt said with a sigh. “I thought it was a story that was important to present,” said Fred Palanicki, who organized the convention. “I thought it was even more important to present the people who are following in the footsteps of the Kirbys, the Lees and the Kanes” – meaning Jack Kirby, Stan Lee and Bob Kane, three legendary Jewish comic artists. Some of Kirby, Lee and Kane’s followers at the event, including Jordan Gorfinkel, who worked as part of the management team of the institution, were two of the 140 attendees who showed their work, talk shop, delve into the historical connection between Jews and comics, and analyze Jewish characters from the vast universe of comic books.

The major Comic Cons in San Diego and New York draw well over 100,000 people each and are held in convention centers with atriums filled with stands and super-fans in costume. They are destinations for actors, Hollywood types and geeks alike who want to spend a few days with their ilk.

The recent Jewish Comic Con was a much more intimate, low-key and, well, Jewish affair. It opened with Shachatir, the morning prayer service, and broke in the middle of the day for an afternoon prayer. Two rows of tables in the synagogue sanctuary were set up in front of wooden pews that had been pushed to the wall, while guests in kippahs, ritual fringes or long skirts perused comic books retelling liturgy, Holocaust stories, Jewish history or biblical tales. The convention had little of the involved community that colors the larger Comic Cons, but attendees wore Batman, Superman and Marvel Comics shirts, and a kid in a Spider-Man costume played by the Torah ark.

“I thought it was a story that was important to present,” said Fred Palanicki, who organized the convention. “I thought it was even more important to present the people who are following in the footsteps of the Kirbys, the Lees and the Kanes” – meaning Jack Kirby, Stan Lee and Bob Kane, three legendary Jewish comic artists.
BY JNS STAFF

Israelis have deciphers a rare inscription found on an underwater artifact. The inscription sheds new light on a Roman-era site and provides evidence of the variety of plants and vegetables available to prehistoric humans.

The discovery is the "earliest known archive of food plants," according to the study.

In recent years, we were met with a golden opportunity to reveal numerous remains of fruits, nuts and seeds from trees, shrubs and the lake, alongside the remains of animals and man-made stone tools in one locality," said Goren-Inbar, who along with Bar-Ilan University's Dr. Yoel Melamed identified 55 species of edible plants.

"Our region is known for its abundance of plants, but the real surprise was a discovery of plant-based sources in the lake (Hula Lake) itself. We found more than 10 species that grew here in prehistoric times, but don't exist today," Melamed said.

At right: A fossil of Archaeofructus liaoningensis, a prehistoric plant. (Illustrative. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

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For more information contact Mark Silverberg at Mark.Silverberg@jewishnepa.org or call 570-961-2300, ext. 1.

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**Israelis have deciphered a rare inscription found on an underwater artifact.**

Archaeologists uncovered a massive rectangular stone bearing the name Gargilius Antiques during a maritime excavation at the Tel Dor archaeology site, which is located south of Haifa. The inscription enabled researchers to determine with certainty that Antiques was the Roman procurator who ruled over Judea just prior to the Bar Kokhba Revolt.

"Not only did we manage to identify with certainty for the first time the name of the procurator that controlled Judea during the critical years before the Bar Kokhba Revolt, but this is only the second time that a reference to the name Judea was revealed in any inscription from the Roman period," University of Haifa's Prof. Assaf Ya'acov- Landau and Dr. Gil Gambash said in a joint statement.

The Bar Kokhba Revolt, also known as the Third Jewish-Roman War, was fought from 132-136 C.E. amid religious and political tensions following the failure of the First Revolt from 66-70 C.E. The latter revolt – led by Simon bar Kokhba, who promised to restore Jewish independence – ended in a crushing defeat for the Jewish people that led to extensive Jewish depopulation in the land of Israel, as well as Roman efforts to erase any memory of Judea and ancient Israel.

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**Israeli teens help unearth Bronze Age figurine**

BY JNS STAFF

(Archive 400 years-old Bronze Age figurine was unearthed by a team of archaeologists and Israeli high school students, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced.

According to Gilad Itach, the IAA's excavation director, the eight-inch-tall figurine sitting upon a jug was unearthed on the last day of excavations at a site in the central Israeli town of Yehud, before construction was about to commence.

"It seems that at first the jug, which is typical of the period, was prepared, and afterward the unique sculpture was added, the likes of which have never before been discovered in previous research," Itach said. "The level of precision and attention to detail in creating this almost 4,000-year-old sculpture is extremely impressive.

"The neck of the jug served as a base for forming the upper portion of the figure, after which the arms, legs, and a face were added to the sculpture," he added. "One can see that the face of the figure seems to be resting on its hand as if in a state of reflection."

The figurine was discovered along with a number of other items, including daggers, an axe head and arrows that archaeologists believe were buried as part of funeral offerings for a respected member of the ancient community.

The Israeli high school students who took part in the dig were part of a new high school matriculation program offered by the IAA and the Israeli Education Ministry to help train future archaeologists.

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**Deciphering the past**

**Israeli archaeologists reveal prehistoric man’s plant-based diet**

BY JNS STAFF

Remains of plants believed to be 780,000 years old were unearthed during excavations at Gesher Bnot Yaakov, a Stone Age archaeological site in the Hula Valley in northern Israel. The discovery provides proof of a plant-based diet in the Paleolithic era, countering the common claim that ancient humans’ diet was based heavily on animal products.

In a study published in the scientific journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Prof. Naama Goren-Inbar of Institute of Archaeology revealed that more than 20,000 remains of edible plants were discovered at the site, providing evidence of the variety of plants and vegetables available to prehistoric humans.

The discovery is the "earliest known archive of food plants," according to the study.

"Not only did we manage to identify with certainty for the first time the name of the procurator that controlled Judea during the critical years before the Bar Kokhba Revolt, but this is only the second time that a reference to the name Judea was revealed in any inscription from the Roman period," University of Haifa's Prof. Assaf Ya'acov-Landau and Dr. Gil Gambash said in a joint statement.

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See "Artifact" on page 17
Check out the Federation’s new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook

**Artifact.**

While the name Gargilius Antiques was also found on an inscription uncovered more than 70 years ago, the portion of the inscription that indicated where he ruled was not preserved. Scholars debated whether or not Antiques was the procurator of Rome’s Syria province or Judea, but the new stone has clarified that debate.

“Immediately after suppressing the Bar Kokhba Revolt, Rome decided to abolish the province of Ju—dea, and erase all traces of its name, and as a result decided to connect it to Syria to create the province of Syria Palaestina,” the University of Haifa researchers said. “So we see an inscription that dates back to very shortly before Judea essentially ceased existing as a province with this name. Out of the two inscriptions that mention the name Judea, this is of course the later one, but in light of its rarity, it is reasonable to assume that few other inscriptions with the name Judea from later on will be found.”

The Tel Dor coastal site where the inscription was found had operated as a port until about the 4th century C.E.

***Continued from page 15***

**Comic.**

Gorfinkel moved around a lot as a kid and said he found his “best friends” in superheroes who acted as role models he could always trust. He now runs a workshop at Jewish schools and camps, where he teaches children the rudiments of comic art and has them re-imagine a story from the Bible through drawing.

He is working on a graphic-novel version of the Pass-over haggadah complete with traditional text. Gorfinkel says it will engage kids through “dynamic art” in a way a traditional seder cannot. “Kids, and adults that are kids at heart, need to connect to our Jewish texts in entertaining ways,” he said. “When you’re sitting around the seder table with a book, what’s the most logical way to bring the story to life? Using a modern medium that also happens to be one Jews created.”

Like many Jewish conventions, this one couldn’t help getting snarled in the thorniest of Jewish debates. At a panel on Jewish characters in comics, the discussion opened by asking who, exactly, counts as a Jewish character.

“If you have one [Jewish] parent and identify as Jewish, you have a lot of characters, including the third Robin,” shouted someone in the audience, referring to Batman’s sidekick.

The man was seated, along with a few others, on a repurposed synagogue pew, while most of the audience of several dozen people sat on folding chairs. On the walls, presenters at the conference advertised comic art for auction, with the proceeds going to the synagogue, Congregation Kol Israel. One panel had a drawing of the “Star Wars” villain Darth Vader saying the Hebrew word for “repentance.”

While the gathering was a far cry from the largest comic cons, in a certain sense, said artist Dean Haspiel, it was the most appropriate feel for the genre. While Marvel and DC Comics films are booming, he said, comic book artists – like Jews – remain a small community invested in its tradition.

“Even though comic books have become popular in movies and costumes, the actual comic book is becoming like a rare breed,” Haspiel said. “What I admire about the Jewish people that were here, they have each other’s backs through thick and thin, and that’s the same way we feel as cartoonists.”

**Check out the Federation’s new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook**
Europe to the kibbutzim of Palestine to the cul-de-sacs of America. Hava Nagila (The Movie) - Although almost all of the Entebbe hostages were saved, Yoni was the lone military fatality. Featuring three Israeli Prime Ministers and recently

106. Her story is an inspiration. Everything is a Present: The Wonder and Grace of Alice Sommer Hertz - This is the uplifting true story of the gifted pianist Alice Sommer Hertz

In 1948, just three years after the liberation of Nazi death camps, a ragtag group of skilled American pilots - both Jewish and non-Jewish, manouvered a call for help. In secret and at great personal risk, they smuggled planes out of the U.S., trained behind the Iron Curtain and flew for Israel in its War of Independence. This band of brothers not only turned the tide of the war, they also embarked on personal journeys of discovery and pride. (Shown at the 2017 UJA campaign opening event)

Non-Feature Films 2016

Unmasked: Judaophobia - the Threat to Civilization – This documentary presents a vigorous case for Israel- for its basic right to exist, to protect its citizens from terrorism, and to defend its borders from hostile enemies. (Shown at the 2017 UJA campaign opening event)

Son of Saul - October 1944, Auschwitz-Birkenau. Saul (Géza Röhrig) is a Hungarian member of the Sonderkommando, the group of Jewish prisoners forced to assist the Nazis. While working, Saul discovers the body of a boy he takes for his son. As the Sonderkommando plans a rebellion, Saul decides to carry out an impossible task: save the child's body, find a rabbi to recite the mourner's Kaddish and offer the boy a proper burial. (shown at the 2017 UJA campaign opening event)

Remember - With the aid of a fellow Auschwitz survivor and a handwritten letter, an elderly man with demntia goes in search of the person responsible for the death of his family. (shown at the 2017 UJA campaign opening event)

Munich - Inspired by real events, Munich reveals the intense story of the secret Israeli squad assigned to track down and assassinate the 11 Palestinians believed to have planned the 1972 Munich massacre of 11 Israeli athletes - and the personal toll this mission of revenge takes on the team and the man who led it.

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The Jolson Story - THE JOLSON STORY is classic Hollywood biography at its best: a fast-paced, tune-filled extravaganza following the meteoric rise of legendary performer Al Jolson. THE JOLSON STORY was nominated for six 1946 Academy Awards, winning two, (Best Musical Scoring and Best Sound Recording).

The Other Son - As he is preparing to join the Israeli army for his national service, Joseph discovers he is not his parents' biological son and that he was inadvertently switched at birth with Yacine, the son of a Palestinian family from the West Bank. This revelation turns the lives of these two families upside-down, forcing them to reassess their respective identities, their values and beliefs.

Follow Me: The Yoni Netanyahu Story - Yoni Netanyahu was a complex, passionate individual thrust into defending his country in a time of war and violence. The older brother of Benjamin Netanyahu, the current Israeli Prime Minister, Yoni led the miraculous raid on Entebbe in 1976. Although almost all of the Entebbe hostages were saved, Yoni was the lone military fatality. Featuring three Israeli Prime Ministers and recently released audio from the Entebbe raid itself.

Hava Nagila (The Movie) - A documentary rromp through the history, mystery and meaning of the great Jewish standard. Featuring interviews with Harry Belafonte, Leonard Nimoy and more, the film follows the ubiquitous party song on its fascinating journey from the shetlits of Eastern Europe to the kibbutzim to the cul-de-sacs of America.

If These Knishes Could Talk tells the story of the New York accent: what it is, how it's evolved, and the love/hate relationship New Yorkers have with it. It features writer Pete Hamill, director Penny Marshall, attorney Alan Dershowitz and screenwriter James McBride, along with a cast of characters from Canarsie to Tottenville. In between, it explores why New Yorkers eat chawclate and drink cawfee, and how the accent became the vibrant soundtrack of a charming, forcing them to reassess their respective identities, their values and beliefs.

The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg - As baseball's first Jewish star, Hammerin' Hank Greenberg's career contains all the makings of a true American success story. Unmasked: Judophobia - the Threat to Civilization – This documentary exposes the current political assault against the State of Israel fundamentally as a war against the Jewish people and their right to self-determination.
Adolf Burger, last of “Hitler’s counterfeiters,” dies at 99

Adolf Burger, a Holocaust survivor who was forced by the Nazis to counterfeit British banknotes, died in Prague at age 99, his family said. Burger, a native of Slovakia, was a typographer by profession. He was arrested in 1942 for producing false baptism records for Jewish refugees. He was deported from the Netherlands to Auschwitz in 1944 and was moved to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where he worked in a section devoted to counterfeiting operations. In June 1945, after the war, Burger settled in Prague. His memoirs, titled “Number 64401 Speaks,” were first published in 1945. He later rewrote his story, which was released in 1983 under the title “The Commando of Counterfeiters.” The Austrian-German film “The Counterfeiters,” based on Burger’s memoirs, won the 2009 Academy Award for best foreign language film.

House passes bill to help recover Nazi-looted art

A bill to facilitate the return of Nazi-looted artworks to their original owners or heirs passed the U.S. House of Representatives. The House passed the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act, or HEAR Act, on Dec. 7. It must still pass the Senate. The bill would extend the statute of limitations for the stolen artwork to six years from the date that the art in question is identified and located, and from when the claimant has shown evidence of possession of the art. In some previous cases, defendants were able to avoid restitution because it was said there was no evidence of possession. In the case of Ivan Gaskell, a London-based lawyer, who was held before the Senate Judiciary Committee subcommittees on the importance of the act. Among those testifying was British actress Helen Mirren, who said that “restoring physical parts of lost heritage to Holocaust victims and their families is a moral imperative.” Mirren said she became steeped in the issue while playing Maria von Trapp in the 1996 Austrian-German film “The Sound of Music.”

Study: Military service contributes to Israeli longevity

Compulsory military service added three years to the life expectancy of Israeli men, according to a new study. The study released on Dec. 6 by the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Jerusalem compared data from 130 countries. After controlling for variables that typically influence longevity, the study concluded that only 80 percent of the variance in life expectancy between Israel and the other countries could be explained by factors such as wealth, health care expenditures, educational levels and others. When the researchers controlled for the rate of military spending and length of service among the countries, the gap between Israel and the other states shrank to less than 3 percent. The variance alone (the interaction between military spending as a percent of GDP and length of military service) essentially explains Israeli men’s longevity over and above the effect of other variables that were tested,” the study found. “In other words, if Israel did not have the compulsory service, the Israeli men would probably live about 5 years longer. In other words, if their life expectancy in Israel would probably be much lower.” In 2013, Israeli men had a projected lifespan of 80.6 years compared to 77.7 among men living in the member states of the Organisations for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). But that gap has narrowed to 7.9 years in 2016.

Chief Rabbinate promises standards for conversion rabbis

Israel’s Chief Rabbinate committed to creating standards for recognizing which rabbis have the authority over Jewish conversions it accepts. But the Rabbinic Court of Appeals in Jerusalem ruled in December that the Chief Rabbinate’s response of 2006 did not do justice to the issues raised by the appeal. The Chief Rabbinate promised in its statement. “This reform is expected to stop the suffering of many converts who have been turned down for conversion abroad when they come to register for marriage and divorce in Israel. In contrast to the situation in the past, in which some officials in the Chief Rabbinate assumed the authority to check every case individually, now as mentioned above, every conversion that will be approved by a rabbi who is on the list of the approved rabbis will not be subject to further checking but will be approved automatically,” Yogev said. “For example, when each of the heads of the Rabbinate reviewed the issue of conversion abroad among the conversion cases before the Chief Rabbinate, the Chief Rabbinate only approved the conversion applications when the claimant was Jewish and was living in Israel. This is a great step forward in the fight against the phenomenon of conversion abroad.” The Chief Rabbinate promised to convene a meeting of the conversion chief rabbis and representatives of the conversion chief rabbis in the near future to determine the standards. The conversion of Ivanka Trump, the daughter of the president of the United States, was held before the new proposed outline in which you check the converting rabbi only, their conversion will be approved automatically,” Yosef said. “For example, when each of the heads of the Rabbinate reviewed the issue of conversion abroad among the conversion cases before the Chief Rabbinate, the Chief Rabbinate only approved the conversion applications when the claimant was Jewish and was living in Israel. This is a great step forward in the fight against the phenomenon of conversion abroad.”

Secretary of Veterans Affairs designates Advisors National Cemetery

The Department of Veterans Affairs has designated the Advisors National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, the location of many more than 4,000 Advisors, as a national cemetery. This recognition marks the beginning of the process to add the Advisors National Cemetery to the National Cemetery System. The Advisors were volunteers who served with the Free French Forces in World War II. The Advisors National Cemetery is located on the west side of the capital, near the Pentagon and the National Mall. It is the only national cemetery that is dedicated to the legacy of the Advisors.

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